

All's Well That Ends Well

Act 1, Scene 3

In this scene, the Countess finds out that her young ward, Helen, has fallen in love with her son, the young Count. A relationship between a commoner and a lord would be a great breach of etiquette, but the Countess gives a surprised Helen her blessing.

Helen **Countess**
Lavache **Rinalda**

Rousillon. The COUNT's palace.

Enter Lavache

LAVACHE
For I the ballad will repeat,
Which men full true shall find;
Your marriage comes by destiny,
Your cuckoo sings by kind.

Enter Countess and Rinalda

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

RINALDA
May it please you, madam,
That he bid Helen come to you.

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

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

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

LAVACHE
One good woman in ten, madam;
Which is a purifying o' the song:
Would God serve the world
So all the year!

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

LAVACHE
That man should be at woman's
command,
And yet no hurt done...
I am going, forsooth!

Exit

COUNTESS Well, now.

RINALDA
I know, madam,
You love your gentlewoman entirely.

COUNTESS
Faith, I do:
her father bequeathed her to me;
And she herself,
without other advantage,
May lawfully make title
To as much love as she finds.

RINALDA
Madam, I was very late more near her
Than I think she wished me.
Alone she was, and did communicate
To herself her own words
to her own ears;
Her matter was, she loved your son.
This she delivered
In the most bitter touch of sorrow
That e'er I heard maiden exclaim.

COUNTESS

You have discharged this honestly;
Keep it to yourself:
Many likelihoods informed me of this
before,
And I thank you for your honest care.
I will speak with you further anon.

Exit RINALDA, enter HELENA

COUNTESS

Even so it was with me
when I was young.
This thorn doth to our rose of youth
Rightly belong;
It is the show and seal of nature's truth.
By our remembrances of days foregone,
Such were our faults,
or then we thought them none.

HELEN

What is your pleasure, madam?

COUNTESS

You know, Helen, I am a mother to you.

HELEN

Mine honorable 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.

HELEN

Pardon, madam;
The Count Rousillon
cannot be my brother:
I am from humble,
he from honored 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

Now I see the mystery of your
loneliness,
and find your salt tears' head.
You love my son. Speak, is't so?

HELEN

Good madam, pardon me!

COUNTESS

Do you love my son?

HELEN

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.
I know I love in vain,
strive against hope;
My dearest madam,
Let not your hate encounter
with my love
For loving where you do.

COUNTESS

Why, Helen, thou shalt have
my leave and love,
I'll pray God's blessing into thy attempt:
Be sure of this,
What I can help thee to...
Thou shalt not miss!

Exeunt