

All's Well That Ends Well

SYNOPSIS

All's Well That Ends Well

Helen is an orphan whose father was a doctor. She now lives with the Countess of Rossillion, a widow. Helen is in love with the Countess's son Bertram, but he thinks he is too good for her. Helen follows Bertram to court, where she is able to cure the King of a sickness everyone thinks will be fatal. The King rewards her by saying she can marry anyone she chooses. She chooses Bertram, and the King forces him to marry her, but he refuses to sleep with her and leaves for the Italian wars, accompanied by his boastful friend Parolles. Bertram says he will only accept Helen if she obtains a ring from his finger and becomes pregnant with his child.

Helen goes to Italy disguised as a pilgrim, and finds that Bertram is trying to seduce Diana, a widow's daughter, but she and Diana arrange a 'bed trick' to make Bertram think he is sleeping with Diana when it is in fact Helen. At the same time a 'kidnapping trick' humiliates Parolles.

The Countess is shocked when she discovers how her son has behaved, but is pleased that Helen's cleverness and persistence have made sure that Bertram's conditions have been fulfilled, so that he must finally accept her.

Media:**DVD:**

All's Well That Ends Well (BBC TV Shakespeare 1981), dir. Elijah Moshinsky

Not available:

All's Well That Ends Well (1968), dir. John Barton

All's Well That Ends Well (NT live, 2009), dir. Marianne Elliott

CD Audio:

All's Well That Ends Well (BBC Radio Collection)

All's Well That Ends Well (Arkangel Complete Shakespeare)

[Michael Mitchell]