COUNTESS In delivering my son from me, I bury a second husband. BERTRAM And I in going, madam, weep o'er my father's death anew: but I must attend his majesty's command, to whom I am now in ward, evermore in subjection. LAFEU You shall find of the king a husband, madam; you, sir, a father: he that so generally is at all times good must of necessity hold his virtue to you; whose worthiness would stir it up where it wanted rather than lack it where there is such abundance. COUNTESS What hope is there of his majesty's amendment? LAFEU He hath abandoned his physicians, madam; under whose practises he hath persecuted time with hope, and finds no other advantage in the process but only the losing of hope by time. COUNTESS This young gentlewoman had a father,--O, that 'had'! how sad a passage 'tis!--whose skill was almost as great as his honesty; had it stretched so far, would have made nature immortal, and death should have play for lack of work. Would, for the king's sake, he were living! I think it would be the death of the king's disease. LAFEU How called you the man you speak of, madam? COUNTESS He was famous, sir, in his profession, and it was his great right to be so: Gerard de Narbon. LAFEU He was excellent indeed, madam: the king very lately spoke of him admiringly and mourningly: he was skilful enough to have lived still, if knowledge could be set up against mortality. BERTRAM What is it, my good lord, the king languishes of? LAFEU A fistula, my lord. BERTRAM I heard not of it before. LAFEU I would it were not notorious. Was this gentlewoman the daughter of Gerard de Narbon? COUNTESS His sole child, my lord, and bequeathed to my overlooking. I have those hopes of her good that her education promises; her dispositions she inherits, which makes fair gifts fairer; for where an unclean mind carries virtuous qualities, there commendations go with pity; they are virtues and traitors too; in her they are the better for their simpleness; she derives her honesty and achieves her goodness. LAFEU Your commendations, madam, get from her tears. COUNTESS 'Tis the best brine a maiden can season her praise in. The remembrance of her father never approaches her heart but the tyranny of her sorrows takes all livelihood from her cheek. No more of this, Helena; go to, no more; lest it be rather thought you affect a sorrow than have it. HELENA I do affect a sorrow indeed, but I have it too. LAFEU Moderate lamentation is the right of the dead, excessive grief the enemy to the living. COUNTESS If the living be enemy to the grief, the excess makes it soon mortal. BERTRAM Madam, I desire your holy wishes. LAFEU How understand we that? COUNTESS Be thou blest, Bertram, and succeed thy father In manners, as in shape! thy blood and virtue Contend for empire in thee, and thy goodness Share with thy birthright! Love all, trust a few, Do wrong to none: be able for thine enemy Rather in power than use, and keep thy friend Under thy own life's key: be cheque'd for silence, But never tax'd for speech. What heaven more will, That thee may furnish and my prayers pluck down, Fall on thy head! Farewell, my lord; 'Tis an unseason'd courtier; good my lord, Advise him. LAFEU He cannot want the best That shall attend his love. COUNTESS Heaven bless him! Farewell, Bertram. BERTRAM [To HELENA] The best wishes that can be forged in your thoughts be servants to you! Be comfortable to my mother, your mistress, and make much of her. LAFEU Farewell, pretty lady: you must hold the credit of your father. HELENA O, were that all! I think not on my father; And these great tears grace his remembrance more Than those I shed for him. What was he like? I have forgot him: my imagination Carries no favour in't but Bertram's. I am undone: there is no living, none, If Bertram be away. 'Twere all one That I should love a bright particular star And think to wed it, he is so above me: In his bright radiance and collateral light Must I be comforted, not in his sphere. The ambition in my love thus plagues itself: The hind that would be mated by the lion Must die for love. 'Twas pretty, though plague, To see him every hour; to sit and draw His arched brows, his hawking eye, his curls, In our heart's table; heart too capable Of every line and trick of his sweet favour: But now he's gone, and my idolatrous fancy Must sanctify his reliques. Who comes here? One that goes with him: I love him for his sake; And yet I know him a notorious liar, Think him a great way fool, solely a coward; Yet these fixed evils sit so fit in him, That they take place, when virtue's steely bones Look bleak i' the cold wind: withal, full oft we see Cold wisdom waiting on superfluous folly. PAROLLES Save you, fair queen! HELENA And you, monarch! PAROLLES No. HELENA And no. PAROLLES Are you meditating on virginity? HELENA Ay. You have some stain of soldier in you: let me ask you a question. Man is enemy to virginity; how may we barricado it against him? PAROLLES Keep him out. HELENA But he assails; and our virginity, though valiant, in the defence yet is weak: unfold to us some warlike resistance. PAROLLES There is none: man, sitting down before you, will undermine you and blow you up. HELENA Bless our poor virginity from underminers and blowers up! Is there no military policy, how virgins might blow up men? PAROLLES Virginity being blown down, man will quicklier be blown up: marry, in blowing him down again, with the breach yourselves made, you lose your city. It is not politic in the commonwealth of nature to preserve virginity. Loss of virginity is rational increase and there was never virgin got till virginity was first lost. That you were made of is metal to make virgins. Virginity by being once lost may be ten times found; by being ever kept, it is ever lost: 'tis too cold a companion; away with 't! HELENA I will stand for 't a little, though therefore I die a virgin. PAROLLES There's little can be said in 't; 'tis against the rule of nature. To speak on the part of virginity, is to accuse your mothers; which is most infallible disobedience. He that hangs himself is a virgin: virginity murders itself and should be buried in highways out of all sanctified limit, as a desperate offendress against nature. Virginity breeds mites, much like a cheese; consumes itself to the very paring, and so dies with feeding his own stomach. Besides, virginity is peevish, proud, idle, made of self-love, which is the most inhibited sin in the canon. Keep it not; you cannot choose but loose by't: out with 't! within ten year it will make itself ten, which is a goodly increase; and the principal itself not much the worse: away with 't! HELENA How might one do, sir, to lose it to her own liking? PAROLLES Let me see: marry, ill, to like him that ne'er it likes. 'Tis a commodity will lose the gloss with lying; the longer kept, the less worth: off with 't while 'tis vendible; answer the time of request. Virginity, like an old courtier, wears her cap out of fashion: richly suited, but unsuitable: just like the brooch and the tooth-pick, which wear not now. Your date is better in your pie and your porridge than in your cheek; and your virginity, your old virginity, is like one of our French withered pears, it looks ill, it eats drily; marry, 'tis a withered pear; it was formerly better; marry, yet 'tis a withered pear: will you anything with it? HELENA Not my virginity yet [ ] There shall your master have a thousand loves, A mother and a mistress and a friend, A phoenix, captain and an enemy, A guide, a goddess, and a sovereign, A counsellor, a traitress, and a dear; His humble ambition, proud humility, His jarring concord, and his discord dulcet, His faith, his sweet disaster; with a world Of pretty, fond, adoptious christendoms, That blinking Cupid gossips. Now shall he-- I know not what he shall. God send him well! The court's a learning place, and he is one-- PAROLLES What one, i' faith? HELENA That I wish well. 'Tis pity-- PAROLLES What's pity? HELENA That wishing well had not a body in't, Which might be felt; that we, the poorer born, Whose baser stars do shut us up in wishes, Might with effects of them follow our friends, And show what we alone must think, which never Return us thanks. Page Monsieur Parolles, my lord calls for you. PAROLLES Little Helen, farewell; if I can remember thee, I will think of thee at court. HELENA Monsieur Parolles, you were born under a charitable star. PAROLLES Under Mars, I. HELENA I especially think, under Mars. PAROLLES Why under Mars? HELENA The wars have so kept you under that you must needs be born under Mars. PAROLLES When he was predominant. HELENA When he was retrograde, I think, rather. PAROLLES Why think you so? HELENA You go so much backward when you fight. PAROLLES That's for advantage. HELENA So is running away, when fear proposes the safety; but the composition that your valour and fear makes in you is a virtue of a good wing, and I like the wear well. PAROLLES I am so full of businesses, I cannot answer thee acutely. I will return perfect courtier; in the which, my instruction shall serve to naturalize thee, so thou wilt be capable of a courtier's counsel and understand what advice shall thrust upon thee; else thou diest in thine unthankfulness, and thine ignorance makes thee away: farewell. When thou hast leisure, say thy prayers; when thou hast none, remember thy friends; get thee a good husband, and use him as he uses thee; so, farewell. HELENA Our remedies oft in ourselves do lie, Which we ascribe to heaven: the fated sky Gives us free scope, only doth backward pull Our slow designs when we ourselves are dull. What power is it which mounts my love so high, That makes me see, and cannot feed mine eye? The mightiest space in fortune nature brings To join like likes and kiss like native things. Impossible be strange attempts to those That weigh their pains in sense and do suppose What hath been cannot be: who ever strove So show her merit, that did miss her love? The king's disease--my project may deceive me, KING The Florentines and Senoys are by the ears; Have fought with equal fortune and continue A braving war. First Lord So 'tis reported, sir. KING Nay, 'tis most credible; we here received it A certainty, vouch'd from our cousin Austria, With caution that the Florentine will move us For speedy aid; wherein our dearest friend Prejudicates the business and would seem To have us make denial. First Lord His love and wisdom, Approved so to your majesty, may plead For amplest credence. KING He hath arm'd our answer, And Florence is denied before he comes: Yet, for our gentlemen that mean to see The Tuscan service, freely have they leave To stand on either part. Second Lord It well may serve A nursery to our gentry, who are sick For breathing and exploit. KING What's he comes here? First Lord It is the Count Rousillon, my good lord, Young Bertram. KING Youth, thou bear'st thy father's face; Frank nature, rather curious than in haste, Hath well composed thee. Thy father's moral parts Mayst thou inherit too! Welcome to Paris. BERTRAM My thanks and duty are your majesty's. KING I would I had that corporal soundness now, As when thy father and myself in friendship First tried our soldiership! He did look far Into the service of the time and was Discipled of the bravest: he lasted long; But on us both did haggish age steal on And wore us out of act. It much repairs me To talk of your good father. In his youth He had the wit which I can well observe To-day in our young lords; but they may jest Till their own scorn return to them unnoted Ere they can hide their levity in honour; So like a courtier, contempt nor bitterness Were in his pride or sharpness; if they were, His equal had awaked them, and his honour, Clock to itself, knew the true minute when Exception bid him speak, and at this time His tongue obey'd his hand: who were below him He used as creatures of another place And bow'd his eminent top to their low ranks, Making them proud of his humility, In their poor praise he humbled. Such a man Might be a copy to these younger times; Which, follow'd well, would demonstrate them now But goers backward. BERTRAM His good remembrance, sir, Lies richer in your thoughts than on his tomb; So in approof lives not his epitaph As in your royal speech. KING Would I were with him! He would always say-- Methinks I hear him now; his plausive words He scatter'd not in ears, but grafted them, To grow there and to bear,--'Let me not live,'-- This his good melancholy oft began, On the catastrophe and heel of pastime, When it was out,--'Let me not live,' quoth he, 'After my flame lacks oil, to be the snuff Of younger spirits, whose apprehensive senses All but new things disdain; whose judgments are Mere fathers of their garments; whose constancies Expire before their fashions.' This he wish'd; I after him do after him wish too, Since I nor wax nor honey can bring home, I quickly were dissolved from my hive, To give some labourers room. Second Lord You are loved, sir: They that least lend it you shall lack you first. KING I fill a place, I know't. How long is't, count, Since the physician at your father's died? He was much famed. BERTRAM Some six months since, my lord. KING If he were living, I would try him yet. Lend me an arm; the rest have worn me out With several applications; nature and sickness Debate it at their leisure. Welcome, count; My son's no dearer. BERTRAM

COUNTESS I will now hear; what say you of this gentlewoman? Steward Madam, the care I have had to even your content, I wish might be found in the calendar of my past endeavours; for then we wound our modesty and make foul the clearness of our deservings, when of ourselves we publish them. COUNTESS What does this knave here? Get you gone, sirrah: the complaints I have heard of you I do not all believe: 'tis my slowness that I do not; for I know you lack not folly to commit them, and have ability enough to make such knaveries yours. Clown 'Tis not unknown to you, madam, I am a poor fellow. COUNTESS Well, sir. Clown No, madam, 'tis not so well that I am poor, though many of the rich are damned: but, if I may have your ladyship's good will to go to the world, Isbel the woman and I will do as we may. COUNTESS Wilt thou needs be a beggar? Clown I do beg your good will in this case. COUNTESS In what case? Clown In Isbel's case and mine own. Service is no heritage: and I think I shall never have the blessing of God till I have issue o' my body; for they say barnes are blessings. COUNTESS Tell me thy reason why thou wilt marry. Clown My poor body, madam, requires it: I am driven on by the flesh; and he must needs go that the devil drives. COUNTESS Is this all your worship's reason? Clown Faith, madam, I have other holy reasons such as they are. COUNTESS May the world know them? Clown I have been, madam, a wicked creature, as you and all flesh and blood are; and, indeed, I do marry that I may repent. COUNTESS Thy marriage, sooner than thy wickedness. Clown I am out o' friends, madam; and I hope to have friends for my wife's sake. COUNTESS Such friends are thine enemies, knave. Clown You're shallow, madam, in great friends; for the knaves come to do that for me which I am aweary of. He that ears my land spares my team and gives me leave to in the crop; if I be his cuckold, he's my drudge: he that comforts my wife is the cherisher of my flesh and blood; he that cherishes my flesh and blood loves my flesh and blood; he that loves my flesh and blood is my friend: ergo, he that kisses my wife is my friend. If men could be contented to be what they are, there were no fear in marriage; for young Charbon the Puritan and old Poysam the Papist, howsome'er their hearts are severed in religion, their heads are both one; they may jowl horns together, like any deer i' the herd. COUNTESS Wilt thou ever be a foul-mouthed and calumnious knave? Clown A prophet I, madam; and I speak the truth the next way: For I the ballad will repeat, Which men full true shall find; Your marriage comes by destiny, Your cuckoo sings by kind. COUNTESS Get you gone, sir; I'll talk with you more anon. Steward May it please you, madam, that he bid Helen come to you: of her I am to speak. COUNTESS Sirrah, tell my gentlewoman I would speak with her; Helen, I mean. Clown 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, With that she sighed as she stood, And gave this sentence then; Among nine bad if one be good, 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. Clown One good woman in ten, madam; which is a purifying o' the song: would God would serve the world so all the year! we'ld find no fault with the tithe-woman, if I were the parson. One in ten, quoth a'! An we might have a good woman born but one every blazing star, or at an earthquake, 'twould mend the lottery well: a man may draw his heart out, ere a' pluck one. COUNTESS You'll be gone, sir knave, and do as I command you. Clown That man should be at woman's command, and yet no hurt done! Though honesty be no puritan, yet it will do no hurt; it will wear the surplice of humility over the black gown of a big heart. I am going, forsooth: the business is for Helen to come hither. COUNTESS Well, now. Steward 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: there is more owing her than is paid; and more shall be paid her than she'll demand. Steward 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; she thought, I dare vow for her, they touched not any stranger sense. Her matter was, she loved your son: Fortune, she said, was no goddess, that had put such difference betwixt their two estates; Love no god, that would not extend his might, only where qualities were level; Dian no queen of virgins, that would suffer her poor knight surprised, without rescue in the first assault or ransom afterward. This she delivered in the most bitter touch of sorrow that e'er I heard virgin exclaim in: which I held my duty speedily to acquaint you withal; sithence, in the loss that may happen, it concerns you something to know it. COUNTESS You have discharged this honestly; keep it to yourself: many likelihoods informed me of this before, which hung so tottering in the balance that I could neither believe nor misdoubt. Pray you, leave me: stall this in your bosom; and I thank you for your honest care: I will speak with you further anon. Even so it was with me when I was young: If ever we are nature's, these are ours; this thorn Doth to our rose of youth rightly belong; Our blood to us, this to our blood is born; It is the show and seal of nature's truth, Where love's strong passion is impress'd in youth: By our remembrances of days foregone, Such were our faults, or then we thought them none. Her eye is sick on't: I observe her now. HELENA What is your pleasure, madam? COUNTESS You know, Helen, I am a mother to you. HELENA Mine honourable 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; And put you in the catalogue of those That were enwombed mine: 'tis often seen Adoption strives with nature and choice breeds A native slip to us from foreign seeds: You ne'er oppress'd me with a mother's groan, Yet I express to you a mother's care: God's mercy, maiden! does it curd thy blood To say I am thy mother? What's the matter, That this distemper'd messenger of wet, The many-colour'd Iris, rounds thine eye? Why? that you are my daughter? HELENA That I am not. COUNTESS I say, I am your mother. HELENA Pardon, madam; The Count Rousillon cannot be my brother: I am from humble, he from honour'd 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 Nor I your mother? HELENA You are my mother, madam; would you were,-- So that my lord your son were not my brother,-- Indeed my mother! or were you both our mothers, I care no more for than I do for heaven, So I were not his sister. Can't no other, 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 hath catch'd your fondness: now I see The mystery of your loneliness, and find Your salt tears' head: now to all sense 'tis gross You love my son; invention is ashamed, Against the proclamation of thy passion, To say thou dost not: therefore tell me true; But tell me then, 'tis so; for, look thy cheeks Confess it, th' one to th' other; and thine eyes See it so grossly shown in thy behaviors That in their kind they speak it: only sin And hellish obstinacy tie thy tongue, That truth should be suspected. Speak, is't so? If it be so, you have wound a goodly clew; If it be not, forswear't: howe'er, I charge thee, As heaven shall work in me for thine avail, Tell me truly. HELENA Good madam, pardon me! COUNTESS Do you love my son? HELENA Your pardon, noble mistress! COUNTESS Love you my son? HELENA Do not you love him, madam? COUNTESS Go not about; my love hath in't a bond, Whereof the world takes note: come, come, disclose The state of your affection; for your passions Have to the full appeach'd. HELENA Then, 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: Be not offended; for it hurts not him That he is loved of me: I follow him not By any token of presumptuous suit; Nor would I have him till I do deserve him; Yet never know how that desert should be. I know I love in vain, strive against hope; Yet in this captious and intenible sieve I still pour in the waters of my love And lack not to lose still: thus, Indian-like, Religious in mine error, I adore The sun, that looks upon his worshipper, But knows of him no more. My dearest madam, Let not your hate encounter with my love For loving where you do: but if yourself, Whose aged honour cites a virtuous youth, Did ever in so true a flame of liking Wish chastely and love dearly, that your Dian Was both herself and love: O, then, give pity To her, whose state is such that cannot choose But lend and give where she is sure to lose; That seeks not to find that her search implies, But riddle-like lives sweetly where she dies! COUNTESS Had you not lately an intent,--speak truly,-- To go to Paris? HELENA Madam, I had. COUNTESS Wherefore? tell true. HELENA I will tell truth; by grace itself I swear. You know my father left me some prescriptions Of rare and proved effects, such as his reading And manifest experience had collected For general sovereignty; and that he will'd me In heedfull'st reservation to bestow them, As notes whose faculties inclusive were More than they were in note: amongst the rest, There is a remedy, approved, set down, To cure the desperate languishings whereof The king is render'd lost. COUNTESS This was your motive For Paris, was it? speak. HELENA My lord your son made me to think of this; Else Paris and the medicine and the king Had from the conversation of my thoughts Haply been absent then. COUNTESS But think you, Helen, If you should tender your supposed aid, He would receive it? he and his physicians Are of a mind; he, that they cannot help him, They, that they cannot help: how shall they credit A poor unlearned virgin, when the schools, Embowell'd of their doctrine, have left off The danger to itself? HELENA There's something in't, More than my father's skill, which was the greatest Of his profession, that his good receipt Shall for my legacy be sanctified By the luckiest stars in heaven: and, would your honour But give me leave to try success, I'ld venture The well-lost life of mine on his grace's cure By such a day and hour. COUNTESS Dost thou believe't? HELENA Ay, madam, knowingly. COUNTESS Why, Helen, thou shalt have my leave and love, Means and attendants and my loving greetings To those of mine in court: I'll stay at home And pray God's blessing into thy attempt: Be gone to-morrow; and be sure of this,