

1602

ALL'S WELL THAT ENDS WELL

William Shakespeare

Shakespeare, William (1564-1616) - English dramatist and poet widely regarded as the greatest and most influential writer in all of world literature. The richness of Shakespeare's genius transcends time; his keen observation and psychological insight are, to this day, without rival. All's Well that Ends Well (1602) - A comedy — the story of Helena and how she eventually wins the love of her husband, Bertram. This play is a retelling of a familiar legend, taken from Boccaccio's Decameron.

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DRAMATIS PERSONAE

Dramatis Personae

KING OF FRANCE

THE DUKE OF FLORENCE

BERTRAM, Count of Rousillon

LAFEU, an old lord

PAROLLES, a follower of Bertram

TWO FRENCH LORDS, serving with Bertram

STEWARD, Servant to the Countess of Rousillon

LAVACHE, a clown and Servant to the Countess of Rousillon

A PAGE, Servant to the Countess of Rousillon

COUNTESS OF ROUSILLON, mother to Bertram

HELENA, a gentlewoman protected by the Countess

A WIDOW OF FLORENCE.

DIANA, daughter to the Widow

VIOLENTA, neighbour and friend to the Widow

MARIANA, neighbour and friend to the Widow

Lords, Officers, Soldiers, etc., French and Florentine

SCENE:

Rousillon; Paris; Florence; Marseilles

ACT I.

SCENE 1.

Rousillon. The COUNT'S palace

Enter BERTRAM, the COUNTESS OF ROUSILLON, HELENA, and LAFEU, all in black
COUNTESS In delivering my son from me, I bury a second husband.

BERTRAM And I in going, madam, weep o'er my father's death anew; but I must attend his Majesty's command, to whom I am now in ward, evermore in subjection.

LAFEU You shall find of the King a husband, madam; you, sir, a father.

He that so generally is at all times good must of necessity hold his virtue to you, whose worthiness would stir it up where it wanted, rather than lack it where there is such abundance.

COUNTESS What hope is there of his Majesty's amendment? LAFEU He hath abandon'd his physicians, madam; under whose practices he hath persecuted time with hope, and finds no other advantage in the process but only the losing of hope by time.

COUNTESS This young gentlewoman had a father- O, that 'had,' how sad a passage 'tis!-whose skill was almost as great as his honesty; had it stretch'd so far, would have made nature immortal, and death should have play for lack of work. Would, for the King's sake, he were living! I think it would be the death of the King's disease.

LAFEU How call'd you the man you speak of, madam? COUNTESS He was famous, sir, in his profession, and it was his great right to be so- Gerard de Narbon.

LAFEU He was excellent indeed, madam; the King very lately spoke of him dmiringly and mourningly; he was skilful enough to have liv'd still, if knowledge could be set up against mortality.

BERTRAM What is it, my good lord, the King languishes of? LAFEU A fistula, my lord.

BERTRAM I heard not of it before.

LAFEU I would it were not notorious. Was this gentlewoman the daughter of Gerard de Narbon? COUNTESS His sole child, my lord, and bequeathed to my overlooking. I have those hopes of her good that her education promises; her dispositions she inherits, which makes fair gifts fairer; for where an unclean mind carries virtuous qualities, there commendations go with pity-they are virtues and traitors too. In her they are the better for their simpleness; she derives her honesty, and achieves her goodness.

LAFEU Your commendations, madam, get from her tears.

COUNTESS 'Tis the best brine a maiden can season her praise in. The reme brance of her father never approaches her heart but the tyranny of her sorrows takes all livelihood from her cheek. No more of this, Helena; go to, no more, lest it be rather thought you affect a sorrow than to haveHELENA I do affect a sorrow indeed, but I have it too.

LAFEU Moderate lamentation is the right of the dead: excessive grief the enemy to the living.

COUNTESS If the living be enemy to the grief, the excess makes it soon mortal.

BERTRAM Madam, I desire your holy wishes.

LAFEU How understand we that? COUNTESS Be thou blest, Bertram, and succeed thy father In manners, as in shape! Thy blood and virtue Contend for empire in thee, and thy goodness Share with thy birthright! Love all, trust a few, Do wrong to none; be able for thine enemy Rather in power than use, and keep thy friend Under thy own life's key; be check'd for silence, But never tax'd for speech. What heaven more will, That thee may furnish, and my prayers pluck down, Fall on thy head!

Farewell. My lord, 'Tis an unseason'd courtier; good my lord, Advise him.

LAFEU He cannot want the best That shall attend his love.

COUNTESS Heaven bless him! Farewell, Bertram.

Exit BERTRAM The best wishes that can be forg'd in your thoughts be servants to you! [To HELENA] Be comfortable to my mother, your mistress, and make much of her.

LAFEU Farewell, pretty lady; you must hold the credit of your father.

Exeunt BERTRAM and LAFEU HELENA O, were that all! I think not on my father; And these great tears grace his remembrance more Than those I shed for him. What was he like? I have forgot him; my imagination Carries no favour in't but Bertram's. I am undone; there is no living, none, If Bertram be away. 'Twere all one That I should love a bright particular star And think to wed it, he is so above me. In his bright radiance and collateral light Must I be comforted, not in his sphere. Th' ambition in my love thus plagues itself: The hind that would be mated by the lion Must die for love. 'Twas pretty, though a plague, To see him every hour; to sit and draw His arched brows, his hawking eye, his curls, In our heart's table-heart too capable Of every line and trick of his sweet favour. But now he's gone, and my idolatrous fancy Must sanctify his relics. Who comes here? Enter PAROLLES[Aside]

One that goes with him. I love him for his sake; And yet I know him a notorious liar, Think him a great way fool, solely a coward; Yet these fix'd evils sit so fit in him That they take place when virtue's steely bones Looks bleak i' th' cold wind; withal, full oft we see Cold wisdom waiting on superfluous folly.

PAROLLES Save you, fair queen!

HELENA And you, monarch!

PAROLLES No.

HELENA And no.

PAROLLES Are you meditating on virginity?

HELENA Ay. You have some stain of soldier in you; let me ask you a question. Man is enemy to virginity; how may we barricado it against him? PAROLLES Keep him out.

HELENA But he assails; and our virginity, though valiant in the defence, yet is weak. Unfold to us some warlike resistance.

PAROLLES There is none. Man, setting down before you, will undermine you and blow you up.

HELENA Bless our poor virginity from underminers and blowers-up! Is there no military policy how virgins might blow up men? PAROLLES Virginity being blown down, man will quicklier be blown up; marry, in blowing him down again, with the breach yourselves made, you lose your city. It is not politic in the commonwealth of nature to preserve virginity. Loss of virginity is rational increase; and there was never

virgin got till virginity was first lost. That you were made of is metal to make virgins. Virginity by being once lost may be ten times found; by being ever kept, it is ever lost. 'Tis too cold a companion; away with't.

HELENA I will stand for 't a little, though therefore I die a virgin.

PAROLLES There's little can be said in 't; 'tis against the rule of nature. To speak on the part of virginity is to accuse your mothers; which is most infallible disobedience. He that hangs himself is a virgin; virginity murders itself, and should be buried in highways, out of all sanctified limit, as a desperate offendress against nature. Virginity breeds mites, much like a cheese; consumes itself to the very paring, and so dies with feeding his own stomach. Besides, virginity is peevish, proud, idle, made of self-love, which is the most inhibited sin in the canon. Keep it not; you cannot choose but lose by't.

Out with't. Within ten year it will make itself ten, which is a goodly increase; and the principal itself not much the worse. Away with't.

HELENA How might one do, sir, to lose it to her own liking?

PAROLLES Let me see. Marry, ill to like him that ne'er it likes. 'Tis a commodity will lose the gloss with lying; the longer kept, the less worth. Off with't while 'tis vendible; answer the time of request.

Virginity, like an old courtier, wears her cap out of fashion, richly suited but unsuitable; just like the brooch and the toothpick, which wear not now. Your date is better in your pie and your porridge than in your cheek. And your virginity, your old virginity, is like one of our French wither'd pears: it looks ill, it eats drily; marry, 'tis a wither'd pear; it was formerly better; marry, yet 'tis a wither'd pear. Will you anything with it? HELENA Not my virginity yet. There shall your master have a thousand loves, A mother, and a mistress, and a friend, A phoenix, captain, and an enemy, A guide, a goddess, and a sovereign, A counsellor, a traitress, and a dear; His humble ambition, proud humility, His jarring concord, and his discord dulcet, His faith, his sweet disaster; with a world Of pretty, fond, adoptious christendoms That blinking Cupid gossips. Now shall he- I know not what he shall. God send him well! The court's a learning-place, and he is one PAROLLES What one, i' faith? HELENA That I wish well. 'Tis pity PAROLLES What's pity? HELENA That wishing well had not a body in't Which might be felt; that we, the poorer born, Whose baser stars do shut us up in wishes, Might with effects of them follow our friends And show what we alone must think, which never Returns us thanks.

Enter PAGE

PAGE Monsieur Parolles, my lord calls for you.

Exit PAGE

PAROLLES Little Helen, farewell; if I can remember thee, I will think of thee at court.

HELENA Monsieur Parolles, you were born under a charitable star.

PAROLLES Under Mars, I.

HELENA I especially think, under Mars.

PAROLLES Why under Man? HELENA The wars hath so kept you under that you must needs be born under Mars.

PAROLLES When he was predominant.

HELENA When he was retrograde, I think, rather.

PAROLLES Why think you so? HELENA You go so much backward when you fight.

PAROLLES That's for advantage.

HELENA So is running away, when fear proposes the safety: but the composition that your valour and fear makes in you is a virtue of a good wing, and I like the wear well

PAROLLES I am so full of business I cannot answer thee acutely. I will return perfect courtier; in the which my instruction shall serve to naturalize thee, so thou wilt be capable of a courtier's counsel, and understand what advice shall thrust upon thee; else thou diest in thine unthankfulness, and thine ignorance makes thee away. Farewell.

When thou hast leisure, say thy prayers; when thou hast none, remember thy friends. Get thee a good husband and use him as he uses thee. So, farewell.

Exit

HELENA Our remedies oft in ourselves do lie, Which we ascribe to heaven.

The fated sky Gives us free scope; only doth backward pull Our slow designs when we ourselves are dull. What power is it which

mounts my love so high, That makes me see, and cannot feed mine eye? The mightiest space in fortune nature brings To join like likes, and kiss like native things. Impossible be strange attempts to those That weigh their pains in sense, and do suppose What hath been cannot be. Who ever strove To show her merit that did miss her love? The King's disease-my project may deceive me, But my intents are fix'd, and will not leave me.

Exit

SCENE 2.

Paris. The KING'S palace Flourish of cornets. Enter the KING OF FRANCE, with letters, and divers ATTENDANTS KING The Florentines and Senoys are by th' ears; Have fought with equal fortune, and continue A braving war.

FIRST LORD So 'tis reported, sir.

KING Nay, 'tis most credible. We here receive it, A certainty, vouch'd from our cousin Austria, With caution, that the Florentine will move us For speedy aid; wherein our dearest friend Prejudicates the business, and would seem To have us make denial.

FIRST LORD His love and wisdom, Approv'd so to your Majesty, may plead For amplest credence.

KING He hath arm'd our answer, And Florence is denied before he comes; Yet, for our gentlemen that mean to see The Tuscan service, freely have they leave To stand on either part.

SECOND LORD It well may serve A nursery to our gentry, who are sick For breathing and exploit.

KING What's he comes here?

Enter BERTRAM, LAFEU, and PAROLLES

FIRST LORD It is the Count Rousillon, my good lord, Young Bertram.

KING Youth, thou bear'st thy father's face; Frank nature, rather curious than in haste, Hath well compos'd thee. Thy father's moral parts Mayst thou inherit too! Welcome to Paris.

BERTRAM My thanks and duty are your Majesty's.

KING I would I had that corporal soundness now, As when thy father and myself in friendship First tried our soldiership. He did look far Into the service of the time, and was Discipled of the bravest. He lasted long; But on us both did haggish age steal on, And wore us out of act. It much repairs me To talk of your good father. In his youth He had the wit which I can well observe To-day in our young lords; but they may jest Till their own scorn return to them unnoted Ere they can hide their levity in honour. So like a courtier, contempt nor bitterness Were in his pride or sharpness; if they were, His qual had awak'd them; and his honour, Clock to itself, knew the true minute when Exception bid him speak, and at this time His tongue obey'd his hand. Who were below him He us'd as creatures of another place; And bow'd his eminent top to their low ranks, Making them proud of his humility In their poor praise he humbled. Such a man Might be a copy to these younger times; Which, followed well, would demonstrate them now But goes backward.

BERTRAM His good remembrance, sir, Lies richer in your thoughts than on his tomb; So in approof lives not his epitaph As in your royal speech.

KING Would I were with him! He would always say- Methinks I hear him now; his plausible words He scatter'd not in ears, but grafted them To grow there, and to bear 'Let me not live' This his good melancholy oft began, On the catastrophe and heel of pastime, When it was out- 'Let me not live' quoth he 'After my flame lacks oil, to be the snuff Of younger spirits, whose apprehensive senses All but new things disdain; whose judgments are Mere fathers of their garments; whose constancies Expire before their fashions.' This he wish'd. I, after him, do after him wish too, Since I nor wax nor honey can bring home, I quickly were dissolved from my hive, To give some labourers room.

SECOND LORD You're loved, sir; They that least lend it you shall lack you first.

KING I fill a place, I know't. How long is't, Count, Since the physician at your father's died? He was much fam'd.

BERTRAM Some six months since, my lord.

KING If he were living, I would try him yet- Lend me an arm- the rest have worn me out With several applications. Nature and sickness Debate it at their leisure. Welcome, Count; My son's no dearer.

BERTRAM Thank your Majesty.

Exeunt [Flourish]

SCENE 3.

Rousillon. The COUNT'S palace Enter COUNTESS, STEWARD, and CLOWN

COUNTESS I will now hear; what say you of this gentlewoman? STEWARD Madam, the care I have had to even your content I wish might be found in the calendar of my past endeavours; for then we wound our modesty, and make foul the clearness of our deservings, when of ourselves we publish them.

COUNTESS What does this knave here? Get you gone, sirrah. The complaints I have heard of you I do not all believe; 'tis my slowness that I do not, for I know you lack not folly to commit them and have ability enough to make such knaveries yours.

CLOWN 'Tis not unknown to you, madam, I am a poor fellow.

COUNTESS Well, sir.

CLOWN No, madam, 'tis not so well that I am poor, though many of the rich are damn'd; but if I may have your ladyship's good will to go to the world, Isbel the woman and I will do as we may.

COUNTESS Wilt thou needs be a beggar? CLOWN I do beg your good will in this case.

COUNTESS In what case? CLOWN In Isbel's case and mine own. Service is no heritage; and I think I shall never have the blessing of God till I have issue o' my body; for they say bames are blessings.

COUNTESS Tell me thy reason why thou wilt marry.

CLOWN My poor body, madam, requires it. I am driven on by the flesh; and he must needs go that the devil drives.

COUNTESS Is this all your worship's reason? CLOWN Faith, madam, I have other holy reasons, such as they are.

COUNTESS May the world know them? CLOWN I have been, madam, a wicked creature, as you and all flesh and blood are; and, indeed, I do marry that I may repent.

COUNTESS Thy marriage, sooner than thy wickedness.

CLOWN I am out o' friends, madam, and I hope to have friends for my wife's sake.

COUNTESS Such friends are thine enemies, knave.

CLOWN Y'are shallow, madam-in great friends; for the knaves come to do that for me which I am weary of. He that ears my land spares my team, and gives me leave to in the crop. If I be his cuckold, he's my drudge. He that comforts my wife is the cherisher of my flesh and blood; he that cherishes my flesh and blood loves my flesh and blood; he that loves my flesh and blood is my friend; ergo, he that kisses my wife is my friend. If men could be contented to be what they are, there were no fear in marriage; for young Charbon the puritan and old Poysam the papist, howsome'er their hearts are sever'd in religion, their heads are both one; they may jowl horns together like any deer i' th' herd

COUNTESS Wilt thou ever be a foul-mouth'd and calumnious knave?

CLOWN A prophet I, madam; and I speak the truth the next way: For I the ballad will repeat, Which men full true shall find: Your marriage comes by destiny, Your cuckoo sings by kind.

COUNTESS Get you gone, sir; I'll talk with you more anon.

STEWARD May it please you, madam, that he bid Helen come to you. Of her I am to speak.

COUNTESS Sirrah, tell my gentlewoman I would speak with her; Helen I mean.

CLOWN [Sings] 'Was this fair face the cause' quoth she 'Why the Grecians sacked Troy? Fond done, done fond, Was this King Priam's joy?' With that she sighed as she stood, With that she sighed as she stood, And gave this sentence then: 'Among nine bad if one be good, Among nine bad if one be good, There's yet one good in ten.'

COUNTESS What, one good in ten? You corrupt the song, sirrah.

CLOWN One good woman in ten, madam, which is a purifying o' th' song.

Would God would serve the world so all the year! We'd find no fault with the tithe-woman, if I were the parson. One in ten, quoth 'a! An we might have a good woman born before every blazing star, or at an earthquake, 'twould mend the lottery well: a man may draw his heart out ere 'a pluck one.

COUNTESS You'll be gone, sir knave, and do as I command you.

CLOWN That man should be at woman's command, and yet no hurt done!
Though honesty be no puritan, yet it will do no hurt; it will wear the surplice of
humility over the black gown of a big heart. I am going, forsooth. The business is for
Helen to come hither.

Exit

COUNTESS Well, now.

STEWARD I know, madam, you love your gentlewoman entirely.

COUNTESS Faith I do. Her father bequeath'd her to me; and she herself, without other
advantage, may lawfully make title to as much love as she finds. There is more owing
her than is paid; and more shall be paid her than she'll demand.

STEWARD Madam, I was very late more near her than I think she wish'd me. Alone
she was, and did communicate to herself her own words to her own ears; she thought, I
dare vow for her, they touch'd not any stranger sense. Her matter was, she loved your
son. Fortune, she said, was no goddess, that had put such difference betwixt their two
estates; Love no god, that would not extend his might only where qualities were level;
Diana no queen of virgins, that would suffer her poor knight surpris'd without rescue
in the first assault, or ransom afterward. This she deliver'd in the most bitter touch of
sorrow that e'er I heard virgin exclaim in; which I held my duty speedily to acquaint
you withal; sithence, in the loss that may happen, it concerns you something to know it.

COUNTESS YOU have discharg'd this honestly; keep it to yourself.

Many likelihoods inform'd me of this before, which hung so tott'ring in the balance that
I could neither believe nor misdoubt. Pray you leave me. Stall this in your bosom; and I
thank you for your honest care. I will speak with you further anon.

Exit STEWARD

Enter HELENA

Even so it was with me when I was young.

If ever we are nature's, these are ours; this thorn Doth to our rose of youth rightly
belong; Our blood to us, this to our blood is born.

It is the show and seal of nature's truth, Where love's strong passion is impress'd in
youth.

By our remembrances of days foregone, Such were our faults, or then we thought them
none.

Her eye is sick on't; I observe her now.

HELENA What is your pleasure, madam? COUNTESS You know, Helen, I am a
mother to you.

HELENA Mine honourable mistress.

COUNTESS Nay, a mother.

Why not a mother? When I said 'a mother,' Methought you saw a serpent. What's in
'mother' That you start at it? I say I am your mother, And put you in the catalogue of
those That were enwombed mine. 'Tis often seen Adoption strives with nature, and
choice breeds A native slip to us from foreign seeds.

You ne'er oppress'd me with a mother's groan, Yet I express to you a mother's care.

God's mercy, maiden! does it curd thy blood To say I am thy mother? What's the matter, That this distempered messenger of wet, The many-colour'd Iris, rounds thine eye? Why, that you are my daughter? HELENA That I am not.

COUNTESS I say I am your mother.

HELENA Pardon, madam.

The Count Rousillon cannot be my brother: I am from humble, he from honoured name; No note upon my parents, his all noble.

My master, my dear lord he is; and I His servant live, and will his vassal die.

He must not be my brother.

COUNTESS Nor I your mother? HELENA You are my mother, madam; would you were So that my lord your son were not my brother Indeed my mother! Or were you both our mothers, I care no more for than I do for heaven, So I were not his sister. Can't no other, But, I your daughter, he must be my brother? COUNTESS Yes, Helen, you might be my daughter-in-law.

God shield you mean it not! 'daughter' and 'mother' So strive upon your pulse. What! pale again? My fear hath catch'd your fondness. Now I see The myst'ry of your loneliness, and find Your salt tears' head. Now to all sense 'tis gross You love my son; invention is asham'd, Against the proclamation of thy passion, To say thou dost not. Therefore tell me true; But tell me then, 'tis so; for, look, thy cheeks Confess it, th' one to th' other; and thine eyes See it so grossly shown in thy behaviours That in their kind they speak it; only sin And hellish obstinacy tie thy tongue, That truth should be suspected. Speak, is't so? If it be so, you have wound a goodly clew; If it be not, forswear't; howe'er, I charge thee, As heaven shall work in me for thine avail, To tell me truly.

HELENA Good madam, pardon me.

COUNTESS Do you love my son? HELENA Your pardon, noble mistress.

COUNTESS Love you my son? HELENA Do not you love him, madam?

COUNTESS Go not about; my love hath in't a bond Whereof the world takes note. Come, come, disclose The state of your affection; for your passions Have to the full appeach'd.

HELENA Then I confess, Here on my knee, before high heaven and you, That before you, and next unto high heaven, I love your son.

My friends were poor, but honest; so's my love.

Be not offended, for it hurts not him That he is lov'd of me; I follow him not By any token of presumptuous suit, Nor would I have him till I do deserve him; Yet never know how that desert should be.

I know I love in vain, strive against hope; Yet in this captious and intenable sieve I still pour in the waters of my love, And lack not to lose still. Thus, Indian-like, Religious in mine error, I adore The sun that looks upon his worshipper But knows of him no more. My dearest madam, Let not your hate encounter with my love, For loving where you do; but if yourself, Whose aged honour cites a virtuous youth, Did ever in so true a flame of liking Wish chastely and love dearly that your Dian Was both herself and Love; O, then, give pity To her whose state is such that cannot choose But lend and give

where she is sure to lose; That seeks not to find that her search implies, But, riddle-like, lives sweetly where she dies!

COUNTESS Had you not lately an intent-speak truly To go to Paris? HELENA Madam, I had.

COUNTESS Wherefore? Tell true.

HELENA I will tell truth; by grace itself I swear.

You know my father left me some prescriptions

Of rare and prov'd effects, such as his reading And manifest experience had collected For general sovereignty; and that he will'd me In heedfull'st reservation to bestow them, As notes whose faculties inclusive were More than they were in note. Amongst the rest There is a remedy, approv'd, set down, To cure the desperate languishings whereof The King is render'd lost.

COUNTESS This was your motive For Paris, was it? Speak.

HELENA My lord your son made me to think of this, Else Paris, and the medicine, and the King, Had from the conversation of my thoughts Haply been absent then.

COUNTESS But think you, Helen, If you should tender your supposed aid, He would receive it? He and his physicians Are of a mind: he, that they cannot help him; They, that they cannot help. How shall they credit A poor unlearned virgin, when the schools, Embowell'd of their doctrine, have let off The danger to itself? HELENA There's something in't More than my father's skill, which was the great'st Of his profession, that his good receipt Shall for my legacy be sanctified By th' luckiest stars in heaven; and, would your honour But give me leave to try success, I'd venture The well-lost life of mine on his Grace's cure.

By such a day and hour.

COUNTESS Dost thou believe't? HELENA Ay, madam, knowingly.

COUNTESS Why, Helen, thou shalt have my leave and love, Means and attendants, and my loving greetings To those of mine in court. I'll stay at home, And pray God's blessing into thy attempt.

Be gone to-morrow; and be sure of this, What I can help thee to thou shalt not miss.

Exeunt

ACT II.

SCENE 1.

Paris. The KING'S palace Flourish of cornets. Enter the KING with divers young LORDS taking leave for the Florentine war; BERTRAM and PAROLLES; ATTENDANTS KING Farewell, young lords; these war-like principles Do not throw from you. And you, my lords, farewell; Share the advice betwixt you; if both gain all, The gift doth stretch itself as 'tis receiv'd, And is enough for both.

FIRST LORD 'Tis our hope, sir, After well-ent'red soldiers, to return And find your Grace in health.

KING No, no, it cannot be; and yet my heart Will not confess he owes the malady That doth my life besiege. Farewell, young lords; Whether I live or die, be you the sons Of worthy Frenchmen; let higher Italy Those bated that inherit but the fall Of the last monarchy-see that you come Not to woo honour, but to wed it; when The bravest questant shrinks, find what you seek, That fame may cry you aloud. I say farewell.

SECOND LORD Health, at your bidding, serve your Majesty!

KING Those girls of Italy, take heed of them; They say our French lack language to deny, If they demand; beware of being captives Before you serve.

BOTH Our hearts receive your warnings.

KING Farewell. [To ATTENDANTS] Come hither to me.

The KING retires attended

FIRST LORD O my sweet lord, that you will stay behind us!

PAROLLES 'Tis not his fault, the spark.

SECOND LORD O, 'tis brave wars!

PAROLLES Most admirable! I have seen those wars.

BERTRAM I am commanded here and kept a coil with 'Too young' and next year' and 'Tis too early.' PAROLLES An thy mind stand to 't, boy, steal away bravely.

BERTRAM I shall stay here the forehorse to a smock, Creaking my shoes on the plain masonry, Till honour be bought up, and no sword worn But one to dance with. By heaven, I'll steal away.

FIRST LORD There's honour in the theft.

PAROLLES Commit it, Count.

SECOND LORD I am your accessory; and so farewell.

BERTRAM I grow to you, and our parting is a tortur'd body.

FIRST LORD Farewell, Captain.

SECOND LORD Sweet Monsieur Parolles!

PAROLLES Noble heroes, my sword and yours are kin. Good sparks and lustrous, a word, good metals: you shall find in the regiment of the Spinii one Captain Spurio, with his cicatrice, an emblem of war, here on his sinister cheek; it was this very sword entrench'd it. Say to him I live; and observe his reports for me.

FIRST LORD We shall, noble Captain.

PAROLLES Mars dote on you for his novices!

Exeunt LORDS

What will ye do?

Re-enter the KING

BERTRAM Stay; the King!

PAROLLES Use a more spacious ceremony to the noble lords; you have restrain'd yourself within the list of too cold an adieu. Be more expressive to them; for they wear themselves in the cap of the time; there do muster true gait; eat, speak, and move, under the influence of the most receiv'd star; and though the devil lead the measure, such are to be followed. After them, and take a more dilated farewell.

BERTRAM And I will do so.

PAROLLES Worthy fellows; and like to prove most sinewy sword-men.

Exeunt BERTRAM and PAROLLES

Enter LAFEU

LAFEU [Kneeling] Pardon, my lord, for me and for my tidings.

KING I'll fee thee to stand up.

LAFEU Then here's a man stands that has brought his pardon.

I would you had kneel'd, my lord, to ask me mercy; And that at my bidding you could so stand up.

KING I would I had; so I had broke thy pate, And ask'd thee mercy for't.

LAFEU Good faith, across!

But, my good lord, 'tis thus: will you be cur'd Of your infirmity? KING No.

LAFEU O, will you eat No grapes, my royal fox? Yes, but you will My noble grapes, an if my royal fox Could reach them: I have seen a medicine That's able to breathe life into a stone, Quicken a rock, and make you dance canary With spritely fire and motion; whose simple touch Is powerful to araise King Pepin, nay, To give great Charlemain a pen in's hand And write to her a love-line.

KING What her is this? LAFEU Why, Doctor She! My lord, there's one arriv'd, If you will see her. Now, by my faith and honour, If seriously I may convey my thoughts In this my light deliverance, I have spoke With one that in her sex, her years, profession, Wisdom, and constancy, hath amaz'd me more Than I dare blame my weakness. Will you see her, For that is her demand, and know her business? That done, laugh well at me.

KING Now, good Lafeu, Bring in the admiration, that we with the May spend our wonder too, or take off thine By wond'ring how thou took'st it.

LAFEU Nay, I'll fit you, And not be all day neither.

Exit LAFEU

KING Thus he his special nothing ever prologues.

Re-enter LAFEU with HELENA

LAFEU Nay, come your ways.

KING This haste hath wings indeed.

LAFEU Nay, come your ways; This is his Majesty; say your mind to him.

A traitor you do look like; but such traitors His Majesty seldom fears. I am Cressid's uncle, That dare leave two together. Fare you well.

Exit

KING Now, fair one, does your business follow us? HELENA Ay, my good lord.

Gerard de Narbon was my father, In what he did profess, well found.

KING I knew him.

HELENA The rather will I spare my praises towards him; Knowing him is enough. On's bed of death Many receipts he gave me; chiefly one, Which, as the dearest issue of his practice, And of his old experience th' only darling, He bade me store up as a triple eye, Safer than mine own two, more dear. I have so: And, hearing your high Majesty is touch'd With that malignant cause wherein the honour Of my dear father's gift stands chief in power, I come to tender it, and my appliance, With all bound humbleness.

KING We thank you, maiden; But may not be so credulous of cure, When our most learned doctors leave us, and The congregated college have concluded That labouring art can never ransom nature From her inaidable estate-I say we must not So stain our judgment, or corrupt our hope, To prostitute our past-cure malady To empirics; or to dissever so Our great self and our credit to esteem A senseless help, when help past sense we deem.

HELENA My duty then shall pay me for my pains.

I will no more enforce mine office on you; Humbly entreating from your royal thoughts A modest one to bear me back again.

KING I cannot give thee less, to be call'd grateful.

Thou thought'st to help me; and such thanks I give As one near death to those that wish him live.

But what at full I know, thou know'st no part; I knowing all my peril, thou no art.

HELENA What I can do can do no hurt to try, Since you set up your rest 'gainst remedy.

He that of greatest works is finisher Oft does them by the weakest minister.

So holy writ in babes hath judgment shown, When judges have been babes. Great floods have flown From simple sources, and great seas have dried When miracles have by the greatest been denied.

Oft expectation fails, and most oft there Where most it promises; and oft it hits Where hope is coldest, and despair most fits.

KING I must not hear thee. Fare thee well, kind maid; Thy pains, not us'd, must by thyself be paid; Proffers not took reap thanks for their reward.

HELENA Inspired merit so by breath is barr'd.

It is not so with Him that all things knows, As 'tis with us that square our guess by shows; But most it is presumption in us when The help of heaven we count the act of men.

Dear sir, to my endeavours give consent; Of heaven, not me, make an experiment.

I am not an impostor, that proclaim Myself against the level of mine aim; But know I think, and think I know most sure, My art is not past power nor you past cure.

KING Art thou so confident? Within what space Hop'st thou my cure? HELENA The greatest Grace lending grace.

Ere twice the horses of the sun shall bring Their fiery torcher his diurnal ring, Ere twice in murk and occidental damp Moist Hesperus hath quenched his sleepy lamp, Or four and twenty times the pilot's glass Hath told the thievish minutes how they pass, What is infirm from your sound parts shall fly, Health shall live free, and sickness freely die.

KING Upon thy certainty and confidence What dar'st thou venture? HELENA Tax of impudence, A strumpet's boldness, a divulged shame, Traduc'd by odious ballads; my maiden's name Sear'd otherwise; ne worse of worst-extended With vilest torture let my life be ended.

KING Methinks in thee some blessed spirit doth speak
His powerful sound within an organ weak; And what impossibility would slay In common sense, sense saves another way.

Thy life is dear; for all that life can rate Worth name of life in thee hath estimate: Youth, beauty, wisdom, courage, all That happiness and prime can happy call.

Thou this to hazard needs must intimate Skill infinite or monstrous desperate.

Sweet practiser, thy physic I will try, That ministers thine own death if I die.

HELENA If I break time, or flinch in property Of what I spoke, unpitied let me die; and well deserv'd. Not helping, death's my fee; But, if I help, what do you promise me?

KING Make thy demand.

HELENA But will you make it even?

KING Ay, by my sceptre and my hopes of heaven.

HELENA Then shalt thou give me with thy kingly hand What husband in thy power I will command.

Exempted be from me the arrogance To choose from forth the royal blood of France, My low and humble name to propagate With any branch or image of thy state; But such a one, thy vassal, whom I know Is free for me to ask, thee to bestow.

KING Here is my hand; the premises observ'd, Thy will by my performance shall be serv'd.

So make the choice of thy own time, for I, Thy resolv'd patient, on thee still rely.

More should I question thee, and more I must, Though more to know could not be more to trust, From whence thou cam'st, how tended on. But rest Unquestion'd welcome and undoubted blest.

Give me some help here, ho! If thou proceed As high as word, my deed shall match thy deed.

[Flourish. Exeunt]

SCENE 2.

Rousillon. The COUNT'S palace Enter COUNTESS and CLOWN

COUNTESS Come on, sir; I shall now put you to the height of your breeding.

CLOWN I will show myself highly fed and lowly taught. I know my business is but to the court.

COUNTESS To the court! Why, what place make you special, when you put off that with such contempt? But to the court!

CLOWN Truly, madam, if God have lent a man any manners, he may easily put it off at court. He that cannot make a leg, put off's cap, kiss his hand, and say nothing, has neither leg, hands, lip, nor cap; and indeed such a fellow, to say precisely, were not for the court; but for me, I have an answer will serve all men.

COUNTESS Marry, that's a bountiful answer that fits all questions.

CLOWN It is like a barber's chair, that fits all buttocks-the pin buttock, the quatch buttock, the brawn buttock, or any buttock.

COUNTESS Will your answer serve fit to all questions? CLOWN As fit as ten groats is for the hand of an attorney, as your French crown for your taffety punk, as Tib's rush for Tom's forefinger, as a pancake for Shrove Tuesday, a morris for Mayday, as the nail to his hole, the cuckold to his horn, as a scolding quean to a wrangling knave, as the nun's lip to the friar's mouth; nay, as the pudding to his skin.

COUNTESS Have you, I, say, an answer of such fitness for all questions? CLOWN From below your duke to beneath your constable, it will fit any question.

COUNTESS It must be an answer of most monstrous size that must fit all demands.

CLOWN But a trifle neither, in good faith, if the learned should speak truth of it. Here it is, and all that belongs to't. Ask me if I am a courtier: it shall do you no harm to learn.

COUNTESS To be young again, if we could, I will be a fool in question, hoping to be the wiser by your answer. I pray you, sir, are you a courtier? CLOWN O Lord, sir!

There's a simple putting off. More, more, a hundred of them.

COUNTESS Sir, I am a poor friend of yours, that loves you.

CLOWN O Lord, sir!-Thick, thick; spare not me.

COUNTESS I think, sir, you can eat none of this homely meat.

CLOWN O Lord, sir!-Nay, put me to't, I warrant you.

COUNTESS You were lately whipp'd, sir, as I think.

CLOWN O Lord, sir!-Spare not me.

COUNTESS Do you cry 'O Lord, sir!' at your whipping, and 'spare not me'? Indeed your 'O Lord, sir!' is very sequent to your whipping. You would answer very well to a whipping, if you were but bound to't.

CLOWN I ne'er had worse luck in my life in my 'O Lord, sir!' I see thing's may serve long, but not serve ever.

COUNTESS I play the noble housewife with the time, To entertain it so merrily with a fool.

CLOWN O Lord, sir!-Why, there't serves well again.

COUNTESS An end, sir! To your business: give Helen this, And urge her to a present answer back; Commend me to my kinsmen and my son. This is not much.

CLOWN Not much commendation to them? COUNTESS Not much employment for you. You understand me? CLOWN Most fruitfully; I am there before my legs.

COUNTESS Haste you again.

Exeunt

SCENE 3.

Paris. The KING'S palace Enter BERTRAM, LAFEU, and PAROLLES LAFEU They say miracles are past; and we have our philosophical persons to make modern and familiar things supernatural and causeless. Hence is it that we make trifles of terrors, ensconcing ourselves into seeming knowledge when we should submit ourselves to an unknown fear.

PAROLLES Why, 'tis the rarest argument of wonder that hath shot out in our latter times.

BERTRAM And so 'tis.

LAFEU To be relinquish'd of the artists PAROLLES So I say-both of Galen and Paracelsus.

LAFEU Of all the learned and authentic fellows PAROLLES Right; so I say.

LAFEU That gave him out incurable PAROLLES Why, there 'tis; so say I too.

LAFEU Not to be help'd PAROLLES Right; as 'twere a man assur'd of a LAFEU Uncertain life and sure death.

PAROLLES Just; you say well; so would I have said.

LAFEU I may truly say it is a novelty to the world.

PAROLLES It is indeed. If you will have it in showing, you shall read it in what-do-ye-call't here.

LAFEU [Reading the ballad title] 'A Showing of a Heavenly Effect in an Earthly Actor.'

PAROLLES That's it; I would have said the very same.

LAFEU Why, your dolphin is not lustier. 'Fore me, I speak in respect PAROLLES Nay, 'tis strange, 'tis very strange; that is the brief and the tedious of it; and he's of a most facinerious spirit that will not acknowledge it to be the LAFEU Very hand of heaven.

PAROLLES Ay; so I say.

LAFEU In a most weak PAROLLES And debile minister, great power, great transcendence; which should, indeed, give us a further use to be made than alone the recov'ry of the King, as to be LAFEU Generally thankful.

Enter KING, HELENA, and ATTENDANTS PAROLLES I would have said it; you say well. Here comes the King.

LAFEU Lustig, as the Dutchman says. I'll like a maid the better, whilst I have a tooth in my head. Why, he's able to lead her a coranto.

PAROLLES Mort du vinaigre! Is not this Helen? LAFEU 'Fore God, I think so.

KING Go, call before me all the lords in court.

Exit an ATTENDANT Sit, my preserver, by thy patient's side; And with this healthful hand, whose banish'd sense Thou has repeal'd, a second time receive The confirmation of my promis'd gift, Which but attends thy naming.

Enter three or four LORDS Fair maid, send forth thine eye. This youthful parcel Of noble bachelors stand at my bestowing, O'er whom both sovereign power and father's voice I have to use. Thy frank election make; Thou hast power to choose, and they none to forsake.

HELENA To each of you one fair and virtuous mistress Fall, when love please. Marry, to each but one!

LAFEU I'd give bay Curtal and his furniture My mouth no more were broken than these boys', And writ as little beard.

KING Peruse them well.

Not one of those but had a noble father.

HELENA Gentlemen, Heaven hath through me restor'd the King to health.

ALL We understand it, and thank heaven for you.

HELENA I am a simple maid, and therein wealthiest That I protest I simply am a maid. Please it your Majesty, I have done already.

The blushes in my cheeks thus whisper me: 'We blush that thou shouldst choose; but, be refused, Let the white death sit on thy cheek for ever, We'll ne'er come there again.'

KING Make choice and see: Who shuns thy love shuns all his love in me.

HELENA Now, Dian, from thy altar do I fly, And to imperial Love, that god most high, Do my sighs stream. Sir, will you hear my suit? FIRST LORD And grant it.

HELENA Thanks, sir; all the rest is mute.

LAFEU I had rather be in this choice than throw ames-ace for my life.

HELENA The honour, sir, that flames in your fair eyes, Before I speak, too threat'ningly replies.

Love make your fortunes twenty times above Her that so wishes, and her humble love!

SECOND LORD No better, if you please.

HELENA My wish receive, Which great Love grant; and so I take my leave.

LAFEU Do all they deny her? An they were sons of mine I'd have them whipt; or I would send them to th' Turk to make eunuchs of.

HELENA Be not afraid that I your hand should take; I'll never do you wrong for your own sake.

Blessing upon your vows; and in your bed Find fairer fortune, if you ever wed!

LAFEU These boys are boys of ice; they'll none have her.

Sure, they are bastards to the English; the French ne'er got 'em.

HELENA You are too young, too happy, and too good, To make yourself a son out of my blood.

FOURTH LORD. Fair one, I think not so.

LAFEU There's one grape yet; I am sure thy father drunk wine-but if thou be'st not an ass, I am a youth of fourteen; I have known thee already.

HELENA [To BERTRAM] I dare not say I take you; but I give Me and my service, ever whilst I live, Into your guiding power. This is the man.

KING Why, then, young Bertram, take her; she's thy wife.

BERTRAM My wife, my liege! I shall beseech your Highness, In such a business give me leave to use The help of mine own eyes.

KING Know'st thou not, Bertram, What she has done for me? BERTRAM Yes, my good lord; But never hope to know why I should marry her.

KING Thou know'st she has rais'd me from my sickly bed.

BERTRAM But follows it, my lord, to bring me down Must answer for your raising? I know her well: She had her breeding at my father's charge.

A poor physician's daughter my wife! Disdain Rather corrupt me ever!

KING 'Tis only title thou disdain'st in her, the which I can build up. Strange is it that our bloods, Of colour, weight, and heat, pour'd all together, Would quite confound distinction, yet stand off In differences so mighty. If she be All that is virtuous-save what thou dislik'st, A poor physician's daughter-thou dislik'st Of virtue for the name; but do not so.

From lowest place when virtuous things proceed, The place is dignified by the doer's deed; Where great additions swell's, and virtue none, It is a dropsied honour. Good alone Is good without a name. Vileness is so: The property by what it is should go, Not by the title. She is young, wise, fair; In these to nature she's immediate heir; And these

breed honour. That is honour's scorn Which challenges itself as honour's born And is not like the sire. Honours thrive When rather from our acts we them derive Than our fore-goers. The mere word's a slave, Debauch'd on every tomb, on every grave A lying trophy; and as oft is dumb Where dust and damn'd oblivion is the tomb Of honour'd bones indeed. What should be said? If thou canst like this creature as a maid, I can create the rest. Virtue and she Is her own dower; honour and wealth from me.

BERTRAM I cannot love her, nor will strive to do 't.

KING Thou wrong'st thyself, if thou shouldst strive to choose.

HELENA That you are well restor'd, my lord, I'm glad.

Let the rest go.

KING My honour's at the stake; which to defeat, I must produce my power. Here, take her hand, Proud scornful boy, unworthy this good gift, That dost in vile misprision shackle up My love and her desert; that canst not dream We, poisoning us in her defective scale, Shall weigh thee to the beam; that wilt not know It is in us to plant thine honour where We please to have it grow. Check thy contempt; Obey our will, which travails in thy good; Believe not thy disdain, but presently Do thine own fortunes that obedient right Which both thy duty owes and our power claims; Or I will throw thee from my care for ever Into the staggers and the careless lapse Of youth and ignorance; both my revenge and hate Loosing upon thee in the name of justice, Without all terms of pity. Speak; thine answer.

BERTRAM Pardon, my gracious lord; for I submit My fancy to your eyes. When I consider What great creation and what dole of honour Flies where you bid it, I find that she which late Was in my nobler thoughts most base is now The praised of the King; who, so ennobled, Is as 'twere born so.

KING Take her by the hand, And tell her she is thine; to whom I promise A counterpoise, if not to thy estate A balance more replete.

BERTRAM I take her hand.

KING Good fortune and the favour of the King Smile upon this contract; whose ceremony Shall seem expedient on the now-born brief, And be perform'd to-night. The solemn feast Shall more attend upon the coming space, Expecting absent friends. As thou lov'st her, Thy love's to me religious; else, does err.

Exeunt all but LAFEU and PAROLLES who stay behind, commenting of this wedding

LAFEU Do you hear, monsieur? A word with you.

PAROLLES Your pleasure, sir? LAFEU Your lord and master did well to make his recantation.

PAROLLES Recantation! My Lord! my master!

LAFEU Ay; is it not a language I speak? PAROLLES A most harsh one, and not to be understood without bloody succeeding. My master!

LAFEU Are you companion to the Count Rousillon? PAROLLES To any count; to all counts; to what is man.

LAFEU To what is count's man: count's master is of another style.

PAROLLES You are too old, sir; let it satisfy you, you are too old.

LAFEU I must tell thee, sirrah, I write man; to which title age cannot bring thee.

PAROLLES What I dare too well do, I dare not do.

LAFEU I did think thee, for two ordinaries, to be a pretty wise fellow; thou didst make tolerable vent of thy travel; it might pass. Yet the scarfs and the bannerets about thee did manifoldly dissuade me from believing thee a vessel of too great a burden. I have now found thee; when I lose thee again I care not; yet art thou good for nothing but taking up; and that thou'rt scarce worth.

PAROLLES Hadst thou not the privilege of antiquity upon thee? LAFEU Do not plunge thyself too far in anger, lest thou hasten thy trial; which if-Lord have mercy on thee for a hen! So, my good window of lattice, fare thee well; thy casement I need not open, for I look through thee. Give me thy hand.

PAROLLES My lord, you give me most egregious indignity.

LAFEU Ay, with all my heart; and thou art worthy of it.

PAROLLES I have not, my lord, deserv'd it.

LAFEU Yes, good faith, ev'ry dram of it; and I will not bate thee a scruple.

PAROLLES Well, I shall be wiser.

LAFEU Ev'n as soon as thou canst, for thou hast to pull at a smack o' th' contrary. If ever thou be'st bound in thy scarf and beaten, thou shalt find what it is to be proud of thy bondage. I have a desire to hold my acquaintance with thee, or rather my knowledge, that I may say in the default 'He is a man I know.' PAROLLES My lord, you do me most insupportable vexation.

LAFEU I would it were hell pains for thy sake, and my poor doing eternal; for doing I am past, as I will by thee, in what motion age will give me leave.

Exit

PAROLLES Well, thou hast a son shall take this disgrace off me: scurvy, old, filthy, scurvy lord! Well, I must be patient; there is no fettering of authority. I'll beat him, by my life, if I can meet him with any convenience, an he were double and double a lord. I'll have no more pity of his age than I would have off'll beat him, and if I could but meet him again.

Re-enter LAFEU LAFEU Sirrah, your lord and master's married; there's news for you; you have a new mistress.

PAROLLES I most unfeignedly beseech your lordship to make some reservation of your wrongs. He is my good lord: whom I serve above is my master.

LAFEU Who? God? PAROLLES Ay, sir.

LAFEU The devil it is that's thy master. Why dost thou garter up thy arms o' this fashion? Dost make hose of thy sleeves? Do other servants so? Thou wert best set thy lower part where thy nose stands. By mine honour, if I were but two hours younger, I'd beat thee. Methink'st thou art a general offence, and every man should beat thee. I think thou wast created for men to breathe themselves upon thee.

PAROLLES This is hard and undeserved measure, my lord.

LAFEU Go to, sir; you were beaten in Italy for picking a kernel out of a pomegranate; you are a vagabond, and no true traveller; you are more saucy with lords and honourable personages than the commission of your birth and virtue gives you heraldry. You are not worth another word, else I'd call you knave. I leave you.

Exit

Enter BERTRAM

PAROLLES Good, very, good, it is so then. Good, very good; let it be conceal'd awhile.
BERTRAM Undone, and forfeited to cares for ever! PAROLLES What's the matter, sweetheart? BERTRAM Although before the solemn priest I have sworn, I will not bed her.

PAROLLES What, what, sweetheart? BERTRAM O my Parolles, they have married me! I'll to the Tuscan wars, and never bed her.

PAROLLES France is a dog-hole, and it no more merits The tread of a man's foot. To th' wars! BERTRAM There's letters from my mother; what th' import is I know not yet.

PAROLLES Ay, that would be known. To th' wars, my boy, to th' wars! He wears his honour in a box unseen That hugs his kicky-wicky here at home, Spending his manly marrow in her arms, Which should sustain the bound and high curvet Of Mars's fiery steed. To other regions!

France is a stable; we that dwell in't jades; Therefore, to th' war!

BERTRAM It shall be so; I'll send her to my house, Acquaint my mother with my hate to her, And wherefore I am fled; write to the King That which I durst not speak. His present gift Shall furnish me to those Italian fields Where noble fellows strike. War is no strife To the dark house and the detested wife.

PAROLLES Will this capriccio hold in thee, art sure? BERTRAM Go with me to my chamber and advise me.

I'll send her straight away. To-morrow I'll to the wars, she to her single sorrow.

PAROLLES Why, these balls bound; there's noise in it. 'Tis hard: A young man married is a man that's marr'd.

Therefore away, and leave her bravely; go.

The King has done you wrong; but, hush, 'tis so.

Exeunt

SCENE 4.

Paris. The KING'S palace Enter HELENA and CLOWN HELENA My mother greets me kindly; is she well? CLOWN She is not well, but yet she has her health; she's very merry, but yet she is not well. But thanks be given, she's very well, and wants nothing i' th' world; but yet she is not well.

HELENA If she be very well, what does she ail that she's not very well? CLOWN Truly, she's very well indeed, but for two things.

HELENA What two things? CLOWN One, that she's not in heaven, whither God send her quickly! The other, that she's in earth, from whence God send her quickly! Enter PAROLLES

PAROLLES Bless you, my fortunate lady! HELENA I hope, sir, I have your good will to have mine own good fortunes.

PAROLLES You had my prayers to lead them on; and to keep them on, have them still. O, my knave, how does my old lady? CLOWN So that you had her wrinkles and I her money, I would she did as you say.

PAROLLES Why, I say nothing.

CLOWN Marry, you are the wiser man; for many a man's tongue shakes out his master's undoing. To say nothing, to do nothing, to know nothing, and to have nothing, is to be a great part of your title, which is within a very little of nothing.

PAROLLES Away! th'art a knave.

CLOWN You should have said, sir, 'Before a knave th'art a knave'; that's 'Before me th'art a knave.' This had been truth, sir.

PAROLLES Go to, thou art a witty fool; I have found thee.

CLOWN Did you find me in yourself, sir, or were you taught to find me? The search, sir, was profitable; and much fool may you find in you, even to the world's pleasure and the increase of laughter.

PAROLLES A good knave, i' faith, and well fed.

Madam, my lord will go away to-night: A very serious business calls on him.

The great prerogative and rite of love, Which, as your due, time claims, he does acknowledge; But puts it off to a compell'd restraint; Whose want, and whose delay, is strew'd with sweets, Which they distil now in the curbed time, To make the coming hour o'erflow with joy And pleasure drown the brim.

HELENA What's his else? PAROLLES That you will take your instant leave o' th' King, And make this haste as your own good proceeding, Strength'ned with what apology you think May make it probable need.

HELENA What more commands he? PAROLLES That, having this obtain'd, you presently Attend his further pleasure.

HELENA In everything I wait upon his will.

PAROLLES I shall report it so.

HELENA I pray you.

Exit PAROLLES Come, sirrah.

Exeunt

SCENE 5.

Paris. The KING'S palace Enter LAFEU and BERTRAM LAFEU But I hope your lordship thinks not him a soldier.

BERTRAM Yes, my lord, and of very valiant approval.

LAFEU You have it from his own deliverance.

BERTRAM And by other warranted testimony.

LAFEU Then my dial goes not true; I took this lark for a bunting.

BERTRAM I do assure you, my lord, he is very great in knowledge, and accordingly valiant.

LAFEU I have then sinn'd against his experience and transgress'd against his valour; and my state that way is dangerous, since I cannot yet find in my heart to repent. Here he comes; I pray you make us friends; I will pursue the amity Enter PAROLLES

PAROLLES [To BERTRAM] These things shall be done, sir.

LAFEU Pray you, sir, who's his tailor? PAROLLES Sir! LAFEU O, I know him well. Ay, sir; he, sir, 's a good workman, a very good tailor.

BERTRAM [Aside to PAROLLES] Is she gone to the King? PAROLLES She is.

BERTRAM Will she away to-night? PAROLLES As you'll have her.

BERTRAM I have writ my letters, casketed my treasure, Given order for our horses; and to-night, When I should take possession of the bride, End ere I do begin.

LAFEU A good traveller is something at the latter end of a dinner; but one that lies three-thirds and uses a known truth to pass a thousand nothings with, should be once heard and thrice beaten.

God save you, Captain.

BERTRAM Is there any unkindness between my lord and you, monsieur? PAROLLES I know not how I have deserved to run into my lord's displeasure.

LAFEU You have made shift to run into 't, boots and spurs and all, like him that leapt into the custard; and out of it you'll run again, rather than suffer question for your residence.

BERTRAM It may be you have mistaken him, my lord.

LAFEU And shall do so ever, though I took him at's prayers.

Fare you well, my lord; and believe this of me: there can be no kernal in this light nut; the soul of this man is his clothes; trust him not in matter of heavy consequence; I have kept of them tame, and know their natures. Farewell, monsieur; I have spoken better of you than you have or will to deserve at my hand; but we must do good against evil.

Exit

PAROLLES An idle lord, I swear.

BERTRAM I think so.

PAROLLES Why, do you not know him? BERTRAM Yes, I do know him well; and common speech Gives him a worthy pass. Here comes my clog.

Enter HELENA HELENA I have, sir, as I was commanded from you, Spoke with the King, and have procur'd his leave For present parting; only he desires Some private speech with you.

BERTRAM I shall obey his will.

You must not marvel, Helen, at my course, Which holds not colour with the time, nor does The ministration and required office On my particular. Prepar'd I was not For such a business; therefore am I found So much unsettled. This drives me to entreat you That presently you take your way for home, And rather muse than ask why I entreat you; For my respects are better than they seem, And my appointments have in them a need Greater than shows itself at the first view To you that know them not. This to my mother.

[Giving a letter] 'Twill be two days ere I shall see you; so I leave you to your wisdom.

HELENA Sir, I can nothing say But that I am your most obedient servant.

BERTRAM Come, come, no more of that.

HELENA And ever shall With true observance seek to eke out that Wherein toward me my homely stars have fail'd To equal my great fortune.

BERTRAM Let that go.

My haste is very great. Farewell; hie home.

HELENA Pray, sir, your pardon.

BERTRAM Well, what would you say? HELENA I am not worthy of the wealth I owe,
Nor dare I say 'tis mine, and yet it is; But, like a timorous thief, most fain would steal
What law does vouch mine own.

BERTRAM What would you have? HELENA Something; and scarce so much; nothing,
indeed.

I would not tell you what I would, my lord.

Faith, yes: Strangers and foes do sunder and not kiss.

BERTRAM I pray you, stay not, but in haste to horse.

HELENA I shall not break your bidding, good my lord.

BERTRAM Where are my other men, monsieur? Farewell!

Exit HELENA

Go thou toward home, where I will never come Whilst I can shake my sword or hear
the drum.

Away, and for our flight.

PAROLLES Bravely, coragio!

Exeunt

ACT III.

SCENE 1.

Florence. Flourish. Enter the DUKE OF FLORENCE, attended; two FRENCH LORDS, with a TROOP OF SOLDIERS DUKE So that, from point to point, now have you heard the fundamental reasons of this war; Whose great decision hath much blood let forth And more thirsts after.

FIRST LORD Holy seems the quarrel Upon your Grace's part; black and fearful On the opposer.

DUKE Therefore we marvel much our cousin France Would in so just a business shut his bosom Against our borrowing prayers.

SECOND LORD Good my lord, The reasons of our state I cannot yield, But like a common and an outward man That the great figure of a council frames By self-unable motion; therefore dare not Say what I think of it, since I have found Myself in my uncertain grounds to fail As often as I guess'd.

DUKE Be it his pleasure.

FIRST LORD But I am sure the younger of our nature, That surfeit on their ease, will day by day Come here for physic.

DUKE Welcome shall they be And all the honours that can fly from us Shall on them settle. You know your places well; When better fall, for your avails they fell.

To-morrow to th' field. Flourish.

Exeunt

SCENE 2.

Rousillon. The COUNT'S palace Enter COUNTESS and CLOWN COUNTESS It hath happen'd all as I would have had it, save that he comes not along with her.

CLOWN By my troth, I take my young lord to be a very melancholy man.

COUNTESS By what observance, I pray you? CLOWN Why, he will look upon his boot and sing; mend the ruff and sing; ask questions and sing; pick his teeth and sing. I know a man that had this trick of melancholy sold a goodly manor for a song.

COUNTESS Let me see what he writes, and when he means to come.

[Opening a letter]

CLOWN I have no mind to Isabel since I was at court. Our old ling and our Isbels o' th' country are nothing like your old ling and your Isbels o' th' court. The brains of my Cupid's knock'd out; and I begin to love, as an old man loves money, with no stomach.

COUNTESS What have we here? CLOWN E'en that you have there.

Exit

COUNTESS [Reads] 'I have sent you a daughter-in-law; she hath recovered the King and undone me. I have wedded her, not bedded her; and sworn to make the "not" eternal. You shall hear I am run away; know it before the report come. If there be breadth enough in the world, I will hold a long distance. My duty to you.'

Your unfortunate son, BERTRAM This is not well, rash and unbridled boy, To fly the favours of so good a king, To pluck his indignation on thy head By the misprizing of a maid too virtuous For the contempt of empire.

Re-enter CLOWN CLOWN O madam, yonder is heavy news within between two soldiers and my young lady.

COUNTESS What is thematter? CLOWN Nay, there is some comfort in the news, some comfort; your son will not be kill'd so soon as I thought he would.

COUNTESS Why should he be kill'd? CLOWN So say I, madam, if he run away, as I hear he does the danger is in standing to 't; that's the loss of men, though it be the getting of children. Here they come will tell you more. For my part, I only hear your son was run away.

Exit

Enter HELENA and the two FRENCH GENTLEMEN SECOND GENTLEMAN Save you, good madam.

HELENA Madam, my lord is gone, for ever gone.

FIRST GENTLEMAN Do not say so.

COUNTESS Think upon patience. Pray you, gentlemen I have felt so many quirks of joy and grief That the first face of neither, on the start, Can woman me unto 't. Where is my son, I pray you? FIRST GENTLEMAN Madam, he's gone to serve the Duke of Florence. We met him thitherward; for thence we came, And, after some dispatch in hand at court, Thither we bend again.

HELENA Look on this letter, madam; here's my passport.

[Reads] 'When thou canst get the ring upon my finger, which never shall come off, and show me a child begotten of thy body that I am father to, then call me husband; but in such a "then" I write a "never." This is a dreadful sentence.

COUNTESS Brought you this letter, gentlemen? FIRST GENTLEMAN Ay, madam; And for the contents' sake are sorry for our pains.

COUNTESS I prithee, lady, have a better cheer; If thou engrossest all the griefs are thine, Thou robb'st me of a moiety. He was my son; But I do wash his name out of my blood, And thou art all my child. Towards Florence is he? FIRST GENTLEMAN Ay, madam.

COUNTESS And to be a soldier? FIRST GENTLEMAN Such is his noble purpose; and, believe 't, The Duke will lay upon him all the honour That good convenience claims.

COUNTESS Return you thither? SECOND GENTLEMAN Ay, madam, with the swiftest wing of speed.

HELENA [Reads] 'Till I have no wife, I have nothing in France.' 'Tis bitter.

COUNTESS Find you that there? HELENA Ay, madam.

SECOND GENTLEMAN 'Tis but the boldness of his hand haply, which his heart was not consenting to.

COUNTESS Nothing in France until he have no wife! There's nothing here that is too good for him But only she; and she deserves a lord That twenty such rude boys might tend upon, And call her hourly mistress. Who was with him? SECOND GENTLEMAN A servant only, and a gentleman Which I have sometime known.

COUNTESS Parolles, was it not? SECOND GENTLEMAN Ay, my good lady, he.

COUNTESS A very tainted fellow, and full of wickedness.

My son corrupts a well-derived nature With his inducement.

SECOND GENTLEMAN Indeed, good lady, The fellow has a deal of that too much Which holds him much to have.

COUNTESS Y'are welcome, gentlemen.

I will entreat you, when you see my son, To tell him that his sword can never win The honour that he loses. More I'll entreat you Written to bear along.

FIRST GENTLEMAN We serve you, madam, In that and all your worthiest affairs.

COUNTESS Not so, but as we change our courtesies.

Will you draw near? Exeunt COUNTESS and GENTLEMEN

HELENA 'Till I have no wife, I have nothing in France.' Nothing in France until he has no wife! Thou shalt have none, Rousillon, none in France Then hast thou all again. Poor lord! is't That chase thee from thy country, and expose Those tender limbs of thine to the event Of the non-sparing war? And is it I That drive thee from the sportive court, where thou Wast shot at with fair eyes, to be the mark Of smoky muskets? O you leaden messengers, That ride upon the violent speed of fire, Fly with false aim; move the still-piecing air, That sings with piercing; do not touch my lord.

Whoever shoots at him, I set him there; Whoever charges on his forward breast, I am the caitiff that do hold him to't; And though I kill him not, I am the cause His death was so effected. Better 'twere I met the ravin lion when he roar'd With sharp constraint of hunger; better 'twere That all the miseries which nature owes Were mine at once. No; come thou home, Rousillon, Whence honour but of danger wins a scar, As oft it loses all. I will be gone.

My being here it is that holds thee hence.

Shall I stay here to do 't? No, no, although The air of paradise did fan the house, And angels offic'd all. I will be gone, That pitiful rumour may report my flight To console thine ear. Come, night; end, day.

For with the dark, poor thief, I'll steal away.

Exit

SCENE 3.

Florence. Before the DUKE's palace Flourish. Enter the DUKE OF FLORENCE, BERTRAM, PAROLLES, SOLDIERS, drum and trumpets DUKE The General of our Horse thou art; and we, Great in our hope, lay our best love and credence Upon thy promising fortune.

BERTRAM Sir, it is A charge too heavy for my strength; but yet We'll strive to bear it for your worthy sake To th' extreme edge of hazard.

DUKE Then go thou forth; And Fortune play upon thy prosperous helm, As thy auspicious mistress! BERTRAM This very day, Great Mars, I put myself into thy file; Make me but like my thoughts, and I shall prove A lover of thy drum, hater of love.

Exeunt

SCENE 4.

Rousillon. The COUNT'S palace Enter COUNTESS and STEWARD 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.

STEWARD [Reads] 'I am Saint Jaques' pilgrim, thither gone.

Ambitious love hath so in me offended 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 His name with zealous fervour sanctify.

His taken labours bid him me forgive; I, his spiteful Juno, sent him forth From courtly friends, with camping foes to live, Where death and danger dogs the heels of worth.

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! Rinaldo, you did never lack advice so much As letting her pass so; had I spoke with her, I could have well diverted her intents, Which thus she hath prevented.

STEWARD Pardon me, madam; If I had given you this at over-night, She might have been o'er ta'en; and yet she writes Pursuit would be but vain.

COUNTESS What angel shall Bless this unworthy husband? He cannot thrive, Unless her prayers, whom heaven delights to hear And loves to grant, reprieve him from the wrath Of greatest justice. Write, write, Rinaldo, To this unworthy husband of his wife; 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 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.

My heart is heavy, and mine age is weak; Grief would have tears, and sorrow bids me speak.

Exeunt

SCENE 5.

Without the walls of Florence A tucket afar off. Enter an old WIDOW OF FLORENCE, her daughter DIANA, VIOLENTA, and MARIANA, with other CITIZENS WIDOW Nay, come; for if they do approach the city we shall lose all the sight.

DIANA They say the French count has done most honourable service.

WIDOW It is reported that he has taken their great'st commander; and that with his own hand he slew the Duke's brother. [Tucket] We have lost our labour; they are gone a contrary way. Hark! you may know by their trumpets.

MARIANA Come, let's return again, and suffice ourselves with the report of it. Well, Diana, take heed of this French earl; the honour of a maid is her name, and no legacy is so rich as honesty.

WIDOW I have told my neighbour how you have been solicited by a gentleman his companion.

MARIANA I know that knave, hang him! one Parolles; a filthy officer he is in those suggestions for the young earl. Beware of them, Diana: their promises, enticements, oaths, tokens, and all these engines of lust, are not the things they go under; many a maid hath been seduced by them; and the misery is, example, that so terrible shows in the wreck of maidenhood, cannot for all that dissuade succession, but that they are limed with the twigs that threatens them. I hope I need not to advise you further; but I hope your own grace will keep you where you are, though there were no further danger known but the modesty which is so lost.

DIANA You shall not need to fear me.

Enter HELENA in the dress of a pilgrim WIDOW I hope so. Look, here comes a pilgrim. I know she will lie at my house: thither they send one another. I'll question her.

God save you, pilgrim! Whither are bound? HELENA To Saint Jaques le Grand.

Where do the palmers lodge, I do beseech you? WIDOW At the Saint Francis here, beside the port.

HELENA Is this the way? [A march afar]

WIDOW Ay, marry, is't. Hark you! They come this way.

If you will tarry, holy pilgrim, But till the troops come by, I will conduct you where you shall be lodg'd; The rather for I think I know your hostess As ample as myself.

HELENA Is it yourself? WIDOW If you shall please so, pilgrim.

HELENA I thank you, and will stay upon your leisure.

WIDOW You came, I think, from France? HELENA I did so.

WIDOW Here you shall see a countryman of yours That has done worthy service.

HELENA His name, I pray you.

DIANA The Count Rousillon. Know you such a one? HELENA But by the ear, that hears most nobly of him; His face I know not.

DIANA What some'er he is, He's bravely taken here. He stole from France, As 'tis reported, for the King had married him Against his liking. Think you it is so? HELENA Ay, surely, mere the truth; I know his lady.

DIANA There is a gentleman that serves the Count Reports but coarsely of her.

HELENA What's his name? DIANA Monsieur Parolles.

HELENA O, I believe with him, In argument of praise, or to the worth Of the great Count himself, she is too mean To have her name repeated; all her deserving Is a reserved honesty, and that I have not heard examin'd.

DIANA Alas, poor lady! 'Tis a hard bondage to become the wife Of a detesting lord.

WIDOW I sweet, good creature, wheresoe'er she is Her heart weighs sadly. This young maid might do her A shrewd turn, if she pleas'd.

HELENA How do you mean? May be the amorous Count solicits her In the unlawful purpose.

WIDOW He does, indeed; And brokes with all that can in such a suit Corrupt the tender honour of a maid; But she is arm'd for him, and keeps her guard In honestest defence.

Enter, with drum and colours, BERTRAM, PAROLLES, and the whole ARMY
MARIANA The gods forbid else! WIDOW So, now they come.

That is Antonio, the Duke's eldest son; That, Escalus.

HELENA Which is the Frenchman? DIANA HeThat with the plume; 'tis a most gallant fellow.

I would he lov'd his wife; if he were honester He were much goodlier. Is't not a handsome gentleman? HELENA I like him well.

DIANA 'Tis pity he is not honest. Yond's that same knave That leads him to these places; were I his lady I would poison that vile rascal.

HELENA Which is he? DIANA That jack-an-apes with scarfs. Why is he melancholy?

HELENA Perchance he's hurt i' th' battle.

PAROLLES Lose our drum! well.

MARIANA He's shrewdly vex'd at something.

Look, he has spied us.

WIDOW Marry, hang you!

MARIANA And your courtesy, for a ring-carrier! Exeunt BERTRAM, PAROLLES, and ARMY
WIDOW The troop is past. Come, pilgrim, I will bring you Where you shall host. Of enjoin'd penitents There's four or five, to great Saint Jaques bound, Already at my house.

HELENA I humbly thank you.

Please it this matron and this gentle maid To eat with us to-night; the charge and thanking Shall be for me, and, to requite you further, I will bestow some precepts of this virgin, Worthy the note.

BOTH We'll take your offer kindly Exeunt

SCENE 6.

Camp before Florence Enter BERTRAM, and the two FRENCH LORDS
SECOND LORD Nay, good my lord, put him to't; let him have his way.

FIRST LORD If your lordship find him not a hiding, hold me no more in your respect.

SECOND LORD On my life, my lord, a bubble.

BERTRAM Do you think I am so far deceived in him? SECOND LORD 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 infinite and endless liar, an hourly promise-breaker, the owner of no one good quality worthy your lordship's entertainment.

FIRST LORD It were fit you knew him; lest, reposing too far in his virtue, which he hath 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 None better than to let him fetch off his drum, which you hear him so confidently undertake to do.

SECOND LORD I with a troop of Florentines will suddenly surprise him; such I will have whom I am sure he knows not from the enemy.

We will bind and hoodwink him so that he shall suppose no other but that he is carried into the leaguer of the adversaries 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 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 judgment in anything.

FIRST LORD O, for the love of laughter, 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 he comes.

Enter PAROLLES SECOND LORD O, for the love of laughter, hinder not the honour of his design; let him fetch off his drum in any hand.

BERTRAM How now, monsieur! This drum sticks sorely in your disposition.

FIRST LORD A pox on 't; let it go; 'tis but a drum.

PAROLLES 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 soldiers! FIRST LORD That was not to be blam'd 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.

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.

PAROLLES It might have been recovered.

BERTRAM It might, but it is not now.

PAROLLES 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 jacet.' BERTRAM Why, if you have a stomach, to't, monsieur. If you think your mystery in stratagem can bring this 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 syllable of our worthiness.

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

BERTRAM But you must not now slumber in it.

PAROLLES 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.

BERTRAM May I be bold to acquaint his Grace you are gone about it? PAROLLES I know not what the success will be, my lord, but the attempt I vow.

BERTRAM I know th' art valiant; and, to the of thy soldiership, will subscribe for thee. Farewell.

PAROLLES I love not many words.

Exit

SECOND LORD No more than a fish loves water. 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 damn'd than to do 't.

FIRST LORD You do not know him, 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 of this that so seriously he does address himself unto? SECOND LORD None in the world; but return with an invention, and clap upon you two or three probable lies. But we have almost emboss'd him. You shall see his fall to-night; for indeed he is not for your lordship's respect.

FIRST LORD We'll make you some sport with the fox ere we case him.

He was first smok'd by the old Lord Lafeu. When his disguise and he is parted, tell me what a sprat you shall find him; which you shall see this very night.

SECOND LORD I must go look my twigs; he shall be caught.

BERTRAM Your brother, he shall go along with me.

SECOND LORD As't please your lordship. I'll leave you.

Exit

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

FIRST LORD 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? FIRST LORD With all my heart, my lord.

Exeunt

SCENE 7.

Florence. The WIDOW'S house Enter HELENA and WIDOW HELENA 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; And would not put my reputation now In any staining act.

HELENA 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, By the good aid that I of you shall borrow, Err in bestowing it.

WIDOW I should believe you; For you have show'd me that which well approves Y'are great in fortune.

HELENA Take this purse of gold, And let me buy your friendly help thus far, 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, Resolv'd to carry her. Let her in fine consent, As we'll direct her how 'tis best to bear it.

Now his important blood will nought 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 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.

HELENA You see it lawful then. It is no more 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 this, To marry her, I'll add three thousand crowns To what is pass'd already.

WIDOW I have yielded.

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

HELENA Why then to-night Let us assay our plot; which, if it speed, Is wicked meaning in a lawful deed, And lawful meaning in a lawful act; Where both not sin, and yet a sinful fact.

But let's about it.

Exeunt

ACT IV.

SCENE 1.

Without the Florentine camp Enter SECOND FRENCH LORD with five or six other SOLDIERS in ambush

SECOND LORD He can come no other way but by this hedge-corner.

When you sally upon him, speak what terrible language you will; though you understand it not yourselves, no matter; for we must not seem to understand him, unless some one among us, whom we must produce for an interpreter.

FIRST SOLDIER Good captain, let me be th' interpreter.

SECOND LORD Art not acquainted with him? Knows he not thy voice? FIRST SOLDIER No, sir, I warrant you.

SECOND LORD But what linsey-woolsey has thou to speak to us again? FIRST SOLDIER E'en such as you speak to me.

SECOND LORD He must think us some band of strangers i' th' adversary's entertainment. Now he hath a smack of all neighbouring languages, therefore we must every one be a man of his own fancy; not to know what we speak one to another, so we seem to know, is to know straight our purpose: choughs' language, gabble enough, and good enough. As for you, interpreter, you must seem very politic. But couch, ho! here he comes; to beguile two hours in a sleep, and then to return and swear the lies he forges.

Enter PAROLLES PAROLLES Ten o'clock. Within these three hours 'twill be time enough to go home. What shall I say I have done? It must be a very plausible invention that carries it. They begin to smoke me; and disgraces have of late knock'd to often at my door. I find my tongue is too foolhardy; but my heart hath the fear of Mars before it, and of his creatures, not daring the reports of my tongue.

SECOND LORD This is the first truth that e'er thine own tongue was guilty of.

PAROLLES What the devil should move me to undertake the recovery of this drum, being not ignorant of the impossibility, and knowing I had no such purpose? I must give myself some hurts, and say I got them in exploit. Yet slight ones will not carry it.

They will say 'Came you off with so little?' And great ones I dare not give. Wherefore, what's the instance? Tongue, I must put you into a butterwoman's mouth, and buy myself another of Bajazet's mule, if you prattle me into these perils.

SECOND LORD Is it possible he should know what he is, and be that he is?

PAROLLES I would the cutting of my garments would serve the turn, or the breaking of my Spanish sword.

SECOND LORD We cannot afford you so.

PAROLLES Or the baring of my beard; and to say it was in stratagem.

SECOND LORD 'Twould not do.

PAROLLES Or to drown my clothes, and say I was stripp'd.

SECOND LORD Hardly serve.

PAROLLES Though I swore I leap'd from the window of the citadel SECOND LORD How deep? PAROLLES Thirty fathom.

SECOND LORD Three great oaths would scarce make that be believed.

PAROLLES I would I had any drum of the enemy's; I would swear I recover'd it.

SECOND LORD You shall hear one anon. [Alarum within] PAROLLES A drum now of the enemy's! SECOND LORD Throca movousus, cargo, cargo, cargo.

ALL Cargo, cargo, cargo, villianda par corbo, cargo.

PAROLLES O, ransom, ransom! Do not hide mine eyes.

[They blindfold him]

FIRST SOLDIER Boskos thromuldo boskos.

PAROLLES I know you are the Muskos' regiment, And I shall lose my life for want of language.

If there be here German, or Dane, Low Dutch, Italian, or French, let him speak to me; I'll discover that which shall undo the Florentine.

FIRST SOLDIER Boskos vauvado. I understand thee, and can speak thy tongue. Kerely-bonto, sir, betake thee to thy faith, for seventeen poniards are at thy bosom.

PAROLLES O!

FIRST SOLDIER O, pray, pray, pray! Manka revania dulce.

SECOND LORD Oscorbidulchos volivorco.

FIRST SOLDIER The General is content to spare thee yet; And, hoodwink'd as thou art, will lead thee on To gather from thee. Haply thou mayst inform Something to save thy life.

PAROLLES O, let me live, And all the secrets of our camp I'll show, Their force, their purposes. Nay, I'll speak that Which you will wonder at.

FIRST SOLDIER But wilt thou faithfully? PAROLLES If I do not, damn me.

FIRST SOLDIER Acordo linta.

Come on; thou art granted space.

Exit, PAROLLES guarded. A short alarum within SECOND LORD Go, tell the Count Rousillon and my brother We have caught the woodcock, and will keep him muffled Till we do hear from them.

SECOND SOLDIER.

Captain, I will.

SECOND LORD 'A will betray us all unto ourselves Inform on that.

SECOND SOLDIER. So I will, sir.

SECOND LORD Till then I'll keep him dark and safely lock'd.

Exeunt

SCENE 2.

Florence. The WIDOW'S house Enter BERTRAM and DIANA BERTRAM They told me that your name was Fontibell.

DIANA No, my good lord, Diana.

BERTRAM Titled goddess; And worth it, with addition! But, fair soul, In your fine frame hath love no quality? If the quick fire of youth light not your mind, You are no maiden, but a monument; When you are dead, you should be such a one As you are

now, for you are cold and stern; And now you should be as your mother was When your sweet self was got.

DIANA She then was honest.

BERTRAM So should you be.

DIANA No.

My mother did but duty; such, my lord, As you owe to your wife.

BERTRAM No more o'that! I prithee do not strive against my vows.

I was compell'd to her; but I love the By love's own sweet constraint, and will for ever Do thee all rights of service.

DIANA Ay, so you serve us Till we serve you; but when you have our roses You barely leave our thorns to prick ourselves, And mock us with our bareness.

BERTRAM How have I sworn! DIANA 'Tis not the many oaths that makes the truth, But the plain single vow that is vow'd true.

What is not holy, that we swear not by, But take the High'st to witness. Then, pray you, tell me: If I should swear by Jove's great attributes I lov'd you dearly, would you believe my oaths When I did love you ill? This has no holding, To swear by him whom I protest to love That I will work against him. Therefore your oaths Are words and poor conditions, but unseal'd At least in my opinion.

BERTRAM Change it, change it; Be not so holy-cruel. Love is holy; And my integrity ne'er knew the crafts That you do charge men with. Stand no more off, But give thyself unto my sick desires, Who then recovers. Say thou art mine, and ever My love as it begins shall so persevere.

DIANA I see that men make ropes in such a scarre That we'll forsake ourselves. Give me that ring.

BERTRAM I'll lend it thee, my dear, but have no power To give it from me.

DIANA Will you not, my lord? BERTRAM It is an honour 'longing to our house, Bequeathed down from many ancestors; Which were the greatest obloquy i' th' world In me to lose.

DIANA Mine honour's such a ring: My chastity's the jewel of our house, Bequeathed down from many ancestors; Which were the greatest obloquy i' th' world In me to lose. Thus your own proper wisdom Brings in the champion Honour on my part Against your vain assault.

BERTRAM Here, take my ring; My house, mine honour, yea, my life, be thine, And I'll be bid by thee.

DIANA When midnight comes, knock at my chamber window; I'll order take my mother shall not hear.

Now will I charge you in the band of truth, When you have conquer'd my yet maiden bed, Remain there but an hour, nor speak to me: My reasons are most strong; and you shall know them When back again this ring shall be deliver'd.

And on your finger in the night I'll put Another ring, that what in time proceeds May token to the future our past deeds.

Adieu till then; then fail not. You have won A wife of me, though there my hope be done.

BERTRAM A heaven on earth I have won by wooing thee.

Exit

DIANA For which live long to thank both heaven and me! You may so in the end.
My mother told me just how he would woo, As if she sat in's heart; she says all men
Have the like oaths. He had sworn to marry me When his wife's dead; therefore I'll lie
with him When I am buried. Since Frenchmen are so braid, Marry that will, I live and
die a maid.

Only, in this disguise, I think't no sin To cozen him that would unjustly win.

Exit

SCENE 2.

The Florentine camp Enter the two FRENCH LORDS, and two or three SOLDIERS
SECOND LORD You have not given him his mother's letter? FIRST LORD I have
deliv'rd it an hour since. There is something in't that stings his nature; for on the
reading it he chang'd almost into another man.

SECOND LORD He has much worthy blame laid upon him for shaking off so good a
wife and so sweet a lady.

FIRST LORD Especially he hath incurred the everlasting displeasure of the King, who
had even tun'd his bounty to sing happiness to him. I will tell you a thing, but you shall
let it dwell darkly with you.

SECOND LORD When you have spoken it, 'tis dead, and I am the grave of it.

FIRST LORD He hath perverted a young gentlewoman here in Florence, of a most
chaste renown; and this night he fleshes his will in the spoil of her honour. He hath
given her his monumental ring, and thinks himself made in the unchaste composition.

SECOND LORD Now, God delay our rebellion! As we are ourselves, what things are
we! FIRST LORD Merely our own traitors. And as in the common course of all treasons
we still see them reveal themselves till they attain to their abhorr'd ends; so he that in
this action contrives against his own nobility, in his proper stream, o'erflows himself.

SECOND LORD Is it not meant damnable in us to be trumpeters of our unlawful
intents? We shall not then have his company to-night? FIRST LORD Not till after
midnight; for he is dieted to his hour.

SECOND LORD That approaches apace. I would gladly have him see his company
anatomiz'd, that he might take a measure of his own judgments, wherein so curiously
he had set this counterfeit.

FIRST LORD We will not meddle with him till he come; for his presence must be the
whip of the other.

SECOND LORD In the meantime, what hear you of these wars? FIRST LORD I hear
there is an overture of peace.

SECOND LORD Nay, I assure you, a peace concluded.

FIRST LORD What will Count Rousillon do then? Will he travel higher, or return again
into France? SECOND LORD I perceive, by this demand, you are not altogether of his
counsel.

FIRST LORD Let it be forbid, sir! So should I be a great deal of his act.

SECOND LORD Sir, his wife, some two months since, fled from his house. Her pretence is a pilgrimage to Saint Jaques le Grand; which holy undertaking with most austere sanctimony she accomplish'd; and, there residing, the tenderness of her nature became as a prey to her grief; in fine, made a groan of her last breath, and now she sings in heaven.

FIRST LORD How is this justified? SECOND LORD The stronger part of it by her own letters, which makes her story true even to the point of her death. Her death itself, which could not be her office to say is come, was faithfully confirm'd by the rector of the place.

FIRST LORD Hath the Count all this intelligence? SECOND LORD Ay, and the particular confirmations, point from point, to the full arming of the verity.

FIRST LORD I am heartily sorry that he'll be glad of this.

SECOND LORD How mightily sometimes we make us comforts of our losses!

FIRST LORD And how mightily some other times we drown our gain in tears! The great dignity that his valour hath here acquir'd for him shall at home be encount'ed with a shame as ample.

SECOND LORD The web of our life is of a mingled yarn, good and ill together. Our virtues would be proud if our faults whipt them not; and our crimes would despair if they were not cherish'd by our virtues.

Enter a MESSENGER How now? Where's your master? SERVANT. He met the Duke in the street, sir; of whom he hath taken a solemn leave. His lordship will next morning for France. The Duke hath offered him letters of commendations to the King.

SECOND LORD They shall be no more than needful there, if they were more than they can commend.

FIRST LORD They cannot be too sweet for the King's tartness.

Here's his lordship now.

Enter BERTRAM How now, my lord, is't not after midnight? BERTRAM I have to-night dispatch'd sixteen businesses, a month's length apiece; by an abstract of success: I have congied with the Duke, done my adieu with his nearest; buried a wife, mourn'd for her; writ to my lady mother I am returning; entertain'd my convoy; and between these main parcels of dispatch effected many nicer needs. The last was the greatest, but that I have not ended yet.

SECOND LORD If the business be of any difficulty and this morning your departure hence, it requires haste of your lordship.

BERTRAM I mean the business is not ended, as fearing to hear of it hereafter. But shall we have this dialogue between the Fool and the Soldier? Come, bring forth this counterfeit module has deceiv'd me like a double-meaning prophesier.

SECOND LORD Bring him forth.

Exeunt SOLDIERS] Has sat i' th' stocks all night, poor gallant knave.

BERTRAM No matter; his heels have deserv'd it, in usurping his spurs so long. How does he carry himself? SECOND LORD I have told your lordship already the stocks carry him. But to answer you as you would be understood: he weeps like a wench that had shed her milk; he hath confess'd himself to Morgan, whom he supposes to be a friar, from the time of his remembrance to this very instant disaster of his setting i' th'

stocks. And what think you he hath confess'd? BERTRAM Nothing of me, has 'a?
SECOND LORD His confession is taken, and it shall be read to his face; if your lordship be in't, as I believe you are, you must have the patience to hear it.

Enter PAROLLES guarded, and FIRST SOLDIER as interpreter BERTRAM A plague upon him! muffled! He can say nothing of me.

SECOND LORD Hush, hush! Hoodman comes. Portotartarossa.

FIRST SOLDIER He calls for the tortures. What will you say without 'em? PAROLLES I will confess what I know without constraint; if ye pinch me like a pasty, I can say no more.

FIRST SOLDIER Bosko chimurcho.

SECOND LORD Boblibindo chicurmurco.

FIRST SOLDIER YOU are a merciful general. Our General bids you answer to what I shall ask you out of a note.

PAROLLES And truly, as I hope to live.

FIRST SOLDIER 'First demand of him how many horse the Duke is strong.' What say you to that? PAROLLES Five or six thousand; but very weak and unserviceable.

The troops are all scattered, and the commanders very poor rogues, upon my reputation and credit, and as I hope to live.

FIRST SOLDIER Shall I set down your answer so? PAROLLES Do; I'll take the sacrament on 't, how and which way you will.

BERTRAM All's one to him. What a past-saving slave is this!

SECOND LORD Y'are deceiv'd, my lord; this is Monsieur Parolles, the gallant militarist-that was his own phrase-that had the whole theoric of war in the knot of his scarf, and the practice in the chape of his dagger.

FIRST LORD I will never trust a man again for keeping his sword clean; nor believe he can have everything in him by wearing his apparel neatly.

FIRST SOLDIER Well, that's set down.

PAROLLES 'Five or six thousand horse' I said-I will say true- 'or thereabouts' set down, for I'll speak truth.

SECOND LORD He's very near the truth in this.

BERTRAM But I con him no thanks for't in the nature he delivers it.

PAROLLES 'Poor rogues' I pray you say.

FIRST SOLDIER Well, that's set down.

PAROLLES I humbly thank you, sir. A truth's a truth-the rogues are marvellous poor.

FIRST SOLDIER 'Demand of him of what strength they are a-foot.' What say you to that? PAROLLES By my troth, sir, if I were to live this present hour, I will tell true. Let me see: Spurio, a hundred and fifty; Sebastian, so many; Corambus, so many; Jaques, so many; Guiltian, Cosmo, Lodowick, and Gratii, two hundred fifty each; mine own company, Chitopher, Vaumond, Bentii, two hundred fifty each; so that the muster-file, rotten and sound, upon my life, amounts not to fifteen thousand poll; half of the which dare not shake the snow from off their cassocks lest they shake themselves to pieces.

BERTRAM What shall be done to him? SECOND LORD Nothing, but let him have thanks. Demand of him my condition, and what credit I have with the Duke.

FIRST SOLDIER Well, that's set down. 'You shall demand of him whether one Captain Dumain be i' th' camp, a Frenchman; what his reputation is with the Duke, what his valour, honesty, expertness in wars; or whether he thinks it were not possible, with well-weighing sums of gold, to corrupt him to a revolt.' What say you to this? What do you know of it? PAROLLES I beseech you, let me answer to the particular of the inter'gatories. Demand them singly.

FIRST SOLDIER Do you know this Captain Dumain? PAROLLES I know him: 'a was a botcher's prentice in Paris, from whence he was whipt for getting the shrieve's fool with child-a dumb innocent that could not say him nay.

BERTRAM Nay, by your leave, hold your hands; though I know his brains are forfeit to the next tile that falls.

FIRST SOLDIER Well, is this captain in the Duke of Florence's camp? PAROLLES Upon my knowledge, he is, and lousy.

SECOND LORD Nay, look not so upon me; we shall hear of your lordship anon.

FIRST SOLDIER What is his reputation with the Duke? PAROLLES The Duke knows him for no other but a poor officer of mine; and writ to me this other day to turn him out o' th' band.

I think I have his letter in my pocket.

FIRST SOLDIER Marry, we'll search.

PAROLLES In good sadness, I do not know; either it is there or it is upon a file with the Duke's other letters in my tent.

FIRST SOLDIER Here 'tis; here's a paper. Shall I read it to you? PAROLLES I do not know if it be it or no.

BERTRAM Our interpreter does it well.

SECOND LORD Excellently.

FIRST SOLDIER [Reads] 'Dian, the Count's a fool, and full of gold.' PAROLLES That is not the Duke's letter, sir; that is an advertisement to a proper maid in Florence, one Diana, to take heed of the allurements of one Count Rousillon, a foolish idle boy, but for all that very ruttish. I pray you, sir, put it up again.

FIRST SOLDIER Nay, I'll read it first by your favour.

PAROLLES My meaning in't, I protest, was very honest in the behalf of the maid; for I knew the young Count to be a dangerous and lascivious boy, who is a whale to virginity, and devours up all the fry it finds.

BERTRAM Damnable both-sides rogue! FIRST SOLDIER [Reads] 'When he swears oaths, bid him drop gold, and take it; After he scores, he never pays the score.

Half won is match well made; match, and well make it; He ne'er pays after-debts, take it before.

And say a soldier, Dian, told thee this: Men are to mell with, boys are not to kiss; For count of this, the Count's a fool, I know it, Who pays before, but not when he does owe it.

Thine, as he vow'd to thee in thine ear, BERTRAM He shall be whipt through the army with this rhyme in's forehead.

FIRST LORD This is your devoted friend, sir, the manifold linguist, and the amnipotent soldier.

BERTRAM I could endure anything before but a cat, and now he's a cat to me.

FIRST SOLDIER I perceive, sir, by our General's looks we shall be fain to hang you.

PAROLLES My life, sir, in any case! Not that I am afraid to die, but that, my offences being many, I would repent out the remainder of nature. Let me live, sir, in a dungeon, i' th' stocks, or anywhere, so I may live.

FIRST SOLDIER We'll see what may be done, so you confess freely; therefore, once more to this Captain Domain: you have answered to his reputation with the Duke, and to his valour; what is his honesty? PAROLLES He will steal, sir, an egg out of a cloister; for rapes and ravishment he parallels Nexus. He professes not keeping of oaths; in breaking 'em he is stronger than Hercules. He will lie, sir, with such volubility that you would think truth were a fool.

Drunkenness is his best virtue, for he will be swine-drunk; and in his sleep he does little harm, save to his bedclothes about him; but they know his conditions and lay him in straw. I have but little more to say, sir, of his honesty. He has everything that an honest man should not have; what an honest man should have he has nothing.

SECOND LORD I begin to love him for this.

BERTRAM For this description of thy honesty? A pox upon him! For me, he's more and more a cat.

FIRST SOLDIER What say you to his expertness in war? PAROLLES Faith, sir, has led the drum before the English tragedians-to belie him I will not-and more of his soldier-ship I know not, except in that country he had the honour to be the officer at a place there called Mile-end to instruct for the doubling of files-I would do the man what honour I can-but of this I am not certain.

SECOND LORD He hath out-villain'd villainy so far that the rarity redeems him.

BERTRAM A pox on him! he's a cat still.

FIRST SOLDIER His qualities being at this poor price, I need not to ask you if gold will corrupt him to revolt.

PAROLLES Sir, for a cardecue he will sell the fee-simple of his salvation, the inheritance of it; and cut th' entail from all remainders and a perpetual succession for it perpetually.

FIRST SOLDIER What's his brother, the other Captain Dumain? FIRST LORD Why does he ask him of me? FIRST SOLDIER What's he? PAROLLES E'en a crow o' th' same nest; not altogether so great as the first in goodness, but greater a great deal in evil. He excels his brother for a coward; yet his brother is reputed one of the best that is. In a retreat he outruns any lackey: marry, in coming on he has the cramp.

FIRST SOLDIER If your life be saved, will you undertake to betray the Florentine?

PAROLLES Ay, and the Captain of his Horse, Count Rousillon.

FIRST SOLDIER I'll whisper with the General, and know his pleasure.

PAROLLES[Aside] I'll no more drumming. A plague of all drums! Only to seem to deserve well, and to beguile the supposition of that lascivious young boy the Count, have I run into this danger.

Yet who would have suspected an ambush where I was taken? FIRST SOLDIER There is no remedy, sir, but you must die.

The General says you that have so traitorously discover'd the secrets of your army, and made such pestiferous reports of men very nobly held, can serve the world for no honest use; therefore you must die. Come, headsman, off with his head.

PAROLLES O Lord, sir, let me live, or let me see my death! FIRST SOLDIER That shall you, and take your leave of all your friends. [Unmuffling him] So look about you; know you any here? BERTRAM Good morrow, noble Captain.

FIRST LORD God bless you, Captain Parolles.

SECOND LORD God save you, noble Captain.

FIRST LORD Captain, what greeting will you to my Lord Lafeu? I am for France.

SECOND LORD Good Captain, will you give me a copy of the sonnet you writ to Diana in behalf of the Count Rousillon? An I were not a very coward I'd compel it of you; but fare you well.

Exeunt BERTRAM and LORDS FIRST SOLDIER You are undone, Captain, all but your scarf; that has a knot on 't yet.

PAROLLES Who cannot be crush'd with a plot? FIRST SOLDIER If you could find out a country where but women were that had received so much shame, you might begin an impudent nation. Fare ye well, sir; I am for France too; we shall speak of you there.

Exit with SOLDIERS PAROLLES Yet am I thankful. If my heart were great, 'Twould burst at this. Captain I'll be no more; But I will eat, and drink, and sleep as soft As captain shall. Simply the thing I am Shall make me live. Who knows himself a braggart, Let him fear this; for it will come to pass That every braggart shall be found an ass.

Rust, sword; cool, blushes; and, Parolles, live Safest in shame. Being fool'd, by fool'ry thrive.

There's place and means for every man alive.

I'll after them.

Exit

SCENE 4.

The WIDOW'S house Enter HELENA, WIDOW, and DIANA HELENA That you may well perceive I have not wrong'd you! One of the greatest in the Christian world Shall be my surety; fore whose throne 'tis needful, Ere I can perfect mine intents, to kneel.

Time was I did him a desired office, Dear almost as his life; which gratitude Through flinty Tartar's bosom would peep forth, And answer 'Thanks.' I duly am inform'd His Grace is at Marseilles, to which place We have convenient convoy. You must know I am supposed dead. The army breaking, My husband hies him home; where, heaven aiding, And by the leave of my good lord the King, We'll be before our welcome.

WIDOW Gentle madam, You never had a servant to whose trust Your business was more welcome.

HELENA Nor you, mistress, Ever a friend whose thoughts more truly labour To recompense your love. Doubt not but heaven Hath brought me up to be your daughter's dower, As it hath fated her to be my motive And helper to a husband. But, O strange men! That can such sweet use make of what they hate, When saucy trusting

of the cozen'd thoughts Defiles the pitchy night. So lust doth play With what it loathes, for that which is away.

But more of this hereafter. You, Diana, Under my poor instructions yet must suffer Something in my behalf.

DIANA Let death and honesty Go with your impositions, I am yours Upon your will to suffer.

HELENA Yet, I pray you: But with the word the time will bring on summer, When briars shall have leaves as well as thorns And be as sweet as sharp. We must away; Our waggon is prepar'd, and time revives us.

All's Well that Ends Well. Still the fine's the crown.

Whate'er the course, the end is the renown.

Exeunt

SCENE 5.

Rousillon. The COUNT'S palace Enter COUNTESS, LAFEU, and CLOWN LAFEU No, no, no, son was misled with a snipt-taffeta fellow there, whose villainous saffron would have made all the unbak'd and doughy youth of a nation in his colour. Your daughter-in-law had been alive at this hour, and your son here at home, more advanc'd by the King than by that red-tail'd humble-bee I speak of.

COUNTESS I would I had not known him. It was the death of the most virtuous gentlewoman that ever nature had praise for creating. If she had partaken of my flesh, and cost me the dearest groans of a mother. I could not have owed her a more rooted love.

LAFEU 'Twas a good lady, 'twas a good lady. We may pick a thousand sallets ere we light on such another herb.

CLOWN Indeed, sir, she was the sweet-marjoram of the sallet, or, rather, the herb of grace.

LAFEU They are not sallet-herbs, you knave; they are nose-herbs.

CLOWN I am no great Nebuchadnezzar, sir; I have not much skill in grass.

LAFEU Whether dost thou profess thyself-a knave or a fool? CLOWN A fool, sir, at a woman's service, and a knave at a man's.

LAFEU Your distinction? CLOWN I would cozen the man of his wife, and do his service.

LAFEU So you were a knave at his service, indeed.

CLOWN And I would give his wife my bauble, sir, to do her service.

LAFEU I will subscribe for thee; thou art both knave and fool.

CLOWN At your service.

LAFEU No, no, no.

CLOWN Why, sir, if I cannot serve you, I can serve as great a prince as you are.

LAFEU Who's that? A Frenchman? CLOWN Faith, sir, 'a has an English name; but his fisnomy is more hotter in France than there.

LAFEU What prince is that? CLOWN The Black Prince, sir; alias, the Prince of Darkness; alias, the devil.

LAFEU Hold thee, there's my purse. I give thee not this to suggest thee from thy master thou talk'st of; serve him still.

CLOWN I am a woodland fellow, sir, that always loved a great fire; and the master I speak of ever keeps a good fire. But, sure, he is the prince of the world; let his nobility remain in's court. I am for the house with the narrow gate, which I take to be too little for pomp to enter. Some that humble themselves may; but the many will be too chill and tender: and they'll be for the flow'ry way that leads to the broad gate and the great fire.

LAFEU Go thy ways, I begin to be aweary of thee; and I tell thee so before, because I would not fall out with thee. Go thy ways; let my horses be well look'd to, without any tricks.

CLOWN If I put any tricks upon 'em, sir, they shall be jades' tricks, which are their own right by the law of nature.

Exit

LAFEU A shrewd knave, and an unhappy.

COUNTESS So 'a is. My lord that's gone made himself much sport out of him. By his authority he remains here, which he thinks is a patent for his sauciness; and indeed he has no pace, but runs where he will.

LAFEU I like him well; 'tis not amiss. And I was about to tell you, since I heard of the good lady's death, and that my lord your son was upon his return home, I moved the King my master to speak in the behalf of my daughter; which, in the minority of them both, his Majesty out of a self-gracious remembrance did first propose. His Highness hath promis'd me to do it; and, to stop up the displeasure he hath conceived against your son, there is no fitter matter. How does your ladyship like it? COUNTESS With very much content, my lord; and I wish it happily effected.

LAFEU His Highness comes post from Marseilles, of as able body as when he number'd thirty; 'a will be here to-morrow, or I am deceiv'd by him that in such intelligence hath seldom fail'd.

COUNTESS It rejoices me that I hope I shall see him ere I die.

I have letters that my son will be here to-night. I shall beseech your lordship to remain with me tal they meet together.

LAFEU Madam, I was thinking with what manners I might safely be admitted.

COUNTESS You need but plead your honourable privilege.

LAFEU Lady, of that I have made a bold charter; but, I thank my God, it holds yet.

Re-enter CLOWN CLOWN O madam, yonder's my lord your son with a patch of velvet on's face; whether there be a scar under 't or no, the velvet knows; but 'tis a goodly patch of velvet. His left cheek is a cheek of two pile and a half, but his right cheek is worn bare.

LAFEU A scar nobly got, or a noble scar, is a good liv'ry of honour; so belike is that.

CLOWN But it is your carbonado'd face.

LAFEU Let us go see your son, I pray you; I long to talk with the young noble soldier.

CLOWN Faith, there's a dozen of 'em, with delicate fine hats, and most courteous feathers, which bow the head and nod at every man.

Exeunt

ACT V.

SCENE 1.

Marseilles. A street Enter HELENA, WIDOW, and DIANA, with two ATTENDANTS
HELENA But this exceeding posting day and night Must wear your spirits low; we cannot help it.

But since you have made the days and nights as one, To wear your gentle limbs in my affairs, Be bold you do so grow in my requital As nothing can unroot you.

Enter a GENTLEMAN In happy time! This man may help me to his Majesty's ear, If he would spend his power. God save you, sir.

GENTLEMAN And you.

HELENA Sir, I have seen you in the court of France.

GENTLEMAN I have been sometimes there.

HELENA I do presume, sir, that you are not fall'n From the report that goes upon your goodness; And therefore, goaded with most sharp occasions, Which lay nice manners by, I put you to The use of your own virtues, for the which I shall continue thankful.

GENTLEMAN What's your will? HELENA That it will please you To give this poor petition to the King; And aid me with that store of power you have To come into his presence.

GENTLEMAN The King's not here.

HELENA Not here, sir? GENTLEMAN Not indeed.

He hence remov'd last night, and with more haste Than is his use.

WIDOW Lord, how we lose our pains! HELENA All's Well That Ends Well yet, Though time seem so adverse and means unfit.

I do beseech you, whither is he gone? GENTLEMAN Marry, as I take it, to Rousillon; Whither I am going.

HELENA I do beseech you, sir, Since you are like to see the King before me, Commend the paper to his gracious hand; Which I presume shall render you no blame, But rather make you thank your pains for it.

I will come after you with what good speed Our means will make us means.

GENTLEMAN This I'll do for you.

HELENA And you shall find yourself to be well thank'd, Whate'er falls more. We must to horse again; Go, go, provide.

Exeunt

SCENE 2.

Rousillon. The inner court of the COUNT'S palace Enter CLOWN and PAROLLES
PAROLLES Good Monsieur Lavache, give my Lord Lafeu this letter. I have ere now, sir, been better known to you, when I have held familiarity with fresher clothes; but I am now, sir, muddled in Fortune's mood, and smell somewhat strong of her strong displeasure.

CLOWN Truly, Fortune's displeasure is but sluttish, if it smell so strongly as thou speak'st of. I will henceforth eat no fish of Fortune's butt'ring. Prithee, allow the wind.

PAROLLES Nay, you need not to stop your nose, sir; I spake but by a metaphor.

CLOWN Indeed, sir, if your metaphor stink, I will stop my nose; or against any man's metaphor. Prithee, get thee further.

PAROLLES Pray you, sir, deliver me this paper.

CLOWN Foh! prithee stand away. A paper from Fortune's close-stool to give to a nobleman! Look here he comes himself.

Enter LAFEU Here is a pur of Fortune's, sir, or of Fortune's cat, but not a musk-cat, that has fall'n into the unclean fishpond of her displeasure, and, as he says, is muddied withal. Pray you, sir, use the carp as you may; for he looks like a poor, decayed, ingenious, foolish, rascally knave. I do pity his distress in my similes of comfort, and leave him to your lordship.

Exit

PAROLLES My lord, I am a man whom Fortune hath cruelly scratch'd.

LAFEU And what would you have me to do? 'Tis too late to pare her nails now. Wherein have you played the knave with Fortune, that she should scratch you, who of herself is a good lady and would not have knaves thrive long under her? There's a cardcue for you. Let the justices make you and Fortune friends; I am for other business.

PAROLLES I beseech your honour to hear me one single word.

LAFEU You beg a single penny more; come, you shall ha't; save your word.

PAROLLES My name, my good lord, is Parolles.

LAFEU You beg more than word then. Cox my passion! give me your hand. How does your drum? PAROLLES O my good lord, you were the first that found me.

LAFEU Was I, in sooth? And I was the first that lost thee.

PAROLLES It lies in you, my lord, to bring me in some grace, for you did bring me out.

LAFEU Out upon thee, knave! Dost thou put upon me at once both the office of God and the devil? One brings the in grace, and the other brings thee out. [Trumpets sound] The King's coming; I know by his trumpets. Sirrah, inquire further after me; I had talk of you last night. Though you are a fool and a knave, you shall eat. Go to; follow.

PAROLLES I praise God for you.

Exeunt

SCENE 3.

Rousillon. The COUNT'S palace Flourish. Enter KING, COUNTESS, LAFEU, the two FRENCH LORDS, with ATTENDANTS KING We lost a jewel of her, and our esteem Was made much poorer by it; but your son, As mad in folly, lack'd the sense to know Her estimation home.

COUNTESS 'Tis past, my liege; And I beseech your Majesty to make it Natural rebellion, done i' th' blaze of youth, When oil and fire, too strong for reason's force, O'erbears it and burns on.

KING My honour'd lady, I have forgiven and forgotten all; Though my revenges were high bent upon him And watch'd the time to shoot.

LAFEU This I must say But first, I beg my pardon: the young lord Did to his Majesty, his mother, and his lady, Offence of mighty note; but to himself The greatest wrong of all. He lost a wife Whose beauty did astonish the survey Of richest eyes; whose words all ears took captive; Whose dear perfection hearts that scorn'd to serve Humbly call'd mistress.

KING Praising what is lost Makes the remembrance dear. Well, call him hither; We are reconcil'd, and the first view shall kill All repetition. Let him not ask our pardon; The nature of his great offence is dead, And deeper than oblivion do we bury Th' incensing relics of it; let him approach, A stranger, no offender; and inform him So 'tis our will he should.

GENTLEMAN I shall, my liege.

Exit GENTLEMAN KING What says he to your daughter? Have you spoke? LAFEU All that he is hath reference to your Highness.

KING Then shall we have a match. I have letters sent me That sets him high in fame.

Enter BERTRAM LAFEU He looks well on 't.

KING I am not a day of season, For thou mayst see a sunshine and a hail In me at once. But to the brightest beams Distracted clouds give way; so stand thou forth; The time is fair again.

BERTRAM My high-repented blames, Dear sovereign, pardon to me.

KING All is whole; Not one word more of the consumed time.

Let's take the instant by the forward top; For we are old, and on our quick'st decrees Th' inaudible and noiseless foot of Time Steals ere we can effect them. You remember The daughter of this lord? BERTRAM Admiringly, my liege. At first I stuck my choice upon her, ere my heart Durst make too bold herald of my tongue; Where the impression of mine eye infixing, Contempt his scornful perspective did lend me, Which warp'd the line of every other favour, Scorn'd a fair colour or express'd it stol'n, Extended or contracted all proportions To a most hideous object. Thence it came That she whom all men prais'd, and whom myself, Since I have lost, have lov'd, was in mine eye The dust that did offend it.

KING Well excus'd.

That thou didst love her, strikes some scores away From the great compt; but love that comes too late, Like a remorseful pardon slowly carried, To the great sender turns a sour offence, Crying 'That's good that's gone.' Our rash faults Make trivial price of serious things we have, Not knowing them until we know their grave.

Oft our displeasures, to ourselves unjust, Destroy our friends, and after weep their dust; Our own love waking cries to see what's done, While shameful hate sleeps out the afternoon.

Be this sweet Helen's knell. And now forget her.

Send forth your amorous token for fair Maudlin.

The main consents are had; and here we'll stay To see our widower's second marriage-day.

COUNTESS Which better than the first, O dear heaven, bless! Or, ere they meet, in me, O nature, cesse! LAFEU Come on, my son, in whom my house's name Must be digested; give a favour from you, To sparkle in the spirits of my daughter, That she may quickly come.

[BERTRAM gives a ring] By my old beard, And ev'ry hair that's on 't, Helen, that's dead, Was a sweet creature; such a ring as this, The last that e'er I took her leave at court, I saw upon her finger.

BERTRAM Hers it was not.

KING Now, pray you, let me see it; for mine eye, While I was speaking, oft was fasten'd to't.

This ring was mine; and when I gave it Helen I bade her, if her fortunes ever stood Necessitated to help, that by this token I would relieve her. Had you that craft to reave her Of what should stead her most? BERTRAM My gracious sovereign, Howe'er it pleases you to take it so, The ring was never hers.

COUNTESS Son, on my life, I have seen her wear it; and she reckon'd it At her life's rate.

LAFEU I am sure I saw her wear it.

BERTRAM You are deceiv'd, my lord; she never saw it.

In Florence was it from a casement thrown me, Wrapp'd in a paper, which contain'd the name Of her that threw it. Noble she was, and thought I stood engag'd; but when I had subscrib'd To mine own fortune, and inform'd her fully I could not answer in that course of honour As she had made the overture, she ceas'd, In heavy satisfaction, and would never Receive the ring again.

KING Plutus himself, That knows the tinct and multiplying med'cine, Hath not in nature's mystery more science Than I have in this ring. 'Twas mine, 'twas Helen's, Whoever gave it you. Then, if you know That you are well acquainted with yourself, Confess 'twas hers, and by what rough enforcement You got it from her. She call'd the saints to surety That she would never put it from her finger Unless she gave it to yourself in bed Where you have never come- or sent it us Upon her great disaster.

BERTRAM She never saw it.

KING Thou speak'st it falsely, as I love mine honour; And mak'st conjectural fears to come into me Which I would fain shut out. If it should prove That thou art so inhuman- 'twill not prove so.

And yet I know not- thou didst hate her deadly, And she is dead; which nothing, but to close Her eyes myself, could win me to believe More than to see this ring. Take him away.

[GUARDS seize BERTRAM] My fore-past proofs, howe'er the matter fall, Shall tax my fears of little vanity, Having vainly fear'd too little. Away with him.

We'll sift this matter further.

BERTRAM If you shall prove This ring was ever hers, you shall as easy Prove that I husbanded her bed in Florence, Where she yet never was.

Exit, guarded KING I am wrapp'd in dismal thinkings.

Enter a GENTLEMAN GENTLEMAN Gracious sovereign, Whether I have been to blame or no, I know not: Here's a petition from a Florentine, Who hath, for four or five removes, come short To tender it herself. I undertook it, Vanquish'd thereto by the fair grace and speech Of the poor suppliant, who by this, I know, Is here attending; her business looks in her With an importing visage; and she told me In a sweet verbal brief it did concern Your Highness with herself.

KING [Reads the letter] 'Upon his many protestations to marry me when his wife was dead, I blush to say it, he won me. Now is the Count Rousillon a widower; his vows are forfeited to me, and my honour's paid to him. He stole from Florence, taking no leave, and I follow him to his country for justice. Grant it me, O King! in you it best lies; otherwise a seducer flourishes, and a poor maid is undone.

DIANA CAPILET.' LAFEU I will buy me a son-in-law in a fair, and toll for this. I'll none of him.

KING The heavens have thought well on thee, Lafeu, To bring forth this discov'ry. Seek these suitors.

Go speedily, and bring again the Count.

Exeunt ATTENDANTS I am afeard the life of Helen, lady, Was foully snatch'd.

COUNTESS Now, justice on the doers! Enter BERTRAM, guarded KING I wonder, sir, sith wives are monsters to you.

And that you fly them as you swear them lordship, Yet you desire to marry.

Enter WIDOW and DIANA What woman's that? DIANA I am, my lord, a wretched Florentine, Derived from the ancient Capilet.

My suit, as I do understand, you know, And therefore know how far I may be pitied.

WIDOW I am her mother, sir, whose age and honour Both suffer under this complaint we bring, And both shall cease, without your remedy.

KING Come hither, Count; do you know these women? BERTRAM My lord, I neither can nor will deny But that I know them. Do they charge me further? DIANA Why do you look so strange upon your wife?

BERTRAM She's none of mine, my lord.

DIANA If you shall marry, You give away this hand, and that is mine; You give away heaven's vows, and those are mine; You give away myself, which is known mine; For I by vow am so embodied yours That she which marries you must marry me, Either both or none.

LAFEU[To BERTRAM] Your reputation comes too short for my daughter; you are no husband for her.

BERTRAM My lord, this is a fond and desp'rate creature Whom sometime I have laugh'd with. Let your Highness Lay a more noble thought upon mine honour Than for to think that I would sink it here.

KING Sir, for my thoughts, you have them ill to friend Till your deeds gain them. Fairer prove your honour Than in my thought it lies!

DIANA Good my lord, Ask him upon his oath if he does think He had not my virginity.

KING What say'st thou to her? BERTRAM She's impudent, my lord, And was a common gamester to the camp.

DIANA He does me wrong, my lord; if I were so He might have bought me at a common price.

Do not believe him. o, behold this ring, Whose high respect and rich validity Did lack a parallel; yet, for all that, He gave it to a commoner o' th' camp, If I be one.

COUNTESS He blushes, and 'tis it.

Of six preceding ancestors, that gem Conferr'd by testament to th' sequent issue, Hath it been ow'd and worn. This is his wife: That ring's a thousand proofs.

KING Methought you said You saw one here in court could witness it.

DIANA I did, my lord, but loath am to produce So bad an instrument; his name's Parolles.

LAFEU I saw the man to-day, if man he be.

KING Find him, and bring him hither.

Exit an ATTENDANT BERTRAM What of him? He's quoted for a most perfidious slave, With all the spots o' th' world tax'd and debauch'd, Whose nature sickens but to speak a truth.

Am I or that or this for what he'll utter That will speak anything? KING She hath that ring of yours.

BERTRAM I think she has. Certain it is I lik'd her, And boarded her i' th' wanton way of youth.

She knew her distance, and did angle for me, Madding my eagerness with her restraint, As all impediments in fancy's course Are motives of more fancy; and, in fine, Her infinite cunning with her modern grace Subdu'd me to her rate. She got the ring; And I had that which any inferior might At market-price have bought.

DIANA I must be patient.

You that have turn'd off a first so noble wife May justly diet me. I pray you yet Since you lack virtue, I will lose a husband Send for your ring, I will return it home, And give me mine again.

BERTRAM I have it not.

KING What ring was yours, I pray you? DIANA Sir, much like The same upon your finger.

KING Know you this ring? This ring was his of late.

DIANA And this was it I gave him, being abed.

KING The story, then, goes false you threw it him Out of a casement.

DIANA I have spoke the truth.

Enter PAROLLES BERTRAM My lord, I do confess the ring was hers.

KING You boggle shrewdly; every feather starts you.

Is this the man you speak of? DIANA Ay, my lord.

KING Tell me, sirrah-but tell me true I charge you, Not fearing the displeasure of your master, Which, on your just proceeding, I'll keep off By him and by this woman here what know you? PAROLLES So please your Majesty, my master hath been an honourable gentleman; tricks he hath had in him, which gentlemen have.

KING Come, come, to th' purpose. Did he love this woman? PAROLLES Faith, sir, he did love her; but how? KING How, I pray you? PAROLLES He did love her, sir, as a gentleman loves a woman.

KING How is that? PAROLLES He lov'd her, sir, and lov'd her not.

KING As thou art a knave and no knave.

What an equivocal companion is this! PAROLLES I am a poor man, and at your Majesty's command.

LAFEU He's a good drum, my lord, but a naughty orator.

DIANA Do you know he promis'd me marriage? PAROLLES Faith, I know more than I'll speak.

KING But wilt thou not speak all thou know'st? PAROLLES Yes, so please your Majesty. I did go between them, as I said; but more than that, he loved her-for indeed he was mad for her, and talk'd of Satan, and of Limbo, and of Furies, and I know not what. Yet I was in that credit with them at that time that I knew of their going to bed; and of other motions, as promising her marriage, and things which would derive me ill will to speak of; therefore I will not speak what I know.

KING Thou hast spoken all already, unless thou canst say they are married; but thou art too fine in thy evidence; therefore stand aside.

This ring, you say, was yours? DIANA Ay, my good lord.

KING Where did you buy it? Or who gave it you? DIANA It was not given me, nor I did not buy it.

KING Who lent it you? DIANA It was not lent me neither.

KING Where did you find it then? DIANA I found it not.

KING If it were yours by none of all these ways, How could you give it him? DIANA I never gave it him.

LAFEU This woman's an easy glove, my lord; she goes of and on at pleasure.

KING This ring was mine, I gave it his first wife.

DIANA It might be yours or hers, for aught I know.

KING Take her away, I do not like her now; To prison with her. And away with him. Unless thou tell'st me where thou hadst this ring, Thou diest within this hour.

DIANA I'll never tell you.

KING Take her away.

DIANA I'll put in bail, my liege.

KING I think thee now some common customer.

DIANA By Jove, if ever I knew man, 'twas you.

KING Wherefore hast thou accus'd him all this while? DIANA Because he's guilty, and he is not guilty.

He knows I am no maid, and he'll swear to't: I'll swear I am a maid, and he knows not.

Great King, I am no strumpet, by my life; I am either maid, or else this old man's wife.

[Pointing to LAFEU] KING She does abuse our ears; to prison with her.

DIANA Good mother, fetch my bail. Stay, royal sir; Exit WIDOW The jeweller that owes the ring is sent for, And he shall surety me. But for this lord Who hath abus'd me as he knows himself, Though yet he never harm'd me, here I quit him.

He knows himself my bed he hath defil'd; And at that time he got his wife with child.

Dead though she be, she feels her young one kick; So there's my riddle: one that's dead is quick And now behold the meaning.

Re-enter WIDOW with HELENA KING Is there no exorcist Beguiles the truer office of mine eyes? Is't real that I see? HELENA No, my good lord; 'Tis but the shadow of a wife you see, The name and not the thing.

BERTRAM Both, both; o, pardon! HELENA O, my good lord, when I was like this maid, I found you wondrous kind. There is your ring, And, look you, here's your letter. This it says: 'When from my finger you can get this ring, And are by me with child,' etc. This is done.

Will you be mine now you are doubly won? BERTRAM If she, my liege, can make me know this clearly, I'll love her dearly, ever, ever dearly.

HELENA If it appear not plain, and prove untrue, Deadly divorce step between me and you! O my dear mother, do I see you living? LAFEU Mine eyes smell onions; I shall weep anon.

[To PAROLLES]

Good Tom Drum, lend me a handkercher. So, I thank thee. Wait on me home, I'll make sport with thee; let thy curtsies alone, they are scurvy ones.

KING Let us from point to point this story know, To make the even truth in pleasure flow.

[To DIANA]

If thou beest yet a fresh uncropped flower, Choose thou thy husband, and I'll pay thy dower; For I can guess that by thy honest aid Thou kept'st a wife herself, thyself a maid. Of that and all the progress, more and less, Resolvedly more leisure shall express.

All yet seems well; and if it end so meet, The bitter past, more welcome is the sweet.

[Flourish]

EPILOGUE.

KING The King's a beggar, now the play is done.

All is well ended if this suit be won, That you express content; which we will pay With strife to please you, day exceeding day.

Ours be your patience then, and yours our parts; Your gentle hands lend us, and take our hearts.

Exeunt omnes

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- **THE END-**