

HELENA

If you misdoubt me that I am not she,  
I know not how I shall assure you further  
But I shall lose the grounds I work upon.

WIDOW

Though my estate be fall'n, I was well born,  
Nothing acquainted with these businesses, 5  
And would not put my reputation now  
In any staining act.

HELENA Nor would I wish you.

First give me trust the Count he is my husband,  
And what to your sworn counsel I have spoken 10  
Is so from word to word; and then you cannot,  
By the good aid that I of you shall borrow,  
Err in bestowing it.

WIDOW I should believe you,

For you have showed me that which well approves 15  
You're great in fortune.

HELENA Take this purse of gold,

And let me buy your friendly help thus far,  
Which I will overpay and pay again  
When I have found it. The Count he woos your 20  
daughter,

Lays down his wanton siege before her beauty,  
Resolved to carry her. Let her in fine consent  
As we'll direct her how 'tis best to bear it. 25  
Now his important blood will naught deny  
That she'll demand. A ring the County wears

That downward hath succeeded in his house  
From son to son some four or five descents  
Since the first father wore it. This ring he holds 30  
In most rich choice. Yet, in his idle fire,  
To buy his will it would not seem too dear,  
Howe'er repented after.

WIDOW

Now I see the bottom of your purpose.

HELENA

You see it lawful, then. It is no more  
But that your daughter, ere she seems as won, 35  
Desires this ring, appoints him an encounter,  
In fine, delivers me to fill the time,  
Herself most chastely absent. After,  
To marry her, I'll add three thousand crowns  
To what is passed already. 40

WIDOW I have yielded.

Instruct my daughter how she shall persever  
That time and place with this deceit so lawful  
May prove coherent. Every night he comes 45  
With musics of all sorts and songs composed  
To her unworthiness. It nothing steads us  
To chide him from our eaves, for he persists  
As if his life lay on 't.

HELENA Why then tonight

Let us assay our plot, which, if it speed, 50  
Is wicked meaning in a lawful deed,  
And lawful meaning in a lawful act,  
Where both not sin, and yet a sinful fact.  
But let's about it.

*They exit.*