



All's Well That Ends Well Plot Summary

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Here is a short plot summary of All's Well That Ends Well:

Bertram, the son of a widowed countess sets off from Roussilon with his friend, Parolles, and the Lord Lafeu, to the French court. He is the ward of the French king. He is unaware that Helena, orphan daughter of the countess' physician, raised in the household of the countess, is in love with him. The countess gives her permission to try and cure the king's illness. No-one has been able to cure him but Helena succeeds and, as a reward, the king invites her to choose a husband from among his wards. She chooses Bertram. Bertram's ambitions for a wife go beyond her, however, and although he marries her on the king's orders, he runs away with Parolles to fight in the wars in Italy. He writes a letter to Helena, telling her that he will not recognise the marriage until she can demonstrate that she is wearing his heirloom ring and carrying his child.

Helena goes home and prepares to seek Bertram out. She disguises herself as a pilgrim and goes to Florence where she is befriended by a widow and her daughter, Diana. In the meantime Bertram has fallen in love with Diana.

Helena fakes her death and Bertram returns to the French court. His mother and Lafeu, also believing Helena to be dead, arrange for Bertram to marry Lafeu's daughter. Bertram gives Lafeu a ring that Helena, as Diana, had given him at the late night meeting in Florence and it becomes apparent that it is the ring that the king had given Helena on her marriage to Bertram.

In the midst of the confusion Diana arrives with Bertram's ring and accuses him of seducing and abandoning her. Bertram denies it but Lafeu withdraws his daughter from the marriage. The king orders that Diana be taken to prison but then Helena appears as a witness to the truth of Diana's story. She is pregnant and her story soon comes out. Bertram accepts her as his wife. The king offers Diana a choice of husbands from among his courtiers, with a rich dowry. The play ends with everyone being more or less satisfied.

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