

W illiam S hakespeare's

*All's Well That*

*Ends Well*



Tuesday 8<sup>th</sup> December

The Copper Rooms, University of Warwick



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## **Plot Summary**

Helena, the orphaned daughter of a physician, has been adopted by the Countess of Rossillion and is secretly in love with the Countess' son, Bertram. The Countess is aware of this and approves for her to become her daughter-in-law. Bertram, along with his friend Patrolles, is to leave Rossillion for the French court, where the King is gravely ill. Wishing to follow him, Helena journeys to Paris to cure the King of "a [fistula](#)" with one of her father's old remedies.

The King recovers and grants Helena as reward the choice of a husband from all the Lords at court. She asks for Bertram, who is outraged at being commanded to marry a woman he sees as little better than a servant. The King rebukes him for his pride and insists that he marry Helena. The ceremony goes ahead but Bertram leaves immediately for the Italian wars with Patrolles, commanding Helena return to Rossillion with letters for the Countess. In these he vows that he will not accept Helena as his wife until she has conceived his child and obtained from him a ring - two seemingly impossible conditions.

Bertram travels to Florence, where he is quickly promoted. There he meets, falls for and plans to seduce Diana, a widow's daughter. Helena too travels to Florence, as a pilgrim and she too meets Diana. Helena convinces Diana to let her take Diana's place in Bertram's bed. Bertram goes to Diana's bed, but Helena is the woman he unknowingly sleeps with. She falls pregnant by him and manages to get his ring, fulfilling the vow he had made. In the meantime Patrolles is caught acting dishonestly, highlighting his true character to Bertram who ends his friendship with him.

News reaches Bertram that Helena is dead. Relieved, he returns to France and the Court in Paris. There he makes plans to marry the daughter of a Lord - but Diana reappears to denounce him, saying he promised her marriage only to desert her. Bertram angrily denies her accusations and is about to have her arrested when Helena enters, wearing Bertram's ring and pregnant with his child. His conditions have been met and he has no choice but to accept Helena as his wife.

## **Characters:**

**Bertram (French):** The self-Centred and immature Count of Roussillon, who rejects Helena, the woman who loves him because of her inferior social status. He flees to the Italian War, where he quickly raises through the ranks.

**Countess of Roussillon (French):** Kindly and level-headed mother of Bertram. She gives her support to Helena's love of Bertram and is saddened by his rejection of her.

**Helena (French):** Orphaned daughter of a physician, protected by the Countess; she is in love with Bertram even though he believes she is not good enough for him. When he leaves his home in

Roussillon to make his mark in Paris at the court of the King of France, she later follows him in hopes of winning his love.

**King of France (French):** He suffers from a chronic ailment which Helena, schooled in the healing arts, has the power to cure. Once cured he grants her the hand of any man in the court she wishes.

**Duke of Florence (Florence):** Figure of authority on the Italian front and admirer of Bertram.  
*(Possibly to be cut)*

**Parolles (French):** Follower of Bertram. He likes to portray himself around court as a war hero. He is a bad influence on the young man and is, in part, responsible for Bertram's less than gentlemanly behaviour.

**Lafeu (French):** An old lord in the Court of Roussillon. He warns Bertram that Parolles is a coward.

**Lords (French):** Two figures who leave the Court for the Italian front. They are the voice the audience identify with, often discussing the events that are taking place around them.

**Lavatch (French):** Clown for the Countess of Roussillon.

**Steward (French):** For the Countess of Roussillon

**Old Widow, Capilet (Florence):** She takes Helena in when she arrives in Florence

**Diana (Florence):** Daughter of the Widow. Diana cooperates with Helena in a scheme to trick Bertram into pledging his love for Helena.

**Violenta, Mariana (Florence):** Neighbours and friends of the Widow.

**A Page (French)**

**Minor Characters:** Officers, Soldiers, Gentlemen (French and Florentine).

## **Production History**

*All's Well That Ends Well's* history is one mired in mystery, with no precise date for its composition. The first record of it is in the First Folio, its first recorded performance being in 1741 at the Goodman's Fields Theatre. It has been attributed to Love's Labour's Won, written in 1598, but it is likely that it is one of Shakespeare's early Jacobean plays, written in 1603, after *Othello* and *Measure for Measure*. Until 20<sup>th</sup> century the play moved from a farce, with Patroclus made the primary focus and Helena's role significantly reduced, before shifting to a sentimental romance with Helena the focus of the play, before being rejected during the Victorian era due to its topic of virginity and the inclusion of bed tricks.

It was only embraced back into the establishment in 1895 and led to a fruitful history of interpretation during the 20<sup>th</sup> century. These ranged from a 20s production that shifted the play to a social morality play about women's emancipation, to a fairy tale version from the 50s and a poorly received dark comedy reworking. The Royal Shakespeare Company has performed the play 5 times, in 1967, 1981, 1989, 1992, and 2003. John Barton's focused on the tension between generations in the play, Trevor Nunn placed the play in a Chekhovian universe, Barry Kyle added minimalism to proceedings, and Peter Hall highlights the numerous problems with this work. The most recent RSC production, directed by Gregory Doran, with Judi Dench as the Duchess. During this period the BBC produced a massively successful production in 1980, highlighting the domestic nature of the play. The National Theatre's recent production, which turned the play into a fairy tale journey, was a critical and commercial success.

The shifting critical appreciation of *All's Well That Ends Well* mirrors much its production history. Sheldon P. Zitner, in his analysis of the play, sums up this changing perspective: "an early silence; a apparent shift of appreciating the play as broad comedy in the later eighteenth century to preferring it as sentimental romance in the early nineteenth; then disaffection from the play's supposed indecencies in Victorian times; and finally the two broad phrases of the twentieth-century response – earlier in the century efforts to define, deplore or explain away the play's supposed contradictions and defects, and since the Second World War, efforts to define and justify its ironies and achievements."

As this shifting production and critical history highlights this a play open to numerous interpretations, fulfilling its title as a trouble play, whilst also offering productions an ability to explore the play's themes and complexities. It proposes a tremendous challenge, but also an enticing one.

## **Why perform *All's Well That Ends Well*?**

*All's Well That Ends Well* is one of Shakespeare's most interesting plays to explore. While it is sometimes seen as a problem play, I feel the issues brought up make it a play that can engage its audience in debate, and offers a unique challenge to the actors involved. The problems that exist within the play's narrative can be used to instigate debate within the audience, but they should not dominate the artistic vision. The play offers a unique look at issues of gender, sexuality and class, has one of the strongest female protagonists Shakespeare has ever written, as well as an ensemble of wonderful characters. It is also a play that can be open to a multitude of interpretations, as its production history highlights. I feel all of these elements makes *All's Well That Ends Well* would a great choice for performance.

This is one of the central reasons we are submitting *All's Well That Ends Well*. Because it is a problem. It makes the play an exciting prospect to explore with a team of actors, to find an interpretation unique to our production. As the production history highlights it is a play that has only been brought into the canon in the last century, and therefore there is fresh areas for us to explore. This will be mirrored in our rehearsal process, as character development takes persistence in the early stages of this process, before intensifying as blocking and run-throughs take hold. This emphasis on character development is important given the rich tapestry of characters the play offers. Each offers a character that is fascinating to investigate, to find their own way of performances. In addition to this the play offers some of the strongest female characters of Shakespeare's work and in Helena a protagonist up there with Cordelia from *King Lear*. Therefore it is in this combination of a genuinely interesting play to explore and a cast of strong, well-developed characters to offer actors make *All's Well That Ends Well* such a sumptuous offer.

Where our production distinguishes itself is in our stylistic vision. As shall be set out in the Production Ideas section, our stylistic setting is the 1940s. The choice of this is to extenuate the duality of war and domesticity in this play. Bertram uses the war in Italy as a means to escape the domestic responsibility thrust upon him by the situation at home. Italy for him is some called of magical world, the solution to his problems. This will be reflected in the set and costume, with the costumes a mirror of the court, albeit infused with a shot of colour, and the backdrop revealed to show a beautiful rural Italian landscape. However the events of the play will be in contrast to this, with the truth being revealed to Bertram, prompting his return to France and the real world. There will be tinges of magical realism, giving an air of wonderment to proceedings, matching the timing of our production.

Finally as with all Shakesoc productions there must be a justification of the educational aspect of this production. As *All's Well That Ends Well* is such an interesting play to look at, we will hold a series of workshops (numbers depending on time restraints) looking at the text from an academic level, analysing its history context, and exploring the debate the play generates. In addition we are planning on hold a talk on the roles of the production team, allowing those with intentions of submitting in the future to understand the different roles within a team. Finally we are going to offer our services to workshops within schools, allowing members of the cast and crew to go into schools to present the play. In partnership with this we will be offering a set of tickets, at a 50% discount price, to the school, allowing the school to follow the workshop undertaken.

Therefore *All's Well That Ends Well* offers a truly interesting play; with a host of fantastic characters and the ability to explore the play and offer debate to the audience. We feel that this is the production to spearhead this.

## **Production Ideas**

*Magic Realism, Fairytales, Christmas Sparkle, Style, Glamour and Lipstick Kisses.*

The setting for our production is 1940s. This allows us to explore the themes of class divides and gender conflicts that exist in this period. However despite this decision, we are not trying to set the play in the political backdrop of World War Two and we shall remove ourselves as much as possible from imagery that evokes this and instead draw attention to the nostalgic aspects of the period, a magical make-believe version of that era yet still with evocations of 1940s darkness as an undercurrent that all fairytales have. Therefore the men of this production shall all be suited, with key aspects of their costume to evoke signs of authority or highlight their character (such as Parolles' scarves that are such a talking point). The women of this cast shall be split in terms of their generation. The older ladies shall be in long dresses while the younger characters will wear tea dresses. There will be a contrast between the French and Italian women evoked by the colouring of their costumes, with French women in more naturalistic, earthy colours, while the Italians will have bolder colours. This is to highlight that the world Bertram and Helena enter is a mirror of theirs, however tinged by a magical realist fairy tale undercurrent. We hope that the time difference will reflect the themes we hope to evoke, and the fairy tale aspect that Italy presents.

The set will be minimal and simplistic, yet evoke the contrasting settings the play offers. A backdrop will be hung up, created from fire proofed cloth, showing a fantastical rural Italian landscape, one that evokes the real world but also evoke the fairytale setting that Italy evokes in this play. The backdrop shall only be lit up when the play reaches Italy. The Court of Rossillon and the King's Court, on the other hand, will be achieved by a shift in lighting, and an adoption of furniture. Rossillon represents a romanticised domestic setting, and the lighting shall reflect. The King's Court, for at least the first part is a dank, dying place and the lighting will show this, with as little being seen as possible. In terms of furniture, this will only be adopted fleetingly to give the actors movement on the stage. However certain characters will need it to evoke their age (Widow and King). This can be sourced and brought on by characters on to the scene. It is likely that a set of stairs shall be added in the middle, with a gangway in the audience, to allow an added entrance.



## **Production Team**

**Russell Bailey – Director**

**Allie Gahan – Producer**

**Diane Baker – Set Design**

**Butool Jamal – Costume**

**Meg Price – Stage Management and Props**

**Tom Such – Marketing and Publicity**

**Rachel Wood – Marketing and Publicity**

**(Technical support to be got on the day from Tech Crew, have contacted Elliot)**

### **Russell Bailey - Director**

Russell is a third year Film and Literature student and is the Productions Manager and Workshop Coordinator for the Shakespeare Society. He has acted in three Shakespeare productions at Warwick; *The Tempest*, *The Winter's Tale*, and *Hal V*, as well as in the Codpiece Theatre production, Hali. In addition to his acting experience at Warwick he is currently a member of the marketing team for the studio production, *Pictures of John Gray*, and was Assistant Director for the Shakespeare Society Production, *Twelfth Night*, in the All Saints Church, Leamington Spa. As well as these achievements, he was Dramaturg for the Capital Centre *Hamlet Project*, directed by the freelance director Tom Cronford, which has been hugely influential in his perspective on theatre, and directing it. Outside of Warwick Russell has been in numerous productions, both at an academic level and through Youth Theatre. This has ranged from Shakespeare, including *Macbeth*, *Midsummer Night's Dream*, and *Richard III*, to 20th Century classics, such as *Twelve Angry Men*, and musical theatre, including *Anything Goes* and *South Pacific*. Outside of Russell's theatrical experience, Russell has worked on the RAW art show, Up Your Arts, and is now Deputy Head of Arts. In addition he has had his own show on RAW, and has written for the Warwick Boar. Russell is a Shakespeare module this year, which will enhance his understanding and particularly aid his direction of *All's Well That Ends Well*.

### **Allie Gahan – Producer**

Allie is a third year Theatre and Performance student with a variety of production team experience at Warwick. She is currently Treasurer for WUDS and has been involved with student theatre in a variety of ways, beginning with marketing experience on the CAPITAL centre production of *Arcadia* in her first year, the sell-out MTW production of *Company* in her second year, and currently on the main theatre production of *West Side Story* in Term 2. She was on the theatre team for One World Week, coordinating a performance of *Translations*, and co-produced the Shakespeare Society production of *Hal V* which toured to Stratford. She also acted in the very first Shakesoc production of *A Midsummer's Midnight Dream*, as well as *The Tempest* and *The Whale* for WSAF and *A Passage to India* for OWW. Outside of Warwick, Allie has had extensive theatre and media experience, including an internship with English Touring Opera and a week with the television company TalkbackThames, as well as previously working with theatres and theatre companies such as Creation Theatre in Oxford, and The North Wall Arts Centre. With her experience, Allie feels more than capable to produce *All's Well That Ends Well*, and is totally prepared for the challenge and the work it will take to make this Shakesoc's flagship Term 1 production.

### **Diane Baker – Set Designer**

Diane is a second year History of Art student. She has been as a designer for Student theatre since the beginning of her first year at Warwick, when she was part of Tom Cornford's, last year Artist in Residences, '*The Hamlet Project*'. This was a yearlong project which involved her doing all aspects of design, including set design and in particular, researching historical court architecture and translating and adapting the architecture into abstract set design. She has been a makeup designer for several plays at Warwick, including the WUDS '*A Midsummer Night's Dream*' in term 3 last year, *Warwick in the Willows* for SPLAT and more recently for the upcoming production of '*By The Bog of Cats*'. Diane is a trained art student with particular interests in painting and working with unusual materials such as fabric and cardboard, and has exhibited her work in several student exhibitions at her Sixth Form College and at University the Art Society and One World Week.

### **Butool Jamal - Costume**

Butool is a final year History and Culture student with an avid interest in costuming for drama at Warwick. Past experience includes '*A Passage to India*' and '*Arcadia*'; both plays being set in very different time periods thus required being able to find/hire costumes. Most recently Butool was Costume director for MTW's studio slot, *Company*. She has also helped out with the props for *Wonderland* and costumes again for *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, a project that was not only set in a different time period but where the costumes were being made by hand. Butool also supplemented her costuming interest by a Fashion in History module as part of her degree and is starting an ethical fashion society this year. She is eagerly looking forward to being a part of '*All's Well That Ends Well*'!

### **Megan Price – Stage Manager and Props**

Megan first became interested in Stage Management during her junior years in secondary school. She worked as part of the Stage Management team for several productions until becoming Stage Manager for senior productions of *'Macbeth'* and *'Headstrong'*, which went to a studio theatre. She also has a keen interest in technical aspects of the theatre such as sound and lighting. Working in a West End Theatre as Front of House staff has allowed her to see Stage Management in a professional setting as well as being able to understand the basic requirements of a performance in a practical and technical mindset. Since coming to Warwick, she has stage managed a production of *'Much Ado About Nothing'*, stage managed and researched *'The Hamlet Project'* with the CAPITAL centre and stage managed and produced a production of *'Inferno'* which played at the CAPITAL centre as part of SPLAT. She has also assisted in several productions for example, she was Assistant Stage Manager for *'Tis Pity She's A Whore'*.

### **Tom Such – Marketing and Publicity**

Tom is a third year law student. Despite his relative inexperience of working with a Warwick production, he hopes to make a real creative contribution to the publicity and marketing team. Tom will draw on his experience gained developing the corporate identity and marketing of several legal projects, notably "Pathways to Law". Thomas has acted as stage manager for the independent production of *"Translations"* during "One World Week" and, in addition to his studies, works with sixth form students on a number of projects and has overseen the development of short films, presentations and publicity material.

### **Rachel Wood – Marketing and Publicity**

Rachel is a third year Film and Literature student. Focussing on film-related societies and journalism at Warwick, Rachel has not been actively involved in Warwick Drama further than marketing assistance for *Company*. She was heavily involved in many drama productions and activities throughout high school and college in a range of roles from acting, directing, marketing and stage-managing, including both GCSE/A Level and extra-curricular productions. A few examples include acting in, co-directing and designing all publicity and marketing materials for *Teechers*, co-directing and designing publicity posters and programmes for Hamlet, and acting in and stage-managing for a large-scale production of *Little Shop of Horrors*. Rachel is looking forward to the chance of getting involved with her passions of Shakespeare and Drama again.

## Budget

### Ticket Prices

	Number	Normal Price	Conc. Price
Seat Type 1 (e.g. seats)	400	£5.00	£5.00
Seat Type 2 (e.g. benches)	0	£0.00	£0.00
Seat Type 3 (e.g. floor)	0	£0.00	£0.00
Seat Type 4 (e.g. restricted view)	0	£0.00	£0.00
Weighted Average Ticket Price	400	£5.00	£5.00
Number of performances	1		
Total number of tickets	400		
Box Office Rate		2% (10p per ticket, selling on union website)	

### Incoming

	Amount	Notes
Sponsorship	£0.00	
100% ticket sales @ conc. price	£1,960.00	
<b>Total Potential Incoming</b>	<b>£1,960.00</b>	

### Outgoing

	Amount	Notes
<b>General</b>		
Copper Rooms Hire	£150.00	
Production Rights	£0.00	
<b>Total General Costs</b>	<b>£150.00</b>	
<b>Set</b>		
Cotton role x 20m (@ 2.99)	£59.80	
Fairy lights	£10.00	
Washing line	£3.00	
Contingency	£50.00	
<b>Total Set Cost</b>	<b>£122.80</b>	
<b>Technical</b>		
Contingency	£50.00	
<b>Total Technical Cost</b>	<b>£50.00</b>	
<b>Props</b>		
No major props (smaller items eg perfume bottle)	£25.00	
<b>Total Props Cost</b>	<b>£25.00</b>	
<b>Costume</b>		
6x Ladies Dresses (£10 approx)	£60.00	
Men's assorted	£30.00	
Accessories	£10.00	
Contingency	£20.00	
<b>Total Costume Cost</b>	<b>£120.00</b>	
<b>Marketing (including all photocopying, programme etc)</b>		
500 A6 Flyers	£44.00	Rocket print
Photocopying	£20.00	all posters photocopied
<b>Total Marketing Cost</b>	<b>£64.00</b>	
<b>Total Outgoing</b>	<b>£531.80</b>	

### Break Even Point

	Normal Rate	Conc. Rate
Income per Average Ticket	£4.90	£4.90
Number of Tickets to Break Even	109	109
Number of Tickets per Night	109	109
<b>Break Even Point</b>	<b>27.3%</b>	<b>27.3%</b>

## **Budget Notes**

- We will be selling tickets on the SU website.
- I have spoken to Lesley Shortland at the union, who has not yet got back to me regarding the exact technical costs involved in hiring the Copper Rooms, however Tech Crew have told me that it is included in the costs of hire and they will charge me no extra. So the £50 I have included in tech is a contingency, which can be used for costs such as fireproofing our set material as well as any other issues that may develop.
- There is a possibility for performing the show twice on the day, to allow for another time for those who may not be able to see the show during the day due to lectures, however this is something that will have to be considered once rehearsals have begun.
- We are keen along with the Shakespeare Society exec to organise education workshops with the play, and are considering approaching a school (for instance the school with which connections were made during Hal V, and block booking cheaper tickets). This would ensure a large quantity of our seats were filled, as we are unlikely to sell out 400 potential seats (though we have a positive attitude!).
- There is also the possibility of organising a fundraiser, though this may not be needed.