

All's Well that Ends Well abbreviated

Act 1, Scene 1

Humor

Situation: Bertram has left for Paris. Bertram's friend Parolles enters and asks Helen "Are you meditating on virginity?" She knows him for who he is and asks him how women might protect themselves against the advances of men.

HELEN: You have some trace of soldier in you. Man is enemy to virginity. How may we fortify ourselves against him?

PAROLLES: Keep him out.

HELEN: But he assails, and we, though valiant in the defense, yet are weak. Unfold to us some warlike resistance.

PAROLLES: There is none. It is not judicious in the commonwealth of nature to preserve virginity.

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

Parolles to Helen

There's little that can be said for it. 'Tis
True that to speak for virginity is
To accuse your mothers, which is certain
Disobedience. And virginity
Is made of self-love, the most forbidden
Sin in the book. 'Tis a commodity;
The longer it's kept, the less it's worth. 'Tis
Too cold a mate; out with it while it is
Capable to be sold in the flower
Of life when there's demand for such beauty.
Old virginity is like one of our
Forsaken French withered pears, formerly
Better. Virginity extracts a cost;
By being e'er kept, it is ever lost.