

1 Much A do

2 About N othing

3 Audition Script

4
5 12/3/19 08:13 PM

6 DRAMATIS PERSONAE

7
8 Don Pedro

9 Don John

10 Claudio

11 Benedick

12 Leonato

13 Antonio

14 Dogberry

15 Conrade

16 Borachio

17 Friar Francis

18 Verges

19 Hero

20 Beatrice

21 Margaret

22 Messenger

23 Ursula

24 First Watch

25 Second Watch

1
2 The action of *Much Ado About Nothing* occurs during several days of a visit by Don Pedro,
3 Prince of Aragon, and his followers at the large estate of Leonato, Governor of Messina. Don
4 Pedro has been victorious in a small war against his own half-brother, Don John, who has
5 now (reluctantly) joined him.

6 From the beginning to the end of the play, two love stories are intertwined. One story follows
7 the formal, romantic relationship between Leonato's daughter, Hero (a young woman), and
8 Claudio (a young officer): Claudio realizes, after returning from war, that he is deeply in love
9 with Hero and wants to ask her father for permission to marry her. His commander, Don
10 Pedro, helps Claudio propose marriage, with some momentary confusion about who the
11 suitor is — Don Pedro or Claudio.

12 The other couple, Beatrice (Hero's cousin) and Benedick (another officer), work hard to give
13 the impression that neither is the least bit interested in the other, still smarting over bad
14 experiences in earlier encounters with one another. From the beginning of the play, Beatrice
15 and Benedick tease and insult one another mercilessly and repeatedly deny that they will ever
16 marry anyone, let alone marry one another. However, the audience can tell almost
17 immediately that they don't entirely believe their own disclaimers. Their friends arrange for
18 them to overhear conversations revealing how much each is loved by the other.

19 Meanwhile, the defeated Don John, a self-proclaimed villain, is eager to carry out serious
20 mischief against his brother and Claudio, who helped defeat him. One of John's men enacts a
21 scene at Hero's window in which a woman who appears to be Hero succumbs to the amorous
22 attentions of a man other than Claudio. John further arranges for Claudio and Don Pedro to
23 observe this scene. As a result of seeing this apparent deception, Claudio angrily denounces
24 Hero during their wedding ceremony and, with Don Pedro, storms off as the deceived
25 husband-to-be. The friar performing the ceremony comforts Hero, her father, and the other
26 couple (Benedick and Beatrice), and arranges for Hero to be hidden as though dead, until
27 Claudio regains his senses. Beatrice's defense of Hero after her denouncement unites Beatrice
28 and Benedick in the cause of Hero's revenge, and they declare their love for one another.

29 In the meantime, Dogberry (a comically bumbling constable) and his men on night watch
30 stumble on the conspiracy against Don Pedro and arrest John's men, who confess their guilt
31 under questioning.

32 Soon Claudio is forced to admit his error in thinking that Hero would deceive him and,
33 believing her dead, mourns for her and agrees to marry one of Hero's cousins. The cousin
34 turns out to be a disguised and forgiving Hero. Beatrice and Benedick are also to be married.
35 Don John tries to run off but is recaptured.

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Act I -- Scene 1

Before Leonato's house.

[Enter Leonato, Hero, and Beatrice, et al with a Messenger]

Messenger: Signior Leonato?... (ad lib)

Cast: (ad lib)

Leonato: Friends, friends, I learn in this letter that Don Pedro of Arragon comes this night to Messina.

[Cheers]

Messenger: Aye sir, he is very near by. He was not three leagues off when I left him.

Leonato: How many gentlemen have you lost in this action?

Messenger: Few of any sort, and none of name.

Leonato: Good. A victory is twice itself when the achiever brings home full numbers. I see here that Don Pedro has bestowed much honor on a young Florentine called Claudio.

Messenger: And much deserved on his part.

Beatrice: I pray you, sir, has Signior Pompous returned from the wars or no?

Messenger: I know none of that name, my lady.

Hero: My cousin means Signior Benedick of Padua.

Messenger: O, he's returned.

Beatrice: Then tell me how many has he killed in these wars?

Messenger: My lady?

Beatrice: You see, I have promised to eat all of his killing. Shall I go hungry yet again?

Leonato: Niece, you tax Signior Benedick too much.

Messenger: In these wars, he has done good service, lady.

Beatrice: You say he has done good service to a lady in these wars.

Messenger: No, no, he is stuffed with all honorable virtues.

Beatrice: It is so, indeed, he is no less than a stuffed man.

Leonato: You must, sir, forgive my niece. There is a kind of merry war betwixt Signior Benedick and her. When they meet, there is a skirmish of wit between them.

Beatrice: True, in our last conflict, four of his five wits went running off, and now is the whole man governed by one. If he has wit enough to keep himself warm, let him show it as a difference between himself and his horse.

Messenger: I see, lady, the gentleman is not in your books.

Beatrice: No, and were he, I would burn my library. Tell me, who is his companion now, for he has every month a new sworn brother?

Messenger: He is most in the company of the right noble Claudio.

Beatrice: O lord, he will hang upon him like a disease. He is sooner caught than the pestilence. God help the noble Claudio if he has caught 'the Benedick.' It will cost him a thousand pounds to be cured.

Messenger: I will hold friends with you, lady.

Beatrice: Do, good friend, do.

Leonato: You will not catch the Benedick?

Beatrice: No, not till a hot January.

[Trumpet]

Messenger: Don Pedro has approached.

1 [Enter Don Pedro, Don John, Claudio, Benedick, Borachio, and Conrade]
2 **Don Pedro:** Good Signior Leonato, you have come to meet your trouble. The fashion of the
3 world is to avoid cost.
4 **Leonato:** Trouble has never come to my house in the likeness of your grace.
5 **Don Pedro:** You embrace your charge far too willingly, Signior. I think this is your
6 daughter.
7 **Leonato:** Her mother had many times told me so.
8 **Benedick:** Were you in doubt, sir that you asked? She holds all the beauty and honor of this
9 fair land and her father.
10 **Beatrice:** I wonder why you are always talking, Signior Benedick. Nobody marks you.
11 **Benedick:** What, my dear Lady Disdain! Are you yet living?
12 **Beatrice:** Is it possible disdain could die while she has such food as Signior Benedick to
13 feed on?
14 **Benedick:** God keep your ladyship still in that mind so no gentleman might fall under your
15 loving gaze.
16 **Beatrice:** I thank God for my cold blood. I would rather hear my dog bark at a crow than a
17 man swears he loves me.
18 **Benedick:** Well, you are a rare parrot.
19 **Beatrice:** A bird of my tongue is better than a beast of yours.
20 **Benedick:** I wish my horse had the speed of your tongue.
21 **Beatrice:** Twere far better than the speed of your wit.
22 **Benedick:** Well,... and you throw like a girl!
23 **Beatrice:** At last tally, I was, which gives me much greater cause for my nature than you
24 have for yours.
25 **Don Pedro:** That is the sum of all, Leonato. Signior Claudio and Signior Benedick, my dear
26 friend Leonato has invited us all. I told him we shall stay here at the least a month.
27 **Leonato:** And I heartily pray some occasion may detain you longer. [To Don John] Let me
28 bid you welcome, Don John, since you have reconciled with your brother, the prince,
29 I owe you all duty.
30 **Don John:** I thank you, Signior Leonato. I am not one of many words, but I thank you.
31 [Shake hands, mild applause]
32 **Leonato:** Please it your grace, lead on?
33 **Don Pedro:** Your arm, Leonato; we will go together.
34 [Exeunt all except Benedick and Claudio]
35 **Benedick:** Come along, Claudio.
36 **Claudio:** Benedick, did you note the daughter of Signior Leonato?
37 **Benedick:** I noted her not, but I looked upon her.
38 **Claudio:** Is she not a modest young lady?
39 **Benedick:** Do you question me, as an honest man should do, for my simple true judgment;
40 or would you have me speak after my usual custom, as being a professed tyrant to
41 their sex?
42 **Claudio:** No, I pray you speak in sober judgment. Tell me truly, how do you like her.
43 **Benedick:** Would you buy her that you inquire after her so?
44 **Claudio:** Can the world buy such a jewel?

1 **Benedick:** Yea, and a case to put it into.

2 **Claudio:** In mine eye, she is the sweetest lady that ever I looked upon.

3 **Benedick:** I can see yet without spectacles and I see no such matter. I hope you have no
4 intent to turn a husband on me.

5 **Claudio:** Though I had sworn the contrary, I would scarce trust myself if Hero would be
6 my wife.

7 **Benedick:** Has the world come to this? Shall I never see a bachelor of three-score again?
8 Go on then, thrust your neck into a yoke, wear the print of it and sigh away your
9 Sundays. I'll have none of it.

10 [Re-enter Don Pedro]

11 **Don Pedro:** Good sirs, what secret has held you here that you followed not to Leonato's?

12 **Benedick:** I would your grace would constrain me to tell.

13 **Don Pedro:** I charge you on your allegiance.

14 **Benedick:** You hear, Count Claudio is in love. With whom? Now that is your grace's part.
15 Mark how short his answer is, with Hero, Leonato's short daughter.

16 **Don Pedro:** Amen, if you love her for the lady is very well worthy.

17 **Claudio:** You speak this to fetch me in, my lord.

18 **Don Pedro:** No, by my troth, I speak my thought.

19 **Claudio:** And, in faith, my lord, I spoke mine.

20 **Benedick:** And, by my faith and troth, my lord, I spoke mine.

21 **Claudio:** That I love her, I feel.

22 **Don Pedro:** That she is worthy, I know.

23 **Benedick:** That I neither feel how she should be loved nor know how she should be worthy
24 is the opinion that fire cannot melt out of me. I will die in it at the stake.

25 **Don Pedro:** You were ever an obstinate heretic in the contempt of beauty.

26 **Benedick:** That a woman conceived me, I thank her. That she brought me up; I likewise
27 give her most humble thanks. While I will not do them the wrong to mistrust any, I
28 will do myself the right to trust none. You may die a married man, but I will live a
29 bachelor.

30 **Don Pedro:** I shall see you, ere I die, look pale with love.

31 **Benedick:** With anger, with sickness, or with hunger, my lord, but not with love. If you
32 ever find me in love, pick out mine eyes with a ballad-maker's pen and hang me up at
33 the door of a brothel for the sign of blind Cupid.

34 **Don Pedro:** Well, if ever you do fall from this faith, you will prove a notable argument.

35 **Benedick:** If I do, hang me in a bottle like a cat and shoot at me.

36 **Don Pedro:** In time the savage bull does bear the yoke.

37 **Benedick:** The savage bull may, but if ever the sensible Benedick bear it, pluck off the bull's
38 horns and set them in my forehead. And let me be vilely painted, and in such great
39 letters as they write 'Here is good horse to hire, you see Benedick, the married man.'

40 **Don Pedro:** Good Signior Benedick, repair to Leonato's and commend me to him. Tell him
41 I will not fail him at supper, for indeed he has made great preparation.

42 **Benedick:** Good Claudio, examine your conscience. I leave you.

43 [Exit]

44 **Claudio:** Has Leonato any son, my lord?

1 **Don Pedro:** No child but Hero. She's his only heir. Do you affect her, Claudio?
2 **Claudio:** O, my lord, when you went onward on this action, I looked upon her with a
3 soldier's eye. But now I am returned and those thoughts of war are vacant places. In
4 their rooms come throngs of soft and delicate desires, all prompting me how fair
5 young Hero is.
6 **Don Pedro:** If you do love fair Hero, then cherish it. I will break with her and with her
7 father, and you shall have her. Was it not to this end that you began to twist so fine a
8 story? I know we shall have reveling tonight. I will assume your part in some
9 disguise and tell fair Hero that I am Claudio. In her bosom I'll unclasp my heart.
10 Then after I will break with her father. And the conclusion is, she shall be yours.
11 Come, we will talk of this anon.

12 [Exeunt]

13 Act I -- Scene 2

14 The same.

15 [Enter Don John and Conrade]

16 **Conrade:** What the good year, my lord! Why are you of measure sad?
17 **Don John:** There is no measure in the occasion that breeds joy, therefore the sadness is
18 without limit.
19 **Conrade:** You should hear reason.
20 **Don John:** And when I have heard it, what blessing brings it?
21 **Conrade:** If not a present remedy, at least a patient sufferance.
22 **Don John:** I cannot hide what I am. I must be sad when I have cause and smile at no man's
23 jests.
24 **Conrade:** Yea, but you must not make the full show of this. Though you have of late stood
25 out against your brother, he has taken you newly into his grace.
26 **Don John:** My brother, the Prince, I had rather be a canker in a hedge than a rose in his
27 grace. It better fits my blood to be disdained by all than to fashion a carriage to rob
28 love from him. It must not be denied, I am a plain-dealing villain. If I had my
29 liberty, I would do my liking, but in the meantime let me be that I am so seek not to
30 alter me.
31 **Conrade:** Can you make no use of your discontent?
32 **Don John:** I make all use of it, for I use it only. [Enter Borachio] What news, Borachio?
33 **Borachio:** I came yonder from a great supper. The Prince, your brother, is royally
34 entertained by Leonato.
35 **Don John:** Leonato is an old fool. Have you no news that will interest me?
36 **Borachio:** I can give you intelligence of an intended marriage.
37 **Don John:** Will it serve for any model to build mischief on?
38 **Borachio:** Marry, it is your brother's right hand.
39 **Don John:** Who, the most exquisite Claudio?
40 **Borachio:** Even he.
41 **Don John:** A proper squire! Which way looks he?
42 **Borachio:** Upon Hero, the daughter and heir of Leonato.
43 **Don John:** How came you to this?

1 **Borachio:** I heard it agreed upon that the Prince should woo Hero for himself, and having
2 obtained her, give her to Count Claudio.
3 **Don John:** Come, come, let us go. This may prove food to my displeasure. That young
4 start-up has all the glory of my overthrow. If I can cross him any way, I bless myself
5 every way. You are both sure, and will assist me?
6 **Conrade:** To the death, my lord.
7 [Exeunt]
8 **Act II -- Scene 1**
9 A hall in Leonato's house.
10 [Enter Leonato, Antonio, Hero, Beatrice, and others]
11 **Leonato:** Was not Count John here at supper?
12 **Antonio:** I saw him not.
13 **Hero:** He is of a very melancholy disposition.
14 **Beatrice:** I never can see him but I am heart-burned an hour after.
15 **Leonato:** By my troth, niece, you will never get a husband, if you be so shrewd of your
16 tongue.
17 **Beatrice:** If God sends me no husband, then I am blessed by God.
18 **Antonio:** [To Hero] Well, niece, I trust you will be ruled by your father.
19 **Beatrice:** Yes, faith, it is my cousin's duty to make a curtsy and say 'Father, as it pleases
20 you.'
21 **Leonato:** Well, niece, I hope to see you one day fitted with a husband.
22 **Beatrice:** Not till God make men of some other metal than earth. I have a good eye, uncle.
23 I can see a church by daylight.
24 **Leonato:** The revelers are entering!
25 [All put on their masks]
26 [Enter Don Pedro, Claudio, Benedick, Borachio,
27 Don John, Conrade, Margaret, Ursula and others, masked]
28 **Don Pedro:** Lady, will you walk about with your friend?
29 **Hero:** I am yours for the walk.
30 [Drawing her aside]
31 **Borachio:** Well, I would you did like me.
32 **Margaret:** Well, not I, for your own sake; for I have many ill qualities.
33 **Borachio:** Which is one?
34 **Margaret:** I say my prayers aloud.
35 **Borachio:** I love you the better. The hearers may cry, 'Amen.'
36 **Margaret:** God match me with a good dancer!
37 **Borachio:** Amen.
38 **Margaret:** And God keep him out of my sight when the dance is done!
39 **Borachio:** No more words.
40 **Ursula:** I know you well enough. You are Signior Antonio.
41 **Antonio:** At a word, I am not.
42 **Ursula:** I know you by the waggling of your head.
43 **Antonio:** To tell you true, I counterfeit him.
44 **Ursula:** You could never do him so, unless you were the very man.

1 **Antonio:** At a word, I am not.
2 **Beatrice:** Will you not tell me who told you so?
3 **Benedick:** No, you shall pardon me.
4 **Beatrice:** Nor will you not tell me who you are?
5 **Benedick:** Not now.
6 **Beatrice:** You were told that I was disdainful, and that I had my good wit out of the
7 'Hundred Merry Tales:' well, this was Signior Benedick that said so.
8 **Benedick:** Who's he?
9 **Beatrice:** Oh, I am sure you know him well enough.
10 **Benedick:** Not I, believe me.
11 **Beatrice:** Did he never make you laugh?
12 **Benedick:** I pray you, who is Signior Benedick?
13 **Beatrice:** Why, he is the Prince's jester, a very dull fool.
14 **Benedick:** When I know the gentleman, I'll tell him what you say.
15 **Beatrice:** Do, do.
16 [Dance. Then exeunt all except Don John, Conrade, and Claudio]
17 **Conrade:** That is Claudio. I know him by his bearing.
18 **Don John:** Now for mine own entertainment. Are you not Signior Benedick?
19 **Claudio:** You know me well. I am he.
20 **Don John:** Signior, you are very near my brother. He is enamored on Hero. I pray you,
21 dissuade him from her. She is no equal to his birth.
22 **Claudio:** How know you that he loves her?
23 **Don John:** I heard him swear his affection.
24 **Conrade:** So did I, and he swore he would marry her tonight.
25 **Don John:** Please Sir Benedick, do your best to stop this errant marriage. Come, let us to
26 the banquet.
27 [Exeunt Don John and Conrade laughing]
28 **Claudio:** I answer in the name of Benedick, but hear this ill news with the ears of Claudio.
29 'Tis certain so. The Prince woos for himself. Friendship is constant in all other
30 things save the affairs of love. Therefore, farewell Hero!
31 [Re-enter Benedick]
32 **Benedick:** Count Claudio?
33 **Claudio:** Yea, the same.
34 **Benedick:** Come, will you go with me?
35 **Claudio:** Whither?
36 **Benedick:** About your own business. The Prince has got your Hero.
37 **Claudio:** I wish him joy of her.
38 **Benedick:** What? Did you think the Prince would have served you thus?
39 **Claudio:** I pray you, leave me. Well if it will not be, I'll leave you.
40 [Exit Claudio]
41 **Benedick:** Poor hurt fowl! How my Lady Beatrice should know me, and yet not know me!
42 The Prince's fool! Ha! I'll be revenged as I may. It may be I go under that title
43 because I am merry. Yes, 'tis true I am the Prince's most merry fellow.

1 [Re-enter Don Pedro]
2 **Don Pedro:** Now, signior, where's Count Claudio? Did you see him?
3 **Benedick:** Troth, my lord, I found him here as melancholy as a lodge in a warren: I told
4 him, and I think I told him true, that your grace had gotten the goodwill of this young
5 lady.
6 **Don Pedro:** That I have, but I hear the Lady Beatrice has a quarrel to you. The gentleman
7 that danced with her told her she is much wronged by you.
8 **Benedick:** O, she misused me. She told me, not thinking I had been myself, that I was the
9 Prince's jester. If her breath were as terrible as her words, there'd be no living near
10 her. She would infect to the North Star. I would not marry her, even if she were
11 endowed with all that Adam had before he transgressed.
12 **Don Pedro:** Look, here she comes.
13 [Enter Claudio, Beatrice, Hero and Leonato]
14 **Benedick:** Will your grace command me any service to the world's end? I will go on the
15 slightest errand now to the Antipodes that you can devise to send me on. I will fetch
16 you a tooth-picker from the furthest inch of Asia, or would you prefer a hair off the
17 great Khan's beard? I will do you any embassy to the Pigmies, rather than hold
18 three words conference with this harpy. What, have you no employment for me?
19 **Don Pedro:** None, but to desire your good company.
20 **Benedick:** O God, sir, here's a dish I love not. I cannot endure my Lady Tongue.
21 [Exit Benedick]
22 **Beatrice:** I have brought Count Claudio, whom you sent me to seek.
23 **Don Pedro:** Why, how now, Count? Why are you sad?
24 **Claudio:** Not sad, my lord.
25 **Don Pedro:** How then, sick?
26 **Claudio:** Neither, my lord.
27 **Beatrice:** The Count is neither sad, nor sick, nor merry, nor well.
28 **Don Pedro:** In faith, lady, I think your thoughts are true. Here, Claudio, I have wooed in
29 your name, and fair Hero is won. I have broke with her father, and his goodwill is
30 obtained, name the day of your marriage. May God give you joy!
31 **Leonato:** Count, take of me my daughter, and with her my fortunes. His grace has made the
32 match.
33 **Beatrice:** Speak, Count, 'tis your cue.
34 **Claudio:** Silence is the perfect herald of joy. Lady, as you are mine, I am yours.
35 **Beatrice:** Speak, cousin or, if you cannot, stop his mouth with a kiss and let him speak
36 neither. [Claudio and Hero kiss]
37 **Don Pedro:** In faith, lady, you have a merry heart.
38 **Beatrice:** Look, my cousin tells him in his ear that he is in her heart.
39 **Claudio:** And so she does, cousin.
40 **Beatrice:** Good Lord, for alliance! So goes everyone to the world but I may sit in a corner
41 and cry heigh-ho for a husband!
42 **Don Pedro:** Lady Beatrice, I will get you one. Would you have me, my lady?

1 **Beatrice:** No, my lord, unless I might have another for working days. Your grace is too
2 costly to wear everyday. But pardon me, your grace. I was born to speak all mirth
3 and no matter. Cousins, God give you joy!
4 [Exit Beatrice]
5 **Don Pedro:** By my troth, a pleasant-spirited lady, but she cannot endure to hear tell of a
6 husband.
7 **Leonato:** O, by no means. She mocks all her wooers out of suit.
8 **Don Pedro:** She would be an excellent wife for Benedick.
9 **Leonato:** O my lord, if they were but a week married, they would talk themselves mad.
10 **Don Pedro:** Count Claudio, when do you mean to go to church?
11 **Claudio:** Tomorrow, my lord.
12 **Leonato:** Not till Monday, my dear son, there are some preparations.
13 **Don Pedro:** Two days hence, very well. In the interim, I will undertake one of Hercules'
14 labors. That is, to bring Signior Benedick and the Lady Beatrice into a mountain of
15 affection the one with the other.
16 **Leonato:** My lord, I am for you, though it cost me ten nights' sleep.
17 **Claudio:** I, my lord, cannot see a way forward.
18 **Don Pedro:** Leave that to me. Gentle, Hero?
19 **Hero:** I will do any modest office, my lord, to help my cousin to a good husband.
20 **Don Pedro:** If we can do this, Cupid is no longer an archer. His glory shall be ours, for we
21 are the only love-gods. Go in with me, and I will tell you my drift.

22 [Exeunt]

23 Act II -- Scene 2

24 The same.

25 [Enter Don John and Borachio]

26 **Don John:** It is so; the Count Claudio shall marry the daughter of Leonato.
27 **Borachio:** Yea, my lord.
28 **Don John:** But I can cross it.
29 **Borachio:** How my lord?
30 **Don John:** With your help.
31 **Borachio:** You know I am sworn to you, my lord.
32 **Don John:** This is Saturday. The Count is to be married on Monday.
33 **Borachio:** Aye.
34 **Don John:** Sunday eve I will visit the noble Count Claudio and we will see just how fair his
35 Hero truly is.
36 **Borachio:** What is your plan?
37 **Don John:** Do you still have the favor of Hero's gentlewoman?
38 **Borachio:** The lady Margaret? I should hope, my lord.
39 **Don John:** Tomorrow you will visit Margaret in the laundry and.....

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[Exuent]

Act II -- Scene 3

Leonato's orchard.

[Enter Benedick]

Benedick: [aside] I do wonder that one man, seeing how much another man is a fool when he dedicates his behaviors to love, will soon become the argument of his own scorn by falling in love. Such a man is Claudio. I have known when there was no music in him but the marshal drum and the fife. Now had he rather hear the lute and the harp. I have known when he would have walked ten miles on foot to see a good armor; and now he lies awake carving the fashion of a waistcoat. He was one to speak plain and to the purpose, like an honest man and a soldier. Now is he turned verse. Why his words are a very fantastical banquet. May I be so converted? I think not. One woman is fair, yet I am well. Another is wise, yet I am well. Another virtuous and I am still well. Until all graces be in one woman, one woman shall not come in my grace. Rich she shall be, that's certain. Wise, or I'll have none. Virtuous, or I'll never cheapen her. Fair, or I'll never look on her. Mild, or come not near me. She'll be of good discourse, an excellent musician, and her hair shall be of what color it please God. Ha! the Prince and Monsieur Love!

[Withdraws]

[Enter Don Pedro, Claudio, and Leonato]

Don Pedro: See you where Benedick has hid himself?

Claudio: O, very well, my lord.

Don Pedro: [Loudly] Come, Leonato, what was it you told me of today, that your niece Beatrice is in love with Signior Benedick?

Claudio: I did never think that lady could love any man.

Leonato: No, nor I neither, but it is most wonderful that she should so dote upon Signior Benedick. Her outward behaviors seemed ever to abhor him.

Benedick: [aside] Is it possible?

Don Pedro: What effects of passion does she show?

Claudio: [Hushed] Bait the hook well, this fish will bite.

Leonato: What effects, my lord? You heard my daughter tell you how.

Don Pedro: You amaze me. I would have thought her spirit would be invincible against all assaults of affection.

Leonato: I would have sworn it had, my lord, especially against Benedick.

Benedick: [aside] I should think this a trick, but that Leonato speaks it.

Don Pedro: Has she made her affection known to Benedick?

Leonato: No, and swears she never will.

Claudio: 'Tis true, indeed, so Hero says. How can she encounter him with scorn and turn to write love to him?

Leonato: Yes, that's her torment.

Claudio: So down upon her knees she falls, weeps, sobs, beats her heart, tears her hair, prays, curses; 'O sweet Benedick! God give me patience!'

Leonato: She does indeed. My daughter says so. Her grief has so much overcome her that my daughter is sometimes afraid Beatrice will do a desperate outrage to herself.

1 **Don Pedro:** It were good that Benedick knew of it.

2 **Claudio:** To what end, my lord? He would make but a sport of it and torment the poor

3 lady worse. Hero thinks surely she will die if he loves her not. And she will die, ere

4 she make her love known to him.

5 **Don Pedro:** Shall we go seek Benedick, and tell him of her love?

6 **Claudio:** Never tell him, my lord. Let her wear it out with good counsel.

7 **Leonato:** Nay, that's impossible. She may wear her heart out first.

8 **Don Pedro:** I love Benedick and I wish he would modestly examine himself to see how

9 much he is unworthy of such a good lady.

10 **Leonato:** My lord, will you walk? Dinner is ready.

11 **Claudio:** [Hushed] If he does not dote on her for this, I will never trust my expectation.

12 **Don Pedro:** [Hushed] Now let there be the same net spread for her. Let us send her to call

13 him in to dinner.

14 [Exeunt Don Pedro, Claudio, and Leonato laughing]

15 **Benedick:** [aside] This can be no trick. They have the truth of this from Hero. Love me!

16 Why, it must be requited. I hear how I am censured. They say I will bear myself too

17 proudly if I perceive the love comes from her. They say too that she would rather die

18 than give any sign of affection. I did never think to marry. They say the lady is fair,

19 'tis a truth. And virtuous, 'tis so, I cannot reprove it. Wise, but for loving me. When

20 I said I would die a bachelor, I did not think I should live till I was married. Here

21 comes Beatrice. By this day! She's a fair lady. I do spy some marks of love in her.

22 [Enter Beatrice]

23 **Beatrice:** Against my will I am sent to bid you come in to dinner.

24 **Benedick:** Fair Beatrice, I thank you for your pains.

25 **Beatrice:** I took no more pains for those thanks than you take pains to thank me. If it had

26 been painful, I would not have come.

27 **Benedick:** You take pleasure then in the message?

28 **Beatrice:** Yea, just so much as you may take upon a knife's point. You have no stomach,

29 Signior. Fare you well then.

30 [Exit]

31 **Benedick:** Ha! 'Against my will I am sent to bid you come in to dinner.' There's a double

32 meaning in that. 'I took no more pains for those thanks than you took pains to thank

33 me.' That's as much as to say, any pains that I take for you is as easy as thanks. She

34 wants me!

35 [Exit]

36 **Act II -- Scene 4**

37 The same.

38 [Enter Beatrice]

39 [Enter Don Pedro, Hero, Margaret, and Ursula]

40 [Exit Don Pedro]

41 **Ursula:** [Loudly] But are you sure that Benedick loves Beatrice so entirely?

42 [Beatrice hides]

43 **Hero:** So says Claudio, my newly trothed lord.

44 **Margaret:** And did they bid you tell her of it, madam?

1 **Hero:** They did entreat me to acquaint her of it. But I persuaded them, if they loved
2 Benedick, never to let Beatrice know of it.

3 **Margaret:** Why my lady?

4 **Hero:** O, I know he does deserve as much as any man. But nature never framed a woman's
5 heart of prouder stuff than that of Beatrice. Disdain and scorn ride sparkling in her
6 eyes, despising all that they look upon. She cannot love.

7 **Ursula:** Sure, I think so. And therefore certainly if she knew his love, she'd make mere
8 sport of it.

9 **Hero:** You speak truth. I never yet saw a man, but she would spell him backwards. She
10 turns every man the wrong side out.

11 **Margaret:** Yet tell her of it. Hear what she will say.
12 [Beatrice exchanges seats with Audience Member]

13 **Hero:** No, rather I will go to Benedick and counsel him to fight against his passion. I'll
14 devise some appropriate slanders to stain my cousin.

15 **Ursula:** O, do not do your cousin such a wrong. She cannot be so much without true
16 judgment as to refuse so rare a gentleman as Signior Benedick.

17 **Hero:** Why it's my good Lady Rosline. Good day to you.

18 **Margaret:** Good day, Lady Rosline.

19 **Ursula:** Good day my lady.

20 **Audience Member:** (ad lib)

21 **Hero:** (ad lib) Margaret, Ursula and I have been discussing how Signior Benedick is madly
22 in love with my cousin Beatrice. You must help settle our argument. I believe
23 Beatrice is too crust to love for any man.

24 **Ursula:** Or do you think that Beatrice could change?

25 **Margaret:** She could love a man as noble as Signior Benedick.

26 **Hero:** What man could withstand ten minutes of her sparing?

27 **Ursula:** Signior Benedick.

28 **Hero:** So we have an empassé. What say you, Lady Rosline? Should we tell him or no?

29 **Audience Member:** (ad lib)

30 **Hero:** Truly? Why? (ad lib)

31 **Audience Member:** (ad lib)

32 **Hero:** Come, go with us inside where we can hear more

33 **Ursula:** [Hushed] She's caught, I warrant you.

34 **Margaret:** I do believe we have trapped her, madam.

35 **Hero:** If it's proven so, then loving goes by haps: Some Cupids kill with arrows, some with
36 traps.
37 [Exeunt Hero, Margaret Ursula and Audience Member]

38 **Beatrice:** [aside] What fire is in mine ears? Can this be true? I stand for so much
39 condemned for pride and scorn? Contempt, farewell! Maiden pride, adieu!
40 Benedick, love on. I will love you. Taming my wild heart to your loving hand. If
41 you do love, my kindness shall incite you. Let us bind our loves up in a holy band.
42 For others say you do deserve it, and I believe it.

1 [Exit]
2 Act III -- Scene 1
3 A room in Leonato's house
4 [Enter Benedick singing]
5 [Enter Don Pedro, Claudio and Leonato]
6 **Benedick:** Gallants, I am not as I have been.
7 **Leonato:** So say I. I think you are sadder.
8 **Claudio:** I think he is in love.
9 **Don Pedro:** Hang him! There's no true drop of blood in him that could be touched with
10 love. If he be sad, he wants money.
11 **Benedick:** I have the toothache.
12 **Don Pedro:** What, sigh for the toothache?
13 **Benedick:** Well, every one can master a grief but he that has it.
14 **Claudio:** Yet I say he is in love.
15 **Don Pedro:** There is no appearance of love in him.
16 **Claudio:** If he be not in love with some woman, then there is no believing old signs.
17 **Don Pedro:** Has any man seen him at the barber's?
18 **Claudio:** No, but the barber's man has been seen with him.
19 **Leonato:** Indeed, he looks younger than he did, by the loss of a beard.
20 **Don Pedro:** Aye and he rubs himself with oils. Can you smell him out by that?
21 **Claudio:** That's as much as to say, the sweet youth's in love.
22 **Don Pedro:** The greatest note of it is his melancholy.
23 **Claudio:** And when was he one to wash his face?
24 **Don Pedro:** Yea.
25 **Benedick:** Signior, walk aside with me.
26 [Exeunt Benedick and Leonato]
27 **Don Pedro:** For my life, to break with Leonato about Beatrice.
28 [Enter Don John]
29 **Don John:** My lord and brother, God save you!
30 **Don Pedro:** Good evening, brother.
31 **Don John:** If your leisure served, I would speak with you.
32 **Don Pedro:** In private?
33 **Don John:** If it pleases you, Count Claudio may hear for what I would speak of concerns
34 him.
35 **Don Pedro:** What's the matter?
36 **Don John:** [To Claudio] Means your lordship to be married tomorrow?
37 **Don Pedro:** You know he does.
38 **Don John:** I know not that, when he knows what I know.
39 **Claudio:** If there be any impediment, I pray you discover it.
40 **Don Pedro:** What's the matter?
41 **Don John:** I came to tell you. The lady is disloyal.
42 **Claudio:** Who, Hero?
43 **Don Pedro:** Even she. Leonato's Hero, your Hero, every man's Hero!
44 **Claudio:** Disloyal?

1 **Don Pedro:** I will not think it.
2 **Don John:** If you will follow me, I will show you enough. When you have seen more and
3 heard more, proceed accordingly. If you love her, then tomorrow wed her. But it
4 would better fit your honor to change your mind.
5 [Exeunt]
6 **Act III -- Scene 2**
7 A street.
8 [Enter Dogberry, Verges, First Watch, Second Watch
9 and Audience Member]
10 **Dogberry:** Are you good men and true?
11 **First Watch:** Yea.
12 **Second Watch:** Yea.
13 **Audience Member:** (ad lib)
14 **Dogberry:** Good. This is your charge. You are to bid any man stand in the Prince's name.
15 **Second Watch:** What if he will not stand?
16 **Dogberry:** Why, then, take no note of him, but let him go, and thank God you are rid of a
17 knave.
18 **Verges:** If he will not stand when he is bidden, he is none of the Prince's subjects.
19 **Dogberry:** True, and you are to meddle with none but the Prince's subjects. You shall also
20 make no noise in the streets, for the watch to babble and to talk is most intolerable
21 and not to be endured.
22 **Audience Member:** We will rather sleep than talk.
23 **Dogberry:** Why, you speak like an ancient and most quiet watchman, for I cannot see how
24 sleeping should offend. You are to call at all the alehouses...
25 **First Watch:** O, good....
26 **Dogberry:** and bid those that are drunk to get to bed.
27 **Second Watch:** What if they will not?
28 **Dogberry:** Why, then, leave them alone till they are sober.
29 **Second Watch:** Very well, sir.
30 **Dogberry:** If you meet a thief, you may suspect him to be no true man.
31 **First Watch:** If we know him to be a thief, shall we lay hands on him?
32 **Dogberry:** By your office, you may, but I think the most peaceable way for you is to let him
33 show himself for what he is and let him steal out of your company.
34 **Verges:** You have been always called a merciful man, partner.
35 **Dogberry:** Truly, I would not hang a dog by my will, much more a man who has any
36 honesty in him.
37 **Verges:** If you hear a child cry in the night, you must call to the nurse and bid her still it.
38 **Second Watch:** What if the nurse be asleep and will not hear us?
39 **Dogberry:** Why, then, depart in peace, and let the child wake her with crying.
40 **Verges:** 'Tis very true.
41 **Dogberry:** This is the end of the charge. Well, masters, good night. If there be any matter
42 of weight, call me. Come, neighbor.

1 [Exit Dogberry and Verges]
2 **First Watch:** Well, masters, we hear our charge. Let us go sit here upon the church-bench
3 till two, and then all to bed.

4 [Exeunt]

5 **Act III – Scene 3**

6 The same

7 [Enter Don John, Don Pedro and Claudio]

8 **Don John:** This way, my brothers. Soon you will see who your Hero is. She plays the fair
9 maid to you, but those who move in my circles know her more than a maid.

10 **Claudio:** Where are we?

11 **Don John:** This is the street where Hero makes her nightly appearance. Be still, she is due
12 nigh.

13 [Enter Borachio dressed in Hero's gown]

14 **Borachio:** Greetings all. (ad lib with audience)

15 [Enter Conrade]

16 **Conrade:** Hero!

17 **Borachio:** Conrade, my love.

18 [They embrace]

19 **Conrade:** Are you not to be married in the morning?

20 **Borachio:** Yes, but my will is to be with you tonight. How could tomorrow's rites stop me
21 from seeing you?

22 **Conrade:** We have walked together many times.

23 **Borachio:** And we will again.

24 **Conrade:** But how can you do this and be married to the Count Claudio?

25 **Borachio:** Claudio is a soldier and fool. He'll be away at war for weeks at a time.

26 **Conrade:** Married, alone and above suspicion. My dearest Hero, do you still have....

27 **Borachio:** In the near chamber, my love

28 **Conrade:** Grr!

29 [Exit Borachio and Conrade]

30 **Don Pedro:** By my life, had I not seen this I would have thought it a rouse.

31 **Don John:** Now fair Count, who is your Hero? Is she the mild virtuous maid with which
32 you first fell in love, or...

33 **Claudio:** ... Or a wicked fallen woman.

34 **Don John:** If you dare not trust your own eyes, confess it so. If you do then...

35 **Claudio:** Then tomorrow in the congregation where I should wed, I will shame her.

36 **Don Pedro:** And as I have wooed for you, I will join with you to disgrace her.

37 **Don John:** As you think best, my brothers.

38 [Exeunt]

39 **Act III -- Scene 4**

40 The same

41 [Enter First Watch, Second Watch and Audience Member]

42 **First Watch:** 'Tis nearly the hour to sleep.

43 **Second Watch:** Our friend must live in a different time zone.

1 **First Watch:** I tell you, I am not long for this position.
2 **Second Watch:** Truly?
3 **First Watch:** In faith, the Prince has commissioned me, Lord and Master of the Recreation,
4 Thane of Baseballers.
5 **Second Watch:** 'Tis well, 'tis well. You know that I've never met the Prince's Baseballers.
6 If sir, you'll tell me their names, I will know all those fit to play this raucous sport.
7 **First Watch:** Then give ear, give ear. Who doth inhabit the primary? What doth inhabit the
8 secondary? I Can Not Tell, the tertiary...
9 **Second Watch:** Verily. That's what I wish to discover.
10 **First Watch:** I say Who doth inhabit the primary, What doth inhabit the secondary, I Can
11 Not Tell, the tertiary.
12 **Second Watch:** Names, Sir, know you their names?
13 **First Watch:** Aye.
14 **Second Watch:** Well then Who doth inhabit the primary?
15 **First Watch:** Aye.
16 **Second Watch:** I mean the gentleman's name.
17 **First Watch:** Who.
18 **Second Watch:** The gentleman on primary.
19 **First Watch:** Who.
20 **Second Watch:** The primary gentleman.
21 **First Watch:** Who.
22 **Second Watch:** The gentleman in the primary position.
23 **First Watch:** Who is primary!
24 **Second Watch:** Sir, I ask of you, Who is primary?
25 **First Watch:** Sirrah, I tell you, Who is primary!
26 **Second Watch:** Well on then and tell me Who.
27 **First Watch:** In faith, that is the man's name.
28 **Second Watch:** whose name?
29 **First Watch:** Aye. [pause]
30 **Second Watch:** Look you, Sir, have you a primary gentleman?
31 **First Watch:** Why certainly.
32 **Second Watch:** So, Who doth inhabit the primary?
33 **First Watch:** Truly. [pause]
34 **Second Watch:** Sir, when the primary gentleman has his sum levied every month, who gets
35 the money?
36 **First Watch:** Aye, every ducat of it for he has earned it.
37 **Second Watch:** Who?
38 **First Watch:** Aye, though sometimes his wife comes in his stead to collect it.
39 **Second Watch:** Who's wife?
40 **First Watch:** Aye. [pause]
41 **Second Watch:** Good sir, All I wish to know is What is the gentleman's name in primary
42 position?
43 **First Watch:** Hold! No! What is secondary.
44 **Second Watch:** I ask not Who is secondary.

1 **First Watch:** Who is primary.
2 **Second Watch:** I Can Not Tell!
3 **First Watch:** He is tertiary.
4 **Second Watch:** Tertiary? How have we come to tertiary?!
5 **First Watch:** Your inquiry, sirrah! Your inquiry.
6 **Second Watch:** My inquiry? Very well, Who then is tertiary?
7 **First Watch:** Who is primary.
8 **Second Watch:** Sir, leave me primary and give me tertiary. I ask you, What is the name of
9 the tertiary gentleman?
10 **First Watch:** What is secondary.
11 **Second Watch:** I ask not Who is secondary.
12 **First Watch:** Who is primary.
13 **Second Watch:** I Can Not Tell.
14 **First Watch:** He is tertiary.
15 **Second Watch:** Zounds! Hold fast to tertiary sir, hold fast.
16 **First Watch:** Come Sirrah, your purpose.
17 **Second Watch:** Who is the gentleman in the tertiary position?
18 **First Watch:** Who is primary.
19 **Second Watch:** Ahh! By the hounds of Sparta, I ask What is the name of the man in the
20 tertiary position?
21 **First Watch:** What is secondary.
22 **Second Watch:** I ask not Who is secondary.
23 **First Watch:** Who is primary.
24 **Second Watch:** I Can Not Tell.
25 **Together:** Tertiary.
26 [Enter Borachio and Conrade]
27 **Borachio:** Conrade!
28 **First Watch:** [aside] Peace! Stir not.
29 **Borachio:** Conrade, I say!
30 **Conrade:** Here, man, I am at your elbow.
31 **Borachio:** Stand thee close, then, under this church-house, for it drizzles rain.
32 **Second Watch:** [aside] Some treason, masters, yet stand close.
33 **Borachio:** We have earned from Don John a thousand ducats.
34 **Conrade:** Is it possible that any villainy should be so dear?
35 **Borachio:** You should rather ask if it were possible any villainy should be so rich. For
36 when rich villains have need of poor ones, poor ones may make what price they will.
37 **Audience Member:** [Snore]
38 **Borachio:** Did you not hear somebody?
39 **Conrade:** No, 'twas the vane on the steeple.
40 **Borachio:** What a tale this night will be. I should first tell how the Prince and Claudio were
41 planted and placed and possessed by my master, Don John.
42 **Conrade:** And they thought you were Hero.
43 **Borachio:** Two of them did, the Prince and Claudio. The devil, my master knows them all
44 too well. Away went Claudio enraged, swearing he would meet her as he is

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[Exeunt]

Act III – Scene 6

Leonato's house

[Enter Dogberry and Verges]

[Enter Leonato]

Leonato: What would you with me, honest nieghbor?

Dogberry: Marry, Sir, I would have some confidence with you.

Leonato: Be brief, I pray you, for you see it is a busy time for me.

Dogberry: Marry, this is it sir.

Verges: Yes, in truth it is,sir.

Leonato: What is it, my good friends?

Dogberry: Good man Verges, sir, speaks a little off the matter. He's an old man, sir, and his wits are not so sharp as, God help, I would desire they were, but in faith, he's as honest as the skin between his brows.

Verges: Yes, I thank God I am as honest as any man living that is an old man and no more honest than I.

Dogberry: A good old man, sir, he will be talking as they say 'When the age is in, the wit is out.' God help us!

Leonato: Neighbors, you are tedious.

Dogberry: If pleases your worship to say so, I thank you. Truly for mine own part, if I were as tedious as a king, I would find it in my heart to bestow it all on your worship.

Leonato: All your tediousness on me, ah?

Dogberry: We can only give the gifts that God gives us.

Leonato: I must leave you.

Dogberry: One word, sir. Our watch, sir, has indeed comprehended two persons and we would have them this morning examined before your worship.

Leonato: Take their examination yourself and bring it to me. I am in great haste, as it may appear. Fare you well.

[Exit Leonato]

Dogberry: Go, good partner. Find the best scribe in the county and bid him bring pen and paper to the jail. We are now to examine these men.

[Exit Dogberry and Verges]

Act IV -- Scene 1

A church.

[Enter Don Pedro, Don John, Leonato, Friar Francis, Claudio, Benedick, Hero, Beatrice, Margaret and Attendants]

Leonato: Come, Friar Francis, be brief.

Friar Francis: You come here, my lord, to marry this lady.

Claudio: No, I do not.

Leonato: He means to be married to her. Friar, you come to marry her to him. You see it's a syntax thing, marry her, married to her...

Friar Francis: Yes, I see. Lady, you come hither to be married to this count.

Hero: I do.

1 **Friar Francis:** If either of you know any inward impediment why you should not be
2 conjoined, I charge you, on your souls, to utter it.

3 **Claudio:** Know you any, Hero?

4 **Hero:** None, my lord.

5 **Friar Francis:** Know you any, count?

6 **Leonato:** I dare make his answer, he knows none.

7 **Claudio:** O, what men dare do!

8 **Benedick:** How now, Claudio?

9 **Claudio:** Stand you aside, Friar. Leonato, by your leave, will you with free and
10 unconstrained soul give me this maid, your daughter?

11 **Leonato:** As freely as God did give her to me.

12 **Claudio:** Then, Leonato, take her back again. Give not this rotten orange to your friend.
13 She's but the sign and semblance of her honor. Behold how like a maid she blushes
14 here! But I tell you she is none.

15 **Leonato:** What do you mean, my lord?

16 **Claudio:** I mean not to be married. I mean not to knit my soul to an approved wanton.

17 **Leonato:** My dear lord, if you have vanquished the resistance of her youth....

18 **Claudio:** I know what you say old man and I have not. You seemed to me as Diane in her
19 orb, as chaste as is the bud ere it be blown. But you are more intemperate in your
20 blood than Venus.

21 **Hero:** Is my lord well that he speaks so wildly?

22 **Leonato:** Sweet Prince, why do you not speak?

23 **Don Pedro:** What should I speak? I stand dishonored. I am about to link my dear friend to
24 a common harlot.

25 **Leonato:** Are these things spoken, or do I dream?

26 **Claudio:** Let me put one question to your daughter, and, by that fatherly power that you
27 have in her, bid her answer it truly.

28 **Leonato:** I charge you do so, as you are my child.

29 **Claudio:** What man was he that you talked with yesternight? Now, if you are a maid,
30 answer to this.

31 **Hero:** I talked with no man, my lord.

32 **Don Pedro:** Why, then are you no maiden. Leonato, I am sorry you must hear this. Upon
33 mine honor, myself, my brother and this grieved count did see her, hear her, last night
34 talk with a ruffian and confess the vile encounters they have had a thousand times in
35 secret.

36 **Hero:** No, my lord..

37 **Don John:** Come, let us go. There will be no wedding today.

38 **Claudio:** Fare you well, most foul! Farewell.

39 **Leonato:** Has no man's dagger a point for me?
40 [Hero swoons]

41 **Beatrice:** What, how now, cousin!
42 [Exeunt Don Pedro, Don John, and Claudio]

43 **Benedick:** How is the lady?

44 **Beatrice:** Dead, I think. Hero! Uncle! Signior Benedick! Friar!

1 **Leonato:** O fate, take not away your heavy hand. Death is the fairest cover for her shame.

2 **Beatrice:** How now, cousin Hero!

3 **Friar Francis:** Have comfort, lady.

4 **Leonato:** Do not live, Hero. Do not open your eyes. I did not think you would so quickly

5 die. I thought your spirits were stronger than your shames. Why had I but one child?

6 Why ever were you so lovely in my eyes?

7 **Benedick:** Sir, sir, be patient. For my part, I am so attired in wonder; I know not what to

8 say.

9 **Beatrice:** O, on my soul, my cousin is belied!

10 **Benedick:** Lady, were you her bedfellow last night?

11 **Beatrice:** No, truly not. Although until last night I have these twelve months been her

12 bedfellow.

13 **Leonato:** Confirmed, confirmed! Would the two Princes lie, and Claudio lie who loved her

14 so? Let her die.

15 **Friar Francis:** Hear me a little for I have been silent too long. Lady, what man is he you

16 are accused of?

17 **Hero:** I know none.

18 **Friar Francis:** There is some strange mistake.

19 **Benedick:** Two of them have the very bent of honor.

20 **Leonato:** If they wrong her honor, the proudest of them shall hear of it.

21 **Friar Francis:** Pause awhile, and let my counsel sway you in this case. Your daughter here,

22 the Prince has left for dead. Let her awhile be secretly kept in, and publish it that she

23 is dead indeed.

24 **Leonato:** What shall become of this? What will this do?

25 **Friar Francis:** She was dead upon the instant that she was accused and it must so be

26 maintained. She shall be lamented, pitied and excused. So will it fare with Claudio.

27 When he shall hear that she died upon his words, he shall mourn if ever there were

28 any love for her in his soul.

29 **Benedick:** Signior Leonato, let the friar advise you:

30 **Leonato:** Being that I flow in grief, the smallest twine may lead me.

31 **Friar Francis:** 'Tis consented, presently away. Come, lady, you must die to live. This

32 wedding day perhaps is but prolonged, have patience and endure.

33 [Exeunt all but Benedick and Beatrice]

34 **Benedick:** Lady Beatrice, have you wept all this while?

35 **Beatrice:** Yea, and I will weep a while longer.

36 **Benedick:** I will not desire that.

37 **Beatrice:** You have no reason, I do it freely.

38 **Benedick:** Surely, I do believe your fair cousin is wronged.

39 **Beatrice:** Ah, how much might the man deserve of me if he would right her!

40 **Benedick:** Is there any way to show such friendship?

41 **Beatrice:** A very even way, but no such friend.

42 **Benedick:** May a man do it?

43 **Beatrice:** It is a man's office, but not yours.

44 **Benedick:** Beatrice, I do love nothing in the world so well as you. Is not that strange?

1 **Beatrice:** As strange as the thing I do not know. It were as possible for me to say I loved
2 nothing so much as you, but believe me I confess nothing.
3 **Benedick:** By my sword, Beatrice, you love me.
4 **Beatrice:** Do not swear, and eat it.
5 **Benedick:** I will swear that you love me, and I will make him eat it that says I don't love
6 you.
7 **Beatrice:** Why, then, God forgive me!
8 **Benedick:** What offense, sweet Beatrice?
9 **Beatrice:** You have stayed me in a happy hour. I was about to protest I loved you.
10 **Benedick:** Then do it with all your heart.
11 **Beatrice:** I love you with so much of my heart that none is left to protest.
12 **Benedick:** Come, bid me do any thing for you.
13 **Beatrice:** Kill Claudio.
14 **Benedick:** Ha, not for the wide world.
15 **Beatrice:** You kill me to deny it. Farewell.
16 **Benedick:** Tarry, sweet Beatrice.
17 **Beatrice:** I am gone, though I am here. There is no love in you. I pray you, let me go.
18 **Benedick:** Beatrice ...
19 **Beatrice:** In faith, I will go.
20 **Benedick:** Is Claudio your enemy?
21 **Beatrice:** Has he not approved the height of a villain? He has slandered, scorned and
22 dishonored my cousin. O that I were a man! I would eat his heart in the market
23 place.
24 **Benedick:** Tarry, good Beatrice. By this hand, I love you.
25 **Beatrice:** Then use it for my love some other way than swearing by it.
26 **Benedick:** In your soul, you think the Count Claudio has wronged Hero.
27 **Beatrice:** Yea, as sure as I have a thought or a soul.
28 **Benedick:** Enough then, I am engaged. I will challenge him. By this hand, Claudio shall
29 render me a dear account. Go, comfort your cousin. I must say she is dead and so,
30 farewell.

31 [Exeunt]

32 Act IV – Scene 2

33 A street

34 [Enter Verges]

35 **Verges:** (ad lib) The best scribe in the county? Who would that be? Does someone have a
36 pen that an old man may borrow? Do you come with it? How is your spelling?
37 Good? Bad? It really doesn't matter; neither my partner nor I can read. You can
38 write anything you want. You're about the right size to fit the robe, come with me.

1 [Exit Verges and Audience Member]
2 Act IV -- Scene 3
3 A prison.
4 [Enter Dogberry, Verges, and Audience Member, in a gown, First and Second
5 Watch, with Conrade and Borachio]
6 **Dogberry:** Is our whole disassembly appeared?
7 **Verges:** O, a stool and a cushion for the sexton.
8 **Dogberry:** [ad lib to Audience Member] Are you the best scribe in the county? Let's see
9 some of your work. [To Borachio] What is your name, friend?
10 **Borachio:** Borachio.
11 **Dogberry:** Pray, write down, Borachio. (ad lib) That's 'B' something, something,
12 something. Can you read it? Good enough. Your's, sirrah?
13 **Conrade:** I am a gentleman, sir, and my name is Conrade.
14 **Dogberry:** Oooo, a gentleman, Write down, master gentleman Conrade. Masters, it is
15 proved already that you are little better than false knaves. How answer you for
16 yourselves?
17 **Conrade:** Marry, sir, we say we are none.
18 **Dogberry:** A marvelous witty fellow, I assure you, but I will go about with him. Come you
19 here, sirrah, a word in your ear. Sir, I say to you, it is thought you are false knaves.
20 **Borachio:** Sir, I say to you we are none.
21 **Dogberry:** Well, stand aside. Call forth the accusers!
22 **Verges:** Call forth the accusers!
23 **Audience Member:** Call forth the accusers!
24 **Dogberry:** Were there not three of you?
25 **First Watch:** I pray you, our third could not be roused.
26 **Dogberry:** Very well then, masters, I charge you in the Prince's name, accuse these men.
27 **Second Watch:** This man said sir, that Don John was a villain.
28 **Dogberry:** Write down Don John a villain. (ad lib) Let me see what you have so far. B,
29 something, something, something; Master gentleman Conrade; Don John a villian.
30 Excellent, excellent, you are a most worthy scribe. What's this note here? 'Help, I
31 have to go to the bathroom.' Well then go. Your duties are ended. Thank you.
32 [Help Audience Member disrobe and sent to seat]
33 **Borachio:** Master constable

34 **Dogberry:** Pray you, fellow, peace. I do not like your look. What else has he said?
35 **Second Watch:** Marry, that he had received a thousand ducats from Don John for accusing
36 the Lady Hero wrongfully.
37 **Dogberry:** Flat burglary as ever was committed.
38 **Verges:** Yea, by mass, that it is.
39 **Dogberry:** What else, fellow?
40 **First Watch:** And that Count Claudio did mean, upon his words, to disgrace Hero before the
41 whole assembly and not marry her.
42 **Dogberry:** O villain! You will be condemned for this.

1 **First Watch:** And this is more, master. Prince John is this morning secretly stolen away.
2 Hero was in this manner accused, in this very manner refused, and upon the grief of
3 this suddenly died.
4 **Dogberry:** Then let these men be bound, and brought to Master Leonato's. Come bind them
5 **Conrade:** Away! You are an ass.
6 **Dogberry:** Do you not suspect my place? Do you not suspect my years? O that he were
7 still here to write me down an ass! But, masters, remember that I am an ass, though it
8 be not written down yet. [To Audience Member] Have you that? Forget not that I
9 am an ass. I am a wise fellow, and, which is more, an officer, and, which is even
10 more, a householder and one that knows the law. Bring him away. O that I had been
11 writtten down an ass!

12 [Exeunt]

13 Act IV -- Scene 4

14 Leonato's house.

15 [Enter Leonato and Antonio]

16 **Margaret:** Sir, if you go on thus, you will kill yourself.
17 **Leonato:** Bring me a father that so loved his child, whose joy of her was overwhelmed like
18 mine. Then bid him speak of patience.
19 **Margaret:** But my Lord...
20 **Leonato:** I pray you, peace. For there was never yet a philosopher that could endure the
21 heartache patiently.
22 **Margaret:** Yet bend not all the harm upon yourself. Make those that do offend you suffer
23 as well.
24 **Leonato:** My soul tells me Hero is belied, and that shall Claudio know. So shall the Prince
25 and all of them that did dishonor her.

26 [Enter Don Pedro and Claudio]

27 **Margaret:** Here come the Prince and Claudio hastily.
28 **Leonato:** Leave me.

29 [Exit Margaret]

30 **Don Pedro:** Good den.
31 **Claudio:** Good day to you.
32 **Leonato:** Hear you. my lords,
33 **Don Pedro:** We have some haste, Leonato.
34 **Leonato:** Some haste, my lord! Well, fare you well, my lord. Why are you so hasty now?
35 **Don Pedro:** Nay, do not quarrel with us, good old man.
36 **Leonato:** If I could right myself with quarreling, some of us would lie low.
37 **Claudio:** Who wrongs him?
38 **Leonato:** Who? You wrong me.
39 **Claudio:** We must away.
40 **Leonato:** Tush, tush, man. Never sneer and jest at me. I speak not like a fool. I say you
41 have belied mine innocent child.
42 **Don Pedro:** I say you are not right, old man.
43 **Leonato:** I'll prove it on his body, if he dare.
44 **Claudio:** Away! I will not have anything to do with you.

1 **Leonato:** You have killed my child. If you kill me, boy, you shall kill a man.

2 **Don Pedro:** Good sir, we will not wake your patience. My heart is sorry for your daughter's

3 death. But, on my honor, she was charged with nothing but what was true and very

4 full of proof.

5 **Leonato:** My lord, my lord, ...

6 **Don Pedro:** I will not hear you.

7 **Leonato:** No? I will be heard.

8 [Exeunt Leonato]

9 **Don Pedro:** See, here comes the man we went to seek.

10 [Enter Benedick]

11 **Claudio:** Now, Signior, what news?

12 **Benedick:** Good day, my Lord.

13 **Don Pedro:** Welcome, Signior. You have almost come to part a fray.

14 **Claudio:** We had like to have had our two noses snapped off by an old man without any

15 teeth.

16 **Benedick:** Shall I speak a word in your ear?

17 **Claudio:** God bless me from a challenge!

18 **Benedick:** [Aside to Claudio] You are a villain, and I jest not. I will make it good how you

19 dare, with what you dare, and when you dare. Do me right, or I will protest your

20 cowardice. You have killed a sweet innocent lady, and her death shall fall heavy on

21 you. Let me hear from you.

22 **Claudio:** Well, I will meet you now, so I may have good cheer.

23 [Both draw swords, Fight]

24 [Enter Leonato, Dogberry, Verges, and the Watch,

25 with Conrade and Borachio]

26 **Benedick:** My lord, for your many courtesies, I thank you. I must discontinue your

27 company. Now for Lord Lackbeard here, are you ready to admit that you have killed

28 a sweet and innocent lady?

29 **Claudio:** On my honor, I will do no such thing. For I was there to see her treachery, you

30 were not.

31 **Leonato:** My lords, I pray you hold! Listen to what these men have to say .

32 **Don Pedro:** How now? Two of my brother's men bound! Borachio one! Officers, what

33 offense have these men done?

34 **Dogberry:** Marry, sir, they have committed false report. Moreover, they have spoken

35 untruths. Secondly, they are slanderers. Sixth and lastly, they have belied a lady.

36 Thirdly, they have verified unjust things. And, to conclude, they are lying knaves.

37 And masters, do not forget to specify, when time and place shall serve, that I am an

38 ass.

39 **Don Pedro:** Who have you offended, masters? This learned constable is too cunning to be

40 understood. What's your offense?

41 **Borachio:** Sweet Prince, I have deceived even your very eyes. Don John, your brother

42 incensed me to slander the Lady Hero. You were brought into the street and saw me

43 in Hero's garments.

44 **Don Pedro:** You in Hero's garments?

1 **Dogberry:** [Places wig on Borachio's head] See your honor how he makes a striking
2 resemblance.

3 **Borachio:** My villainy is on record. I had rather seal it with my death than repeat over to
4 my shame. The lady is dead upon mine and my master's false accusation.

5 **Benedick:** My friend, can you now see what you have done?

6 **Leonato:** You are the slave that with your breath has killed my innocent child.

7 **Borachio:** Yea, even I alone.

8 **Leonato:** No, not so, villain. Here are a pair of honorable men that also had a hand in it.
9 Don Pedro, Sir Claudio, I thank you, for my daughter's death and Sir Benedick for
10 your defense of her.

11 **Claudio:** I know not how to pray your patience. Yet I must speak. Choose your revenge
12 upon me. Impose me to what penance your invention can lay upon my sin.

13 **Leonato:** I cannot bid you bid my daughter live, that were impossible. But, I pray you both,
14 tell the people in Messina how innocent she died. Hang her an epitaph upon her
15 tomb. Tomorrow morning come you to my house, and since you could not be my
16 son-in-law, be yet my nephew. My brother has a daughter, almost the copy of my
17 child that's dead. She alone is heir to both of us. Marry her as you should have her
18 cousin, and so dies my revenge.

19 **Dogberry:** Moreover, sir, this plaintiff here, the offender, did call me such a name as to
20 slander the best of the Prince's men. Good sir, follow me if you will. He said I am
21 an

22 **All:** Ass

23 **Dogberry:** There good sirs. I am an ass, I beseech you, let it always be remembered that I
24 am an ass.

25 **Don Pedro:** So it shall.

26 **Dogberry:** I humbly thank your nobleness.

27 **Claudio:** O sir, I do embrace your offer.

28 **Leonato:** Tomorrow then I will expect your coming. Tonight I take my leave.
29 [Exit Leonato]

30 **Dogberry:** Good neighbor, take these villains away. An ass, am I? Let you say that again.
31 The Prince now knows I am an ass

32 [Exeunt]

33 **Act V -- Scene 1**
34 A church.
35 [Enter Don Pedro, Claudio, Benedick]

36 **Claudio:** Is this the monument of Leonato?

37 **Friar Francis:** It is, my lord.

38 **Claudio:** [Places flowers on Hero's chest. Reading out of a scroll] Done to death by
39 slanderous tongues was the Hero that here lies. Death, in reward of my wrongs. Give
40 her fame, which never dies. So the life that died with shame lives in death with
41 glorious fame. Hang you there upon the tomb praising her when I am gone. Now,
42 goodnight! Good friends, thank you. Yearly will I do this rite.

43 **Hero:** [Sneeze]

44 **Benedick:** [Sneeze, cough] Allergy season.

1 **Claudio:** Good masters, thanks to you all, and leave me here to mourn awhile.

2 **Don Pedro:** No, to Leonato's we will go.

3 **Claudio:** Goodnight fair Hero, would that the wedding could still be ours.

4 [Exeunt]

5 **Act V -- Scene 2**

6 Leonato's garden.

7 [Enter Benedick]

8 **Benedick:** [Sings] The god of love, That sits above, And knows me, and knows me, How
9 pitiful I deserve... [Speaking] Leander, Troilus their names run smoothly in the even
10 road of a blank verse, but they were never so truly turned over and over as my poor
11 self in love. Marry, I cannot show it in rhyme. I have tried. I can find out no rhyme
12 to 'lady' but 'baby,' an innocent rhyme; for 'scorn,' 'horn,' a hard rhyme; for, 'school,'
13 'fool,' a babbling rhyme; very ominous endings. No, I was not born under a rhyming
14 planet. I cannot woo in festival terms.

15 [Enter Beatrice]

16 **Beatrice:** My lord.

17 **Benedick:** Sweet Beatrice, would you come when I called?

18 **Beatrice:** Yea, Signior, and depart when you bid me.

19 **Benedick:** O, stay but till then!

20 **Beatrice:** 'Then' is spoken. Fare you well now. I go

21 **Benedick:** I pray thee now, tell me for which of my bad parts did you first fall in love with?

22 **Beatrice:** For all of them together. They maintained such a state of evil that they will not
23 admit any good part to intermingle with them. But for which of my good parts did
24 you first suffer love for me?

25 **Benedick:** Suffer love! a good epithet! I do suffer love indeed, for I love you against my
26 will.

27 **Beatrice:** In spite of your heart, alas, poor heart! If you spite it for my sake, I will spite it
28 for yours, for I will never love that which my friend hates.

29 **Benedick:** You and I are too wise to woo peaceably. Now tell me, how is your cousin?

30 **Beatrice:** Oh, very ill, my lord. Dead in fact, but feeling better as we speak.

31 **Benedick:** Then all is ready?

32 **Beatrice:** Aye.

33 **Benedick:** Then I will go with you to your uncle's.

34 [Exeunt]

35 **Act V -- Scene 3**

36 Leonato's house.

37 [Enter Leonato, Antonio, Benedick, Beatrice,
38 Margaret, Ursula, Friar Francis, and Hero]

39 **Friar Francis:** Did I not tell you she was innocent?

40 **Leonato:** So are the Prince and Claudio who accused her.

41 **Antonio:** Well, I am glad that all things sort out so well.

42 **Leonato:** Daughter, and your gentlewomen withdraw into a chamber by yourselves. When I
43 send for you, come hither masked.

1 **Hero:** Yes Father.

2 [Exeunt Ladies]

3 **Leonato:** The Prince and Claudio promised to visit me by this hour. You know your office,
4 brother. You must be father to my daughter and give her to young Claudio.

5 **Antonio:** Which I will do with confirmed countenance.

6 **Benedick:** Friar, I must entreat your pains, I think.

7 **Friar Francis:** To do what, signior?

8 **Benedick:** To bind me, or undo me, one of them. Signior Leonato, good signior, your niece
9 regards me with an eye of favor.

10 **Leonato:** So what's your will?

11 **Benedick:** My will is that your good will may stand with ours this day to be conjoined in the
12 state of honorable marriage. Good friar, I shall desire your help.

13 **Friar Francis:** And my help is yours. Here comes the Prince and Claudio.

14 [Enter Don Pedro and Claudio]

15 **Don Pedro:** Good morrow to this fair assembly.

16 **Leonato:** Good morrow, Prince. Good morrow, Claudio. We here attend you. Are you still
17 determined today to marry with my brother's daughter?

18 **Claudio:** I will marry whom you direct.

19 **Leonato:** Call her forth, brother. Here's the Friar ready.

20 [Exit Antonio]

21 **Claudio:** I owe you this, my lord.

22 [Re-enter Antonio, with the Ladies masked]

23 **Claudio:** Which is the lady I must seize upon?

24 **Antonio:** This same is she, and I do give you her.

25 **Claudio:** Then she's mine. Sweet, let me see your face.

26 **Leonato:** No, that you shall not. Not until you take her hand before this Friar and swear to
27 marry her.

28 **Claudio:** Give me your hand. Before this holy Friar, I am your husband, if you want of
29 me.

30 **Hero:** When I lived, I was your other wife. [Unmasking] And when you loved, you were
31 my other husband.

32 **Don Pedro:** The former Hero! The Hero that is dead!

33 **Leonato:** She died, my lord, but only while her slander lived.

34 **Friar Francis:** All this amazement can I qualify when after that the holy rites are ended.

35 **Benedick:** Which is Beatrice?

36 **Beatrice:** [Unmasking] I answer to that name. What is your will?

37 **Benedick:** Do not you love me?

38 **Beatrice:** Why, no, no more than reason.

39 **Benedick:** Why, then your uncle and the Prince and Claudio have been deceived. They
40 swore you did.

41 **Beatrice:** Do not you love me?

42 **Benedick:** Troth, no. No more than reason.

43 **Beatrice:** Why, then my cousin, Margaret and Ursula are much deceived, for they did swear
44 you did.

1 **Benedick:** They swore that you were almost sick for me.
2 **Beatrice:** They swore that you were well nigh dead for me.
3 **Benedick:** 'Tis no such matter. Then you do not love me?
4 **Beatrice:** No, truly, but in friendly recompense.
5 **Leonato:** Come, niece, I am sure you love the gentleman.
6 **Claudio:** And I'll be sworn that he loves her, for here's a paper written in his hand. A
7 halting sonnet of his own pure brain, fashioned to Beatrice.
8 **Hero:** And here's another writ in my cousin's hand, stolen from her pocket, containing her
9 affection to Benedick.
10 **Benedick:** A miracle! Here are our own hands against our hearts. Come, I will have you
11 but, by this light, I take you for pity.
12 **Beatrice:** I would not deny you, but, by this good day, I yield upon great persuasion. Partly
13 to save your life, for I was told you were in consumption.
14 **Leonato:** Peace! I will stop your mouth. [Pulls Benedick to Beatrice, They kiss]
15 **Don Pedro:** How do you, Benedick, the married man?
16 **Benedick:** In brief, since I do purpose to marry, I will think of nothing in the world to speak
17 against it. Therefore never flout at me for what I have said against it. For man is a
18 giddy thing, and that is my conclusion. Come, come, we are friends. Let's have a
19 dance ere we are married, that we may lighten our own hearts and our wives' heels.
20 **Leonato:** We'll have dancing afterward, first the marriage rites.
21 **Benedick:** Prince, you look sad. There is but one cure - get thee a wife, get thee a wife.
22 [Exeunt]
23
24 **Finis**