

All's Well That Ends Well

3.4

*Enter the Countess and Reynaldo her steward, with
a letter*

COUNTESS

Alas! And would you take the letter of her?
Might you not know she would do as she has done,
By sending me a letter? Read it again.

REYNALDO *(reads the letter)*

'I am Saint Jaques' pilgrim, thither gone.
Ambitious love hath so in me offended 5
That barefoot plod I the cold ground upon
With sainted vow my faults to have amended.
Write, write, that from the bloody course of war
My dearest master, your dear son, may hie.
Bless him at home in peace, whilst I from far 10
His name with zealous fervour sanctify.
His taken labours bid him me forgive;
I, his despiteful Juno, sent him forth
From courtly friends, with camping foes to live,
Where death and danger dogs the heels of worth. 15
He is too good and fair for death and me;
Whom I myself embrace to set him free.'

COUNTESS

Ah, what sharp stings are in her mildest words!
Reynaldo, you did never lack advice so much
As letting her pass so. Had I spoke with her, 20
I could have well diverted her intents,
Which thus she hath prevented.

REYNALDO Pardon me, madam.

If I had given you this at over-night
She might have been o'erta'en and yet she writes
Pursuit would be but vain.

COUNTESS What angel shall 25

Bless this unworthy husband? He cannot thrive
Unless her prayers, whom heaven delights to hear
And loves to grant, relieve him from the wrath
Of greatest justice. Write, write, Reynaldo,

To this unworthy husband of his wife. 30
Let every word weigh heavy of her worth,
That he does weigh too light; my greatest grief,
Though little he do feel it, set down sharply.
Dispatch the most convenient messenger.
When haply he shall hear that she is gone, 35
He will return, and hope I may that she,
Hearing so much, will speed her foot again,
Led hither by pure love. Which of them both
Is dearest to me I have no skill in sense
To make distinction. Provide this messenger. 40
My heart is heavy and mine age is weak;
Grief would have tears, and sorrow bids me speak.

Exeunt