

Shakespeare's

All's Well



That Ends Well

in a version by Dominic Power

H&P
Playwrights

This version of *All's Well that Ends Well*

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Cover: Eleanor Yates as Helena

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The Text

As far as we know, there were no quarto publishings of this play and it first appeared in print in the 1623 Folio. Most academics suggest a time of composition of around 1603, but there are few external pointers to aid their speculation.

For this production Dominic Power has relocated the play to the mid-nineteenth century, when Italian states, many of them under the control of the Austrian Empire, were looking towards unification and independence (a complex history of both conservative and liberal movements we refer to as the 'Risorgimento'). They were aided in this by the Franco-Austrian War of 1859 and the defeat of the Austrians at Magenta and Solferino by the combined forces of France and Piedmont. This relates only loosely to the interplay between France and Italy in Shakespeare's plot, but characterfully so, we believe.

Dominic has also radically reimagined the character of Lavatch, here integrated as Bertram's music and dancing-master, whereas in Shakespeare's original he is a quibbling 'Clown', attached to the Rossillion household but largely peripheral to the action.

Dominic Writes:

All's Well that Ends Well has been categorised, along with *Measure for Measure* and *Troilus and Cressida* as a 'Problem Play'. The term arises from the elements of darkness and tragedy that underlie the moments of comedy and romance, a lack of easy resolution and a tendency to place sexual relationships on an equal footing with romantic ones. Writing about *All's Well that Ends Well* and *Measure for Measure* in 1950, the critic E.M.W Tillyard stated that each play was like a "problem child whom no efforts will ever bring back to normality." *All's Well that Ends Well* has rich, muscular poetry, sexual frankness and, at its heart, a young, disadvantaged woman determined to choose her own destiny, sexually and romantically, at any cost. It also has emotional and psychological dissonances that have puzzled and sometimes shocked audiences in the past. Perhaps this 'problem child' can never to be brought 'back to normality' but it may be that this is the source of its power and fascination.

The Sources

The prime source is the story of Giletta di Nerbona, the daughter of a doctor, Master Gerardo di Nerbona, in Boccaccio's *Decameron*. It is likely that Shakespeare encountered this via William Painter's retelling in his 1566 book, *The Palace of Pleasure*. Both texts are available at: www.andrewhilton.online

This version of *All's Well That Ends Well* was first performed in Bristol by Shakespeare at the Tobacco Factory on March 31st 2016, with the following cast:

Countess	Julia Hills
Bertram	Craig Fuller
Lafew	Ian Barritt
Helena	Eleanor Yates
Parolles	Paul Currier
Lavatch	Marc Geoffrey
King of France	Christopher Bianchi
Old Lord	Alan Coveney
Nurse	Nicky Goldie
Charles Dumain	Alan Mahon
Pierre Dumain	Callum McIntyre
1 st Young Lord	Laurence Varda
2 nd Young Lord	John Sandeman
3 rd Young Lord	Joel Macey
Duke of Florence	John Sandeman
Widow Capilet	Nicky Goldie
Diana Capilet	Isabella Marshall
Adelbert	Laurence Varda
Interpreter	Alan Coveney
Widow's Servant	Joel Macey

The action takes place in France – in Rossillion & Paris – and in Florence

Production

Director	Andrew Hilton
Associate Director	Dominic Power
Assistant Director	Lucinda McLean-Bibby *
Set & Costume Designer	Max Johns
Assistant Designer	Mae-Li Evans *
Costume Supervisor	Jane Tooze
Lighting Designer	Matthew Graham
Composer & Sound Designer	Elizabeth Purnell
Choreographer	John Sandeman
Production Manager	Nic Prior
Construction Manager	Chris Samuels
Company & Stage Manager	Jennifer Hunter
Deputy Stage Managers	Polly Meech, Cassie Harrison
Assistant Stage Managers	Charlie Smalley
	Alexander Mincks *
Wardrobe Mistress	Jessica Hardy
Production Photographer	Mark Douet
Rehearsal Photographer	Craig Fuller

* Lucinda McLean-Bibby, Mae-li Evans and Alexander Mincks were on attachment from the University of Bristol's Drama Department

Part One

Scene 1 (Act1 Sc1)

Rossillion: the Great Hall

The Countess of Rossillion, Bertram, Helena, all in black; and Lord Lafew

- 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.
- Lafew* You shall find of the King a husband, madam. You, sir, a father.
- Countess* What hope is there of his majesty's amendment?
- Lafew* He hath abandon'd his physicians 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.
- Lafew* 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.
- Lafew* He was excellent indeed, madam. The King very lately spoke of him admiringly and mourningly.
- Bertram* What is it, my good lord, the King languishes of?
- Lafew* A fistula, my lord.
- Bertram* O! I heard not of it before.
- Lafew* I would it were not notorious. Was this gentlewoman the daughter of Gerard de Narbon?
- Countess* His sole child, my lord, and bequeath'd to my o'erlooking. I have those hopes of her good that her education promises. Her dispositions she inherits, which makes fair gifts fairer. She derives her honesty and achieves her goodness.
- Lafew* Your commendations, madam, get from her tears.
- Countess* The remembrance 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 have it.

- Helena* I do affect a sorrow indeed, but I have it too.
- Lafew* Moderate lamentation is the right of the dead, excessive grief the enemy to the living.
- Bertram* Madam, I desire your holy wishes.
- Countess* Be thou blest, Bertram, and succeed thy father
In manners, as in shape. 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.
[To Lafew] 'Tis an unseason'd courtier. Good my lord,
Advise him.
- Lafew* He cannot want the best that shall attend his love.
- Countess* Heaven bless him! Farewell, Bertram.
- Bertram* The best wishes that can be forg'd in your thoughts be servants to you.
- Exit Countess*
- [To Helena]* Be comfortable to my mother, your mistress, and make much of her.
- Lafew* Farewell, pretty lady, you must hold the credit of your father.
- Exeunt Bertram and Lafew*
- 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.
The 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.

Enter Parolles

O, here's one goes with him. I'll love him for his sake,
And yet I know this man a notorious liar,
Think him a great way fool, solely a coward.

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 its own stomach. Besides, virginity is peevish, proud, idle, made of self-love, which is the most inhibited sin in the canon. Away with't!

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

Parolles Let me see. 'Tis a commodity will lose its gloss with lying. 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. 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 would 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,
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 Lavatch

Lavatch

Monsieur Parolles, your Lord calls you.

Parolles

Get you gone, dancing master. I call no man Lord who is my friend.

Lavatch

Y'are a paper warrior, I hear you not and fear you less, Monsieur Swagger.

Parolles

Go thy ways, thou eunuch to St. Vitus. Go now - trippingly!
Trippingly! Little Helen, farewell. I go to Bertam. 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 Mars?

Helena

The wars have 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.

Parolles I am so full of businesses, I cannot answer thee acutely. 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 Parolles & Lavatch

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 (Act1 Sc2)

Paris. The King's Private Chamber

Enter the King of France, with letters, Old Lord and Nurse

King The Florentines and Sienese are in arms,
Have fought with equal fortune and continue
A braving war.

Old Lord So 'tis reported, sir.

Nurse Sire –

King Nay, I'll stand.
'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. Our dearest friend would have us
Make denial.

Old 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 wish to see
The Tuscan service, freely have they leave
To stand on either part.

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

Enter Lafew & Bertram

King Lafew.

Lafew My Lord.

King What's he comes here?

Lafew It is the Count Rossillion, 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 father's love to you, sire, is my inheritance.

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
Discipl'd 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. 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 humbl'd. Such a man
Might be a copy to these younger times.

Bertram His good remembrance sir
Lies richer in your thoughts than on his tomb.

King Would I were with him! "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.

Old Lord You are lov'd, 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

Scene 3 (Act1 Sc3)

Rossillion. The Garden

*The Countess asleep, Helena enters (singing). Lavatch enters towards the end of
 the song*

SONG: I Care Not for the Lords of France

*Take from me my scarlet gown
 The skein of silk that ties my hair
 The jew'led slippers I do wear
 Aye, tear my father's castle down.*

*She went out by the castle door
 Thrice kiss'd the boy that shod her mare
 That brush'd her flanks and called her dear,
 And then she kiss'd him three times more.*

*I care not for the Lords of France
 I'll wed the boy that shoes my mare.
 He shows to her such tender care.
 I'll love him in spite of circumstance.*

Lavatch Forsake these old ballads, Helen. They have but little art.

Helena I own their simplicity pleases me.

- Lavatch* 'Tush! They are poor things, and their plainness hides no virtue.
- Countess* You are very critical today, Lavatch. For my part a simple song sung sweetly is the equal of your madrigals and your rondeaux, where all is ornament and artifice. Good Helena, fetch me my book from my chamber. I would have it by me.
- Helena* I will, madam. *Exit*
- Countess* Monsieur, you have a suit?
- Lavatch* I shall come to't immediately, madam. Your Ladyship must know that these five years I have tutor'd the Lord Bertram with most tender care.
- Countess* We have noted your devotion with pleasure.
- Lavatch* I may boast I have taught him to tread a measure. Aye, and to pluck a mandolin, for music and dance are ever married. I strove to teach him the art of cantus, for why should not a gentleman sing as sweetly as the ladies. But, he was an ill pupil, a very ill pupil.
- Countess* Your suit, Monsieur?
- Lavatch* To be plain, madam, and not to varnish the request, I beg you to release me to go to Paris.
- Countess* To what purpose?
- Lavatch* To follow Lord Bertram, to advise him in a world that values neither chivalry nor nobility.
- Countess* Good Lavatch, there is no more you can teach him. Be not like the jeweller that still polishes the pearl, past its moment of perfection.
- Lavatch* Nay, madam, that's not it. I would go to Paris for there lies danger for your son.
- Countess* You have my ear, Monsieur.
- Lavatch* Madam ... is't not true that you do love your gentlewoman entirely?
- Countess* She has ever been most dear to me.
- Lavatch* Her goodness and virtue shine, but she was born under an obscure star. She has no fortune and, saving your ladyship, no friends.
- Countess* Monsieur –
- Lavatch* But yesterday, Madam, I chanc'd to be alone with my thoughts, when I o'erheard Helena. I would not have your Ladyship infer any baseness on my part. Lavatch is no spy, yet my delicacy forbade me to discover myself. "Oh wicked fortune," quoth she, "Oh vile fate that sunders Bertram from me. Though my fortune is

but small and my birth mean, I would tear down the wall betwixt us with my bare and bloody hands." All this was said with a fervour that struck at my heart.

Countess Spake she so fierce?

Lavatch I have extracted her meaning and perform'd her speech thus to render the effect more strikingly to your ladyship. Oft times such invention conveys a more absolute truth. Her matter was, she lov'd your son. The lady intends for Paris, pretending to her father's skill which she will offer to the ailing King. Consider, your ladyship, these are hazardous times, natural order totters on uneven scales. Here's the King like to die from a most unmajestic malady. I cannot say the word – 'tis a vile word, it has no savour of regality. Here is your gentlewoman, scarce more than a child, with hopes to raise herself by treating this – condition - and by what procedure I dare not ask your ladyship to imagine. Thus sullied she hopes she might win your son.

Countess Though a mother's love does burn in me undimm'd, my heart misdoubts me he would be so won. Pray you, keep this intelligence to yourself. Many likelihoods inform'd me of this before, which hung so tottering in the balance that I could neither believe nor misdoubt.

Lavatch Yet may I have I your ladyship's commission to go to Paris and counsel Lord Bertram?

Countess Nay, good Lavatch, you are not for such business. You are Rossillion's Master of Music. Suppose you found the king contagious and succumb'd yourself to that contagion? What doctor could treat you when you are too nice to name the ailment? For your best safety you must stay in Rossillion.

Lavatch Is your ladyship merry that I would protect your son from danger?

Countess Sir, that you do care for my son gladdens me. But, see she comes. Please leave us.

Enter Helena

Lavatch As your ladyship commands.

Exit

Countess [*Aside*] In love?

Even so it was with me when I was young.
This thorn doth to our rose of youth belong.
Our blood to us, this to our blood is born.
Her eye is sick on't, I observe her now.

Helena Here is your book, madam.

Countess Thank you child. 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.
 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 distemper'd 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 Rossillion cannot be my brother.
 I am from humble, he from honour'd 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 mystery of your loneliness and find
 Your salt tears' head. Now to all sense 'tis clear -
 You love my son. Invention is asham'd
 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. Only sin
 And hellish obstinacy tie thy tongue,
 That truth should be suspected. I charge thee,
 As heaven shall work in me for thine avail,
 Tell me true.
- Helena* Good madam, pardon me!

- Countess* Do you love 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.
- 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, 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. 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 despair'd
Of remedy?
- Helena* There's something in't,
More than my father's skill, which was the greatest
Of his profession, that his good receipt
Shall for my legacy be sanctified
By the 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 tomorrow. And be sure of this,
What I can help thee to thou shalt not miss.

Exeunt

Scene 4 (Act2 Sc1)

Paris. The French court

Enter the King with Charles & Pierre Dumain, Bertram, Parolles and Lords

- King* Farewell, young lords. These warlike principles
Do not throw from you. Fight for justice
And for honour.
- Charles* 'Tis our hope, sir,
After well-enter'd soldiers, to return
And find your grace in health.
- King* No, no, it cannot be. And yet my heart
Will not confess he owns the malady
That doth my life besiege. Farewell, young lords.

Whether I live or die, be you the sons
Of worthy Frenchmen. 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 loud. I say, farewell.

Pierre 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 Old Lord*] Come hither with me.

Exit King & Attendants. Young Lords bid farewell to Charles & Pierre and exit

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

Parolles 'Tis not his fault, the spark.

Pierre 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!

Charles Farewell, my Lord. Farewell, captain.

Pierre Sweet Monsieur Parolles!

Parolles Noble heroes, my sword and yours are kin. 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.

Charles We shall, noble captain.

Parolles Mars dote on you for his novices!

Exeunt Charles and Pierre

What will we do?

Bertram Stay. The King commands it.

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 received star, and though the devil lead the measure, such are to be follow'd. After them, and take a more dilated farewell.

Bertram

I will do so.

Parolles

Worthy fellows, and like to prove most sinewy swordsmen.

Exeunt

Scene 5 (Act2 Sc1 contd)

The King's Private Chamber

Enter, severally, Lafew, the King, the Old Lord & the Nurse

Lafew

Pardon, my lord, for me and for my tidings.

King

I'll fee thee to stand up.

Old Lord & Nurse exit

Lafew

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.

Lafew

Good faith, across!
But, my good lord, 'tis thus: will you be cur'd
Of your infirmity?

King

No.

Lafew

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
Hath power enough to raise King Pippen, nay,
To give great Charlemain a pen in's hand
And write to her a love-line.

King

What 'her' is this?

Lafew

Why, Doctor She. My lord, there's one arriv'd,
If you will see her. Now, by my faith and honour,
I have spoke with one that in her sex, her years,
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 Lafew,
Bring in the admiration, that we with thee
May spend our wonder too, or take off thine
By wondering how thou took'st it.

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

King Thus he his special nothing ever prologues.

Lafew Nay, come your ways.

Enter Helena

King This haste hath wings indeed.

Lafew 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,
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 inaidible estate. I say we must not
So stain our judgment, or corrupt our hope,
To prostitute our past-cure malady
To empirics, or 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.
He that of greatest works is finisher
Oft does them by the weakest minister.
- 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* 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* Are thou so confident? Within what space
Hop'st thou my cure?
- Helena* The great'st grace lending grace
Ere twice the horses of the sun shall bring
Their fiery star through his diurnal ring,
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, nay worse of worst - extended
With vilest torture let my life be ended.
- King* Methinks in thee some bless'd spirit doth speak
His powerful sound within an organ weak.
And what impossibility would slay
In common sense, sense saves another way.
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,
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.
More should I question thee, and more I must -
Though more to know could not be more to trust -
From whence thou camest, how tended on, but rest
Unquestion'd welcome and undoubted blest.
- Come, give me some help here - If thou proceed
As high as word, my deed shall match thy deed.

Exeunt

Scene 6 (Act 2 Sc2)

Rossillion. The Garden

Enter Lavatch, singing some lines of Shakespeare's Sonnet 57

Lavatch *Being your slave, what should I do but tend
Upon the hours and times of your desire?
I have no precious time at all to spend,
Nor services to do, till you require.
Nor dare I chide the world-without-end hour
Whilst I, my sovereign, watch the clock for you,
Nor think the bitterness of absence sour
When you have bid your servant once adieu;
Nor dare I question with my jealous thought
Where you may be, or your affairs suppose,
But, like a sad slave, stay and think of nought
Save, where you are, how happy you make those.
So true a fool is love that in your will,
Though you do anything, he thinks no ill.*

The Countess enters and listens to a line or two before Lavatch sees her and breaks off

Countess You are melancholy, Lavatch.

- Lavatch* Dear, madam, I dream'd a dream last night. I would your ladyship would hear it.
- Countess* Take heed, monsieur. At night our thoughts roam free and, perchance, tell more than we intend.
- Lavatch* But 'tis a dream most pertinent to your Ladyship. I did see a mighty eagle, soaring over Rossillion, his noble eyes scanning the earth beneath. As it seem'd, I rode upon his back. All at once his eye did light upon a wretched speckled fowl, that scratch'd and peck'd in the dirt. Pity made him stoop, to see one with feathers so bedraggl'd, so dowdy and so humble. He clasp'd it, as gentle as a lamb, thinking to raise it up. But all at once the foolish hen did lodge her beak straight into his breast. The wounded monarch could not soar away. As I awoke, he lay there still. I weep to think on't. Your ladyship, these dreams come to us for a purpose. As I interpret it, the eagle is the lord Bertram, and the hen ambitious Helena that would marry him. What would your Ladyship have me do?
- Countess* I would have you eat no cheese, nor drink no liquor before you sleep. A good digestion will cure you of such dreams.
- Lavatch* I beseech your ladyship, send me to Paris. Let Lavatch stand with Bertram once more and be his better angel. Let me advise him for the best.
- Countess* I would you would go to Paris, Monsieur, but to my gentlewoman, not to my son. Give Helen this letter and urge her to a present answer back. This is all the employment I require. You understand?
- Lavatch* Most fruitfully. I am there before my legs.
- Countess* Monsieur, beware the cooks of Paris. Shun all sauces and rare wines that you may sleep the sounder.

Exeunt severally

Scene 7 (Act2 Sc3)

Paris. The French court

Sounds of celebration. Enter Bertram, Lafew and Parolles

- Lafew* They say miracles are past, and we have our philosophical persons, to make modern and familiar, things supernatural and causeless.
- Parolles* Why, 'tis the rarest argument of wonder that hath shot out in our latter times.
- Bertram* And so 'tis.

Lafew To be relinquish'd of the scholars -
Parolles So I say, both of Galen and Paracelsus.
Lafew Of all the learned and authentic fellows -
Parolles Right, so I say.
Lafew That gave him out incurable -
Parolles Why, there 'tis; so say I too.
Lafew Not to be help'd -
Parolles Right, as 'twere, a man assur'd of a -
Lafew Uncertain life, and sure death.
Parolles Just, you say well. So would I have said.
Lafew I may truly say it is a novelty to the world.
Parolles It is indeed. Here comes the King.

Enter King and Helena, dancing

Lafew *Lustique*, as the Dutchman says. Why, he's able to lead her a polka.
Parolles *Mort du vinager!* Is not this Helen?
Bertram 'Fore God, I think so.
King Go, call before me all my wards in court.

Exit an Attendant

 Sit, my preserver, by thy patient's side
 And from this hand a second time receive
 The confirmation of my promis'd gift,
 Which but attends thy naming.

They sit apart

 First accept this ring from me. If misfortune
 Ever thee befall, let it be a token
 That your King shall redeem you from all harm.

Enter three Young 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!
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.

Lords 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 refus'd,
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 [To 1st Lord] Sir, will you hear my suit?

1st Lord And grant it.

Helena Thanks, sir. All the rest is mute.

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

Helena [To 2nd Lord] The honour, sir, that flames in your fair eyes,
Before I speak, too threateningly replies.
Love make your fortunes twenty times above
Her that so wishes and her humble love!

2nd Lord No better, if you please.

Helena My wish receive,
Which great Love grant! And so, I take my leave.

Lafew Does he deny her? An he were son of mine, I'd have him whipp'd,
or send him to the Turk to make a eunuch of.

Helena [To 3rd Lord] Be not afraid that I your hand should take.
You are too young, too happy and too good
To make yourself a son out of my blood.

3rd Lord Fair one, I think not so.

Lafew 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 [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 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.
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. 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, 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 ennobl'd,
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 be perform'd tonight. As thou lov'st her
Thy love's to me religious, else does err.
- Exeunt all but Lafew and Parolles*
- Lafew* Do you hear, monsieur? A word with you.
- Parolles* Your pleasure, sir?
- Lafew* Your lord and master did well to make his recantation.
- Parolles* Recantation? My lord? My master?
- Lafew* Ay. Is it not a language I speak?
- Parolles* A most harsh one, and not to be understood without bloody
succeeding. My master?
- Lafew* Are you not companion to the Count Rossillion?
- Parolles* To any count, to all counts, to what is man.
- Lafew* To what is count's man.
- Parolles* You are too old, sir. Let it satisfy you, you are too old.
- Lafew* I must tell thee, sirrah, I write man, to which title age cannot bring
thee. I did think thee 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.
- Parolles* Hadst thou not the privilege of antiquity upon thee -
- Lafew* Do not plunge thyself too far in anger, lest thou hasten thy trial.
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.
- Lafew* Ay, with all my heart, and thou art worthy of it.
- Parolles.* I have not, my lord, deserv'd it.
- Lafew* Yes, good faith, every dram of it, and I will not bate thee a scruple.
- Parolles* My lord, you do me most insupportable vexation.
- Lafew* 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 Old, filthy, scurvy lord! 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 of - I'll beat him an if I could but meet him again.

Re-enter Lafew

Lafew 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.

Lafew Who? God?

Parolles Ay, sir.

Lafew The devil it is that's thy master. Why dost thou garter up thy arms o' this fashion? Dost make hose of 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.

Parolles This is hard and undeserved measure, my lord.

Lafew 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 not worth another word, else I'd call you a saucy knave. I leave you.

Exit

Parolles Good, very good, it is so then. Good, very good.

Re-enter Bertram

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 the wars, my boy!
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 the war!

Bertram It shall be so. I shall never see her more.
I'll 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 Come with me to my chamber, and advise me.
I'll send her straight away. Tomorrow
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!

Exeunt

Scene 8 (Act 2 Sc4)

Helena's Chamber at Court
Enter Helena and Lavatch

Lavatch Madam, I left the Countess sick with fancies and evil portents.
When she hears of the trick you have play'd, she will run mad.

Helena I am very sorry to hear it, for she has ever been good to me. Her
letter speaks kindly.

Lavatch Had I been here, your lord would still be free,
Not yok'd, like Sampson, among the Philistines,
Cropp'd and shorn of all vitality.

Helena Can it be he is so far above me?

Lavatch Oh, Helen, he is far above us all,
So radiant in his nobility
He cannot stoop to love as others do,
Lest he flicker when fiercely should he blaze.

Helena Him you have made an idol is a man.
In him pride and mercy do contend
As other men. O I have worshipp'd him
Though I have seen him stamp a violin
He could not play to dust in scornful rage,
The same night that he lay upon the straw
Beside his mare that stumbl'd at a gate
And nurs'd her as if she were his sister.

Lavatch Alack you dance upon a precipice

Heedless of your harm.

Enter Parolles

Parolles Bless you, my fortunate lady!

Helena I hope, sir, I have your good will to have mine own good fortune.

Parolles You had my prayers to lead them on, and to keep them on, have them still. Why 'tis the little dancing master, puff'd up with choler. Have ye tripp'd on a petticoat in the midst of a carillion?

Lavatch I know you, sir, and do believe you two to be confederate in this deed.

Parolles What, doubt my honour! My sword is at your service and will presently cut you in two that you may dance with yourself.

Lavatch Let us meet, Seignor Swagger, with sword or pistol. This instant, if it is your pleasure.

Parolles No need for that. I shall not fight so dainty a knave. Away with you.

Lavatch Nay, I'll stay and hear what I must hear.

Parolles Madam, my lord will go away tonight.
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 will else?

Parolles That you will take your instant leave o' the King
And make this haste as your own good proceeding,
Strengthen'd with what apology you think
May make it probable need.

Helena What more commands he?

Parolles That, having this obtain'd, you presently
Await his further pleasure.

Helena In every thing I wait upon his will.

Parolles I shall report it so.

Helena I pray you. Come Lavatch.

Exeunt severally

Scene 9 (Act2 Sc5)

Bertam's Chamber at Court

Enter Lafew and Bertram

- Lafew* But I hope your lordship thinks not him a soldier?
- Bertram* Yes, my lord, and of very valiant approof.
- Lafew* You have it from his own deliverance?
- Bertram* And by other warranted testimony.
- Lafew* 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.
- Lafew* 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.
- Lafew* Pray you, sir, who's his tailor?
- Parolles* Sir?
- Lafew* O, 'Sir' - I know him well, I. 'Sir' is a good workman, a very good tailor.
- Bertram* [*Aside to Parolles*] Is she gone to the King?
- Parolles* She is.
- Bertram* Will she away tonight?
- Parolles* As you'll have her.
- Bertram* I have writ my letters, casketed my treasure,
Given order for our horses, and tonight,
When I should take possession of the bride,
End ere I do begin.
- Lafew* God save you, captain.
- Bertram* Is there any unkindness between my lord and you, monsieur?
- Parolles* I know not how I have deserv'd to run into my lord's displeasure.
- Lafew* You have made shift to run into't, boots and spurs and all, like him that leap'd 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.
- Lafew* And shall do so ever, though I took him at's prayers. Fare you well to Rossillion, good my lord. And believe this of me, there can be

no kernel 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 deserve at my hand, but we must do good against evil.

Exit

Parolles An idle lord, I swear.

Bertram I think not 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 unsestl'd. 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. [*Giving letter*] This to my mother.
'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 is it you would you have of me?

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.
[To Parolles] Monsieur, farewell.

Exit

Bertram 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, corragio!

Exeunt

Scene 10 (Act3 Sc2)

The Garden in Rossillion

*Dumbshow: The Countess in her chair. Enter Helena and Lavatch from Paris.
Helena gives the Countess Bertram's letter. She and Lavatch enter the house*

Countess It hath happen'd all as I would have had it, save that he comes not
along with her. *[Opening a letter]* Let me see what he writes.
[Reads] I have sent you a daughter-in-law. She hath recover'd 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 unbridl'd boy,
To fly the favours of so good a King,
To pluck his indignation on thy head
By the misprising of a maid too virtuous
For the contempt of empire.

Enter Helena with the Dumain brothers

Helena Madam, my lord is gone, for ever gone!

Charles 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?
- Charles* 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.
*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?
- Charles* 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?
- Pierre* Ay, madam.
- Countess* And to be a soldier?
- Charles* Such is his noble purpose, and believe't,
The Duke will lay upon him all the honour
That good convenience claims.
- Helena* *'Till I have no wife I have nothing in France.*
'Tis bitter.
- Countess* Find you that there?
- Helena* Ay, madam.
- Pierre* '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?
- Pierre* A servant only, and a gentleman
Which I have sometime known.
- Countess* Parolles, was it not?
- Pierre* Ay, my good lady, he.
- Countess* A very tainted fellow, and full of wickedness.
My son corrupts a well-derived nature

With his inducement.

Pierre Indeed, good lady.

Countess 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. My greatest grief
Though little he do feel it, I'll set down sharply.

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

Countess Will you draw near?

Exit Countess & the Dumains

Lavatch steps forward

Lavatch I have it in my heart to condole the lady. Were it another man, I should say it was scurvily done, aye scurvily. O Bertram, thou art noble, yet know not chivalry. But I must love thee still. *[To Helena]* 'Tis most cruel, Helen, to be married but ne'er be a wife. You must know that Lavatch has never courted matrimony. He is complete in himself. His mind a university, where he wanders at will. Were I to wed t'would not be for mutual comfort, but for a greater good.

Helena Monsieur?

Lavatch Sith your wedding to lord Bertram is *ratum sed non consummatum* then 'tis voidable in canon law. Ergo, were some man of equal birth to offer you his hand you may in good conscience accept. I am that man. In this manner the odium, that to his name doth now attach, will lessen. You, who now are cast adrift, will have your name restor'd by its alteration. And we may return Bertram from the mischance of war -

Helena O sir, you buzz and buzz and heedless sting
Where you do hope to feed.

Lavatch Helen, I would see you well in this world.

Helena Get you from me!

Exit Lavatch

Helena *Nothing in France, until I have no wife!*
Thou shalt have none, Rossillion, none in France,
Then hast thou all again. Poor lord, is't I
That chase thee from thy country and expose
Those tender limbs of thine to the event
Of the none-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, 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, Rossillion,
 For honour but of danger wins a scar,
 And 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 this house
 And angels offic'd all, I will be gone,
 That pitiful rumour may report my flight
 To consolate thine ear. Come night, end day!
 For with the dark, poor thief, I'll steal away.

Exit

Scene 11 (Act3 Sc3)

A Cellar in Florence

Enter the Duke of Florence, Bertram, Parolles, Soldiers
Noise outside of Street Battle (gunshots, drums, ordinance)

Duke	<p> My lord, I bid you welcome to our cause, You find us hemm'd by foes on ev'ry side. If you would fight, the French Brigade awaits, Here i'the East of our free city state. times are desp'rate, and friends of Florence strive keep the torch of liberty aflame Against all odds. The battle here Is bloody, fierce and close. The volunteer Who seeks for glory finds it stain'd with gore. Yet if you'll fight, we'll thank you as we can, Our necessity must void all ceremony. </p>	<p>The To</p>
<i>Bertram</i>	<p> Sir, no ceremonial is requir'd. I do care Nought for fame, the freedom that I seek Is mine, not thine – </p>	
<i>Duke</i>	<p> Your words, youth, are older than your years. But may we know you honourable? </p>	
<i>Bertram</i>	<p> I am the Count of Rossillion, which name Alone proclaims my honour, sir. </p>	

Duke But not,
 I think, your honesty. Plainly I'll speak:
 For some dishonour done to one he values
 High among the best of his, your King now holds
 You in his hate. Letters in advance of you are sent, Demanding
 your return to France forthwith, Or
 otherwise that I straightway lodge you At
 th' extremest point of danger in the field.

Parolles [*Aside*] Zounds, this plain speaking will have us kill'd ere
 breakfast.

Duke I'd as lief do that, though I bear the King no love,
 Save ev'ry point of danger is as one.

Bertram There is more hazard in a marriage bed
 Than on your field of battle. My lord, I sue to fight.
 If you will have me I will serve your cause
 Wheresoever in the field you place me.

Duke That's brave, and I'll love thee for't.
 Come, you'll be battle-aged before the light.

Exit Duke. Parolles detains Bertram

Parolles For God, I love these wars. Yet it may be
 That return to France is the truer chivalry.
 Your lady's low born, that I own 'tis true.
 Yet vows were made and marriage rites are due.
 Her virgin state by holy right is yours,
 Take it bravely ere you join these wars.

Bertram Nay, bravely here we stay. In action let us prove
 Both lovers of the drum, and enemies of love.

Exeunt

Part Two

Scene 12 (Act3 Sc5)

A Square in Florence. Sounds of celebration & martial music

Enter a Widow of Florence and her daughter, Diana

Diana Come, mother, if they do approach the city we shall lose all the sight.

Widow Stay, daughter, this vantage may be as good as any.

Diana Will they truly bring Adelbert in chains, think you?

Widow They will. The great Butcher of Florence goes to't today, justice for the rapes and violations he hath committed on our city. Though he would wrong you, they say the French Count has done most honourable service. He took that devil Adelbert with his own hand.

Diana We have lost our labour, they are gone a contrary way - hark!

Widow Come, let's return again and suffice ourselves with the report of it. Now, Diana, beware this French Count. The honour of a maid is her name, and no legacy is so rich as honesty.

Diana You shall not need to fear me.

Enter Helena, disguised as a Pilgrim

Widow I hope so. Look, here comes a pilgrim. I know she will lie at our house. Thither they send one another. God save you, pilgrim, whither are you bound?

Helena To Padua, to the shrine of St Anthony. Where do the pilgrims lodge, I do beseech you?

Widow At the Saint Francis, here beside the city gate.

Helena Is this the way?

A march in the distance

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 Rossillion. Know you such a one?

Helena But by the ear, that hears most nobly of him.
His face I know not.

Diana Whatsome'er he is,
He's bravely shown him 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.

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

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

Helena How do you mean?

Widow The amorous Count would corrupt the tender
Honour of this maid. But she is arm'd for him
And keeps her guard in honestest defence.

Helena *[Aside]* The gods forbid else!

Drum and Colours. Enter Duke, Bertram, the Dumains, Parolles, Soldiers and a Priest, with Adelbert in chains. After a few moments Adelbert is led off to be shot, while the Duke etc watch from the square

Widow So, now they come!
Do look, that villain there is Adelbert the Butcher,
That would have rap'd our town, is now in chains -
Villain! I could tear your heart out with bloody hands
And count the time well spent!

Helena Which is the Frenchman?

- Diana* He,
That with the Duke. 'Tis a most gallant fellow.
I would he lov'd his wife. If he were honest
He were much goodlier. Is't not a handsome gentleman?
- Helena* I like him well.
- Diana* Yond's that same knave that leads him into folly.
See, that jack-an-apes with scarfs. Why is he melancholy?
- Helena* Perchance he's hurt i' the battle.
- Parolles* Lose our drum! Well.
- Diana* He's shrewdly vex'd at something. Look, he has spied us.
- Widow* Marry, hang you! And your courtesy!
Off, an Officer calls out: "Brigata! Presentat arm! ... Sparare!"
Rifle shots
Exeunt Bertram, Parolles and Soldiers
- Widow* We are reveng'd! Come, pilgrim, I will bring you where you shall
host. There's four or five, to great Saint Anthony bound, already at
my house.
- Helena* I humbly thank you. Please it this gentle maid
To eat with us tonight, the charge and thanking
Shall be for me.
- Widow* We'll take your offer kindly.
- Exeunt*

Scene 13 (Act3 Sc6)

The Florentine Camp

Enter Bertram and the two Dumains

- Pierre* Nay, good my lord, put him to't. Let him have his way.
- Charles* If your lordship find him not a coward hold me no more in your
respect.
- Pierre* On my life, my lord, a bubble.
- Bertram* Do you think I am so far deceiv'd in him?
- Pierre* Believe it, my lord, 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.
- Charles* It were fit you knew him, lest 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.
- Charles* None better than to let him fetch off his drum, which you hear

him so confidently undertake to do.

Pierre 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 that he is carried into the enemy camp. If he do not 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.

Charles O, for the love of laughter, let him fetch his drum. 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 – but here he comes.

Enter Parolles

Bertram How now, monsieur? This drum sticks sorely in your disposition.

Charles 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!

Charles That was not to be blam'd. It was a disaster of war that Caesar himself could not have prevented.

Bertram We cannot greatly condemn our success. Some dishonour we had in the loss of that drum, but it is not to be recover'd.

Parolles It might have been recover'd.

Bertram It might, but it is not now.

Parolles It is to be recover'd. I would have that drum, or *hic jacet* Parolles.

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, go on. I will grace the attempt for a worthy exploit.

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. I will encourage myself in my certainty, put myself into 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 thou'rt valiant, and to the possibility of thy soldiership will vouch for thee. Farewell.

- Parolles* I love not many words.
Exit
- Pierre* 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?
- Bertram* Why, do you think he will make no attempt at all in this?
- Pierre* None in the world, but return with an invention and clap upon you two or three probable lies. Indeed he is not for your lordship's respect. I must go set my trap.
- Bertram* Your brother shall go along with me.
- Pierre* As't please your lordship.
Exit
- Bertram* Now will I lead you to the house, and show you
The lass I spoke of.
- Charles* 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' the 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?
- Charles* With all my heart, my lord.
Exeunt

Scene 14 (Act3 Sc7)

A House in Florence
Helena, Widow and Diana

- Helena* If you misdoubt me that I am she
I know not how I shall assure you further.
- Widow* Though my estate be fallen, 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.
- Widow* I should believe you,
For you have show'd me that which well approves
You're 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 affect consent,
 As I'll direct you how 'tis best to bear it.
 Now his importunate blood will nought deny
 That you'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 Diana, ere you seem as won,
 Beg him the ring, and do you in exchange
 Give him this ring that I do give to you.
 When the barter's done, do you seem to yield,
 Appoint him an encounter, then in fine
 Deliver me to fill the time, yourself
 Most chastely absent. After this,
 If you would marry, I'll add three thousand crowns
 To what is pass'd already.

Widow We have yielded.
 Instruct my daughter how she shall persevere,
 That time and place with this deceit so lawful
 May prove coherent. Every night he comes
 With musics of all sorts, and songs 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 tonight
 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

Scene 15 (Act4 Sc1)

Outside the Florentine Camp

Enter Pierre Dumain, with others in ambush

Pierre 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, except some one among us whom we must produce for an interpreter.

1st Soldier Good captain, let me be the interpreter.

Pierre Art not acquainted with him? Knows he not thy voice?

1st Soldier No, sir, I warrant you.

Pierre But what linsey-woolsey hast thou to speak to us again?

1st Soldier E'en such as you speak to me.

Pierre He must think us some band of strangers i' the enemy's camp, for he hath a smack of all neighbouring languages. As for you, interpreter, you must seem very politic. But couch, 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 too often at my door. I find my tongue is too foolhardy, but my heart hath the fear of Mars before it, not daring the reports of my tongue.

Pierre 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.

Pierre 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.

Pierre 'Twould not.

Parolles Or the shaving of my beard, and to say it was in stratagem.

Pierre Nor that, neither.

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

Pierre Hardly serve.

- Parolles* Though I swore I leap'd from the window of the citadel.
- Pierre* How deep?
- Parolles* Thirty fathom.
- Pierre* Thirty oaths would scarce make that believ'd.
- Parolles* I would I had any drum of the enemy's. I would swear I recover'd it.
- Pierre* You shall hear one anon.
- One of the group drums*
- Parolles* A drum now of the enemy's!
- Pierre* Throca movousus, cargo, cargo, cargo!
- All* Cargo, cargo, cargo, villiando par corbo, cargo!
- They seize and blindfold him*
- Parolles* O, ransom, ransom! Do not hide mine eyes.
- 1st 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.
- 1st 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!
- 1st Soldier* O, pray, pray, pray! Manka revania dulce.
- Pierre* Oscorbidulchos volivorco.
- 1st 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.
- 1st Soldier* But wilt thou faithfully?
- Parolles* If I do not, damn me.
- 1st Soldier* Acordo linta.
Come on, thou art granted space.
- Exit, with Parolles guarded*

Pierre Go, tell the Count Rossillion, and my brother,
We have caught the woodcock and will keep him muffl'd
Till we do hear from them.

2nd Soldier Captain, I will.

Pierre A' will betray us all unto ourselves.

Exeunt

Scene 16 (Act4 Sc2)

Florence: a Street
Enter Bertram and Diana

Bertram They told me that your name was Fontybell?

Diana No, my good lord, Diana.

Bertram Titl'd goddess,
And worth it, with addition! But, fair soul,
In your fine frame hath love no quantity?
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 was compell'd to her, but I love thee
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.
If I should swear by God's great attributes
I loved you dearly, would you believe my oaths
When I did love you ill? Your oaths, my lord,

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 recover. Say thou art mine and ever
My love as it begins shall so persevere.

Diana I see that men may rope's in such a snare
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' the 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' the 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 Here, my lord, from off my finger take
This ring in value equal to your own.
This sweet exchange does signify I yield
To what you will.

Bertram I take it gladly and I steal this kiss –
Now my desire is at its highest pitch.

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.
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 has sworn to marry me
 When his wife is dead. Therefore I'll lie with him
 When I am buried. Since Frenchmen are so braid,
 Marry that will, I'll live and die a maid.

Exit

Dumbshow: The lights change and a clock begins to strike midnight. Helena enters, greets Diana, who indicates the way to her chamber. Helena exits, then Diana leaves another way. Bertram enters, pauses before the house, then climbs the stairs after Helena.

Music replaces the clock chimes

Scene 17 (Act4 Sc3)

The French Camp

Charles enters to find Pierre and two Soldiers

Pierre Where is my lord, the Count? Our swine is caught and ready to squeal.

Charles The Count may detain us a little longer yet. Brother, I will tell you a thing, but let it dwell darkly with you.

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

Charles He hath perverted a young gentlewoman here in Florence, of a most chaste renown, and e'en now he fleshes his will in the spoil of her honour.

Pierre Now, God forgive us - what things are we!

Charles Merely our own traitors. In this action he contrives against his own nobility.

Pierre We shall not then have his company tonight? We will not meddle with Monsieur Parolles till he come; for his presence must be the whip of the other.

Charles Nay, but see – here he comes now.

Enter Bertram

How now, my lord, you have made fast work!

Bertram Ay, I would I could have made slower business, but 'twas sweet, 'twas sweet indeed. But shall we have this dialogue between the

fool and the soldier? Come, bring forth this counterfeit module,
h'as deceiv'd me, like a double-meaning prophesier.

Pierre Bring him forth. H'as sat i' the stocks for three hours, poor gallant
knave.

Exit Soldiers

Bertram How does he carry himself?

Pierre He weeps like a wench that has 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' the
stocks. And what think you he hath confess'd?

Bertram Nothing of me, has'a?

Pierre Well ...

Enter Parolles guarded, and 1st Soldier

Bertram A plague upon him, he can say nothing of me -

Pierre Hush, hush! Hoodman comes! Portotartarosa

1st 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.

1st Soldier Bosko chimurcho.

Pierre Boblibindo chicurmurco.

1st 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.

1st Soldier [*Reads*] First demand of him how many horse the Duke is strong.
What say you to that?

Parolles Five or six thousand.

Charles He's very near the truth in this.

Parolles But very weak and unserviceable. The troops are all scatter'd and
the commanders very poor rogues, upon my reputation and credit
and as I hope to live.

1st 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!

Pierre Y'are deceiv'd, my lord. This is Monsieur Parolles, the gallant
militarist that had the whole theoric of war in the knot of his scarf.

1st Soldier Well, that's set down. 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, Jaques so many, Guiltian, Cosmo, Lodowick and Gratii two hundred and fifty each, mine own company, Chitopher, Vaumond, Bentii two hundred and 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 snow from off their cassocks lest they shake themselves to pieces.

- Bertram* What shall be done to him?
- Charles* Nothing, but let him have thanks. Demand of him my condition and what credit I have with the Duke.
- 1st Soldier* Well, that's set down. You shall demand of him, whether one Captain Charles Dumain be i' the camp, a Frenchman, what his reputation is with the Duke, what his valour, honesty and expertness in wars, or whether he thinks it were not possible, with well-weighing sums of gold, to corrupt him to revolt. What say you to this?
- Parolles* I beseech you let me answer to the particular of the inter'gatories. Demand them singly.
- 1st Soldier* Do you know this Captain Dumain?
- Parolles* I know him. A' was a botcher's 'prentice in Paris, from whence he was whipp'd for getting the Parish fool with child - a dumb innocent that could not say him nay.
- 1st Soldier* Well, is this captain in the Duke of Florence's camp?
- Parolles* Upon my knowledge he is, and lousy.
- Charles* Nay, look not so upon me. We shall hear of your lordship anon.
- 1st 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' the band. I think I have his letter in my pocket.
- 1st 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.
- 1st 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.
- Charles* Excellently.
- 1st Soldier* *Dian,*
The count's a fool, and full of gold -
- Parolles* That is not the Duke's letter, sir. That is a warning to a proper

maid in Florence, one Diana, to take heed of the allurements of one Count Rossillion, a foolish idle boy, but for all that very ruttish. I pray you, sir, put it up again.

1st 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!

1st Soldier *[Reading] Dian,*
The Count's a fool and full of gold, I know it,
Who pays before, but not when he does owe it.
Men are to mell with, boys are not to kiss,
And say a soldier, Dian, told thee this.
Thine as he vow'd to thee in thine ear,
Parolles.

Bertram He shall be whipp'd through the army with this rhyme in's forehead.

1st Soldier I perceive, sir, by the 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' the stocks, or anywhere, so I may live.

1st Soldier We'll see what may be done, so you confess freely. Therefore, once more to this Captain Dumain. You have answer'd 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. He will lie 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 bed-clothes about him, but they know his conditions and lay him in straw.

Pierre I begin to love him for this.

1st Soldier What's his brother, the other Captain Dumain?

Pierre Why does he ask him of me?

1st Soldier What's he?

Parolles E'en a crow o' the same nest. 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.

1st Soldier If your life be sav'd, will you undertake to betray the Florentine?

Parolles Ay, and the captain of his horse, Count Rossillion.

1st 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?
- 1st 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!
- 1st Soldier* That shall you, and take your leave of all your friends. [Unblinding him] So, look about you. Know you any here?
- Bertram* Good morrow, noble captain.
- Pierre* God bless you, Captain Parolles.
- Charles* God save you, noble captain.
- Pierre* Captain, what greeting will you to my Lord Lafew? I am for France.
- Charles* Good captain, will you give me a copy of the sonnet you writ to Diana in behalf of the Count Rossillion? An I were not a very coward, I'd compel it of you. But fare you well.
- Enter the Widow's Servant, dressed as a Monk*
- Servant* [To Bertram] My lord, I commend myself to you. I bring news it were best you hear in private.
- Bertram* I bid you wait. There will be time enough anon.
- Servant* What I must tell you cannot brook delay, my lord.
- Exeunt Bertram and Servant*
- 1st 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?
- 1st Soldier* If you could but find out a country where women were that had receiv'd as much shame, you might begin an impudent nation. Fare ye well, sir. I am for France too. We shall speak of you there.
- Exit all but Parolles*
- 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 18

Enter Bertram and the Widow's Servant

Bertram If it be good or ill, deliver your message.

Servant Sir, your wife some two months since fled from France.

Bertram That title is in ceremony only, not in deed.

Servant In secret she made a pilgrimage to Padua, to the shrine of St Anthony; 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.

Bertram How is this known?

Servant The stronger part of it by her own letters, which makes her story true, even to the point of her death. Her death itself I am come from Padua to confirm.

Bertram Then I have no wife.

Servant No wife, sir. You have gain'd the liberty you crav'd.

Bertram Leave me. Your presence oppresses me.

The Servant withdraws to observe

Helena dead? The playmate of my youth
 Turn'd to dust by my indifference?
 Too fond she was, and I too cold at heart,
 E'en now not mourning but in wanton flight
 From a bed of luxury, a virgin here defil'd.
 Dare I catch my reflection in a glass,
 The visage that returns is blotch'd with sin.
 Botch'd by nature inwardly malform'd,
 While outwardly the world esteems me fair.
 Appetite and pride have at a stroke
 Murder'd the lady and my immortal soul.
 To Rossillion and family now am I fit
 To show my duty and play the hypocrite.

Exit

Scene 19 (Act4 Sc4)

Morning. Outside the Widow's House in Florence
Enter Helena, Widow, Diana and Servant

Helena That you may well perceive I have not wrong'd you,
 The King of France shall be my surety,
 Before whose throne 'tis needful I now kneel.
 Time was, I did him a desired office,
 Dear almost as his life. I duly am inform'd
 He travels to Rossillion, to which we too
 Have convenient convoy. The army breaking,
 My husband, firm in thought that I am dead,
 Now hies him home, where great Heaven aiding,
 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 We must away.
 Our wagon 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 20 (Act4 Sc5)

Rossillion: the Garden
Lavatch (in disarray). Enter Countess & Lafew

Lafew No, no, no, your 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 we had never 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 ow'd her a more rooted love.

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

Lavatch You speak false, your salad is a great promoter of your wind, just as your meat is a promoter of boils. Aye and of fistulae.

Countess I had not known you to favour that word, monsieur.

Lavatch 'Tis a good word, madam, it does describe our course in this world. Shall I conjugate it for you? Your fistulae is the plural, and they do populate the world, your fistula is singular, 'tis the particular of the disease, not the general. They will thrive in the moist parts of a lady or a gentleman, but they fare best betwixt the buttocks. To say more, there is fistular, adjective, to fistulate, a verb -

Lafew Leave off, sir, you say more than the Countess would wish to hear.

Lavatch How now, Monsieur Huguenot? 'Twas good enough to lodge 'twixt the buttocks of the King, yet you would not have it named for fear t'would fright the ladies. Fie on you for a hypocrite.

Lafew Take heed, sirrah! And learn from me that his Majesty's fistula was upon his breast!

Countess Good Lafew, forgive the poor fellow. Did you not know of Monsieur Lavatch?

Lafew Aye, the dancing master. I never knew a man more modest and genteel. Can this be the same?

Lavatch Aye, breast or buttock, handy-dandy, 'tis all one to Lavatch.

Countess To speak plain, he is not in his right mind. He was ever nice in his manners and precise in his person -

Lavatch Nature makes no distinction between your noble or your fool. Your chastity is one with your lechery, chivalry is naught but slaughter in clean britches, and beauty rots while foulness thrives.

Countess The physicians cannot name his affliction, and she that might have cur'd him now is dead.

Lafew But what is the cause?

Countess He did dote upon my son. At Bertram's unkindness to Helen and his fleeing to the war, he became distract, fell into a melancholy and from thence, on hearing of Helen's death, into madness.

- Lafew* Aye, there is much this past year that would make a man mad.
- Lavatch* I lov'd a coxcomb and a rogue. 'Tis that alone that has made me mad.
- Exit*
- Lafew* Not entirely mad. But no more of that, I was about to tell you, after I heard of the good lady's death and that my lord your son was upon his return home, I mov'd the King my master to speak to Bertram in the behalf of my daughter, Madeleine, which in the minority of them both, his Majesty did first propose. His Highness hath promis'd me to do it, and to stop up the displeasure he hath conceiv'd 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.
- Lafew* His Highness comes from Paris of as able body as when he number'd thirty. He will be here tomorrow, or I am deceiv'd.
- Countess* It rejoices me that I shall see him ere I die. I have letters that my son will be here tonight. I shall beseech your lordship to remain with me till they meet together.
- Lafew* Madam, I am at your command.
- Exeunt*

Scene 21 (Act 5 Sc1)

An Inn towards Rossillion

Enter Helena (veiled), Widow, and Diana

- 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 sure you do so grow in my requital
As nothing can unroot you. In happy time
We shall attain Rossillion tonight.
- Enter the Old Lord & a Young Lord*
- This gentleman may help me to his Majesty's ear,
If he would spend his power. God save you, sir.
- Old Lord* And you, good ladies.
- Helena* Sir, I have seen you in the court of France.
- Old Lord* I have been sometimes there.
- Helena* Makes the King to Rossillion?
- Old Lord* He does. We follow but a day behind him.

Helena What brings him there, my lord?

Old Lord An embassy of sadness and of joy,
Of reconciliation in the midst of loss.
Bertram of Rossillion, that in the pride of youth
Cast off the wife beloved of the king
Returns widower to his inheritance.

Helena The lady's dead?

Old Lord Aye she is. In life he caused her sorrow,
Yet in her death is he once more forgiv'n.

Helena Did he pity the lady at the end?

Old Lord Though cruelly he spurn'd her when she liv'd
In death 'tis said his sorrow is sincere.

Helena 'Tis a sad story.

Old Lord The saddest there is. It will outlive these times,
It will be told by mothers to their young.
In years to come, upon a winter's night.

Helena Sir, the tale is not done yet.
By that same Bertram is this lady wrong'd.

Old Lord I grieve to hear it, for by most sure report
He is to wed again.

Helena Bertram, to be married?

Old Lord The daughter of the worthy Lord Lafew
Shall be his wife. Oh, we must rue these times
When youth makes fashion out of every vice
And wantonness will pass for gallantry.

Helena I do presume, sir, that you are not fallen
From the report that goes upon your goodness.
Will it please you, sir, with most urgent haste,
To take this poor petition to the King,
And aid me with that store of power you have
To come into his presence? It shall arrest
A grave mischance that would befall them both.
More I cannot say. It shall render you
No blame, but rather make you bless your pains.

Old Lord This I will do for you.

Helena And you shall find yourself to be well thank'd.
We will come after you with what good speed
Our means will make us means. Farewell, sir.
Come, to Rossillion!

Exeunt, severally

Scene 22 (Act5 Sc2)

The Garden at Rossillion

Enter Lavatch, Parolles (now dressed as a beggar) following

- Lavatch* Prithee, allow the wind.
- Parolles* Good Monsieur Lavatch, sweet Monsieur Lavatch, give my Lord Lafew 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, muddied in Fortune's mood and smell somewhat strong of her strong displeasure.
- Lavatch* Fortune's displeasure offends the nostrils. Stand farther off, I beseech.
- Parolles* Nay, you need not to stop your nose, sir. I spake but by a metaphor.
- Lavatch* Aye but your stench is literal enough. Will you measure swords, monsieur? Lavatch will be pleas'd to do you the service of cutting off your nose.
- Parolles* Nay, sir! Sweet sir, I do reproach myself if ever I spoke ill of you. 'Twas but a satire of the times, aimed at the general, not at you. Pray you, sir, deliver me this paper.
- Lavatch* You do offend my nose and eyes. Mark you, I too have fallen from fortune's favour and so dislike myself as I do you. I could wish myself dead and my body a banquet for maggots. Yet, do but inhale and you will see that I smell as fresh and pleasingly as ever I did. Monsieur, your ragged clothing disgraces you. Despair must not make us less nice in these matters.
- Parolles* You are mistaken, Monsieur. You are now as I am. Your clothes are so disorder'd, and if my nose is true, your fragrance is as evil as mine. We are one, Monsieur. Let me be your glass, and you will see the true reflection of yourself.
- Enter Lafew, who observes the pantomime*
- Lavatch* O, 'tis true! Lavatch is become a beggar, unpleasing to the eye and to the nose. I'll go home to soap and water. I'll amend my wardrobe -
- Parolles* But my letter, monsieur?
- Lavatch* Foh, stand away. I meddle no more in any man's affairs but my own. Before the flood o'erwhelms us, I'll wear clean linen once more.
- Exit*
- Parolles* My lord, I am a man whom Fortune hath cruelly scratch'd.
- Lafew* 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.

Lafew You beg a single penny more. Come, you shall ha't. Save your word.

Parolles My name, my good lord, is Parolles.

Lafew 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!

Lafew 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.

Trumpets sound from afar

Lafew Out upon thee, knave, dost thou put upon me at once both the office of God and the devil? One brings thee in grace and the other brings thee out. The King's coming. 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 23 (Act5 Sc3)

The Great Hall at Rossillion

Enter King, Countess, Lafew, the Dumains and Lavatch

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' the blade 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.

Lafew 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 we do bury
 The incensing relics of it. Let him approach,
 A stranger, no offender, and inform him
 So 'tis our will he should.

Pierre I shall, my liege.

Exit

King What says he to your daughter? Have you spoke?

Lafew All that he is is obedient to your Highness.

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

Enter Bertram with Pierre

Lafew 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-repenting 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 a herald of my tongue,
 Sire, well you know that once I had a wife

Whose virtue in the hotness of my youth
I did abjure. Thence, to my shame, 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.
Be this sweet Helen's knell, and now forget her.
Send forth your amorous token for fair Madeleine.
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, please!
Or, ere they meet, in me, O nature, cease!

Lafew Come on, my son, give a favour from you
To sparkle in the spirits of my daughter,
That she may haste her here.

Bertram gives a ring

By my old beard,
And every 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
Necessitied 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 at our last sad meeting.
And she reckon'd it at her life's rate.

Lafew 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. When I had inform'd her
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,
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!
- Enter the Old Lord*
- 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. Thou didst hate her
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.
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 yet she never was.
- King* Away with him! I am wrapp'd in dismal thinkings.
- Exit Bertram, guarded*
- Old Lord* My Lord
Whether I am to blame or no, I know not.
Here's a petition from a Florentine,
That would, it seems, concern your ward and his
Unhappy conduct in the Tuscan wars.
I undertook to deliver it, vanquish'd
By the fair grace and speech of her companion.
They are by this, I know, attending.
- King* (*Reading*) Upon his many protestations to marry me when his wife
was dead, I blush to say it, he won me. Now is the Count

Rossillion 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.

Lafew I will buy me a son-in-law in a fair for this. I'll none of him.

King The heavens have thought well on thee, Lafew,
To bring forth this discovery. Seek these suitors.
Go speedily and bring again the Count.

Exit Pierre

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

Countess Now, justice on the doers!

Re-enter Bertram, guarded by Charles and Pierre

King I wonder, sir, since 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, sire, 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 interchange of rings am so embodied yours
That she which marries you must marry me,
Either both or none.

Lafew Your reputation comes too short for my daughter. You are no
husband for her.

Bertram My lord, this is a fond and desperate 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' the camp,
If I be one.
- Countess* He blushes, and 'tis hit.
Of six preceding ancestors, that gem,
Conferr'd by testament to the sequent issue,
Hath it been ow'd and worn. This is his wife.
That ring's a thousand proofs.
- King* Is there any
You can call to witness what you say to us?
- Diana* His man Parolles 'twas that went between us.
- Lafew* I saw the man today, if man he be.
He's e'en now at a humble pie i' the kitchen.
- King* Find him and bring him hither.
- Exit Lafew*
- Bertram* What of him?
He's quoted for a most perfidious slave
With all the spots o' the 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 any thing?
- King* She hath that ring of yours.
- Bertram* I think she has. Certain it is I lik'd her
And boarded her i' the 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,
 Subdued 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 & Lafew

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,
 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 the 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.
- Lafew* 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 knowest?
- Parolles* Yes, so please your majesty. I did go between them, as I said. But more than that, he lov'd 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.
- Lafew* This woman's an easy glove, my lord. She goes off 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* 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.

King She does abuse our ears. To prison with her.

Diana Good mother, fetch my bail. Stay, sir, stay.

Exit Widow

The jeweller that owns 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.

Enter Widow, with Helena, followed by Lavatch, clean & tidy once more

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 This joy I feel is overwhelm'd with shame.
 In you I see redemption, love and hope.
 In me you see a spotted perjur'd soul
 With scarce the breath to beg your pardon here.

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 ...' This is done.
 Will you be mine, now you are doubly won?

Bertram If you will have me, let me first repent -

Helena Nay, you must take me freely, not as a penitent.

Bertram Then I consent, and will strive to win thee.
 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?

- Lafew* 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.
- Exit Parolles*
Music plays
- King* Let us from point to point this story know,
 To make the even truth in pleasure flow.
[To Diana] If thou be'st 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 keep'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.
- Countess* What, Monsieur Lavatch, now do you slip away?
- Bertram* Nay, my old tutor -
- Helena* And my last suitor, we pray that you will stay.
- Lavatch* Madam, I cannot.
- Countess* We need your skill. Cast off your melancholy,
 Tune our spirits, bring us harmony.
- Lafew* If it contents you, I propose we choose
 St Vitus, not Cecilia as our muse.
 You've taught your charge to dance, I do believe.
 Instruct us now -
- Countess* Your skill shall show us how.
- Lavatch* As you command, yet if you'll give me leave -
 Save for this dance, Lavatch no more shall teach.
 Pray assemble, join hands each to each
 Attend the music, let us now begin.
 Good, sir, you lead, with upward tilt of chin.
 Remember Bertram, left foot forward! Madam, no,
 Extend your wrist and arch it. See. Just so.
 And ...
- They dance*
- A dance moves at its own sweet order'd pace
 Stillness in motion, comeliness in grace.
 Our Pavane's a tale that's not yet told
 In every step its story does unfold.
 The past and future hide in every turn,
 In graceful execution may we learn
 To know ourselves. So says Lavatch.
 Come, all advance once more -

Bertram *(To Helena)* Though all I am to you I do attach
If e're I may deserve thee, I cannot tell.

Lavatch A life may turn twixt footfall and the floor.

Helena In this eternal instant, all is well.

They dance on as Lavatch exits unseen

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