

All's Well That Ends Well

3.7

Enter Helen and the Widow

HELEN

If you misdoubt me that I am not she,
I know not how I shall assure you further
But I shall lose the grounds I work upon.

WIDOW

Though my estate be fall'n, I was well born,
Nothing acquainted with these businesses, 5
And would not put my reputation now
In any staining act.

HELEN

Nor would I wish you.
First give me trust the Count he is my husband,
And what to your sworn counsel I have spoken
Is so from word to word, and then you cannot, 10
By the good aid that I of you shall borrow,
Err in bestowing it.

WIDOW

I should believe you,
For you have showed me that which well approves
You're great in fortune.

HELEN

Take this purse of gold,
And let me buy your friendly help thus far, 15
Which I will over-pay, and pay again
When I have found it. The Count he woos your
daughter,
Lays down his wanton siege before her beauty,
Resolved to carry her. Let her in fine consent,
As we'll direct her how 'tis best to bear it. 20
Now his important blood will naught deny
That she'll demand. A ring the County wears,
That downward hath succeeded in his house
From son to son some four or five descents
Since the first father wore it. This ring he holds 25
In most rich choice; yet in his idle fire
To buy his will it would not seem too dear,
Howe'er repented after.

WIDOW

Now I see the bottom of your purpose.

HELEN

You see it lawful then. It is no more 30
But that your daughter ere she seems as won
Desires this ring; appoints him an encounter;
In fine, delivers me to fill the time,
Herself most chastely absent. After,
To marry her I'll add three thousand crowns 35
To what is passed already.

WIDOW

I have yielded.

Instruct my daughter how she shall persevere,
That time and place with this deceit so lawful
May prove coherent. Every night he comes
With musics of all sorts, and songs composed 40
To her unworthiness. It nothing steads us
To chide him from our eaves, for he persists
As if his life lay on't.

HELEN

Why then tonight

Let us essay our plot, which if it speed
Is wicked meaning in a lawful deed 45
And lawful meaning in a wicked act,
Where both not sin, and yet a sinful fact.
But let's about it.

Exeunt