

All's Well that Ends Well abbreviated

Act 2, Scene 3

Insight

Situation: Bertram has returned to Paris and Helen has “cured” the king, saying “heaven hath through me restored the king to health.” A grateful king says to Helen “who shuns thy love shuns all his love in me.” Earlier he had agreed, conditioned on her curing him, with her request that “thou give me with thy kingly hand what husband in thy power I will command.”

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 raised me from my sickly bed.

BERTRAM: But follows it, my lord, to bring me down must answer for your raising? I know her well. A poor physician's daughter my wife?

KING: 'Tis only lack of title thou disdain'st in her, the which I can build up.

King to Bertram, No. 2

'Tis strange that our bloods poured all together
Could not be distinguished, yet do sever
Us mightily. If she but be to you
“A poor physician's daughter,” then you've tied
This maid, if she be all that is virtue,
To a name. Low places are dignified
By th' doer's deed. Good alone is good
Without a name; the nature of it should
Not be known by the title. She is fair,
Young and wise, attributes that breed honor,
Leaving little more to ask of this heir
To nature. If with this maid you seek more,
I can create the more. Virtue and she
Are one; honor and wealth she gets from me.

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

KING: Thou wrong'st thyself if thou shouldst strive to have your own way.