

Much Ado About Nothing

Shakespeare, William, 1564-1616.

Much Adoe about Nothing from Mr. William Shakespeares comedies,
histories, & tragedies. Published according to the true originall copies.

Bodleian First Folio, Arch. G c.7

|101

ACT 1

Scene 1

Actus primus, Scena prima.

Enter Leonato Gouvernour of Messina, Innogen his wife, Hero his daughter, and Beatrice his Neece, with a messenger.

5 LEONATO. I Learne in this Letter, that *Don Peter* of Arragon, comes this night to *Messina*.

MESS. He is very neere by this: he was not three Leagues off when I left him.

LEON. How many Gentlemen haue you lost in this action?

10 MESS. But few of any sort, and none of name.

LEON. A victorie is twice it selfe, when the atchieuer brings home full numbers: I finde heere, that *Don Peter* hath bestowed much honor on a yong *Florentine*, called *Claudio*.

MESS. Much deseru'd on his part, and equally remembred by
15 *Don Pedro*, he hath borne himselfe beyond the promise of his age, doing in the figure of a Lambe, the feats of a Lion, he hath indeede better bettred expectation, then you must expect of me to tell you how.

LEO. He hath an Vnckle heere in *Messina*, wil be very much glad
20 of it.

MESS. I haue alreadie deliuered him letters, and there appears much ioy in him, euen so much, that ioy could not shew it selfe modest enough, without a badg of bitterness.

LEO. Did he breake out into teares?

25 MESS. In great measure.

LEO. A kinde ouerflow of kindnesse, there are no faces truer, then those that are so wash'd, how much better is it to weepe at ioy, then to ioy at weeping?

BEA. I pray you, is Signior *Mountanto* return'd from the warres,
30 or no?

MESS. I know none of that name, Lady, there was none such in the armie of any sort.

LEON. What is he that you aske for Neece?

HERO. My cousin meanes Signior Benedick of *Padua*

35 MESS. O he's return'd, and as pleasant as euer he was.

BEAT. He set vp his bils here in *Messina*, & challeng'd Cupid at
the Flight: and my Vnckles foole reading the Challenge,
subscrib'd for Cupid, and challeng'd him at the Burbolt. I
pray you, how many hath hee kil'd and eaten in these warres?
40 But how many hath he kil'd? for indeed, I promis'd to eate all
of his killing.

LEON. 'Faith Neece, you taxe Signior Benedicke too much, but
hee'l be meet with you, I doubt it not.

MESS. He hath done good seruice Lady in these wars.

45 BEAT. You had musty victuall, and he hath holpe to ease it: he's
a very valiant Trencher-man, hee hath an excellent stomacke.

MESS. And a good souldier too Lady.

BEAT. And a good souldier to a Lady. But what is he to a Lord?

50 MESS. A Lord to a Lord, a man to a man, stuf with all
honourable vertues.

BEAT. It is so indeed, he is no lesse then a stuf man: but for the
stuffing well, we are all mortall.

LEON. You must not (sir) mistake my Neece, there is a kind of
55 merry war betwixt Signior Benedick, & her: they neuer meet,
but there's a skirmish of wit between them.

BEA. Alas, he gets nothing by that. In our last conflict, foure of
his fiae wits went halting off, and now is the whole man
gouern'd with one: so that if hee haue wit enough to keepe
60 himselfe warme, let him beare it for a difference betweene
himselfe and his horse: For it is all the wealth that he hath
left, to be knowne a reaso- nable creature. Who is his
companion now? He hath euery month a new sworne brother.

MESS. Is't possible?

65 BEAT. Very easily possible: he weares his faith but as the fashion
of his hat, it euer changes with y^e next block.

MESS. I see (Lady) the Gentleman is not in your bookes.

BEA. No, and he were, I would burne my study. But I pray you,
who is his companion? Is there no young squarer now,[.. ..]

70 nonstandardCharacter: 1 chars that will make a voyage with him
to the diuell?

MESS. He is most in the company of the right noble *Claudio*.

BEAT. O Lord, he will hang vpon him like a disease: he is sooner caught then the pestilence, and the taker runs presently mad.

75 God helpe the noble *Claudio*, if hee haue caught the Benedict, it will cost him a thousand pound ere he be cur'd.

MESS. I will hold friends with you Lady.

BEA. Do good friend.

LEO. You'l ne're run mad Neece.

80 BEA. No, not till a hot Ianuary.

MESS. *Don Pedro* is approach'd.

Enter don Pedro, Claudio, Benedicke, Balthasar, and Iohn the bastard.

PEDRO. Good Signior *Leonato*, you are come to meet your
85 trouble: the fashion of the world is to auoid cost, and you encounter it.

LEON. Neuer came trouble to my house in the likenes of your Grace: for trouble being gone, comfort should remaine: but when you depart from me, sorrow abides, and happinesse takes
90 his leaue.

|102

PEDRO. You embrace your charge too willingly: I thinke this is your daughter.

LEONATO. Her mother hath many times told me so.

95 BENED. Were you in doubt that you askt her?

LEONATO. Signior Benedicke, no, for then were you a childe.

PEDRO. You haue it full Benedicke, we may ghesse by this, what you are, being a man, truely the Lady fathers her selfe: be
happie Lady, for you are like an honorable father.

100 BEN. If Signior *Leonato* be her father, she would not haue his head on her shoulders for al Messina, as like him as she is.

BEAT. I wonder that you will still be talking, signior Benedicke, no body markes you.

BEN. What my deere Ladie Disdaine! are you yet liuing?

105 BEAT. Is it possible Disdaine should die, while shee hath such meete foode to feede it, as Signior Benedicke? Curtesie it selfe must conuert to Disdaine, if you come in her presence.

BENE. Then is curtesie a turnercoate, but it is certaine I am loued of all Ladies, onely you excepted: and I would I could
110 finde in my heart that I had not a hard heart, for truely I loue none.

BEAT. A deere happinesse to women, they would else haue beene troubled with a pernitious Suter, I thanke God and my cold

- blood, I am of your humour for that, I had rather heare my
115 Dog barke at a Crow, than a man sweare he loues me.
BENE. God keepe your Ladiship still in that minde, so[. . .]
illegible: 1 chars some Gentleman or other shall scape a
predestinate scratcht face.
BEAT. Scratching could not make it worse, and 'twere such a
120 face as yours were.
BENE. Well, you are a rare Parrat teacher.
BEAT. A bird of my tongue, is better than a beast of your.
BEN. I would my horse had the speed of your tongue, and so
good a continuer, but keepe your way a Gods name, I haue
125 done.
BEAT. You alwaies end with a Iades tricke, I know you of old.
PEDRO. This is the summe of all: *Leonato*, signior *Claudio*, and
signior *Benedicke* my deere friend *Leonato*, hath inuited you
all, I tell him we shall stay here, at the least a moneth, and he
130 heartily praies some occasion may detaine vs longer: I dare
sweare hee is no hypocrite, but praies from his heart.
LEON. If you sweare, my Lord, you shall not be forsworne, let
mee bid you welcome, my Lord, being reconciled to the Prince
your brother: I owe you all duetie.
135 IOHN. I thanke you, I am not of many words, but I thanke you.
LEON. Please it your grace leade on?
PEDRO. Your hand *Leonato*, we will goe together.
Exeunt. Manet Benedicke and Claudio.
CLAU. *Benedicke*, didst thou note the daughter of signior
140 *Leonato*?
BENE. I noted her not, but I lookt on her.
CLAUD. Is she not a modest yong Ladie?
BENE. Doe you question me as an honest man should doe, for
my simple true iudgement? or would you haue me speake after
145 my custome, as being a professed tyrant to their sexe?

CLAU. No, I pray thee speake in sober iudgement.
BENE. Why yfaith me thinks shee's too low for a hie praise, too
browne for a faire praise, and too little for a great praise,
150 onely this commendation I can affoord her, that were shee
other then she is, she were vnhandsome, and being no other,
but as she is, I doe not like her.
CLAU. Thou think'st I am in sport, I pray thee tell me truely
how thou lik'st her.

- 155 BENE. Would you buie her, that you enquier after her?
CLAU. Can the world buie such a iewell?
BEN. Yea, and a case to put it into, but speake you this with a
sad brow? Or doe you play the flowting iacke, to tell vs Cupid
is a good Hare-finder, and Vulcan a rare Carpenter: Come, in
160 what key shall a man take you to goe in the song?
CLAU. In mine eie, she is the sweetest Ladie that euer I lookt on.
BENE. I can see yet without spectacles, and I see no such
matter: there's her cosin, and she were not possest with a
furie, exceedes her as much in beautie, as the first of Maie
165 doth the last of December: but I hope you haue no intent to
turne husband, haue you?
CLAU. I would scarce trust my selfe, though I had sworne the
contrarie, if *Hero* would be my wife.
BENE. Ist come to this? in faith hath not the world one man but
170 he will weare his cap with suspition? shall I neuer see a
batcheller of three score againe? goe to yfaith, and thou wilt
needes thrust thy necke into a yoke, weare the print of it, and
sigh away sundaies: looke, *don Pedrois* returned to seeke you.
Enter don Pedro, Iohn the bastard.
175 PEDR. What secret hath held you here, that you followed not to
Leonatoes?
BENED. I would your Grace would constraine mee to tell.
PEDRO. I charge thee on thy allegeance.
BEN. You heare, Count *Claudio*, I can be secret as a dumbe
180 man, I would haue you thinke so (but on my allegiance, marke
you this, on my allegiance) hee is in loue, With who? now that
is your Graces part: marke how short his answeare is, with
Hero, Leonatoes short daughter.
CLAU. If this were so, so were it vttred.
185 BENED. Like the old tale, my Lord, it is not so, nor 'twas not so:
but indeede, God forbid it should be so.
CLAU. If my passion change not shortly, God forbid it should be
otherwise.
PEDRO. Amen, if you loue her, for the Ladie is verie well
190 worthie.
CLAU. You speake this to fetch me in, my Lord.
PEDR. By my troth I speake my thought.
CLAU. And in faith, my Lord, I spoke mine.
BENED. And by my two faiths and troths, my Lord, I speake
195 mine.

CLAU. That I loue her, I feele.

PEDR. That she is worthie, I know.

BENED. That I neither feele how shee should be loued, nor know
how shee should be worthie, is the opinion that fire cannot
200 melt out of me, I will die in it at the stake.

PEDR. Thou wast euer an obstinate heretique in the despight of
Beautie.

CLAU. And neuer could maintaine his part, but in the force of
his will.

205 |103

BEN. That a woman conceiued me, I thanke her: that she
brought mee vp, I likewise giue her most humble thanks: but
that I will haue a rechate winded in my forehead, or hang my
bugle in an inuisible baldricke, all women shall pardon me:
210 because I will not do them the wrong to mistrust any, I will
doe my selfe the right to trust none: and the fine is, (for the
which I may goe the finer) I will liue a Batchellor.

PEDRO. I shall see thee ere I die, looke pale with loue.

BENE. With anger, with sicknesse, or with hunger, my Lord, not
215 with loue: proue that euer I loose more blood with loue, then I
will get againe with drinking, picke out mine eyes with a
Ballet-makers penne, and hang me vp at the doore of a
brothel-house for the signe of blinde Cupid.

PEDRO. Well, if euer thou doost fall from this faith, thou wilt
220 proue a notable argument.

BENE. If I do, hang me in a bottle like a Cat, & shoot at me,
and he that hit's me, let him be clapt on the shoulder, and
cal'd *Adam*.

PEDRO. Well, as time shall trie: In time the sauage Bull doth
225 beare the yoake.

BENE. The sauage bull may, but if euer the sensible *Benedicke*
beare it, plucke off the bulles hornes, and set them in my
forehead, and let me be vildely painted, and in such great
Letters as they write, heere is good horse to hire: let them
230 signifie vnder my signe, here you may see *Benedicke* the
married man.

CLAU. If this should euer happen, thou wouldst bee horne mad.

PEDRO. Nay, if Cupid haue not spent all his Quiuer in Venice,
thou wilt quake for this shortly.

235 BENE. I looke for an earthquake too then.

PEDRO. Well, you will temporize with the houres, in the meane time, good Signior *Benedicke*, repaire to *Leonatoes*, commend me to him, and tell him I will not faile him at supper, for indeede he hath made great preparation.

240 BENE. I haue almost matter enough in me for such an Embassage, and so I commit you.

CLAU. To the tuition of God. From my house, if I had it.

PEDRO. The sixt of Iuly. Your louing friend, *Benedick*.

BENE. Nay mocke not, mocke not; the body of your discourse is
245 sometime guarded with fragments, and the guardes are but slightly basted on neither, ere you flout old ends any further, examine your conscience, and so I leaue you.

Exit.

CLAU. My Liege, your Highnesse now may doe mee good.

PEDRO. My loue is thine to teach, teach it but how,
250 And thou shalt see how apt it is to learne Any hard Lesson that may do thee good.

CLAU. Hath *Leonato* any sonne my Lord?

PEDRO. No childe but *Hero*, she's his onely heire.
Dost thou affect her *Claudio*?

CLAU. O my Lord,
255 When you went onward on this ended action,¹
I look'd vpon her with a souldiers eie,
That lik'd, but had a rougher taske in hand,
Than to driue liking to the name of loue:
260 But now I am return'd, and that warre-thoughts
Haue left their places vacant: in their roomes,
Come thronging soft and delicate desires,
All prompting mee how faire yong *Hero* is,
Saying I lik'd her ere I went to warres.

265 PEDRO. Thou wilt be like a louer presently,
And tire the hearer with a booke of words:
If thou dost loue faire *Hero*, cherish it,
And I will breake with her: wast not to this end,
270 That thou beganst to twist so fine a story?
CLAU. How sweetly doe you minister to loue,
That know loues grieve by his complexion!
But lest my liking might too sodaine seeme,

¹An ink mark follows the end of this line.

275 I would haue salu'd it with a longer treatise.
PED. What need y^e bridge much broder then the flood?
The fairest graunt is the necessitie:
Looke what will serue, is fit: 'tis once, thou louest,
And I will fit thee with the remedie,
280 I know we shall haue reuelling to night,
I will assume thy part in some disguise,
And tell faire *Hero* I am *Claudio*,
And in her bosome Ile vnclaspe my heart,
And take her hearing prisoner with the force
285 And strong incounter of my amorous tale:
Then after, to her father will I breake,
And the conclusion is, shee shall be thine,
In practise let vs put it presently.

Exeunt.

Scene 2

Enter Leonato and an old man, brother to Leonato.

290 LEO. How now brother, where is my cosen your son: hath he
prouided this musicke?
OLD. He is very busie about it, but brother, I can tell you newes
that you yet dreamt not of.
LO. Are they good?
295 OLD. As the euent stamps them, but they haue a good couer:
they shew well outward, the Prince and Count *Claudio* walking
in a thick pleached alley in my orchard, were thus ouer-heard
by a man of mine: the Prince discouered to *Claudio* that hee
loued my niece your daughter, and meant to acknowledge it
300 this night in a dance; and if hee found her accordant, hee
meant to take the present time by the top, and instantly
breake with you of it.
LEO. Hath the fellow any wit that told you this?
OLD. A good sharpe fellow, I will send for him, and question
305 him your selfe.
LEO. No, no; wee will hold it as a dreame, till it appeare it selfe:
but I will acquaint my daughter withall, that she may be the
better prepared for an answer, if peraduenture this bee true:
goe you and tell her of it: coosins, you know what you haue to
310 doe, O I crie you mercie friend, goe you with mee and I will
vse your skill, good cosin haue a care this busie time.

Exeunt.

Scene 3

Enter Sir Iohn the Bastard, and Conrade his companion.

CON. What the good yeere my Lord, why are you thus out of measure sad?

315 IOH. There is no measure in the occasion that breeds, therefore the sadnesse is without limit.

CON. You should heare reason.

IOHN. And when I haue heard it, what blessing bringeth it?

CON. If not a present remedy, yet a patient sufferance.

320 IOH. I wonder that thou (being as thou saist thou art, borne vnder *Saturne*) goest about to apply a morall medicine, to a mortifying mischiefe: I cannot hide what I am: I must bee sad when I haue cause, and smile at no mans iests, eat when I haue stomacke, and wait for no mans leisure: sleepe when I am
325 drowsie, and tend on no mans businesse, laugh when I am merry, and claw no man in his humor.

CON. Yea, but you must not make the ful show of this, till you may doe it without controllment, you haue of ¹⁰⁴
late stood out against your brother, and hee hath tane you
330 newly into his grace, where it is impossible you should take root, but by the faire weather that you make your selfe, it is needful that you frame the season for your owne haruest.

IOHN. I had rather be a canker in a hedge, then a rose in his grace, and it better fits my bloud to be disdain'd of all, then
335 to fashion a carriage to rob loue from any: in this (though I cannot be said to be a flattering honest man) it must not be denied but I am a plaine dealing villaine, I am trusted with a mussell, and enfranchisde with a clog, therefore I haue decreed, not to sing in my cage: if I had my mouth, I would bite: if I
340 had my liberty, I would do my liking: in the meane time, let me be that I am, and seeke not to alter me.

CON. Can you make no vse of your discontent?

IOHN. I will make all vse of it, for I vse it onely. Who comes here? what newes *Borachio*?

345 *Enter Borachio.*

BOR. I came yonder from a great supper, the Prince your brother is royally entertained by *Leonato*, and I can giue you intelligence of an intended marriage.

- IOHN. Will it serue for any Modell to build mischief on? What
 350 is hee for a foole that betrothes himselfe to vnquietnesse?
 BOR. Mary it is your brothers right hand.
 IOHN. Who, the most exquisite *Claudio*?
 BOR. Euen he.
 IOHN. A proper squier, and who, and who, which way lookes he?
 355 BOR. Mary on *Hero*, the daughter and Heire of *Leonato*.
 IOHN. A very forward March-chicke, how came you to this?
 BOR. Being entertain'd for a perfumer, as I was smoaking a
 musty roome, comes me the Prince and *Claudio*, hand in hand
 in sad conference: I whipt behind the Arras, and there heard it
 360 agreed vpon, that the Prince should wooe *Hero* for himselfe,
 and hauing obtain'd her, giue her to Count *Claudio*.
 IOHN. Come, come, let vs thither, this may proue food to my
 displeasure, that young start-vp hath all the glorie of my
 ouerthrow: if I can crosse him any way, I lesse my selfe euery
 365 way, you are both sure, and will assist mee?
 CONR. To the death my Lord.
 IOHN. Let vs to the great supper, their cheere is the greater that
 I am subdued, would the Cooke were of my minde: shall we
 goe proue whats to be done?
 370 BOR. Wee'll wait vpon your Lordship.

Exeunt.

ACT 2

Scene 1

Actus Secundus.

*Enter Leonato, his brother, his wife, Hero his daughter, and
 Beatrice his neece, and a kinsman.*

- LEONATO. Was not Count *Iohn* here at supper?
 BROTHER. I saw him not.
 BEATRICE. How tartly that Gentleman lookes, I neuer can see
 him, but I am heart-burn'd an howre after.
 375 HERO. He is of a very melancholy disposition.

BEATRICE. Hee were an excellent man that were made iust in

the mid-way betweene him and *Benedicke*, the one is too like
an image and saies nothing, and the other too like my Ladies
380 eldest sonne, euermore tatling.

LEON. Then halfe signior *Benedicks* tongue in Count *Iohns*
mouth, and halfe Count *Iohns* melancholy in Signior *Benedicks*
face.

BEAT. With a good legge, and a good foot vnckle, and money
385 enough in his purse, such a man would winne any woman in
the world, if he could get her good will.

LEON. By my troth Neece, thou wilt neuer get thee a husband, if
thou be so shrewd of thy tongue.

BROTHER. Infaith shee's too curst.

390 BEAT. Too curst is more then curst, I shall lessen Gods sending
that way: for it is said, God sends a curst Cow short hornes,
but to a Cow too curst he sends none.

LEON. So, by being too curst, God will send you no hornes.

BEAT. Iust, if he send me no husband, for the which blessing, I
395 am at him vpon my knees euery morning and euening: Lord, I
could not endure a husband with a beard on his face, I had
rather lie in the woollen.

LEONATO. You may light vpon a husband that hath no beard.

BEATRICE. What should I doe with him? Dresse him in my
400 apparell, and make him my waiting gentlewoman? he that
hath a beard, is more then a youth: and he that hath no
beard, is lesse then a man: and hee that is more then a youth,
is not for mee: and he that is lesse then a man, I am not for
him: therefore I will euen take sixepence in earnest of the
405 Berrord, and leade his Apes into hell.

LEON. Well then, goe you into hell.

BEAT. No, but to the gate, and there will the Deuill meete mee
like an old Cuckold with hornes on his head, and say, get you
to heauen *Beatrice*, get you to heauen, heere's no place for you
410 maids, so deliuer I vp my Apes, and away to *SaintS. Peter*: for
the heauens, hee shewes mee where the Batchellers sit, and
there liue wee as merry as the day is long.

BROTHER. Well neece, I trust you will be rul'd by your father.

BEATRICE. Yes faith, it is my cosens dutie to make curtsie, and
415 say, as it please you: but yet for all that cosin, let him be a
handsome fellow, or else make an other cursie, and say, father,
as it please me.

LEONATO. Well neece, I hope to see you one day fitted with a husband.

420 BEATRICE. Not till God make men of some other mettall then earth, would it not grieue a woman to be ouer- mastred with a peece of valiant dust? to make account of her life to a clod of waiward marle? no vnckle, ile none: *Adams* sonnes are my brethren, and truly I hold it a sinne to match in my kinred.

425 LEON. Daughter, remember what I told you, if the Prince doe solicit you in that kinde, you know your answere.

BEATRICE. The fault will be in the musicke cosin, if you be not woed in good time: if the Prince bee too important, tell him there is measure in euey thing, & so dance out the answere,
430 for heare me *Hero*, wooing, wedding, & repenting, is as a Scotch jigge, a measure, and a cinque-pace: the first suite is hot and hasty like a Scotch ijgge (and full as fantastically) the wedding manerly modest, (as a measure) full of state & aunchentry, and then comes repentance, and with his bad legs
435 falls into the cinquepace faster and faster, till he sinkes into his graue.

|105

LEONATO. Cosin you apprehend passing shrewdly.

BEATRICE. I haue a good eye vnckle, I can see a Church by
440 daylight.

LEON. The reuellers are entring brother, make good roome.

Enter Prince, Pedro, Claudio, and Benedicke, and Balthasar, or dumbe Iohn, Maskers with a drum.

PEDRO. Lady, will you walke about with your friend?

HERO. So you walke softly, and looke sweetly, and say nothing, I am yours for the walke, and especially when I walke away.

445 PEDRO. With me in your company.

HERO. I may say so when I please.

PEDRO. And when please you to say so?

HERO. When I like your fauour, for God defend the Lute should be like the case.

450 PEDRO. My visor is *Philemons* roofe, within the house is Loue.

HERO. Why then your visor should be thatcht.

PEDRO. Speake low if you speake Loue.

BENE. Well, I would you did like me.

MAR. So would not I for your owne sake, for I haue manie ill
455 qualities.

BENE. Which is one?

MAR. I say my prayers alowd.

BEN. I loue you the better, the hearers may cry Amen.

MAR. God match me with a good dauncer.

460 BALT. Amen.

MAR. And God keepe him out of my sight when the daunce is
done: answer Clarke.

BALT. No more words, the Clarke is answered.

VRsula. I know you well enough, you are Signior *Anthonio*.

465 ANTH. At a word, I am not.

VRsula. I know you by the wagling of your head.

ANTH. To tell you true, I counterfet him.

VRsu. You could neuer doe him so ill well, vnlesse you were the
very man: here's his dry hand vp & down, you are he, you are
470 he.

ANTH. At a word I am not.

VRsula. Come, come, doe you thinke I doe not know you by
your excellent wit? can vertue hide it selfe? goe to, mumme,
you are he, graces will appeare, and there's an end.

475 BEAT. Will you not tell me who told you so?

BENE. No, you shall pardon me.

BEAT. Nor will you not tell me who you are?

BENED. Not now.

BEAT. That I was disdainfull, and that I had my good wit out of
480 the hundred merry tales: well, this was Signior *Benedicke* that
said so.

BENE. What's he?

BEAT. I am sure you know him well enough.

BENE. Not I, beleeeue me.

485 BEAT. Did he neuer make you laugh?

BENE. I pray you what is he?

BEAT. Why he is the Princes ieaster, a very dull foole, onely his
gift is, in deuising impossible slanders, none but Libertines
delight in him, and the commendation is not in his witte, but
490 in his villanie, for hee both pleaseth men and angers them, and
then they laugh at him, and beat him: I am sure he is in the
Fleet, I would he had boorded me.

BENE. When I know the Gentleman, Ile tell him what you say.

495 BEAT. Do, do, hee'l but breake a comparison or two on me,
which peraduenture (not markt, or not laugh'd at) strikes him
into melancholly, and then there's a Partridge wing saued, for

the foole will eate no supper that night. We must follow the Leaders.

500 BEN. In euery good thing.

BEA. Nay, if they leade to any ill, I will leaue them at the next turning.

Exeunt.

Musicke for the dance.

IOHN. Sure my brother is amorous on *Hero*, and hath

505 withdrawne her father to breake with him about it: the Ladies follow her, and but one visor remaines.

BORACHIO. And that is *Claudio*, I know him by his bearing.

IOHN. Are not you signior *Benedicke*?

CLAU. You know me well, I am hee.

510 IOHN. Signior, you are verie neere my Brother in his loue, he is enamor'd on *Hero*, I pray you dissuade him from her, she is not equall for his birth: you may do the part of an honest man in it.

CLAUDIO. How know you he loues her?

515 IOHN. I heard him sweare his affection,

BOR. So did I too, and he swore he would marrie her to night.

IOHN. Come, let vs to the banquet.

Ex. manet Clau.

CLAU. Thus answer I in name of *Benedicke*,
But heare these ill newes with the eares of *Claudio*:

520 'Tis certaine so, the Prince woes for himselfe:

Friendship is constant in all other things,

Saue in the Office and affaires of loue:

Therefore all hearts in loue vse their owne tongues.

Let euerie eye negotiate for it selfe,

525 And trust no Agent: for beautie is a witch,

Against whose charmes, faith melteth into blood:

This is an accident of houely prooffe,

Which I mistrusted not. Farewell therefore *Hero*.

Enter Benedicke.

530 BEN. Count *Claudio*.

CLAU. Yea, the same.

BEN. Come, will you goe with me?

CLAU. Whither?

BEN. Euen to the next Willow, about your own businesse,

535 Count. What fashion will you weare the Garland off? About

your necke, like an Vsurers chaine? Or vnder your arme, like a
Lieutenants scarfe? You must weare it one way, for the Prince
hath got your *Hero*.

CLAU. I wish him ioy of her.

540 BEN. Why that's spoken like an honest Drouier, so they sel
Bullockes: but did you thinke the Prince wold haue serued you
thus?

CLAU. I pray you leaue me.

BEN. Ho now you strike like the blindman, 'twas the boy that
545 stole your meate, and you'l beat the post.

CLAU. If it will not be, Ile leaue you.

Exit.

BEN. Alas poore hurt fowle, now will he creepe into sedges: But
that my Ladie *Beatrice* should know me, & not know me: the
Princes foole! Hah? It may be I goe vnder that title, because I
550 am merrie: yea but so I am apt to do my selfe wrong: I am not
so reputed, it is the base (though bitter) disposition of
Beatrice, that putt's the world into her person, and so giues
me out: well, Ile be reuenged as I may.

Enter the Prince.

555 PEDRO. Now Signior, where's the Count, did you see him?

|106

BENE. Troth my Lord, I haue played the part of Lady Fame,
I found him heere as melancholy as a Lodge in a Warren, I
told him, and I thinke, told him true, that your grace had got
560 the will of this young Lady, and I offered him my company to
a willow tree, either to make him a garland, as being forsaken,
or to binde him a rod, as being worthy to be whipt.

PEDRO. To be whipt, what's his fault?

BENE. The flat transgression of a Schoole-boy, who being
565 ouer-ioyed with finding a birds nest, shewes it his companion,
and he steales it.

PEDRO. Wilt thou make a trust, a transgression? the
transgression is in the stealer.

BEN. Yet it had not been amisse the rod had beene made, and
570 the garland too, for the garland he might haue worne himselfe,
and the rod hee might haue bestowed on you, who (as I take
it) haue stolne his birds nest.

PEDRO. I will but teach them to sing, and restore them to the
owner.

- 575 BENE. If their singing answer your saying, by my faith you say
honestly.
- PEDRO. The Lady *Beatrice* hath a quarrell to you, the
Gentleman that daunst with her, told her shee is much
wrong'd by you.
- 580 BENE. O she misusde me past the indurance of a block: an oake
but with one greene leafe on it, would haue answered her: my
very visor began to assume life, and scold with her: shee told
mee, not thinking I had beene my selfe, that I was the Princes
Iester, and that I was duller then a great thaw, hudling iest
585 vpon iest, with such impossible conueiance vpon me, that I
stood like a man at a marke, with a whole army shooting at
me: shee speakes poynyards, and euery word stabbes: if her
breath were as terrible as terminations, there were no liuing
neere her, she would infect to the north starre: I would not
590 marry her, though she were indowed with all that *Adam* had
left him before he transgrest, she would haue made *Hercules*
haue turnd spit, yea, and haue cleft his club to make the fire
too: come, talke not of her, you shall finde her the infernall
Ate in good apparell. I would to God some scholler would
595 coniure her, for certainly while she is heere, a man may liue
as quiet in hell, as in a sanctuary, and people sinne vpon
purpose, because they would goe thither, so indeed all
disquiet, horror, and perturbation followes her.
- Enter Claudio and Beatrice, Leonato, Hero.*
- 600 PEDRO. Looke heere she comes.
- BENE. Will your Grace command mee any seruice to the worlds
end? I will goe on the slightest arrand now to the Antypodes
that you can deuise to send me on: I will fetch you a
tooth-picker now from the furthest inch of Asia: bring you the
605 length of *Prester Iohns* foot: fetch you a hayre off the great
Chams beard: doe you any embassage to the Pigmies, rather
then hould three words conference, with this Harpy: you haue
no employment for me?
- PEDRO. None, but to desire your good company.
- 610 BENE. O God sir, heeres a dish I loue not, I cannot indure this
Lady tongue.

Exit.

PEDR. Come Lady, come, you haue lost the heart of Signior
Benedicke.

BEATR. Indeed my Lord, hee lent it me a while, and I gaue him
615 vse for it, a double heart for a single one, marry once before he
wonne it of mee, with false dice, therefore your Grace may well
say I haue lost it.

PEDRO. You haue put him downe Lady, you haue put him
620 downe.

BEAT. So I would not he should do me, my Lord, lest I should
prooue the mother of fooles: I haue brought Count *Claudio*,
whom you sent me to seeke.

PEDRO. Why how now Count, wherfore are you sad?

625 CLAUD. Not sad my Lord.

PEDRO. How then? sicke?

CLAUD. Neither, my Lord.

BEAT. The Count is neither sad, nor sicke, nor merry, nor well:
but ciuill Count, ciuill as an Orange, and something of a
630 iealous complexion.

PEDRO. Ifaith Lady, I thinke your blazon to be true, though Ile
be sworne, if hee be so, his conceit is false: heere *Claudio*, I
haue wooed in thy name, and faire *Herois* won, I haue broke
with her father, and his good will obtained, name the day of
635 marriage, and God giue thee ioy.

LEONA. Count, take of me my daughter, and with her my
fortunes: his grace hath made the match, & all grace say,
Amen to it.

BEATR. Speake Count, tis your Qu.

640 CLAUD. Silence is the perfectest Herault of ioy, I were but little
happy if I could say, how much? Lady, as you are mine, I am
yours, I giue away my selfe for you, and doat vpon the
exchange.

BEAT. Speake cosin, or (if you cannot) stop his mouth with a
645 kisse, and let not him speake neither.

PEDRO. Infaith Lady you haue a merry heart.

BEATR. Yea my Lord I thanke it, poore foole it keepes on the
windy side of Care, my coosin tells him in his eare that he is
in my heart.

650 CLAU. And so she doth coosin.

BEAT. Good Lord for alliance: thus goes euery one to the world
but I, and I am sun-burn'd, I may sit in a corner and cry,
heigh ho for a husband.

PEDRO. Lady *Beatrice*, I will get you one.

655 BEAT. I would rather haue one of your fathers getting: hath your
Grace ne're a brother like you? your father got excellent
husbands, if a maid could come by them.

PRINCE. Will you haue me? Lady.

660 BEAT. No, my Lord, vnlesse I might haue another for
working-daies, your Grace is too costly to weare euerie day:
but I beseech your Grace pardon mee, I was borne to speake
all mirth, and no matter.

PRINCE. Your silence most offends me, and to be merry, best
becomes you, for out of question, you were born in a merry
665 howre.

BEATR. No sure my Lord, my Mother cried, but then there was
a starre daunst, and vnder that was I borne: cosins God giue
you ioy.

LEONATO. Neece, will you looke to those things I told you of?

670 BEAT. I cry you mercy Vncle, by your Graces pardon.

Exit Beatrice.

PRINCE. By my troth a pleasant spirited Lady.

LEON. There's little of the melancholy element in her my Lord,
she is neuer sad, but when she sleepes, and not euer sad then:
for I haue heard my daughter say, she hath often dreamt of
675 vnhappinesse, and wakt her selfe with laughing.

PEDRO. Shee cannot indure to heare tell of a husband.

LEONATO. O, by no meanes, she mocks all her wooers out of
suite.

PRINCE. She were an excellent wife for *Benedick*.

680 LEONATO. O Lord, my Lord, if they were but a weeke ¹⁰⁷
married, they would talke themselues madde.

PRINCE. Counte *Claudio*, when meane you to goe to Church?

CLAU. To morrow my Lord, Time goes on crutches, till Loue
haue all his rites.

685 LEONATA. Not till monday, my deare sonne, which is hence a
iust seuen night, and a time too briefe too, to haue all things
answer minde.

PRINCE. Come, you shake the head at so long a breathing, but I
warrant thee *Claudio*, the time shall not goe dully by vs, I will
690 in the *interim*, vndertake one of *Hercules* labors, which is, to
bring Signior *Benedicke* and the Lady *Beatrice* into a
mountaine of affection, th'one with th'other, I would faine

haue it a match, and I doubt not but to fashion it, if you three
will but minister such assistance as I shall giue you direction.

695 LEONATA. My Lord, I am for you, though it cost mee ten nights
watchings.

CLAUD. And I my Lord.

PRIN. And you to gentle *Hero*?

HERO. I will doe any modest office, my Lord, to helpe my cosin
700 to a good husband.

PRIN. And *Benedick* is not the vnhopefullest husband that I
know: thus farre can I praise him, hee is of a noble straine, of
approued valour, and confirm'd honesty, I will teach you how
to humour your cosin, that shee shall fall in loue with
705 *Benedicke*, and I, with your two helps, will so practise on
Benedicke, that in despite of his quicke wit, and his queasie
stomacke, hee shall fall in loue with *Beatrice*: if wee can doe
this, *Cupid* is no longer an Archer, his glory shall be ours, for
wee are the onely louegods, goe in with me, and I will tell you
710 my drift.

Exit.

Scene 2

Enter Iohn and Borachio.

IOH. It is so, the Count *Claudio* shal marry the daughter of
Leonato.

BORA. Yea my Lord, but I can crosse it.

715 IOHN. Any barre, any crosse, any impediment, will be
medicinable to me, I am sicke in displeasure to him, and
whatsoever comes athwart his affection, ranges euently with
mine, how canst thou crosse this marriage?

BOR. Not honestly my Lord, but so couertly, that no dishonesty
720 shall appeare in me.

IOHN. Shew me breiefely how.

BOR. I thinke I told your Lordship a yeere since, how much I am
in the fauour of *Margaret*, the waiting gentlewoman to *Hero*.

IOHN. I remember.

725 BOR. I can at any vnseasonable instant of the night, appoint her
to looke out at her Ladies chamber window.

IOHN. What life is in that, to be the death of this marriage?

BOR. The poyson of that lies in you to temper, goe you to the
Prince your brother, spare not to tell him, that hee hath

730 wronged his Honor in marrying the renowned *Claudio*, whose
 estimation do you mightily hold vp, to a contaminated stale,
 such a one as *Hero*.

IOHN. What prooffe shall I make of that?

BOR. Prooffe enough, to misuse the Prince, to vex *Claudio*, to
735 vndoe *Hero*, and kill *Leonato*, looke you for any other issue?

IOHN. Onely to despight them, I will endeauour any thing.

BOR. Goe then, finde me a meete howre, to draw on *Pedro* and
 the Count *Claudio* alone, tell them that you know that *Hero*
740 loues me, intend a kinde of zeale both to the Prince and
 Claudio (as in a loue of your brothers

 honor who hath made this match) and his friends reputation,
 who is thus like to be cosen'd with the semblance of a maid,
 that you haue discouer'd thus: they will scarcely beleuee this
 without triall: offer them instances which shall beare no lesse
745 likelihood, than to see mee at her chamber window, heare me
 call *Margaret*, *Hero* heare *Margaret* terme me *Claudio*, and
 bring them to see this the very night before the intended
 wedding, for in the meane time, I will so fashion the matter,
 that *Hero* shall be absent, and there shall appeare such
750 seeming truths of *Heroes* disloyaltie, that iealousie shall be
 cal'd assurance, and all the preparation ouerthrowne.

IOHN. Grow this to what aduerse issue it can, I will put it in
 practise: be cunning in the working this, and thy fee is a
 thousand ducats.

755 BOR. Be thou constant in the accusation, and my cunning shall
 not shame me.

IOHN. I will presentlie goe learne their day of marriage.

Exit.

Scene 3

Enter Benedicke alone.

BENE. Boy.

760 BOY. Signior.

BENE. In my chamber window lies a booke, bring it hither to me
 in the orchard.

BOY. I am heere already sir.

Exit.

BENE. I know that, but I would haue thee hence, and heere
765 againe. I doe much wonder, that one man seeing how much

another man is a foole, when he dedicates his behauours to
 loue, will after hee hath laught at such shallow follies in
 others, become the argument of his owne scorne, by falling in
 loue, & such a man is *Claudio*, I haue known when there was
 770 no musicke with him but the drum and the fife, and now had
 hee rather heare the taber and the pipe: I haue knowne when
 he would haue walkt ten mile afoot, to see a good armor, and
 now will he lie ten nights awake caruing the fashion of a new
 dublet: he was wont to speake plaine, & to the purpose (like
 775 an honest man & a souldier) and now is he turn'd ortho-
 graphy, his words are a very fantastick banquet, iust so many
 strange dishes: may I be so conuerted, & see with these eyes? I
 cannot tell, I thinke not: I will not bee sworne, but loue may
 transforme me to an oyster, but Ile take my oath on it, till he
 780 haue made an oyster of me, he shall neuer make me such a
 foole: one woman is faire, yet I am well: another is wise, yet I
 am well: another vertuous, yet I am well: but till all graces be
 in one woman, one woman shall not come in my grace: rich
 shee shall be, that's certaine: wise, or Ile none: vertuous, or Ile
 785 neuer cheapen her: faire, or Ile neuer looke on her: milde, or
 come not neere me: Noble, or not for an Angell: of good
 discourse: an excellent Musitian, and her haire shal be of what
 colour it please God, hah! the Prince and Monsieur Loue, I
 will hide me in the Arbor.

790 *Enter Prince, Leonato, Claudio, and Iacke Wilson.*

PRIN. Come, shall we heare this musicke?

CLAUD. Yea my good Lord: how still the euening is,
 As husht on purpose to grace harmonie.

PRIN. See you where *Benedicke* hath hid himselfe?

795 CLAU. O very well my Lord: the musicke ended,
 Wee'll fit the kid-foxe with a penny worth.

PRINCE. Come *Balthasar*, wee'll heare that song again.

BALTH. O good my Lord, taxe not so bad a voyce,
 To slander musicke any more then once.

800 PRIN. It is the witnesse still of excellency,

|108

To slander Musicke any more then once.

PRINCE. It is the witnesse still of excellencie,
 To put a strange face on his owne perfection,

805 I pray thee sing, and let me woe no more.

BALTH. Because you talke of wooing, I will sing,

Since many a wooer doth commence his suit,
To her he thinkes not worthy, yet he wooes,
Yet will he sweare he loues.

810 PRINCE. Nay pray thee come,
Or if thou wilt hold longer argument,
Doe it in notes.

BALTH. Note this before my notes,
Theres not a note of mine that's worth the noting.

815 PRINCE. Why these are very crotchets that he speaks,
Note notes forsooth, and nothing.

BENE. Now diuine aire, now is his soule raiisht, is it not strange
that sheepes guts should hale soules out of mens bodies? well,
a horne for my money when all's done.

820 *The Song.*

Sigh no more Ladies, sigh no more,
Men were deceiuers euer,
One foote in Sea, and one on shore,
To one thing constant neuer,
825 Then sigh not so, but let them goe,
And be you blithe and bonnie,
Conuerting all your sounds of woe,
Into hey nony nony.

Sing no more ditties, sing no moe,
830 Of dumps so dull and heauy,
The fraud of men were euer so,
Since summer first was leauy,
Then sigh not so, &c.

PRINCE. By my troth a good song.

835 BALTH. And an ill singer, my Lord.

PRINCE. Ha, no, no faith, thou singst well enough for a shift.

BEN. And he had been a dog that should haue howld thus, they
would haue hang'd him, and I pray God his bad voyce bode no
mischiefe, I had as lief haue heard the night-rauen, come
840 what plague could haue come after it.

PRINCE. Yea marry, dost thou heare *Balthasar*? I pray thee get
vs some excellent musick: for to morrow night we would haue
it at the Lady *Heroes* chamber window.

BALTH. The best I can, my Lord.

Exit Balthasar.

845 PRINCE. Do so, farewell. Come hither *Leonato*, what was it you
told me of to day, that your Niece *Beatrice* was in loue with
signior *Benedicke*?

CLA. O I, stalke on, stalke on, the foule sits. I did neuer thinke
that Lady would haue loued any man.

850 LEON. No, nor I neither, but most wonderful, that she should so
dote on Signior *Benedicke*, whom shee hath in all outward
behauiours seemed euer to abhorre.

BENE. Is't possible? sits the winde in that corner?

LEO. By my troth my Lord, I cannot tell what to thinke of it,
855 but that she loues him with an inraged affection, it is past the
infinite of thought.

PRINCE. May be she doth but counterfeit.

CLAUD. Faith like enough.

LEON. O God! counterfeit? there was neuer counterfeit of
860 passion, came so neere the life of passion as she discouers it.

PRINCE. Why what effects of passion shewes she?

CLAUD. Baite the hooke well, this fish will bite.

LEON. What effects my Lord? shee will sit you, you heard my
865 daughter tell you how.

CLAU. She did indeed.

PRINCE. How, how I pray you? you amaze me, I would haue
thought her spirit had beene inuincible against all assaults of
affection.

870 LEO. I would haue sworne it had, my Lord, especially against
Benedicke.

BENE. I should thinke this a gull, but that the white- bearded
fellow speakes it: knauery cannot sure hide himselfe in such
reuerence.

875 CLAUD. He hath tane th'infection, hold it vp.

PRINCE. Hath shee made her affection known to *Benedicke*?

LEONATO. No, and sweares she neuer will, that's her torment.

CLAUD. 'Tis true indeed, so your daughter saies: shall I, saies
she, that haue so oft encountred him with scorne, write to him
880 that I loue him?

LEO. This saies shee now when shee is beginning to write to
him, for shee'll be vp twenty times a night, and there will she
sit in her smocke, till she haue writ a sheet of paper: my
daughter tells vs all.

- 885 CLAU. Now you talke of a sheet of paper, I remember a pretty
iest your daughter told vs of.
- LEON. O when she had writ it, & was reading it ouer, she found
Benedicke and *Beatrice* betweene the sheete.
- CLAU. That.
- 890 LEON. O she tore the letter into a thousand halfpence, raild at
her self, that she should be so immodest to write, to one that
shee knew would flout her: I measure him, saies she, by my
owne spirit, for I should flout him if hee writ to mee, yea
though I loue him, I should.
- 895 CLAU. Then downe vpon her knees she falls, weepes, sobs,
beates her heart, teares her hayre, praies, curses, O sweet
Benedicke, God giue me patience.
- LEON. She doth indeed, my daughter saies so, and the extasie
hath so much ouerborne her, that my daughter is sometime
900 afeard she will doe a desperate out-rage to her selfe, it is very
true.
- PRINCE. It were good that *Benedicke* knew of it by some other,
if she will not discouer it.
- CLAU. To what end? he would but make a sport of it, and
905 torment the poore Lady worse.
- PRIN. And he should, it were an almes to hang him, shee's an
excellent sweet Lady, and (out of all suspition,) she is virtuous.
- CLAUDIO. And she is exceeding wise.
- PRINCE. In euery thing, but in louing *Benedicke*.
- 910 LEON. O my Lord, wisdom and bloud combating in so tender
a body, we haue ten proofes to one, that bloud hath the
victory, I am sorry for her, as I haue iust cause, being her
Vncle, and her Guardian.
- PRINCE. I would shee had bestowed this dotage on mee, I would
915 haue daft all other respects, and made her halfe my selfe: I
pray you tell *Benedicke* of it, and heare what he will say.
- LEON. Were it good thinke you?
- CLAU. *Hero* thinkes surely she wil die, for she saies she will die,
if hee loue her not, and shee will die ere shee make her loue
920 knowne, and she will die if hee wooe her, rather than shee will
bate one breath of her accustomed crossnesse.
- PRINCE. She doth well, if she should make tender of her 109
loue, 'tis very possible hee'l scorne it, for the man (as you
know all) hath a contemptible spirit.
- 925 CLAU. He is a very proper man.

PRIN. He hath indeed a good outward happines.

CLAU. 'Fore God, and in my minde very wise.

PRIN. He doth indeed shew some sparkes that are like wit.

LEON. And I take him to be valiant.

930 PRIN. As *Hector*, I assure you, and in the managing of quarrels
you may see hee is wise, for either hee auoydes them with
great discretion, or vndertakes them with a Christian-like
feare.

LEON. If hee doe feare God, a must necessarilie keepe peace, if
935 hee breake the peace, hee ought to enter into a quarrell with
feare and trembling.

PRIN. And so will he doe, for the man doth fear God, howsoeuer
it seemes not in him, by some large ieasts hee will make: well,
I am sorry for your niece, shall we goe see *Benedicke*, and tell
940 him of her loue.

CLAUD. Neuer tell him, my Lord, let her weare it out with good
counsell.

LEON. Nay that's impossible, she may weare her heart out first.

PRIN. Well, we will heare further of it by your daughter, let it
945 coole the while, I loue *Benedicke* well, and I could wish he
would modestly examine himselfe, to see how much he is
vnworthy to haue so good a Lady.

LEON. My Lord, will you walke? dinner is ready.

CLAU. If he do not doat on her vpon this, I wil neuer trust my
950 expectation.

PRIN. Let there be the same Net spread for her, and that must
your daughter and her gentlewoman carry: the sport will be,
when they hold one an opinion of another's dotage, and no
such matter, that's the Scene that I would see, which will be
955 meerey a dumbe shew: let vs send her to call him into dinner.

Exeunt.

BENE. This can be no tricke, the conference was sadly borne,
they haue the truth of this from *Hero*, they seeme to pittie the
Lady: it seemes her affections haue the full bent: loue me? why
it must be requited: I heare how I am censur'd, they say I will
960 beare my selfe proudly, if I perceiue the loue come from her:
they say too, that she will rather die than giue any signe of
affection: I did neuer thinke to marry, I must not seeme proud,
happy are they that heare their detractions, and can put them
to mending: they say the Lady is faire, 'tis a truth, I can beare

965 them witnesse: and vertuous, tis so, I cannot reprooue it, and
wise, but for louing me, by my troth it is no addition to her
witte, nor no great argument of her folly; for I wil be horribly
in loue with her, I may chance haue some odde quirkes and
970 remnants of witte broken on mee, because I haue rail'd so long
against marriage: but doth not the appetite alter? a man loues
the meat in his youth, that he cannot indure in his age. Shall
quips and sentences, and these paper bullets of the braine awe
a man from the careere of his humour? No, the world must be
975 peopled. When I said I would die a batcheler, I did not think I
should liue till I were married, here comes *Beatrice*: by this day,
shee's a faire Lady, I doe spie some markes of loue in her.

Enter Beatrice.

BEAT. Against my wil I am sent to bid you come in to dinner.

BENE. Faire *Beatrice*, I thanke you for your paines.

980

BEAT. I tooke no more paines for those thanks, then you
take paines to thanke me, if it had been painefull, I would not
haue come.

BENE. You take pleasure then in the message.

985

BEAT. Yea iust so much as you may take vpon a kniues point,
and choake a daw withall: you haue no stomacke signior, fare
you well.

Exit.

BENE. Ha, against my will I am sent to bid you come into
dinner: there's a double meaning in that: I tooke no more
990 paines for those thanks then you took paines to thanke me,
that's as much as to say, any paines that I take for you is as
easie as thanks: if I do not take pittie of her I am a villaine, if
I doe not loue her I am a Iew, I will goe get her picture.

Exit.

ACT 3

Scene 1

Actus Tertius.

Enter Hero and two Gentlemen, Margaret, and Vrsula.

995 HERO. Good *Margaret* runne thee to the parlour,
There shalt thou finde my Cosin *Beatrice*,
Proposing with the Prince and *Claudio*,
Whisper her eare, and tell her I and *Vrsula*,
Walke in the Orchard, and our whole discourse
1000 Is all of her, say that thou ouer-heardst vs,
And bid her steale into the pleached bower,
Where hony-suckles ripened by the sunne,
Forbid the sunne to enter: like fauourites,
Made proud by Princes, that aduance their pride,
1005 Against that power that bred it, there will she hide her,
To listen our purpose, this is thy office,
Beare thee well in it, and leaue vs alone.

MARG. Ile make her come I warrant you presently.

HERO. Now *Vrsula*, when *Beatrice* doth come,
1010 As we do trace this alley vp and downe,
Our talke must onely be of *Benedicke*,
When I doe name him, let it be thy part,
To praise him more then euer man did merit,
My talke to thee must be how *Benedicke*
1015 Is sicke in loue with *Beatrice* of this matter,
Is little *Cupids* crafty arrow made,
That onely wounds by heare-say: now begin,
Enter Beatrice.

For looke where *Beatrice* like a Lapwing runs
1020 Close by the ground, to heare our conference.
VRS. The pleasant'st angling is to see the fish
Cut with her golden ores the siluer streame,
And greedily deuoure the treacherous baite:
So angle we for *Beatrice*, who euen now,
1025 Is couched in the wood-bine couerture,
Feare you not my part of the Dialogue.

HER. Then go we neare her that her eare loose nothing,
Of the false sweete baite that we lay for it:
No truely *Vrsula*, she is too disdainfull,
1030 I know her spirits are as coy and wilde,
As Haggerds of the rocke.

VRSULA. But are you sure,
That *Benedicke* loues *Beatrice* so intirely?

HER. So saies the Prince, and my new trothed Lord.

1035 VRS. And did they bid you tell her of it, Madam?

HER. They did intreate me to acquaint her of it,
But I perswaded them, if they lou'd *Benedicke*,

|110

To wish him wrastle with affection,

1040 And neuer to let *Beatrice* know of it.

VRSULA. Why did you so, doth not the Gentleman
Deserue as full as fortunate a bed,
As euer *Beatrice* shall couch vpon?

HERO. O God of loue! I know he doth deserue,

1045 As much as may be yeelded to a man:

But Nature neuer fram'd a womans heart,

Of prowder stuffe then that of *Beatrice*:

Disdaine and Scorne ride sparkling in her eyes,

Mis-prizing what they looke on, and her wit

1050 Values it selfe so highly, that to her

All matter else seemes weake: she cannot loue,

Nor take no shape nor proiect of affection,

Shee is so selfe indeared.

VRSULA. Sure I thinke so,

1055 And therefore certainly it were not good

She knew his loue, lest she make sport at it.

HERO. Why you speake truth, I neuer yet saw man,

How wise, how noble, yong, how rarely featur'd.

But she would spell him backward: if faire fac'd,

1060 She would sweare the gentleman should be her sister:

If blacke, why Nature drawing of an anticke,

Made a foule blot: if tall, a launce ill headed:

If low, an agot very vildlie cut:

If speaking, why a vane blowne with all windes:

1065 If silent, why a blocke moued with none.

So turnes she euery man the wrong side out,

And neuer giues to Truth and Vertue, that

Which simplenesse and merit purchaseth.

VRSU. Sure, sure, such carping is not commendable.

1070 HERO. No, not to be so odde, and from all fashions,

As *Beatrice* is, cannot be commendable,

But who dare tell her so? if I should speake,

She would mocke me into ayre, O she would laugh me

Out of my selfe, presse me to death with wit,

1075 Therefore let *Benedicke* like couered fire,

Consume away in sighes, waste inwardly:

It were a better death, to die with mockes,

Which is as bad as die with tickling.

VRSU. Yet tell her of it, heare what shee will say.

1080 HERO. No, rather I will goe to *Benedicke*,
And counsaile him to fight against his passion,
And truly Ile devise some honest slanders,
To staine my cosin with, one doth not know,
How much an ill word may impoison liking.

1085 VRSU. O doe not doe your cosin such a wrong,
She cannot be so much without true iudgement,
Hauing so swift and excellent a wit
As she is prisde to haue, as to refuse
So rare a Gentleman as signior *Benedicke*.

1090 HERO. He is the onely man of Italy,
Alwaies excepted, my deare *Claudio*.

VRSU. I pray you be not angry with me, Madame,

Speaking my fancy: Signior *Benedicke*,

For shape, for bearing argument and valour,

1095 Goes formost in report through Italy.

HERO. Indeed he hath an excellent good name.

VRSU. His excellence did earne it ere he had it:

When are you married Madame?

HERO. Why euerie day to morrow, come goe in,

1100 Ile shew thee some attires, and haue thy counsell,
Which is the best to furnish me to morrow.

VRSU. Shee's tane I warrant you,

We haue caught her Madame?

HERO. If it proue so, then louing goes by haps,

1105

Some *Cupid* kills with arrowes, some with traps.

Exit.

BEAT. What fire is in mine eares? can this be true?

Stand I condemn'd for pride and scorne so much?

Contempt, farewell, and maiden pride, adew,

1110 No glory liues behinde the backe of such.

And *Benedicke*, loue on, I will requite thee,

Taming my wilde heart to thy louing hand:

If thou dost loue, my kindnesse shall incite thee

To binde our loues vp in a holy band.

1115 For others say thou dost deserue, and I
Beleeue it better then reportingly.

Exit.

Scene 2

Enter Prince, Claudio, Benedicke, and Leonato.

PRINCE. I doe but stay till your marriage be consummate, and
then go I toward Arragon.

1120 CLAU. Ile bring you thither my Lord, if you'l vouchsafe me.

PRIN. Nay, that would be as great a soyle in the new glosse of
your marriage, as to shew a childe his new coat and forbid him
to weare it, I will onely bee bold with *Benedicke* for his
companie, for from the crowne of his head, to the sole of his
1125 foot, he is all mirth, he hath twice or thrice cut Cupids
bow-string, and the little hang-man dare not shoot at him, he
hath a heart as sound as a bell, and his tongue is the clapper,
for what his heart thinkes, his tongue speakes.

BENE. Gallants, I am not as I haue bin.

1130 LEO. So say I, methinkes you are sadder.

CLAUD. I hope he be in loue.

PRIN. Hang him truant, there's no true drop of bloud in him to
be truly toucht with loue, if he be sad, he wants money.

BENE. I haue the tooth-ach.

1135 PRIN. Draw it.

BENE. Hang it.

CLAUD. You must hang it first, and draw it afterwards.

PRIN. What? sigh for the tooth-ach.

LEON. Where is but a humour or a worme.

1140 BENE. Well, euery one cannot master a griefe, but hee that has
it.

CLAU. Yet say I, he is in loue.

PRIN. There is no appearance of fancie in him, vnlesse it be a
fancy that he hath to strange disguises, as to bee a Dutchman
1145 to day, a Frenchman to morrow: vnlesse hee haue a fancy to
this foolery, as it appeares hee hath, hee is no foole for fancy,
as you would haue it to appeare he is.

CLAU. If he be not in loue with some woman, there is no
beleeuing old signes, a brushes his hat a mornings, What
1150 should that bode?

PRIN. Hath any man seene him at the Barbers?

CLAU. No, but the Barbers man hath beene seen with him, and
the olde ornament of his cheeke hath already stufte tennis balls.

1155 LEON. Indeed he lookes yonger than hee did, by the losse of a
beard.

PRIN. Nay a rubs himselfe with Ciuit, can you smell him out by
that?

CLAU. That's as much as to say, the sweet youth's in loue.

PRIN. The greatest note of it is his melancholy.

1160 CLAU. And when was he wont to wash his face?

PRIN. Yea, or to paint himselfe? for the which I heare what they
say of him.

CLAU. Nay, but his iesting spirit, which is now crept into a
lute-string, and now gouern'd by stops.

1165 |111

PRIN. Indeed that tels a heauy tale for him: conclude, he is in
loue.

CLAU. Nay, but I know who loues him.

1170 PRINCE. That would I know too, I warrant one that knowes him
not.

CLA. Yes, and his ill conditions, and in despight of all, dies for
him.

PRIN. Shee shall be buried with her face vpwards.

1175 BENE. Yet is this no charme for the tooth-ake, old signior, walke
aside with mee, I haue studied eight or nine wise words to
speake to you, which these hobby-horses must not heare.

PRIN. For my life to breake with him about *Beatrice*.

1180 CLAU. 'Tis euen so, *Hero* and *Margaret* haue by this played their
parts with *Beatrice*, and then the two Beares will not bite one
another when they meete.

Enter Iohn the Bastard.

BAST. My Lord and brother, God saue you.

PRIN. Good den brother.

BAST. If your leisure seru'd, I would speake with you.

1185 PRINCE. In priuate?

BAST. If it please you, yet Count *Claudio* may heare, for what I
would speake of, concernes him.

PRIN. What's the matter?

BASTA. Meanes your Lordship to be married to morrow?

1190 PRIN. You know he does.

BAST. I know not that when he knowes what I know.

CLAU. If there be any impediment, I pray you discouer it.

BAST. You may thinke I loue you not, let that appeare hereafter,
and ayme better at me by that I now will manifest, for my
1195 brother (I thinke, he holds you well, and in dearenesse of
heart) hath holpe to effect your ensuing marriage: surely sute
ill spent, and labour ill bestowed.

PRIN. Why, what's the matter?

BASTARD. I came hither to tell you, and circumstances shortned,
1200 (for she hath beene too long a talking of) the Lady is disloyall.

CLAU. Who *Hero*?

BAST. Euen shee, *Leonatoes Hero*, your *Hero*, euery mans *Hero*.

CLAU. Disloyall?

BAST. The word is too good to paint out her wickednesse, I
1205 could say she were worse, thinke you of a worse title, and I will
fit her to it: wonder not till further warrant: goe but with mee
to night, you shal see her chamber window entred, euen the
night before her wedding day, if you loue her, then to morrow
wed her: But it would better fit your honour to change your
1210 minde.

CLAUD. May this be so?

PRINC. I will not thinke it.

BAST. If you dare not trust that you see, confesse not that you
know: if you will follow mee, I will shew you enough, and when
1215 you haue seene more, & heard more, proceed accordingly.

CLAU. If I see any thing to night, why I should not marry her to
morrow in the congregation, where I shold wedde, there will I
shame her.

PRIN. And as I wooed for thee to obtaine her, I will ioyne with
1220 thee to disgrace her.

BAST. I will disparage her no farther, till you are my witnesses,
beare it coldly but till night, and let the issue shew it selfe.

PRIN. O day vntowardly turned!

1225 CLAUD. O mischiefe strangelie thwarting!

BASTARD. O plague right well preuented! so will you say, when
you haue seene the sequele.

Exit.

Scene 3

Enter Dogbery and his compartner with the watch.

DOG. Are you good men and true?

1230 VERG. Yea, or else it were pittie but they should suffer saluation
body and soule.

DOGB. Nay, that were a punishment too good for them, if they
should haue any allegiance in them, being chosen for the
Princes watch.

1235 VERGES. Well, giue them their charge, neighbor *Dogbery*.

DOG. First, who thinke you the most desartlesse man to be
Constable?

WATCH. 1. *Hugh Ote-cake* sir, or *George Sea-coale*, for they can
write and reade.

1240 DOGB. Come hither neighbour *Sea-coale*, God hath blest you
with a good name: to be a wel-fauoured man, is the gift of
Fortune, but to write and reade, comes by Nature.

WATCH 2. Both which Master Constable

DOGB. You haue: I knew it would be your answere: well, for
1245 your fauour sir, why giue God thanks, & make no boast of it,
and for your writing and reading, let that appeare when there
is no need of such vanity, you are thought heere to be the most
senslesse and fit man for the Constable of the watch: therefore
beare you the lanthorne: this is your charge: You shall
1250 comprehend all vagrom men, you are to bid any man stand in
the Princes name.

WATCH 2. How if a will not stand?

DOGB. Why then take no note of him, but let him go, and
presently call the rest of the Watch together, and thanke God
1255 you are ridde of a knaue.

VERGES. If he will not stand when he is bidden, hee is none of
the Princes subiects.

DOGB. True, and they are to meddle with none but the Princes
subiects: you shall also make no noise in the streetes: for, for
1260 the Watch to babble and talke, is most tollerable, and not to
be indured.

WATCH. We will rather sleepe than talke, wee know what
belongs to a Watch.

DOG. Why you speake like an ancient and most quiet watchman,
1265 for I cannot see how sleeping should offend: only haue a care
that your bills be not stolne: well, you are to call at all the
Alehouses, and bid them that are drunke get them to bed.

WATCH. How if they will not?

DOGB. Why then let them alone till they are sober, if they make
1270 you not then the better answeare, you may say, they are not the
men you tooke them for.

WATCH. Well sir.

DOGB. If you meet a theefe, you may suspect him, by vertue of
your office, to be no true man: and for such kinde of men, the
1275 lesse you meddle or make with them, why the more is for your
honesty.

WATCH. If wee know him to be a thiefe, shall wee not lay hands
on him.

DOGB. Truly by your office you may, but I think they that touch
1280 pitch will be defil'd: the most peaceable way for you, if you
doe take a theefe, is, to let him shew himselfe what he is, and
steale out of your company.

VER. You haue bin alwaies cal'd a merciful man partner.

DOG. Truely I would not hang a dog by my will, much more a
1285 man who hath anie honestie in him.

|112

VERGES. If you heare a child crie in the night you must call
to the nurse, and bid her still it.

WATCH. How if the nurse be asleepe and will not heare vs?

1290 DOG. Why then depart in peace, and let the childe wake her
with crying, for the ewe that will not heare her Lambe when it
baes, will neuer answeare a calfe when he bleates.

VERGES. 'Tis verie true.

DOG. This is the end of the charge: you constable are to present
1295 the Princes owne person, if you meete the Prince in the night,
you may staie him.

VERGES. Nay birladie that I thinke a cannot.

DOG. Fiue shillings to one on't with anie man that knowes the
Statutes, he may staie him, marrie not without the prince be
1300 willing, for indeed the watch ought to offend no man, and it is
an offence to stay a man against his will.

VERGES. Birladie I thinke it be so.

DOG. Ha, ah ha, well masters good night, and there be anie
matter of weight chances, call vp me, keepe your fellowes
1305 counsailes, and your owne, and good night, come neighbor.

WATCH. Well masters, we heare our charge, let vs go sit here
vpon the Church bench till two, and then all to bed.

DOG. One word more, honest neighbors. I pray you watch about
signior *Leonatoes* doore, for the wedding being there to

1310 morrow, there is a great coyle to night, adiew, be vigilant I
 beseech you.

Exeunt.

Enter Borachio and Conrade.

BOR. What, *Conrade*?

WATCH. Peace, stir not.

1315 BOR. *Conrade* I say.

CON. Here man, I am at thy elbow.

BOR. Mas and my elbow itcht, I thought there would a scabbe
 follow.

CON. I will owe thee an answere for that, and now forward with
1320 thy tale.

BOR. Stand thee close then vnder this penthouse, for it drissels
 raine, and I will, like a true drunkard, vtter all to thee.

WATCH. Some treason masters, yet stand close.

BOR. Therefore know, I haue earned of *Don Iohn* a thousand
1325 Ducates.

CON. Is it possible that anie villanie should be so deare?

BOR. Thou should'st rather aske if it were possible anie villanie
 should be so rich? for when rich villains haue neede of poore
 ones, poore ones may make what price they will.

1330 CON. I wonder at it.

BOR. That shewes thou art vnconfirm'd, thou knowest that the
 fashion of a doublet, or a hat, or a cloake, is nothing to a man.

CON. Yes, it is apparel.

BOR. I meane the fashion.

1335 CON. Yes the fashion is the fashion.

BOR. Tush, I may as well say the foole's the foole, but seest thou
 not what a deformed theefe this fashion is?

WATCH. I know that deformed, a has bin a vile theefe, this vii.
 yeares, a goes vp and downe like a gentle man: I remember his
1340 name.

BOR. Did'st thou not heare some bodie?

CON. No, 'twas the vaine on the house.

BOR. Seest thou not (I say) what a deformed thiefe this fashion
 is, how giddily a turnes about all the Hot
1345 blouds, betweene foureteene & fue & thirtie, sometimes
 fashioning them like *Pharaoes* souldiours in the rechie painting,
 sometime like god Bels priests in the old Church window,

sometime like the shauen *Hercules* in the smircht worm-eaten tapestry, where his cod-peece seemes as massie as his club.

1350 CON. All this I see, and see that the fashion weares out more apparrell then the man; but art not thou thy selfe giddie with the fashion too that thou hast shifted out of thy tale into telling me of the fashion?

BOR. Not so neither, but know that I haue to night wooed
1355 *Margaret* the Lady *Heroes* gentle-woman, by the name of *Hero*, she leanes me out at her mistris chamber- window, bids me a thousand times good night: I tell this tale vildly. I should first tell thee how the Prince *Claudio* and my Master planted, and placed, and possessed by my Master *Don Iohn*, saw a far off in
1360 the Orchard this amiable incounter.

CON. And thought thy *Margaret*² was *Hero*?

BOR. Two of them did, the Prince and *Claudio*, but the diuell my Master knew she was *Margaret* and partly by his oathes, which first possest them, partly by the darke night which did
1365 deceiue them, but chiefly, by my villanie, which did confirme any slander that *Don Iohn* had made, away went *Claudio* enraged, swore hee wouldmeete her as he was apointed next morning at the Temple, and there, before the whole congregation shame her with what he saw o're night, and send
1370 her home againe without a husband.

WATCH. 1. We charge you in the Princes name stand.

WATCH. 2. Call vp the right master Constable, we haue here recouered the most dangerous peece of lechery, that euer was knowne in the Common-wealth.

1375 WATCH. 1. And one Deformed is one of them, I know him, a weares a Locke.

CONR. Masters, masters.

WATCH. 2. Youle be made bring deformed forth I warrant you,

CONR. Masters, neuer speake, we charge you, let vs obey you to
1380 goe with vs.

BOR. We are like to proue a goodly commoditie, being taken vp of these mens bils.

CONR. A commoditie in question I warrant you, come weele obey you.

Exeunt.

Scene 4

Enter Hero, and Margaret, and Vrsula.

HERO. Good *Vrsula* wake my cosin *Beatrice*, and desire her to rise.

VRSU. I will Lady.

1390 HER. And bid her come hither.

VRs. Well.

MAR. Troth I thinke your other rebato were better.

BERO. No pray thee good *Meg*, Ile weare this.

MARG. By my troth's not so good, and I warrant your cosin will
1395 say so.

BERO. My cosin's a foole, and thou art another, ile weare none but this.

MAR. I like the new tire within excellently, if the haire were a thought browner: and your gown's a most rare fashion yfaith, I
1400 saw the Dutchesse of *Millaines* gowne that they praise so.

BERO. O that exceeds they say.³

MAR. By my troth's but a night-gowne in respect of yours, cloth a gold and cuts, and lac'd with siluer, set with pearles, downe sleeues, side sleeues, and skirts, round vnderborn with a
1405 blewish tinsel, but for a fine quaint gracefull and excellent fashion, yours is worth ten on't.

|113

HERO. God giue mee ioy to weare it, for my heart is exceeding heauy.

1410 MARGA. 'Twill be heauier soone, by the waight of a man.

HERO. Fie vpon thee, art not asham'd?⁴

MARG. Of what Lady? of speaking honourably? is not marriage honourable in a beggar? is not your Lord honourable without marriage? I thinke you would haue me say, sauing your
1415 reuerence a husband: and bad thinking doe not wrest true speaking, Ile offend no body, is there any harme in the heauier for a husband? none I thinke, and it be the right husband, and the right wife, otherwise 'tis light and not heauy, aske my Lady *Beatrice* else, here she comes.

1420 *Enter Beatrice.*

HERO. Good morrow Coze.

BEAT. Good morrow sweet *Hero*.

³An ink mark follows the end of this line.

⁴An ink mark follows the end of this line.

- 1425 HERO. Why how now? do you speake in the sick tune?
BEAT. I am out of all other tune, me thinkes.
MAR. Claps into Light a loue, (that goes without a burden,) do
you sing it and Ile dance it.
BEAT. Ye Light aloue with your heeles, then if your husband
1430 haue stables enough, you'll looke he shall lacke no barnes.
MAR. O illegitimate construction! I scorne that with my heeles.
BEAT. 'Tis almost fiue a clocke cosin, 'tis time you were ready,
by my troth I am exceeding ill, hey ho.
MAR. For a hauke, a horse, or a husband?
1435 BEAT. For the letter that begins them all, H.
MAR. Well, and you be not turn'd Turke, there's no more
sayling by the starre.
BEAT. What meanes the foole trow?
MAR. Nothing I, but God send euery one their harts desire.
1440 HERO. These gloues the Count sent mee, they are an excellent
perfume.
BEAT. I am stufft cosin, I cannot smell.
MAR. A maid and stuff! there's goodly catching of colde.
BEAT. O God helpe me, God help me, how long haue you
1445 profest apprehension?
MAR. Euer since you left it, doth not my wit become me rarely?
BEAT. It is not seene enough, you should weare it in your cap,
by my troth I am sicke.
MAR. Get you some of this distill'd *carduus benedictus* and lay it
1450 to your heart, it is the onely thing for a qualm.
HERO. There thou prickst her with a thissell.
BEAT. *Benedictus*, why *benedictus*? you haue some morall in this
benedictus.
MAR. Morall? no by my troth, I haue no morall meaning, I
1455 meant plaine holy thissell, you may thinke perchance that I
thinke you are in loue, nay birlady I am not such a foole to
thinke what I list, nor I list not to thinke what I can, nor
indeed, I cannot thinke, if I would thinke my hart out of
thinking, that you are in loue, or that you will be in loue, or
1460 that you can be in loue: yet *Benedick* was such another, and
now is he become a man, he swore hee would neuer marry, and
yet now in despite of his heart he eates his meat without
grudging, and how you may be conuerted I know not, but me
thinke you looke with your eies as other women doe.
1465 BEAT. What pace is this that thy tongue keepes.

MAR. Not a false gallop.

Enter Vrsula.

1470 VRSULA. Madam, withdraw, the Prince, the Count, signior
Benedicke, Don *Iohn*, and all the gallants of the towne are
 come to fetch you to Church.

HERO. Helpe me to dresse mee good coze, good *Meg*, good
Vrsula.

Scene 5

Enter Leonato, and the Constable, and the Headborough.

1475 LEONATO. What would you with mee, honest neighbour?

CONST. DOG. Mary sir I would haue some confidence with you,
 that decernes you nearly.

LEON. Briefe I pray you, for you see it is a busie time with me.

CONST. DOG. Mary this it is sir.

1480 HEADB. Yes in truth it is sir.

LEON. What is it my good friends?

CON. DO. Goodman Verges sir speakes a little of the matter, an
 old man sir, and his wits are not so blunt, as God helpe I
 would desire they were, but infaith honest as the skin
 1485 betweene his browes.

HEAD. Yes I thank God, I am as honest as any man liuing, that
 is an old man, and no honester then I.

CON. DOG. Comparisons are odorous, palabras, neighbour
 Verges.

1490 LEON. Neighbours, you are tedious.

CON. DOG. It pleases your worship to say so, but we are the
 poore Dukes officers, but truely for mine owne part, if I were
 as tedious as a King I could finde in my heart to bestow it all
 of your worship.

1495 LEON. All thy tediousnesse on me, ah?

CONST. DOG. Yea, and 'twere a thousand times more than 'tis,
 for I heare as good exclamation on your Worship as of any
 man in the Citie, and though I bee but a poore man, I am
 glad to heare it.

1500 HEAD. And so am I.

LEON. I would faine know what you haue to say.

HEAD. Marry sir our watch to night, except[. . .]

illegible: 1 chars ng your worships presence, haue tane a couple of
 as arrant knaues as any in Messina.

1505 CON. DOG. A good old man sir, hee will be talking as they say,
 when the age is in the wit is out, God helpe vs, it is a world to
 see: well said yfaith neighbour *Verges*, well, God's a good man,
 and two men ride of a horse, one must ride behinde, an honest
 soule yfaith sir, by my troth he is, as euer broke bread, but
 1510 God is to bee worshipt, all men are not alike, alas good
 neighbour.

LEON. Indeed neighbour he comes too short of you.

CON. DO. Gifts that God giues.

LEON. I must leaue you.

1515 CON. DOG. One word sir, our watch sir haue indeed
 comprehended two aspitious persons, & we would haue them
 this morning examined before your worship.

LEON. Take their examination your selfe, and bring it me, I am
 now in great haste, as may appeare vnto you.

1520 CONST. It shall be suffigance.

LEON. Drinke some wine ere you goe: fare you well. (

Exit.

MESSENGER. My Lord, they stay for you to giue your daughter
 to her husband.

LEON. Ile wait vpon them, I am ready.

1525 DOGB. Goe good partner, goe get you to *Francis Sea-coale*, bid
 him bring his pen and inkehorne to the Gaole: we are now to
 examine those men.

VERGES. And we must doe it wisely.

DOGB. Wee will spare for no witte I warrant you: ^[114]
 1530 heere's that shall driue some to a non-come, only get the
 learned writer to set downe our excommunication, and meet
 me at the Iaile.

Exeunt.

ACT 4

Scene 1

Actus Quartus.

Enter Prince, Bastard, Leonato, Frier, Claudio, Benedicke, Hero, and Beatrice.

- LEONATO. Come Frier *Francis*, be briefe, onely to the plaine
forme of marriage, and you shal recount their particular duties
1535 afterwards.
- FRAN. You come hither, my Lord, to marry this Lady.
- CLAU. No.
- LEO. To be married to her: Frier, you come to marrie her.
- FRIER. Lady, you come hither to be married to this Count.
- 1540 HERO. I doe.
- FRIER. If either of you know any inward impediment why you
should not be conioyned, I charge you on your soules to vtter
it.
- CLAUD. Know you anie, *Hero*?
- 1545 HERO. None my Lord.
- FRIER. Know you anie, Count?
- LEON. I dare make his answer, None.
- CLAU. O what men dare do! what men may do! what men daily
do!
- 1550 BENE. How now! interiections? why then, some be of laughing,
as ha, ha, he.
- CLAU. Stand thee by Frier, father, by your leaue,
Will you with free and vnconstrained soule
Giue me this maid your daughter?
- 1555 LEON. As freely sonne as God did giue her me.
- CLA. And what haue I to giue you back, whose worth
May counterpoise this rich and precious gift?
- PRIN. Nothing, vnlesse you render her againe.
- CLAU. Sweet Prince, you learn me noble thankfulnes:
1560 There *Leonato*, take her backe againe,
Giue not this rotten Orenge to your friend,
Shee's but the signe and semblance of her honour:
Behold how like a maid she blushes heere!
O what authoritie and shew of truth
1565 Can cunning sinne couer it selfe withall!
Comes not that bloud, as modest euidence,
To witnesse simple Vertue? would you not sweare
All you that see her, that she were a maide,
By these exterior shewes? But she is none:
1570 She knowes the heat of a luxurious bed:
Her blush is guiltinesse, not modestie.

LEONATO. What doe you meane, my Lord?

CLAU. Not to be married,
Not to knit my soule to an approued wanton.

1575 LEON. Deere my Lord, if you in your owne [.. ..]
illegible: 1 chars rooffe,
Haue vanquisht the resistance of her youth,
And made defeat of her virginitie.

CLAU. I know what you would say: if I haue knowne (her,
1580 You will say, she did imbrace me as a husband,
And so extenuate the forehand sinne: No *Leonato*,
I neuer tempted her with word too large,
But as a brother to his sister, shewed
Bashfull sinceritie and comely loue.

1585 HERO. And seem'd I euer otherwise to you?

CLAU. Out on thee seeming, I will write against it,
You seeme to me as *Diane* in her Orbe,
As chaste as is the budde ere it be blowne:
1590 But you are more intemperate in your blood,
Than *Venus*, or those pampred animalls,
That rage in sauage sensualitie.

HERO. Is my Lord well, that he doth speake so wide?

LEON. Sweete Prince, why speake not you?

1595 PRIN. What should I speake?
I stand dishonour'd that haue gone about,
To linke my deare friend to a common stale.

LEON. Are these things spoken, or doe I but dreame?

BAST. Sir, they are spoken, and these things are true.

1600 BENE. This lookes not like a nuptiall.

HERO. True, O God!

CLAU. *Leonato*, stand I here?

Is this the Prince? is this the Princes brother?

Is this face *Heroes*? are our eies our owne?

1605 LEON. All this is so, but what of this my Lord?

CLAU. Let me but moue one question to your daugh(ter,
And by that fatherly and kindly power,
That you haue in her, bid her answer truly.

LEO. I charge thee doe, as thou art my childe.

1610 HERO. O God defend me how am I beset,
What kinde of catechizing call you this?

CLAU. To make you answer truly to your name.

HERO. Is it not *Hero*? who can blot that name
With any iust reproach?

1615 CLAUD. Marry that can *Hero*,
Hero it selfe can blot out *Heroes* vertue.
What man was he, talkt with you yesternight,
Out at your window betwixt twelue and one?
Now if you are a maid, answer to this.

1620 HERO. I talkt with no man at that howre my Lord.

PRINCE. Why then you are no maiden. *Leonato*,
I am sorry you must heare: vpon mine honor,
My selfe, my brother, and this griued Count
Did see her, heare her, at that howre last night,
1625 Talke with a ruffian at her chamber window,
Who hath indeed most like a liberall villaine,
Confest the vile encounters they haue had
A thousand times in secret.

IOHN. Fie, fie, they are not to be named my Lord,
1630 Not to be spoken of,
There is not chastitie enough in language,
Without offence to vtter them: thus pretty Lady
I am sorry for thy much misgouernment.

CLAUD. O *Hero*! what a *Hero* hadst thou beene
1635 If halfe thy outward graces had beene placed
About thy thoughts and counsailes of thy heart?
But fare thee well, most foule, most faire, farewell
Thou pure impiety, and impious puritie,
For thee Ile locke vp all the gates of Loue,
1640 And on my eie-lids shall Coniecture hang,
To turne all beauty into thoughts of harme,
And neuer shall it more be gracious.

LEON. Hath no mans dagger here a point for me?

BEAT. Why how now cosin, wherfore sink you down?

1645 BAST. Come, let vs go: these things come thus to light,
Smother her spirits vp.

BENE. How doth the Lady?

BEAT. Dead I thinke, helpe vncle,
Hero, why *Hero*, Vncle, Signor *Benedicke*, Frier.

1650 LEONATO. O Fate! take not away thy heauy hand,
Death is the fairest couer for her shame
That may be wisht for.

|115

BEATR. How now cosin *Hero*?

1655 FRI. Haue comfort Ladie.

LEON. Dost thou looke vp?

FRIER. Yea, wherefore should she not?

LEON. Wherefore? Why doth not euery earthly thing
Cry shame vpon her? Could she heere denie

1660 The storie that is printed in her blood?

Do not liue *Hero*, do not ope thine eyes:

For did I thinke thou wouldst not quickly die,

Thought I thy spirits were stronger then thy shames,

My selfe would on the reward of reproaches

1665 Strike at thy life. Grieu'd I, I had but one?

Chid I, for that at frugal Natures frame?

O one too much by thee: why had I one?

Why euer was't thou louelie in my eies?

Why had I not with charitable hand

1670 Tooke vp a beggars issue at my gates,

Who smeered thus, and mir'd with infamie,

I might haue said, no part of it is mine:

This shame deriues it selfe from vnknowne loines,

But mine, and mine I lou'd, and mine I prais'd,

1675 And mine that I was proud on mine so much,

That I my selfe, was to my selfe not mine:

Valewing of her, why she, O she is falne

Into a pit of Inke, that the wide sea

Hath drops too few to wash her cleane againe,

1680 And salt too little, which may season giue

To her foule tainted flesh.

BEN. Sir, sir, be patient: for my part, I am so attired in wonder,

I know not what to say.

BEA. O on my soule my cosin is belied.

1685 BEN. Ladie, were you her bedfellow last night?

BEA. No, truly: not although vntill last night,

I haue this tweluemonth bin her bedfellow.

LEON. Confirm'd, confirm'd, O that is stronger made
Which was before barr'd vp with ribs of iron.1690 Would the Princes lie, and *Claudio* lie,

Who lou'd her so, that speaking of her foulnesse,

Wash'd it with teares? Hence from her, let her die.

FRI. Heare me a little, for I haue onely bene silent so long, and
giuen way vnto this course of fortune, by noting of the Ladie, I
1695 haue markt. A thousand blushing apparitions,
To start into her face, a thousand innocent shames,
In Angel whitenesse beare away those blushes,
And in her eie there hath appear'd a fire
To burne the errors that these Princes hold
1700 Against her maiden truth. Call me a foole,
Trust not my reading, nor my obseruations,
Which with experimental seale doth warrant
The tenure of my booke: trust not my age,
My reuerence, calling, nor diuinitie,
1705 If this sweet Ladie lye not guiltlesse heere,
Vnder some biting error.

LEO. Friar, it cannot be:
Thou seest that all the Grace that she hath left,
Is, that she wil not adde to her damnation,
1710 A sinne of periury, she not denies it:
Why seek'st thou then to couer with excuse,
That which appeares in proper nakednesse?
FRI. Ladie, what man is he you are accus'd of?
HERO. They know that do accuse me, I know none:
1715 If I know more of any man aliue
Then that which maiden modestie doth warrant,
Let all my sinnes lacke mercy. O my Father,
Proue you that any man with me conuerst,

1720 At houres vnmeete, or that I yesternight
Maintain'd the change of words with any creature,
Refuse me, hate me, torture me to death.
FRI. There is some strange misprision in the Princes.
BEN. Two of them haue the verie bent of honor,
1725 And if their wisdomes be misled in this:
The practise of it liues in *Iohn* the bastard,
Whose spirits toile in frame of villanies.
LEO. I know not: if they speake but truth of her,
These hands shall teare her: If they wrong her honour,
1730 The proudest of them shall wel heare of it.
Time hath not yet so dried this bloud of mine,
Nor age so eate vp my inuention,
Nor Fortune made such hauocke of my meanes,

- Nor my bad life reft me so much of friends,
1735 But they shall finde, awak'd in such a kinde,
Both strength of limbe, and policie of minde,
Ability in meanes, and choise of friends,
To quit me of them thoroughly.
- FRI. Pause awhile:
- 1740 And let my counsell sway you in this case,
Your daughter heere the Princesse (left for dead)
Let her awhile be secretly kept in,
And publish it, that she is dead indeed:
Maintaine a mourning ostentation,
1745 And on your Families old monument,
Hang mournfull Epitaphes, and do all rites,
That appertaine vnto a buriall.
- LEON. What shall become of this? What wil this do?
- FRI. Marry this wel carried, shall on her behalfe,
1750 Change slander to remorse, that is some good,
But not for that dreame I on this strange course,
But on this trauaile looke for greater birth:
She dying, as it must be so maintain'd,
Vpon the instant that she was accus'd,
1755 Shal be lamented, pittied, and excus'd
Of euery hearer: for it so fals out,
That what we haue, we prize not to the worth,
Whiles we enioy it; but being lack'd and lost,
Why then we racke the value, then we finde
1760 The vertue that possession would not shew vs
Whiles it was ours, so will it fare with *Claudio*:
When he shal heare she dyed vpon his words,
Th'Idea of her life shal sweetly creepe
Into his study of imagination.
- 1765 And euery louely Organ of her life,
Shall come apparel'd in more precious habite:
More mouing delicate, and ful of life,
Into the eye and prospect of his soule
Then when she liu'd indeed: then shal he mourne,
1770 If euer Loue had interest in his Liuer,
And wish he had not so accused her:
No, though he thought his accusation true:
Let this be so, and doubt not but successe
Wil fashion the euent in better shape,

1775 Then I can lay it downe in likelihood.
 But if all ayme but this be leuelld false,
 The supposition of the Ladies death,
 Will quench the wonder of her infamie.
 And if it sort not well, you may conceale her
 1780 As best befits her wounded reputation,
 In some reclusiue and religious life,
 Out of all eyes, tongues, mindes and iniuries.
 BENE. Signior *Leonato*, let the Frier aduise you,
 And though you know my inwardnesse and loue
 1785 Is very much vnto the Prince and *Claudio*.

[116

Yet, by mine honor, I will deale in this,
 As secretly and iustlie, as your soule
 Should with your bodie.
 1790 LEON. Being that I flow in greefe,
 The smallest twine may lead me.
 FRIER. 'Tis well consented, presently away,
 For to strange sores, strangely they straine the cure,
 Come Lady, die to liue, this wedding day
 1795 Perhaps is but prolong'd, haue patience & endure.

Exit.

BENE. Lady *Beatrice*, haue you wept all this while?
 BEAT. Yea, and I will weepe a while longer.
 BENE. I will not desire that.
 BEAT. You haue no reason, I doe it freely.
 1800 BENE. Surelie I do beleeeue your fair cosin is wrong'd.
 BEAT. Ah, how much might the man deserue of mee that would
 right her!
 BENE. Is there any way to shew such friendship?
 BEAT. A verie euen way, but no such friend.
 1805 BENE. May a man doe it?
 BEAT. It is a mans office, but not yours.
 BENE. I doe loue nothing in the world so well as you, is not that
 strange?
 BEAT. As strange as the thing I know not, it were as possible for
 1810 me to say, I loued nothing so well as you, but beleeeue me not,
 and yet I lie not, I confesse nothing, nor I deny nothing, I am
 sorry for my cousin.
 BENE. By my sword *Beatrice* thou lou'st me.
 BEAT. Doe not sweare by it and eat it.

- 1815 BENE. I will sweare by it that you loue mee, and I will make him
eat it that sayes I loue not you.
BEAT. Will you not eat your word?
BENE. With no sawce that can be deuised to it, I protest I loue
thee.
1820 BEAT. Why then God forgiue me.
BENE. What offence sweet Beatrice?
BEAT. You haue stayed me in a happy howre, I was about to
protest I loued you.
BENE. And doe it with all thy heart.
1825 BEAT. I loue you with so much of my heart, that none is left to
protest.
BENED. Come, bid me doe any thing for thee.
BEAT. Kill *Claudio*.
BENE. Ha, not for the wide world.
1830 BEAT. You kill me to denie, farewell.
BENE. Tarrie sweet *Beatrice*.
BEAT. I am gone, though I am heere, there is no loue in you, nay
I pray you let me goe.
BENE. *Beatrice*.
1835 BEAT. Infaith I will goe.
BENE. Wee'll be friends first.
BEAT. You dare easier be friends with mee, than fight with mine
enemy.
BENE. Is *Claudio* thine enemy?
1840 BEAT. Is a not approued in the height a villaine, that hath
slandered, scorned, dishonoured my kinswoman? O that I were
a man! what, beare her in hand vntill they come to take
hands, and then with publike accusation vncovered slander,
vnmittigated rancour? O God that I were a man! I would eat
1845 his heart in the market-place.
BENE. Heare me *Beatrice*.
BEAT. Talke with a man out at a window, a proper saying.
BENE. Nay but *Beatrice*.
BEAT. Sweet *Hero*, she is wrong'd, shee is slandered, she is
1850 vndone.
BENE. Beat?

BEAT. Princes and Counties! surelie a Princely testimonie, a
goodly Count, Comfect, a sweet Gallant surelie, O that I were
1855 a man for his sake! or that I had any friend would be a man

for my sake! But manhood is melted into cursies, valour into complement, and men are onelie turned into tongue, and trim ones too: he is now as valiant as *Hercules*, that only tells a lie, and swears it: I cannot be a man with wishing, therefore I will
 1860 die a woman with grieving.

BENE. Tarry good *Beatrice*, by this hand I loue thee.

BEAT. Vse it for my loue some other way then swearing by it.

BENED. Thinke you in your soule the Count *Claudio* hath
 wrong'd *Hero*?

1865 BEAT. Yea, as sure as I haue a thought, or a soule.

BENE. Enough, I am engagde, I will challenge him, I will kisse your hand, and so leaue you: by this hand *Claudio* shall render me a deere account: as you heare of me, so thinke of me: goe comfort your coosin, I must say she is dead, and so farewell.

Scene 2

1870 *Enter the Constables, Borachio, and the Towne Clerke in gownes.*

KEEPER. Is our whole dissembly appeard?

COWLEY. O a stoole and a cushion for the Sexton.

SEXTON. Which be the malefactors?

ANDREW. Marry that am I, and my partner.

1875 COWLEY. Nay that's certaine, wee haue the exhibition to
 examine.

SEXTON. But which are the offenders that are to be examined,
 let them come before master Constable.

KEMP. Yea marry, let them come before mee, what is your
 1880 name, friend?

BOR. *Borachio*.

KEM. Pray write downe *Borachio*. Yours sirra.

CON. I am a Gentleman sir, and my name is *Conrade*.

KEE. Write downe Master gentleman *Conrade*: maisters, doe you
 1885 serue God: maisters, it is proued already that you are little
 better than false knaues, and it will goe neere to be thought so
 shortly, how answer you for your selues?

CON. Marry sir, we say we are none.

KEMP. A maruellous witty fellow I assure you, but I will goe
 1890 about with him: come you hither sirra, a word in your eare sir,
 I say to you, it is thought you are false knaues.

BOR. Sir, I say to you, we are none.

KEMP. Well, stand aside, 'fore God they are both in a tale: haue
 you writ downe that they are none?

- 1895 SEXT. Master Constable, you goe not the way to examine, you must call forth the watch that are their accusers.
- KEMP. Yea marry, that's the efastest way, let the watch come forth: masters, I charge you in the Princes name, accuse these men.
- 1900 WATCH 1. This man said sir, that *Don Iohn* the Princes brother was a villaine.
- KEMP. Write down, Prince *Iohn* a villaine: why this is flat periurie, to call a Princes brother villaine.
- BORA. Master Constable.
- 1905 KEMP. Pray thee fellow peace, I do not like thy looke I promise thee.
- SEXTON. What heard you him say else?
- WATCH 2. Mary that he had receiued a thousand Dukates of *Don Iohn*, for accusing the Lady *Hero* wrongfully.
- 1910 |117
- KEMP. Flat Burglarie as euer was committed.
- CONST. Yea by th'masse that it is.
- SEXTON. What else fellow?
- WATCH 1. And that Count *Claudio* did meane vpon his words,
- 1915 to disgrace *Hero* before the whole assembly, and not marry her.
- KEMP. O villaine! thou wilt be condemn'd into euerlasting redemption for this.
- SEXTON. What else?
- 1920 WATCH. This is all.
- SEXTON. And this is more masters then you can deny, Prince *Iohn* is this morning secretly stolne away: *Herow*as in this manner accus'd, in this very manner refus'd, and vpon the grieve of this sodainely died: Master Constable, let these men
- 1925 be bound, and brought to *Leonato*, I will goe before, and shew him their examination.
- CONST. Come, let them be opinion'd.
- SEX. Let them be in the hands of *Coxcombe*.
- KEM. Gods my life, where's the Sexton? let him write downe the
- 1930 Princes Officer *Coxcombe*: come, binde them thou naughty varlet.
- COULEY. Away, you are an asse, you are an asse.
- KEMP. Dost thou not suspect my place? dost thou not suspect my yeeres? O that hee were heere to write mee downe an asse!
- 1935 but masters, remember that I am an asse: though it be not

written down, yet forget not yt I am an asse: No thou villaine,
 yu art full of piety as shall be prou'd vpon thee by good
 witnesse, I am a wise fellow, and which is more, an officer, and
 which is more, a housholder, and which is more, as pretty a
 1940 peece of flesh as any in Messina, and one that knowes the Law,
 goe to, & a rich fellow enough, goe to, and a fellow that hath
 had losses, and one that hath two gownes, and euery thing
 handsome about him: bring him away: O that I had been writ
 downe an asse!

Exit.

ACT 5

Scene 1

Actus Quintus.

1945 *Enter Leonato and his brother.*
 BROTHER. If you goe on thus, you will kill your selfe,
 And 'tis not wisdom thus to second griefe,
 Against your selfe.
 LEON. I pray thee cease thy counsaile,
 1950 Which falls into mine eares as profitlesse,
 As water in a siue: giue not me counsaile,
 Nor let no comfort delight mine eare,
 But such a one whose wrongs doth sute with mine.
 Bring me a father that so lou'd his childe,
 1955 Whose ioy of her is ouerwhelmed like mine,
 And bid him speake of patience,
 Measure his woe the length and bredth of mine,
 And let it answer euery straine for straine,
 As thus for thus, and such a griefe for such,
 1960 In euery lineament, branch, shape, and forme:
 If such a one will smile and stroke his beard,
 And sorrow, wagge, crie hem, when he should grone,
 Patch griefe with prouerbs, make misfortune drunke,
 With candlewasters: bring him yet to me,
 1965 And I of him will gather patience:
 But there is no such man, for brother, men

Can counsaile, and speake comfort to that griefe,
Which they themselues not feele, but tasting it,
Their counsaile turnes to passion, which before,

1970

Would giue preceptiall medicine to rage,
Fetter strong madnesse in a silken thred,
Charme ache with ayre, and agony with words,
No, no, 'tis all mens office, to speake patience
To those that wring vnder the load of sorrow:
But no mans vertue nor sufficiencie
To be so morall, when he shall endure
The like himselfe: therefore giue me no counsaile,
My griefs cry lowder then aduertisement.

1980

BROTH. Therein do men from children nothing differ.
LEONATO. I pray thee peace, I will be flesh and bloud,
For there was neuer yet Philosopher,
That could endure the toothŕake patiently,
How euer they haue writ the stile of gods,
And made a push at chance and sufferance.

1985

BROTHER. Yet bend not all the harme vpon your selfe,
Make those that doe offend you, suffer too.

LEON. There thou speak'st reason, nay I will doe so,
My soule doth tell me, *Hero* is belied,

1990

And that shall *Claudio* know, so shall the Prince,
And all of them that thus dishonour her.

Enter Prince and Claudio.

BROT. Here comes the *Prince* and *Claudio* hastily.

PRIN. Good den, good den.

1995

CLAU. Good day to both of you.

LEON. Heare you my Lords?

PRIN. We haue some haste *Leonato*.

LEO. Some haste my Lord! wel, fareyouwel my Lord,
Are you so hasty now? well, all is one.

2000

PRIN. Nay, do not quarrel with vs, good old man.

BROT. If he could rite himselfe with quarrelling,
Some of vs would lie low.

CLAUD. Who wrongs him?

LEON. Marry yu dost wrong me, thou dissembler, thou:

2005

Nay, neuer lay thy hand vpon thy sword,
I feare thee not.

CLAUD. Marry beshrew my hand,

If it should giue your age such cause of feare,
Infaieth my hand meant nothing to my sword.

2010 LEONATO. Tush, tush, man, neuer fleere and iest at me,
I speake not like a dotard, nor a foole,
As vnder priuiledge of age to bragge,
What I haue done being yong, or what would doe,
Were I not old, know *Claudio* to thy head,
2015 Thou hast so wrong'd my innocent childe and me,
That I am forc'd to lay my reuerence by,
And with grey haire and bruise of many daies,
Doe challenge thee to triall of a man,
I say thou hast belied mine innocent childe.
2020 Thy slander hath gone through and through her heart,
And she lies buried with her ancestors:
O in a tombe where neuer scandall slept,
Saue this of hers, fram'd by thy villanie.
CLAUD. My villany?

2025 LEONATO. Thine *Claudio*, thine I say.
PRIN. You say not right old man.
LEON. My Lord, my Lord,
Ile proue it on his body if he dare,
Despight his nice fence, and his actiue practise,
2030 His Maie of youth, and bloome of lustihood.
CLAUD. Away, I will not haue to do with you.
LEO. Canst thou so daffe me? thou hast kild my child,
If thou kilst me, boy, thou shalt kill a man.
BRO. He shall kill two of vs, and men indeed,
2035 But that's no matter, let him kill one first:

|118

Win me and weare me, let him answere me,
Come follow me boy, come sir boy, come follow me
Sir boy, ile whip you from your foyning fence,
2040 Nay, as I am a gentleman, I will.
LEON. Brother.
BROT. Content your self, God knows I lou'd my neece,
And she is dead, slander'd to death by villaines,
That dare as well answer a man indeede,
2045 As I dare take a serpent by the tongue.
Boyes, apes, braggarts, Iackes, milke'sops.
LEON. Brother *Anthony*.
BROT. Hold you content, what man? I know them, yea

And what they weigh, euen to the vtmost scruple,
2050 Scambling, outŕfacing, fashionŕmonging boyes,
That lye, and cog, and flout, depraue, and slander,
Goe antiquely, and show outward hidiousnesse,
And speake of halfe a dozen dang'rous words,
How they might hurt their enemies, if they durst.

2055 And this is all.

LEON. But brother *Anthonie*.

ANT. Come, 'tis no matter,

Do not you meddle, let me deale in this.

PRI. Gentlemen both, we will not wake your patience

2060 My heart is sorry for your daughters death:

But on my honour she was charg'd with nothing

But what was true, and very full of prooffe.

LEON. My Lord, my Lord.

PRIN. I will not heare you.

2065 *Enter Benedicke.*

LEO. No come brother, away, I will be heard.

Exeunt ambo.

BRO. And shall, or some of vs will smart for it.

PRIN. See, see, here comes the man we went to seeke.

CLAU. Now signior, what newes?

2070 BEN. Good day my Lord.

PRIN. Welcome signior, you are almost come to part almost a
fray.

CLAU. Wee had likt to haue had our two noses snapt off with
two old men without teeth.

2075 PRIN. *Leonato* and his brother, what think'st thou? had wee
fought, I doubt we should haue beene too yong for them.

BEN. In a false quarrell there is no true valour, I came to seeke
you both.

CLAU. We haue beene vp and downe to seeke thee, for we are
2080 high prooffe melancholly, and would faine haue it beaten away,
wilt thou vse thy wit?

BEN. It is in my scabberd, shall I draw it?

PRIN. Doest thou weare thy wit by thy side?

CLAU. Neuer any did so, though verie many haue been beside
2085 their wit, I will bid thee drawe, as we do the minstrels, draw
to pleasure vs.

PRIN. As I am an honest man he lookes pale, art thou sicke, or
angrie?

2090 CLAU. What, courage man: what though care kil'd a cat, thou
hast mettle enough in thee to kill care.

BEN. Sir, I shall meete your wit in the careere, and you charge it
against me, I pray you chuse another subiect.

CLAU. Nay then giue him another staffe, this last was broke
crosse.

2095 PRIN. By this light, he changes more and more, I thinke he be
angrie indeede.

CLAU. If he be, he knowes how to turne his girdle.

BEN. Shall I speake a word in your eare?

CLAU. God blesse me from a challenge.

2100

BEN. You are a villaine, I iest not, I will make it good how
you dare, with what you dare, and when you dare: do me
right, or I will protest your cowardise: you haue kill'd a sweete
Ladie, and her death shall fall heauie on you, let me heare
2105 from you.

CLAU. Well, I will meete you, so I may haue good cheare.

PRIN. What, a feast, a feast?

CLAU. I faith I thanke him, he hath bid me to a calues head and
a Capon, the which if I doe not carue most curiously, say my
2110 knife's naught, shall I not finde a woodcocke too?

BEN. Sir, your wit ambles well, it goes easily.

PRIN. Ile tell thee how *Beatrice* prais'd thy wit the other day: I
said thou hadst a fine wit: true saies she, a fine little one: no
said I, a great wit: right saies shee, a great grosse one: nay said
2115 I, a good wit: iust said she, it hurts no body: nay said I, the
gentleman is wise: certaine said she, a wise gentleman: nay
said I, he hath the tongues: that I beleue said shee, for hee
swore a thing to me on munday night, which he forswore on
tuesday morning: there's a double tongue, there's two tongues:
2120 thus did shee an howre together transshape thy particular
vertues, yet at last she concluded with a sigh, thou wast the
proprest man in Italie.

CLAUD. For the which she wept heartily, and said shee car'd not.

2125 PRIN. Yea that she did, but yet for all that, and if shee did not
hate him deadlie, shee would loue him dearely, the old mans
daughter told vs all.

CLAU. All, all, and moreouer, God saw him when he was hid in the garden.

2130 PRIN. But when shall we set the sauage Bulls hornes on the sensible *Benedicks* head?

CLAU. Yea and text vnderneath, heere dwells *Benedicke* the married man.

BEN. Fare you well, Boy, you know my minde, I will leaue you now to your gossep-like humor, you breake iests as braggards
2135 do their blades, which God be thanked hurt not: my Lord, for your manie courtesies I thank you, I must discontinue your companie, your brother the Bastard is fled from *Messina*: you haue among you, kill'd a sweet and innocent Ladie: for my Lord Lackeif beard there, he and I shall meete, and till then
2140 peace be with him.

PRIN. He is in earnest.

CLAU. In most profound earnest, and Ile warrant you, for the loue of Beatrice.

PRIN. And hath challeng'd thee.

2145 CLAU. Most sincerely.

PRIN. What a prettie thing man is, when he goes in his doublet and hose, and leaues off his wit.

Enter Constable, Conrade, and Borachio.

CLAU. He is then a Giant to an Ape, but then is an Ape a
2150 Doctor to such a man.

PRIN. But soft you, let me be, plucke vp my heart, and be sad, did he not say my brother was fled?

CONST. Come you sir, if iustice cannot tame you, shee shall nere weigh more reasons in her ballance, nay, and you be a cursing
2155 hypocrite once, you must be lookt to.

PRIN. How now, two of my brothers men bound? *Borachio* one.

CLAU. Ha[. . .]

illegible: 1 chars ken after their offence my Lord.

PRIN. Officers, what offence haue these men done?
2160 |119

CONST. Marrie sir, they haue committed false report, moreouer they haue spoken vntruths, secondarily they are slanders, sixt and lastly, they haue belyed a Ladie, thirdly, they haue verified vniust things, and to conclude they are
2165 lying knaues.

PRIN. First I aske thee what they haue done, thirdlie I aske thee
what's their offence, sixt and lastlie why they are committed,
and to conclude, what you lay to their charge.

2170 CLAU. Rightlie reasoned, and in his owne diuision, and by my
troth there's one meaning well suted.

PRIN. Who haue you offended masters, that you are thus bound
to your answer? this learned Constable is too cunning to be
vnderstood, what's your offence?

2175 BOR. Sweete Prince, let me go no farther to mine answere: do
you heare me, and let this Count kill mee: I haue deceiued
euen your verie eies: what your wisdomes could not discouer,
these shallow fooles haue brought to light, who in the night
ouerheard me confessing to this man, how *Don Iohn* your
brother incensed me to slander the Ladie *Hero*, how you were
2180 brought into the Orchard, and saw me court *Margaret* in
*Heroes*garments, how you disgrace'd her when you should
marrie her: my villanie they haue vpon record, whichI had
rather seale with my death, then repeate ouer to my shame:
the Ladie is dead vpon mine and my masters false accusation:
2185 and briefelie, I desire nothing but the reward of a villaine.

PRIN. Runs not this speech like yron through your bloud?

CLAU. I haue drunke poison whiles he vtter'd it.

PRIN. But did my Brother set thee on to this?

BOR. Yea, and paid me richly for the practise of it.

2190 PRIN. He is compos'd and fram'd of treacherie,
And fled he is vpon this villanie.

CLAU. Sweet *Hero*, now thy image doth appeare
In the rare semblance that I lou'd it first.

2195 CONST. Come, bring away the plaintiffes, by this time our
Sexton hath reformed *Signior Leonato* of the matter: and
masters, do not forget to specifie when time & place shall
serue, that I am an Asse.

CON. 2. Here, here comes master *Signior Leonato*, and the
Sexton too.

2200 *Enter Leonato.*

LEON. Which is the villaine? let me see his eies,
That when I note another man like him,
I may auoide him: which of these is he?

BOR. If you would know your wronger, looke on me.

2205 LEON. Art thou the slaue that with thy breath hast kild mine
innocent childe?

BOR. Yea, euen I alone.

LEO. No, not so villaine, thou beliest thy selfe,
Here stand a paire of honourable men,

2210 A third is fled that had a hand in it:
I thanke you Princes for my daughters death,
Record it with your high and worthie deedes,
'Twas brauely done, if you bethinke you of it.

CLAU. I know not how to pray your patience,
2215 Yet I must speake, choose your reuenge your selfe,
Impose me to what penance your inuention
Can lay vpon my sinne, yet sinn'd I not,
But in mistaking.

PRIN. By my soule nor I,
2220 And yet to satisfie this good old man,

I [...]ould bend vnder anie heauie waight,
That heele enioyne me to.

LEON. I cannot bid you bid my daughter liue,
2225 That were impossible, but I prairie you both,
Possesse the people in *Messina* here,
How innocent she died, and if your loue
Can labour aught in sad inuention,
Hang her an epitaph vpon her toomb,
2230 And sing it to her bones, sing it to night:
To morrow morning come you to my house,
And since you could not be my sonne in law,
Be yet my Nephew: my brother hath a daughter,
Almost the copie of my childe that's dead,
2235 And she alone is heire to both of vs,
Giue her the right you should haue giu'n her cosin,
And so dies my reuenge.

CLAU. O noble sir!
Your ouerkindnesse doth wring teares from me,
2240 I do embrace your offer, and dispose
For henceforth of poore *Claudio*.

LEON. To morrow then I will expect your comming,
To night I take my leaue, this naughtie man
Shall face to face be brought to *Margaret*,
2245 Who I beleeeue was packt in all this wrong,
Hired to it by your brother.

BOR. No, by my soule she was not,

Nor knew not what she did when she spoke to me,
But alwaies hath bin iust and vertuous,

2250 In anie thing that I do know by her.

CONST. Moreouer sir, which indeede is not vnder white and
black, this plaintiffe here, the offendour did call mee asse, I
beseech you let it be remembred in his punishment, and also
the watch heard them talke of one Deformed, they say he
2255 weares a key in his eare and a lock hanging by it, and
borrowes monie in Gods name, the which he hath vs'd so long,
and neuer paied, that now men grow hardÓharted and will
lend nothing for Gods sake: praie you examine him vpon that
point.

2260 LEON. I thanke thee for thy care and honest paines.

CONST. Your worship speakes like a most thankefull and
reuerend youth, and I praise God for you.

LEON. There's for thy paines.

CONST. God saue the foundation.

2265 LEON. Goe, I discharge thee of thy prisoner, and I thanke thee.

CONST. I leaue an arrant knaue with your worship, which I
beseech your worship to correct your selfe, for the example of
others: God keepe your worship, I wish your worship well, God
restore you to health, I humblie giue you leaue to depart, and
2270 if a merrie meeting may be wisht, God prohibite it: come
neighbour.

LEON. Vntill to morrow morning, Lords, farewell.

Exeunt.

BROT. Farewell my Lords, we looke for you to morrow.

PRIN. We will not faile.

2275 CLAU. To night ile mourne with *Hero*:

LEON. Bring you these fellowes on, weel talke with *Margaret*, How
her acquaintance grew with this lewd fellow.

Exeunt.

Scene 2

Enter Benedicke and Margaret.

BEN. Praie thee sweete Mistris *Margaret*, deserue well at my
2280 hands, by helping mee to the speech of *Beatrice*.

|120

MAR. Will you then write me a Sonnet in praise of my
beautie?

BENE. In so high a stile *Margaret*, that no man liuing shall come
2285 ouer it, for in most comely truth thou deseruest it.

MAR. To haue no man come ouer me, why, shall I alwaies keepe
below staires?

BENE. Thy wit is as quicke as the grey-hounds mouth, it
catches.

2290 MAR. And yours, as blunt as the Fencers foiles, which hit, but
hurt not.

BENE. A most manly wit *Margaret*, it will not hurt a woman:
and so I pray thee call *Beatrice*, I giue thee the bucklers.

MAR. Giue vs the swords, wee haue bucklers of our owne.

2295 BENE. If you vse them *Margaret*, you must put in the pikes with
a vice, and they are dangerous weapons for Maides.

MAR. Well, I will call *Beatrice* to you, who I thinke hath legges.

Exit Margarite.

BEN. And therefore will come. The God of loue that sits aboue,
and knowes me, and knowes me, how pittifull I deserue. I
2300 meane in singing, but in louing, Leander the good swimmer,
Troilus the first imploier of pandars, and a whole booke full
of these quondam carpet-mongers, whose name yet runne
smoothly in the euen rode of a blanke verse, why they were
neuer so truely turned ouer and ouer as my poore selfe in loue:
2305 marrie I cannot shew it rime, I haue tried, I can finde out no
rime to Ladie but babie, an innocent rime: for scorne, horne, a
hard rime: for schoole foole, a babling rime: verie ominous
endings, no, I was not borne vnder a riming Plannet, for I
cannot wooe in festiuall tearmes: *Enter Beatrice.*

2310 sweete *Beatrice* would'st thou come when I cal'd thee?

BEAT. Yea Signior, and depart when you bid me.

BENE. O stay but till then.

BEAT. Then, is spoken: fare you well now, and yet ere I goe, let
me goe with that I came, which is, with knowing what hath
2315 past betweene you and *Claudio*.

BENE. Onely foule words, and thereupon I will kisse thee.

BEAT. Foule words is but foule wind, and foule wind is but foule
breath, and foule breath is noisome, therefore I will depart
vnkist.

2320 BENE. Thou hast frighted the word out of his right sence, so
forcible is thy wit, but I must tell thee plainly, *Claudio*
vndergoes my challenge, and either I must shortly heare from

2325 him, or I will subscribe him a coward, and I pray thee now tell me, for which of my bad parts didst thou first fall in loue with me?

BEAT. For them all together, which maintain'd so politique a state of euill, that they will not admit any good part to intermingle with them: but for which of my good parts did you first suffer loue for me?

2330 BENE. Suffer loue! a good epithite, I do suffer loue indeede, for I loue thee against my will.

BEAT. In spight of your heart I think, alas poore heart, if you spight it for my sake, I will spight it for yours, for I will neuer loue that which my friend hates.

2335 BENED. Thou and I are too wise to wooe peaceable.

BEA. It appeares not in this confession, there's not one wise man among twentie that will praise himselfe.

2340 BENE. An old, an old instance *Beatrice*, that liu'd in the time of good neighbours, if a man doe not erect in this age his owne tombe ere he dies, hee shall liue no longer in monuments, then the Bels ring, & the Widdow weepes.

BEAT. And how long is that thinke you?

2345 BEN. Question, why an hower in clamour and a quarter in rhewme, therfore is it most expedient for the wise, if Don worrne (his conscience) finde no impediment to the contrarie, to be the trumpet of his owne vertues, as I am to my selfe so much for praising my selfe, who I my selfe will beare witnesse is praise worthie, and now tell me, how doth your cosin?

2350 BEAT. Verie ill.

BENE. And how doe you?

BEAT. Verie ill too.

Enter Vrsula.

2355 BENE. Serue God, loue me, and mend, there will I leaue you too, for here comes one in haste.

VRs. Madam, you must come to your Vncle, yonders old coile at home, it is prooued my Ladie *Hero* hath bin falselie accusede, the *Prince* and *Claudio* mightilie abusde, and *Don Iohn* is the author of all, who is fled and gone: will you come presentlie?

2360 BEAT. Will you go heare this newes Signior?

BENE. I will liue in thy heart, die in thy lap, and be buried in thy eies: and moreouer, I will goe with thee to thy Vncles.

Exeunt.

Scene 3

Enter Claudio, Prince, and three or foure with Tapers.

CLAU. Is this the monument of *Leonato*?

2365 LORD. It is my Lord.

Epitaph.

Done to death by slanderous tongues,

Was the Hero that here lies:

Death in guérdon of her wrongs,

Giues her fame which neuer dies:

2370 So the life that dyed with shame,

Liues in death with glorious fame.

Hang thou there vpon the tombe,

Praising her when I am dombe.

CLAU. Now musick sound & sing your solemn hymne

2375 *Song.*

Pardon goddesse of the night,

Those that slew thy virgin knight,

For the which with songs of woe,

Round about her tombe they goe:

2380 Midnight assist our mone, helpe vs to sigh and grone.

Heauily, heauily.

Graues yawne and yeelde your dead,

Till death be vttered,

Heauenly, heauenly.

2385 LO. Now vnto thy bones good night, yeerely will I do (this right.

PRIN. Good morrow masters, put your Torches out,

The wolues haue preied, and looke, the gentle day

Before the wheelles of Phoebus, round about

Dapples the drowsie East with spots of grey:

2390 Thanks to you all, and leaue vs, fare you well.

CLAU. Good morrow masters, each his seuerall way.

PRIN. Come let vs hence, and put on other weedes,

And then to *Leonatoes* we will goe.

CLAU. And Hymen now with luckier issue speeds,

2395 |121

Then this for whom we rendred vp this woe.

Exeunt.

Scene 4

Enter Leonato, Bene. Marg. Vrsula, old man, Frier, Hero.

FRIER. Did I not tell you she was innocent?

2400 LEO. So are the *Prince* and *Claudio* who accus'd her,
Vpon the errour that you heard debated:
But *Margaret* was in some fault for this,
Although against her will as it appeares,
In the true course of all the question.

OLD. Well, I am glad that all things sort so well.

2405 BENE. And so am I, being else by faith enforc'd
To call young *Claudio* to a reckoning for it.

LEO. Well daughter, and you gentlewomen all,
Withdraw into a chamber by your selues,
And when I send for you, come hither mask'd:
2410 The *Prince* and *Claudio* promis'd by this howre
To visit me, you know your office Brother,
You must be father to your brothers daughter,
And giue her to young *Claudio*.

Exeunt Ladies.

OLD. Which I will doe with confirm'd countenance.

2415 BENE. Frier, I must intreat your paines, I thinke.

FRIER. To doe what Signior?

BENE. To binde me, or vndoe me, one of them:
Signior *Leonato*, truth it is good Signior,
Your neece regards me with an eye of fauour.

2420 LEO. That eye my daughter lent her, 'tis most true.

BENE. And I doe with an eye of loue requite her.

LEO. The sight whereof I thinke you had from me,
From *Claudio*, and the *Prince*, but what's your will?

BENED. Your answer sir is Enigmaticall,
2425 But for my will, my will is, your good will
May stand with ours, this day to be conioyn'd,
In the state of honourable marriage,
In which (good Frier) I shall desire your helpe.

LEON. My heart is with your liking.

2430 FRIER. And my helpe.

Enter Prince and Claudio, with attendants.

PRIN. Good morrow to this faire assembly.

LEO. Good morrow *Prince*, good morrow *Claudio*:
We heere attend you, are you yet determin'd,
2435 To day to marry with my brothers daughter?

CLAUD. Ile hold my minde were she an Ethiope.

LEO. Call her forth brother, heres the Frier ready.

PRIN. Good morrow *Benedicke*, why what's the matter?

That you haue such a Februarie face,

2440 So full of frost, of storme, and clowdinesse.

CLAUD. I thinke he thinkes vpon the sauage bull:

Tush, feare not man, wee'll tip thy hornes with gold,

And all Europa shall reioyce at thee,

As once *Europa* did at lusty *Ioue*,

2445 When he would play the noble beast in loue.

BEN. Bull *Ioue* sir, had an amiable low,

And some such strange bull leapt your fathers Cow,

A got a Calfe in that same noble feat,

Much like to you, for you haue iust his bleat.

2450 *Enter brother, Hero, Beatrice, Margaret, Vrsula.*

CLA. For this I owe you: here comes other recknings.

Which is the Lady I must seize vpon?

LEO. This same is she, and I doe giue you her.

CLA. Why then she's mine, sweet let me see your face.

2455 LEON. No that you shal not, till you take her hand,

Before this Frier, and sweare to marry her.

CLAU. Giue me your hand before this holy Frier,

I am your husband if you like of me.

HERO. And when I liu'd I was your other wife,

2460 And when you lou'd, you were my other husband.

CLAU. Another *Hero*?

HERO. Nothing certainer.

One *Hero* died, but I doe liue,

2465 And surely as I liue, I am a maid.

PRIN. The former *Hero*, *Hero* that is dead.

LEON. Shee died my Lord, but whiles her slander liu'd.

FRIER. All this amazement can I qualifie,

When after that the holy rites are ended,

2470 Ile tell you largely of faire *Heroes* death:

Meane time let wonder seeme familiar,

And to the chappell let vs presently.

BEN. Soft and faire Frier, which is *Beatrice*?

BEAT. I answer to that name, what is your will?

2475 BENE. Doe not you loue me?

BEAT. Why no, no more then reason.

BENE. Why then your Vncle, and the Prince, & *Claudio*, haue
beene deceiued, they swore you did.

BEAT. Doe not you loue mee?

2480 BENE. Troth no, no more then reason.

BEAT. Why then my Cosin *Margaret* and *Vrsula*
Are much deceiu'd, for they did sweare you did.

BENE. They swore you were almost sicke for me.

BEAT. They swore you were wellnye dead for me.

2485 BENE. 'Tis no matter, then you doe not loue me?

BEAT. No truly, but in friendly recompence.

LEON. Come Cosin, I am sure you loue the gentleman.

CLAU. And Ile be sworne vpon't, that he loues her,
For heres a paper written in his hand,

2490 A halting sonnet of his owne pure braine,
Fashioned to *Beatrice*.

HERO. And heeres another,
Writ in my cosins hand, stolne from her pocket,
Containing her affection vnto *Benedicke*.

2495 BENE. A miracle, here's our owne hands against our hearts:
come I will haue thee, but by this light I take thee for pittie.

BEAT. I would not denie you, but by this good day, I yeeld vpon
great perswasion, & partly to saue your life, for I was told, you
were in a consumption.

2500 LEON. Peace I will stop your mouth.

PRIN. How dost thou *Benedicke* the married man?

BENE. Ile tell thee what Prince: a Colledge of witte^r crackers
cannot flout mee out of my humour, dost thou think I care for
a Satyre or an Epigram? no, if a man will be beaten with
2505 braines, a shall weare nothing handsome about him: in briefe,
since I do purpose to marry, I will thinke nothing to any
purpose that the world can say against it, and therefore neuer
flout at me, for I haue said against it: for man is a giddy thing,
and this is my conclusion: for thy part *Claudio*, I did thinke to
2510 haue beaten thee, but in that thou art like to be my kinsman,
liue vnbruised, and loue my cousin.

CLA. I had well hop'd yu wouldst haue denied *Beatrice*, ytI
might haue cudgel'd thee out of thy single life, to make thee a
double dealer, which out of question thou wilt be, if my
2515 Cousin do not looke exceeding narrowly to thee.

BENE. Come, come, we are friends, let's haue a dance ere we are married, that we may lighten our own hearts, and our wiues heeles.

LEON. Wee'll haue dancing afterward.

2520 BENE. First, of my word, therfore play musick. *Prince*, thou art sad, get thee a wife, get thee a wife, there is no staff more reuerend then one tipt with horn.

Enter. Mes.

MESSEN. My Lord, your brother Iohn is tane in flight,
And brought with armed men backe to *Messina*.

2525 BENE. Thinke not on him till to morrow, ile deuise thee braue punishments for him: strike vp Pipers. *Dance*.

FINIS.