

# All's Well That Ends Well

## Act I, sc. 1

**KING:** 'Tis only title thou disdain'st in her, the which I can build up. Strange is it that our bloods, Of colour, weight, and heat, pour'd all together, Would quite confound distinction, yet stand off In differences so mighty. If she be All that is virtuous, save what thou dislikest, A poor physician's daughter, thou dislikest Of virtue for the name: but do not so: From lowest place when virtuous things proceed, The place is dignified by the doer's deed: Where great additions swell's, and virtue none, It is a dropsied honour. Good alone Is good without a name. Vileness is so: The property by what it is should go, Not by the title. She is young, wise, fair; In these to nature she's immediate heir, And these breed honour: that is honour's scorn, Which challenges itself as honour's born And is not like the sire: honours thrive, When rather from our acts we them derive Than our foregoers: the mere word's a slave Debosh'd on every tomb, on every grave A lying trophy, and as oft is dumb Where dust and damn'd oblivion is the tomb Of honour'd bones indeed. What should be said? If thou canst like this creature as a maid, I can create the rest: virtue and she Is her own dower; honour and wealth from me.

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

**KING:** Thou wrong'st thyself, if thou shouldst strive to choose.

**HELENA:** That you are well restored, my lord, I'm glad: Let the rest go.

**KING:** My honour's at the stake; which to defeat,  
I must produce my power. Here, take her hand,  
Proud scornful boy, unworthy this good gift;  
That dost in vile misprision shackle up  
My love and her desert; that canst not dream,  
We, poisoning us in her defective scale,  
Shall weigh thee to the beam; that wilt not know,  
It is in us to plant thine honour where  
We please to have it grow. Cheque thy contempt:  
Obey our will, which travails in thy good:  
Believe not thy disdain, but presently  
Do thine own fortunes that obedient right  
Which both thy duty owes and our power claims;  
Or I will throw thee from my care for ever  
Into the staggers and the careless lapse  
Of youth and ignorance; both my revenge and hate  
Loosing upon thee, in the name of justice,  
Without all terms of pity. Speak; thine answer.