

KING

Why then, young Bertram, take her. She's thy wife.

BERTRAM

My wife, my liege? I shall beseech your Highness  
In such a business give me leave to use  
The help of mine own eyes. 115

KING Know'st thou not,

Bertram,

What she has done for me?

BERTRAM Yes, my good lord, 120

But never hope to know why I should marry her.

KING

Thou know'st she has raised me from my sickly bed.

BERTRAM

But follows it, my lord, to bring me down  
Must answer for your raising? I know her well;  
She had her breeding at my father's charge. 125  
A poor physician's daughter my wife? Disdain  
Rather corrupt me ever!

KING

'Tis only title thou disdain'st in her, the which  
I can build up. Strange is it that our bloods,  
Of color, weight, and heat, poured all together, 130  
Would quite confound distinction, yet stands off  
In differences so mighty. If she be  
All that is virtuous, save what thou dislik'st—  
“A poor physician's daughter”—thou dislik'st  
Of virtue for the name. But do not so. 135  
If thou canst like this creature as a maid,  
I can create the rest. Virtue and she  
Is her own dower, honor and wealth from me. 155

BERTRAM

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

KING

Thou wrong'st thyself if thou shouldst strive to  
choose.

BERTRAM

That you are well restored, my lord, I'm glad.  
Let the rest go. 160

KING

My honor's at the stake, which to defeat  
I must produce my power.—Here, take her hand,  
Do thine own fortunes that obedient right  
Which both thy duty owes and our power claims,  
Or I will throw thee from my care forever  
Into the staggers and the careless lapse 175  
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.

BERTRAM

Pardon, my gracious lord, for I submit  
My fancy to your eyes. When I consider  
What great creation and what dole of honor  
Flies where you bid it, I find that she which late  
Was in my nobler thoughts most base is now  
The praised of the King, who, so ennobled,  
Is as 'twere born so. 185

KING Take her by the hand,

And tell her she is thine, to whom I promise

A counterpoise, if not to thy estate,

A balance more replete.

BERTRAM I take her hand. 190