

All's Well That Ends Well

3.6

Enter Bertram and the two Captains Dumaine

SECOND LORD DUMAINE *(to Bertram)* Nay, good my lord,
put him to't. Let him have his way.

FIRST LORD DUMAINE *(to Bertram)* If your lordship find him
not a hilding, hold me no more in your respect.

SECOND LORD DUMAINE *(to Bertram)* On my life, my lord, a 5
bubble.

BERTRAM Do you think I am so far deceived in him?

SECOND LORD DUMAINE Believe it, my lord. In mine own
direct knowledge±±without any malice, but to speak of
him as my kinsman±±he's a most notable coward, an 10
infinite and endless liar, an hourly promise-breaker,
the owner of no one good quality worthy your lordship's
entertainment.

FIRST LORD DUMAINE *(to Bertram)* It were fit you knew
him, lest reposing too far in his virtue, which he hath 15
not, he might at some great and trusty business, in a
main danger, fail you.

BERTRAM I would I knew in what particular action to try
him.

FIRST LORD DUMAINE None better than to let him fetch off 20
his drum, which you hear him so confidently undertake
to do.

SECOND LORD DUMAINE *(to Bertram)* I, with a troop of
Florentines, will suddenly surprise him. Such I will
have whom I am sure he knows not from the enemy; 25
we will bind and hoodwink him so, that he shall
suppose no other but that he is carried into the laager
of the adversary's when we bring him to our own tents.
Be but your lordship present at his examination: if he
do not, for the promise of his life and in the highest 30
compulsion of base fear, offer to betray you, and deliver
all the intelligence in his power against you, and that
with the divine forfeit of his soul upon oath, never trust
my judgement in anything.

FIRST LORD DUMAINE *(to Bertram)* O, for the love of laughter, 35

let him fetch his drum. He says he has a stratagem
for't. When your lordship sees the bottom of his success
in't, and to what metal this counterfeit lump of ore
will be melted, if you give him not John Drum's
entertainment, your inclining cannot be removed. Here 40
he comes.

Enter Paroles

SECOND LORD DUMAINE O *[aside]* for the love of laughter
[aloud] hinder not the honour of his design; let him
fetch off his drum in any hand.

BERTRAM *(to Paroles)* How now, monsieur? This drum 45
sticks sorely in your disposition.

FIRST LORD DUMAINE A pox on't, let it go. 'Tis but a drum.

PAROLES But a drum? Is't but a drum? A drum so lost!
There was excellent command: to charge in with our
horse upon our own wings and to rend our own 50
soldiers!

FIRST LORD DUMAINE That was not to be blamed in the
command of the service. It was a disaster of war that
Caesar himself could not have prevented, if he had
been there to command. 55

BERTRAM Well, we cannot greatly condemn our success.
Some dishonour we had in the loss of that drum, but
it is not to be recovered.

PAROLES It might have been recovered.

BERTRAM It might, but it is not now. 60

PAROLES It *is* to be recovered. But that the merit of service
is seldom attributed to the true and exact performer, I
would have that drum or another, or *'hic iacet'*.

BERTRAM Why, if you have a stomach, to't, monsieur. If
you think your mystery in stratagem can bring this 65
instrument of honour again into his native quarter, be
magnanimous in the enterprise and go on. I will grace
the attempt for a worthy exploit. If you speed well in
it, the Duke shall both speak of it and extend to you
what further becomes his greatness, even to the utmost 70
syllable of your worthiness.

PAROLES By the hand of a soldier, I will undertake it.

BERTRAM But you must not now slumber in it.

PAROLES I'll about it this evening, and I will presently

pen down my dilemmas, encourage myself in my
certainty, put myself into my mortal preparation; and
by midnight look to hear further from me.

75

BERTRAM May I be bold to acquaint his grace you are
gone about it?

PAROLES I know not what the success will be, my lord, 80
but the attempt I vow.

BERTRAM I know thou'rt valiant, and to the possibility of
thy soldiership will subscribe for thee. Farewell.

PAROLES I love not many words.

Exit

SECOND LORD DUMAINE No more than a fish loves water. 85
(*To Bertram*) Is not this a strange fellow, my lord, that
so confidently seems to undertake this business, which
he knows is not to be done? Damns himself to do, and
dares better be damned than to do't.

FIRST LORD DUMAINE (*to Bertram*) You do not know him, 90
my lord, as we do. Certain it is that he will steal himself
into a man's favour, and for a week escape a great
deal of discoveries, but when you find him out, you
have him ever after.

BERTRAM Why, do you think he will make no deed at all 95
of this that so seriously he does address himself unto?

SECOND LORD DUMAINE None in the world, but return with
an invention, and clap upon you two or three probable
lies. But we have almost embosked him. You shall see
his fall tonight; for indeed he is not for your lordship's 100
respect.

FIRST LORD DUMAINE (*to Bertram*) We'll make you some
sport with the fox ere we case him. He was first smoked
by the old Lord Lafeu. When his disguise and he is
parted, tell me what a sprat you shall find him, which 105
you shall see this very night.

SECOND LORD DUMAINE

I must go look my twigs. He shall be caught.

BERTRAM

Your brother, he shall go along with me.

[SECOND] LORD DUMAINE As't please your lordship. I'll leave
you. 110

Exit

BERTRAM

Now will I lead you to the house, and show you
The lass I spoke of.

[FIRST] LORD DUMAINE But you say she's honest.

BERTRAM

That's all the fault. I spoke with her but once
And found her wondrous cold, but I sent to her
By this same coxcomb that we have i'th' wind
Tokens and letters, which she did re-send,
And this is all I have done. She's a fair creature.
Will you go see her?

115

[FIRST] LORD DUMAINE With all my heart, my lord.

Exeunt