

All's Well that Ends Well abbreviated

Act 1, Scene 3

Mother to Daughter

Situation: The Countess, Bertram's mother, is as a surrogate mother to Helen, telling her steward "her father bequeathed her to me." Helen enters and gets upset when the Countess says "I am a mother to you." Helen is worried that if that were so Bertram might be considered her brother.

HELEN: Pardon, madam. The Count Rossillion cannot be my brother. I am from humble, he from honored name; no distinction attached to my parents, his all noble. He must not be my brother.

COUNTESS: Nor I your mother?

HELEN: Would you were --- so that my lord your son were not my brother --- indeed my mother! Or were you both our mothers, so I were not his sister. There is no other option 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 has caught your love for Bertram.

Countess to Helen

The mystery of your sadness now appears
As does what is the source of your salt tears,
And to all my senses 'tis now clear: you
Love my son. For you to say thou dost not
Misrepresents the truth as proclaimed through
Thy passion. Therefore, if Bertram has caught
Your heart tell me true and tell me then 'tis
So, for look, your cheeks confess what seems is
So, and thine eyes see it as clearly shown
In thy behavior. In their way each eye
Doth speak it. Thy obstinate tongue alone
Doth act to keep truth secret. However, I
Charge thee: heaven will work through me as one
To fill your wishes. Do you love my son?

HELEN: Do not you love him, madam?