

***MUCH ADO ABOUT YOU***

6-Person 35-minute *Much Ado About Nothing* for MUSE Machine

Character Tracking:

Actor 1: Benedick

Actor 2: Beatrice

Actor 3: Claudio

Actor 4: Hero/Borachio

Actor 5: Leonato/Don John

Actor 6: Don Pedro/Friar Francis

**SCENE I: Before LEONATO'S house. -The Heroes Introduced**

*NARRATION: BEATRICE, HERO, & LEONATO introduces BENEDICK, CLAUDIO, & DON PEDRO*

*Enter BENEDICK, CLAUDIO, and DON PEDRO*

**DON PEDRO**

I think this is your daughter.

**LEONATO**

Her mother hath many times told me so.

**BENEDICK**

Were you in doubt, sir, that you asked her?

**LEONATO**

Signior Benedick, no; for then were you a child.

**DON PEDRO**

Truly, the lady fathers herself. Be happy, lady; for you are like an honourable father.

**BENEDICK**

If Signior Leonato be her father, she would not have his head on her shoulders for all Messina, as like him as she is.

**BEATRICE**

I wonder that you will still be talking, Signior Benedick: nobody marks you.

**BENEDICK**

What, my dear Lady Disdain! are you yet living?

**BEATRICE**

Is it possible disdain should die while she hath such meet food to feed it as Signior Benedick? Courtesy itself must convert to disdain, if you come in her presence.

**BENEDICK**

Then is courtesy a turncoat. For I am loved of all ladies, this I gloat.

**BEATRICE**

A dear happiness to women: they would else have been troubled with a pernicious suitor. I thank God and my cold blood, I am of your humour for that: I had rather hear my dog bark at a crow than a man swear he loves me.

**BENEDICK**

God keep your ladyship still in that mind! so some gentleman or other shall 'scape a predestinate scratched face.

**BEATRICE**

Scratching could not make it worse, an 'twere such a face as yours were.

**BENEDICK**

Well, you are a rare parrot-teacher.

**BEATRICE**

A bird of my tongue is better than a beast of yours.

**BENEDICK**

I would my horse had the speed of your tongue, and so good a continuer. But keep your way, i' God's name; I have done.

**BEATRICE**

You always end with a jade's trick: I know you of old.

**DON PEDRO**

That is the sum of all, Leonato. Signior Claudio and Signior Benedick, my dear friend Leonato hath invited you all.

*Exeunt all except BENEDICK and CLAUDIO*

**CLAUDIO**

Benedick, didst thou note the daughter of Signior Leonato?

**BENEDICK**

I noted her not; but I looked on her.

**CLAUDIO**

Is she not a modest young lady?

**BENEDICK**

Why, i' faith, methinks she's too low for a high praise, I do not like her.

**CLAUDIO**

In mine eye she is the sweetest lady that ever I looked on.

**BENEDICK**

I can see yet without spectacles and I see no such matter: there's her cousin, and she were not possessed with a fury, exceeds her as much in beauty as the first of May doth the last of December. But I hope you have no intent to turn husband, have you?

**CLAUDIO**

I would scarce trust myself, though I had sworn the contrary, if Hero would be my wife.

**BENEDICK**

Is't come to this?

*Re-enter DON PEDRO*

**DON PEDRO**

What secret hath held you here, that you followed not?

**BENEDICK**

I would your grace would constrain me to tell.

**DON PEDRO**

I charge thee on thy allegiance.

**BENEDICK**

Mark you this, on my allegiance. He is in love. With who? now that is your grace's part. Mark how short his answer is;--With Hero, Leonato's short daughter.

**CLAUDIO**

If this were so, so were it uttered.

**DON PEDRO**

Amen, if you love her; for the lady is very well worthy.

**CLAUDIO**

That I love her, I feel.

**DON PEDRO**

That she is worthy, I know.

**BENEDICK**

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

**DON PEDRO**

Thou wast ever an obstinate heretic in the despite of beauty.

**CLAUDIO**

And never could maintain his part but in the force of his will.

**BENEDICK**

That a woman conceived me, I thank her; that she brought me up, I likewise give her most humble thanks: but all women shall pardon me. Because I will not do them the wrong to mistrust any, I will do myself the right to trust none; and the fine is, for the which I may go the finer, I will live a bachelor.

**DON PEDRO**

Good Signior Benedick, repair to Leonato's.

*Exeunt BENEDICK*

**DON PEDRO**

If thou dost love fair Hero, cherish it,  
And I will break with her and with her father,  
And thou shalt have her.

**CLAUDIO**

How sweetly you do minister to love,  
That know love's grief by his complexion!

**DON PEDRO**

I know we shall have revelling to-night:  
I will assume thy part in some disguise  
And tell fair Hero I am Claudio,  
And in her bosom I'll unclasp my heart  
And take her hearing prisoner with the force  
And strong encounter of my amorous tale:  
Then after to her father will I break;  
And the conclusion is, she shall be thine.  
In practise let us put it presently.

*Exeunt*

**SCENE II. A room in LEONATO's house. -The Villains Introduced**

*NARRATION: BORACHIO introduces DON JOHN*

*Enter DON JOHN and BORACHIO*

**DON JOHN**

I cannot hide what I am: I had rather be a canker in a hedge than a rose in his grace, it must not be denied but I am a plain-dealing villain. If I had my mouth, I would bite; if I had my liberty, I would do my liking: in the meantime let me be that I am and seek not to alter me.

**BORACHIO**

I can give you intelligence of an intended marriage.

**DON JOHN**

Will it serve for any model to build mischief on?

**BORACHIO**

Marry, it is your brother's right hand.

**DON JOHN**

Who? the most exquisite Claudio?

**BORACHIO**

Even he.

**DON JOHN**

And who, and who? which way looks he?

**BORACHIO**

Marry, on Hero, the daughter and heir of Leonato.

**DON JOHN**

That young start-up hath all the glory of my overthrow: if I can cross him any way, I bless myself every way.

*Exeunt*

**SCENE III. A hall in LEONATO'S house. -The Party**

*Enter BEATRICE, HERO, & LEONATO*

**LEONATO**

By my troth, niece, thou wilt never get thee a husband, if thou be so shrewd of thy tongue. In faith, you are too curst.

**BEATRICE**

Too curst is more than curst: I shall lessen God's sending that way; for it is said, 'God sends a curst cow short horns;' but to a cow too curst he sends none.

**LEONATO**

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

**BEATRICE**

Just, if he send me no husband; Lord, I could not endure a husband with a beard on his face: I had rather lie in the woollen.

**LEONATO**

You may light on a husband that hath no beard.

**BEATRICE**

What should I do with him? dress him in my apparel and make him my waiting-gentlewoman? He that hath a beard is more than a youth, and he that hath no beard is less than a man: and he that is more than a youth is not for me, and he that is less than a man, I am not for him.

**LEONATO**

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

**BEATRICE**

Not till God make men of some other metal than earth.

**LEONATO** *[to HERO]*

Daughter, remember what I told you: if the prince do solicit you in that kind, you know your answer.

**BEATRICE**

For, hear me, Hero:

Wooring, wedding, and repenting, is as a Scotch jig.

**LEONATO**

Cousin, you apprehend passing shrewdly.

**BEATRICE**

I have a good eye, uncle; I can see a church by daylight.

**LEONATO**

The revellers are entering.

*Enter BENEDICK, masked; CLAUDIO, masked; & DON PEDRO, masked as CLAUDIO*

**CLAUDIO [DON PEDRO]**

Lady, will you walk about with your friend?

**HERO**

So you walk softly and look sweetly and say nothing, I am yours for the walk; and especially when I walk away.

**CLAUDIO [DON PEDRO]**

With me in your company?

**HERO**

I may say so, when I please.

**CLAUDIO [DON PEDRO]**

And when please you to say so?

**HERO**

When I like your favour.

**CLAUDIO [DON PEDRO]**

Speak low, if you speak love.

*Drawing her aside*

**BEATRICE**

Will you not tell me who told you so?

**BENEDICK**

No, you shall pardon me.

**BEATRICE**

Nor will you not tell me who you are?

**BENEDICK**

Not now.



**BEATRICE**

That I was disdainful --well this was Signior Benedick that said so.

**BENEDICK**

What's he?

**BEATRICE**

Why, he is the prince's jester: a very dull fool; his only gift is in devising impossible slanders: none but libertines delight in him; and the commendation is not in his wit, but in his villainy; for he both pleases men and angers them, and then they laugh at him and beat him.

**BENEDICK**

When I know the gentleman, I'll tell him what you say.

**BEATRICE**

Do, do:

*Music*

We must follow the leaders.

*Dance*

*Exeunt all except DON JOHN, BORACHIO, and CLAUDIO, masked*

**DON JOHN**

Are not you Signior Benedick?

**CLAUDIO**

You know me well; I am he.

**DON JOHN**

Signior, you are very near my brother in his love: he is enamoured on Hero; I pray you, dissuade him from her: she is no equal for his birth.

**CLAUDIO**

How know you he loves her?

**BORACHIO**

I heard him swear his affection.

And he swore he would marry her to-night.

**DON JOHN**

Come, let us to the banquet.

*Exeunt DON JOHN and BORACHIO*

**CLAUDIO**

Thus answer I in the name of Benedick,

But hear these ill news with the ears of Claudio.

'Tis certain so; the prince wooes for himself.

This is an accident of hourly proof,

Which I mistrusted not. Farewell, therefore, Hero!

*Re-enter BENEDICK*

**BENEDICK**

Count Claudio?

**CLAUDIO**

Yea, the same.

**BENEDICK**

Come, will you go with me?

**CLAUDIO**

Whither?

**BENEDICK**

About your own business, county, for the prince hath got your Hero.

**CLAUDIO**

I wish him joy of her.

*Exeunt CLAUDIO*

**BENEDICK**

Alas, poor hurt fowl! Now will he creep into sedges. But that my Lady Beatrice should know me, and not know me! The prince's fool! Ha?

*Re-enter DON PEDRO*

**DON PEDRO**

Now, signior, where's Claudio?

**BENEDICK**

My lord, I found him here as melancholy as a lodge in a warren: I told him, and I think I told him true, that your grace had got the good will of Hero.

**DON PEDRO**

The Lady Beatrice hath a quarrel to you: the gentleman that danced with her told her she is much wronged by you.

**BENEDICK**

O, she misused me past the endurance of a block! She told me, not thinking I had been myself, that I was the prince's jester; huddling jest upon jest. She speaks poniards, and every word stabs: I would not marry her. Come, talk not of her.

**DON PEDRO**

Look, here she comes.

*Enter BEATRICE, CLAUDIO, HERO, & LEONATO*

**BENEDICK**

O God, sir, here's a dish I love not: I cannot endure my Lady Tongue.

*Exit BENEDICK*

**DON PEDRO**

Come, lady, come; you have lost the heart of Signior Benedick.

**BEATRICE**

Indeed, my lord, he lent it me awhile; and I gave him use for it, a double heart for his single one: marry, once before he won it of me with false dice, therefore your grace may well say I have lost it.

**DON PEDRO**

You have put him down, lady, you have put him down.

**BEATRICE**

So I would not he should do me, my lord, lest I should prove the mother of fools. I have brought Count Claudio, whom you sent me to seek.

**DON PEDRO**

Why, how now, count! wherefore are you sad?

**CLAUDIO**

Not sad, my lord.

**DON PEDRO**

How then? sick?

**CLAUDIO**

Neither, my lord.

**BEATRICE**

The count is neither sad, nor sick, nor merry, nor well; but civil count, civil as an orange, and something of that jealous complexion.

**DON PEDRO**

Here, Claudio, I have wooed in thy name, and fair Hero is won: I have broke with her father, and his good will obtained: name the day of marriage, and God give thee joy!

**LEONATO**

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

**BEATRICE**

Speak, count, 'tis your cue.

**CLAUDIO**

Silence is the perfectest herald of joy: I were but little happy, if I could say how much. Lady, as you are mine, I am yours: I give away myself for you and dote upon the exchange.

**BEATRICE**

Speak, cousin; or, if you cannot, stop his mouth with a kiss, and let not him speak neither.

**LEONATO**

Niece, will you look to those things I told you of?

**BEATRICE**

I cry you mercy, uncle. By your grace's pardon.

*Exeunt BEATRICE*

**DON PEDRO**

By my troth, a pleasant-spirited lady.

**LEONATO**

There's little of the melancholy element in her, my lord.

**DON PEDRO**

She were an excellent wife for Benedict.

**LEONATO**

O Lord, my lord, if they were but a week married, they would talk themselves mad.

**DON PEDRO**

County Claudio, when mean you to go to church?

**CLAUDIO**

To-morrow, my lord: time goes on crutches till love have all his rites.

**LEONATO**

Not till Monday, my dear son.

**DON PEDRO**

I warrant thee, Claudio, the time shall not go dully by us. I will in the interim undertake one of Hercules' labours; which is, to bring Signior Benedick and the Lady Beatrice into a mountain of affection the one with the other. Go in with me, and I will tell you my drift.

*Exeunt*

**SCENE IV. *The same.* -The Evil Plot**

*Enter DON JOHN and BORACHIO*

**DON JOHN**

It is so; the Count Claudio shall marry the daughter of Leonato.

**BORACHIO**

Yea, my lord; but I can cross it.

**DON JOHN**

How canst thou cross this marriage?

**BORACHIO**

Not honestly, my lord; but so covertly that no dishonesty shall appear in me.

**DON JOHN**

Show me briefly how.

**BORACHIO**

I think I told your lordship a year since, how much I am in the favour of Margaret, the waiting gentlewoman to Hero.

**DON JOHN**

I remember.

**BORACHIO**

Go, then; find me a meet hour to draw Don Pedro and the Count Claudio alone: tell them that you know that Hero loves me. They will scarcely believe this without trial: offer them instances; which shall bear no less likelihood than to see me at her chamber-window, hear me call Margaret Hero, hear Margaret term me Claudio; and bring them to see this the very night before the intended wedding,--for in the meantime I will so fashion the matter that Hero shall be absent,--and there shall appear such seeming truth of Hero's disloyalty that jealousy shall be called assurance and all the preparation overthrown.

**DON JOHN**

Be cunning in the working this, and thy fee is a thousand ducats.

**BORACHIO**

Be you constant in the accusation, and my cunning shall not shame me.

**DON JOHN**

I will presently go learn their day of marriage.

*Exeunt*

**SCENE V. LEONATO'S orchard. -The Tricking of Benedick**

*Enter BENEDICK*

**BENEDICK**

I do much wonder that one man, seeing how much another man is a fool when he dedicates his behaviors to love, will, after he hath laughed at such shallow follies in others, become the argument of his own scorn by falling in love: and such a man is Claudio. May I be so converted and see with these eyes? I cannot tell; I think not: I will not be sworn, he shall never make me such a fool. Ha! the prince and Monsieur Love! I will hide me.

*Withdraws*

*Enter DON PEDRO, CLAUDIO, and LEONATO*

**DON PEDRO**

See you where Benedick hath hid himself?

**CLAUDIO**

O, very well, my lord.

**DON PEDRO**

Come hither, Leonato. What was it you told me of to-day, that your niece Beatrice was in love with Signior Benedick?

**CLAUDIO**

O, ay: I did never think that lady would have loved any man.

**LEONATO**

No, nor I neither; but most wonderful that she should so dote on Signior Benedick, whom she hath in all outward behaviors seemed ever to abhor.

**BENEDICK**

Is't possible?

**LEONATO**

By my troth, my lord, I cannot tell what to think of it but that she loves him with an enraged affection.

**DON PEDRO**

Hath she made her affection known to Benedick?

**LEONATO**

No; and swears she never will: that's her torment.

**DON PEDRO**

It were good that Benedick knew of it by some other, if she will not discover it.

**CLAUDIO**

Hero thinks surely she will die; for she says she will die, if he love her not.

**DON PEDRO**

She doth well: if she should make tender of her love, 'tis very possible he'll scorn it; for the man, as you know all, hath a contemptible spirit. I love Benedick well; and I could wish he would modestly examine himself, to see how much he is unworthy so good a lady.

**LEONATO**

My lord, will you walk? dinner is ready.

**CLAUDIO**

If he do not dote on her upon this, I will never trust my expectation.

**DON PEDRO**

Let there be the same net spread for her; and that must you and your daughter carry. Let us send her to call him in to dinner.

*Exeunt CLAUDIO, DON PEDRO, & LEONATO*

**BENEDICK** *[Coming forward]*

This can be no trick: the conference was sadly borne. They have the truth of this from Hero. They seem to pity the lady: it seems her affections have their full bent. Love me! why, it must be requited. When I said I would die a bachelor, I did not think I should live till I were married. Here comes Beatrice. By this day! she's a fair lady: I do spy some marks of love in her.

*Enter BEATRICE*

**BEATRICE**

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

**BENEDICK**

Fair Beatrice, I thank you for your pains.

**BEATRICE**

I took no more pains for those thanks than you take pains to thank me: if it had been painful, I would not have come.

**BENEDICK**

You take pleasure then in the message?



**BEATRICE**

Yea, just so much as you may take upon a knife's point. You have no stomach, signior: fare you well.

*Exeunt BEATRICE*

**BENEDICK**

Ha! 'Against my will I am sent to bid you come in to dinner;' there's a double meaning in that! If I do not take pity of her, I am a villain; if I do not love her, I am a fool.

*Exeunt BENEDICK*

**SCENE VI. LEONATO'S garden. -The Tricking of Beatrice**

*Enter HERO and LEONATO*

**LEONATO**

Now, daughter, when Beatrice doth come,  
As we do trace this alley up and down,  
Our talk must only be of Benedick

*Enter BEATRICE, behind*

**HERO**

No, truly, father, she is too disdainful;

**LEONATO**

But are you sure  
That Benedick loves Beatrice so entirely?

**HERO**

So says the prince and my new-trothed lord.

**LEONATO**

And did they bid you tell her of it, madam?

**HERO**

They did entreat me to acquaint her of it;  
But I persuaded them, if they loved Benedick,  
To wish him wrestle with affection,  
And never to let Beatrice know of it.

**LEONATO**

Why did you so? Doth not the gentleman  
 Deserve as full as fortunate a bed  
 As ever Beatrice shall couch upon?

**HERO**

O god of love! I know he doth deserve  
 As much as may be yielded to a man:  
 But Nature never framed a woman's heart  
 Of prouder stuff than that of Beatrice;  
 And therefore certainly it were not good  
 She knew his love, lest she make sport at it.  
 Therefore let Benedick, like cover'd fire,  
 Consume away in sighs, waste inwardly:  
 It were a better death than die with mocks.

**LEONATO**

Yet tell her of it: hear what she will say.

**HERO**

No; rather I will go to Benedick  
 And counsel him to fight against his passion.

**LEONATO**

O, do not do your cousin such a wrong.  
 She cannot be so much without true judgment—  
 Having so swift and excellent a wit  
 As she is prized to have—as to refuse  
 So rare a gentleman as Signior Benedick.

**HERO**

He is the only man of Italy.  
 Always excepted my dear Claudio.

**LEONATO**

We have caught her.

**HERO**

If it proves so, then loving goes by haps:

Some Cupid kills with arrows, some with traps.

*Exeunt HERO and LEONATO*

**BEATRICE** [*Coming forward*]

What fire is in mine ears? Can this be true?

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

Contempt, farewell! and maiden pride, adieu!

And, Benedick, love on; I will requite thee,

Taming my wild heart to thy loving hand:

If thou dost love, my kindness shall incite thee

To bind our loves up in a holy band;

For others say thou dost deserve, and I

Believe it better than reportingly.

*Exeunt*

**SCENE VII. A room in LEONATO'S house. -The Tricking of CLAUDIO and DON PEDRO**

*NARRATION: CLAUDIO and DON PEDRO confirm BENEDICK and BEATRICE are tricked*

*Enter CLAUDIO, DON PEDRO, & DON JOHN*

**DON JOHN**

My lord and brother, God save you!

*[to CLAUDIO]* Means your lordship to be married to-morrow?

**DON PEDRO**

You know he does.

**DON JOHN**

I know not that, when he knows what I know.

**DON PEDRO**

If there be any impediment, I pray you discover it.

**DON JOHN**

The lady is disloyal.

**CLAUDIO**

Who, Hero?

**DON JOHN**

Even she; Leonato's Hero, your Hero, every man's Hero:

**CLAUDIO**

Disloyal?

**DON JOHN**

Wonder not till further warrant: go but with me to-night, you shall see her chamber-window entered, even the night before her wedding-day.

**CLAUDIO**

O day untowardly turned! O mischief strangely thwarting!

*Exeunt*

*Enter BORACHIO*

**BORACHIO**

I have earned of Don John a thousand ducats, by my villany, which did confirm any slander that Don John had made, away went Claudio enraged; swore he would meet her, as he was appointed, next morning at the temple, and there, before the whole congregation, shame her with what he saw o'er night and send her home again without a husband.

*Exeunt*

**SCENE VIII. A church. -The First Wedding**

*Enter FRIAR, BEATRICE, BENEDICK, HERO, CLAUDIO, & LEONATO*

**FRIAR FRANCIS**

You come hither, my lord, to marry this lady.

**CLAUDIO**

No.

**LEONATO**

To be married to her: friar, you come to marry her.

**FRIAR FRANCIS**

Lady, you come hither to be married to this count.

**HERO**

I do.

**FRIAR FRANCIS**

If either of you know any inward impediment why you should not be conjoined, charge you, on your souls, to utter it.

**CLAUDIO**

Know you any, Hero?

**HERO**

None, my lord.

**FRIAR FRANCIS**

Know you any, count?

**LEONATO**

I dare make his answer, none.

**CLAUDIO**

Stand thee by, friar. Father, by your leave:

Will you with free and unconstrained soul

Give me this maid, your daughter?

**LEONATO**

As freely, son, as God did give her me.

**CLAUDIO**

There, Leonato, take her back again:

Behold how like a maid she blushes here!

But she is none:

She knows the heat of a luxurious bed;

Her blush is guiltiness, not modesty.

**LEONATO**

What do you mean, my lord?

**CLAUDIO**

Not to be married,  
Not to knit my soul to an approved wanton.

**HERO**

Is my lord well, that he doth speak so wide?

**BENEDICK**

This looks not like a nuptial.

**HERO**

O, God defend me! how am I beset!  
What kind of catechising call you this?

**CLAUDIO**

To make you answer truly to your name.

**HERO**

Is it not Hero? Who can blot that name  
With any just reproach?

**CLAUDIO**

Hero itself can blot out Hero's virtue.  
What man was he talk'd with you yesternight  
Out at your window betwixt twelve and one?  
Now, if you are a maid, answer to this.

**HERO**

I talk'd with no man at that hour, my lord.

**CLAUDIO**

Why, then are you no maiden. Leonato,  
I am sorry you must hear: upon mine honour,  
Did see her, hear her, at that hour last night  
Talk with a ruffian at her chamber-window  
Who hath indeed, most like a liberal villain,  
Confess'd the vile encounters they have had

A thousand times in secret.

*HERO swoons*

**BEATRICE**

Why, how now, cousin! wherefore sink you down?

**CLAUDIO**

These things, come thus to light,  
Smother her spirits up.

*Exeunt CLAUDIO*

**BENEDICK**

How doth the lady?

**BEATRICE**

Dead, I think. Help, uncle! Hero! why, Hero! Uncle! Signior Benedick! Friar!

**LEONATO**

O Fate! Take not away thy heavy hand.  
Death is the fairest cover for her shame.  
That may be wish'd for.

**BENEDICK**

I know not what to say.

**BEATRICE**

O my soul, my cousin is belied.

**FRIAR FRANCIS**

Hear me a little;  
Your daughter here Claudio left for dead:  
Let her awhile be secretly kept in,  
And publish it that she is dead indeed.

**LEONATO**

What shall become of this?

**FRIAR FRANCIS**

She dying, as it must be so maintain'd,  
Shall be lamented, pitied and excused  
Of every hearer: So will it fare with Claudio.  
Come, lady, die to live: this wedding-day  
Perhaps is but prolong'd: have patience and endure.

*Exeunt all but BENEDICK and BEATRICE*

**BENEDICK**

Lady Beatrice, have you wept all this while?

**BEATRICE**

Yea, and I will weep a while longer.

**BENEDICK**

I will not desire that.

**BEATRICE**

You have no reason; I do it freely.

**BENEDICK**

Surely I do believe your fair cousin is wronged.

**BEATRICE**

Ah, how much might the man deserve of me that would right her!

**BENEDICK**

Is there any way to show such friendship?

**BEATRICE**

A very even way, but no such friend.

**BENEDICK**

May a man do it?

**BEATRICE**

It is a man's office, but not yours.

**BENEDICK**

I do love nothing in the world so well as you: is not that strange?



**BEATRICE**

As strange as the thing I know not. It were as possible for me to say I loved nothing so well as you: but believe me not; and yet I lie not; I confess nothing, nor I deny nothing. I am sorry for my cousin.

**BENEDICK**

By my sword, Beatrice, thou lovest me.

**BEATRICE**

Do not swear, and eat it.

**BENEDICK**

I will swear by it that you love me; and I will make him eat it that says I love not you.

**BEATRICE**

Will you not eat your word?

**BENEDICK**

With no sauce that can be devised to it. I protest I love thee.

**BEATRICE**

Why, then, God forgive me!

**BENEDICK**

What offence, sweet Beatrice?

**BEATRICE**

You have stayed me in a happy hour: I was about to protest I loved you.

**BENEDICK**

And do it with all thy heart.

**BEATRICE**

I love you with so much of my heart that none is left to protest.

**BENEDICK**

Come, bid me do any thing for thee.

**BEATRICE**

Kill Claudio.

*Exeunt*

**SCENE IX. Before LEONATO'S house. -After The First Wedding**

*Enter CLAUDIO and DON PEDRO, meeting BENEDICK*

**BENEDICK**

Good day, my lord. I came to seek you both.

**CLAUDIO**

We have been up and down to seek thee; for we are high-proof melancholy and would fain have it beaten away. Wilt thou use thy wit?

**BENEDICK**

It is in my scabbard: shall I draw it?

**CLAUDIO**

God bless me from a challenge!

**BENEDICK**

You are a villain; I jest not: I will make it good how you dare, with what you dare, and when you dare. You have killed a sweet lady, and her death shall fall heavy on you. Let me hear from you.

**CLAUDIO**

Well, I will meet you, so I may have good cheer.

**BENEDICK**

Fare you well, boy: you know my mind. My lord, for your many courtesies I thank you: I must discontinue your company: your brother Don John is fled from Messina: you have among you killed a sweet and innocent lady.

*Exeunt BENEDICK*

**DON PEDRO**

He is in earnest.

**CLAUDIO**

In most profound earnest.

*Enter BORACHIO*

**DON PEDRO**

How now? My brother's man?

**BORACHIO**

Sweet prince: do you hear me, and let this count kill me. I have deceived even your very eyes: what your wisdoms could not discover, this shallow fool hath brought to light: Don John your brother incensed me to slander the Lady Hero. You were brought into the orchard and saw me court Margaret in Hero's garments. The lady is dead upon mine and my master's false accusation; and, briefly, I desire nothing but the reward of a villain.

**DON PEDRO**

But did my brother set thee on to this?

**BORACHIO**

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

**DON PEDRO**

He is composed and framed of treachery:

And fled he is upon this villany.

**CLAUDIO**

Sweet Hero! now thy image doth appear

In the rare semblance that I loved it first.

*Enter LEONATO*

**LEONATO**

Which is the villain?

**BORACHIO**

If you would know your wronger, look on me.

**CLAUDIO**

I know not how to pray your patience;

Yet I must speak. Choose your revenge yourself;

Impose me to what penance your invention

Can lay upon my sin.

**LEONATO**

Since you could not be my son-in-law,

Be yet my nephew: my brother hath a daughter,

Almost the copy of my child that's dead,  
 And she alone is heir to both of us:  
 Give her the right you should have given her cousin,  
 And so dies my revenge.

**CLAUDIO**

I do embrace your offer.

**LEONATO**

To-morrow then I will expect your coming.

**CLAUDIO**

To-night I'll mourn with Hero.

*Exeunt, severally*

**SCENE X. LEONATO'S garden. -The Wooing**

*Enter BEATRICE and BENEDICK*

**BENEDICK**

Sweet Beatrice, wouldst thou come when I called thee?

**BEATRICE**

Yea, signior, and depart when you bid me.

**BENEDICK**

O, stay but till then!

**BEATRICE**

'Then' is spoken; fare you well now: and yet, ere I go, let me go with that I came; which is, with knowing what hath passed between you and Claudio.

**BENEDICK**

I must tell thee plainly, Claudio undergoes my challenge; and either I must shortly hear from him, or I will subscribe him a coward. And now tell me, how doth your cousin?

**BEATRICE**

Very ill.

**BENEDICK**

And how do you?

**BEATRICE**

Very ill too.

**BENEDICK**

Serve God, love me and mend.

*Enter LEONATO*

**LEONATO**

Madam, you must come. It is proved Hero hath been falsely accused, the prince and Claudio mightily abused; and Don John is the author of all, who is fed and gone. Will you come presently?

**BEATRICE**

Will you go hear this news, signior?

**BENEDICK**

I will live in thy heart, die in thy lap, and be buried in thy eyes; and moreover I will go with thee and thy uncle.

*Exeunt*

**SCENE XI. A room in LEONATO'S house. -The Second Wedding**

*Enter BENEDICK, CLAUDIO, DON PEDRO, & LEONATO*

**LEONATO**

Good morrow, prince; good morrow, Claudio:

We here attend you. Call her forth.

*Enter BEATRICE and HERO, masked*

**CLAUDIO**

Give me your hand:

I am your husband, if you like of me.

**HERO**

And when I lived, I was your other wife:

*Unmasking*

And when you loved, you were my other husband.

**CLAUDIO**

Hero!

**BENEDICK**

Soft and fair, uncle. Where is Beatrice?

**BEATRICE** *[entering]*

I answer to that name. What is your will?

**BENEDICK**

Do not you love me?

**BEATRICE**

Why, no; no more than reason.

**BENEDICK**

Why, then your uncle and the prince and Claudio  
Have been deceived; they swore you did.

**BEATRICE**

Do not you love me?

**BENEDICK**

Troth, no; no more than reason.

**BEATRICE**

Why, then my cousin and uncle  
Are much deceived; for they did swear you did.

**BENEDICK**

They swore that you were almost sick for me.

**BEATRICE**

They swore that you were well-nigh dead for me.

**BENEDICK**

'Tis no such matter. Then you do not love me?

**BEATRICE**

No, truly, but in friendly recompense.

**LEONATO**

Come, cousin, I am sure you love the gentleman.

**CLAUDIO**

And I'll be sworn upon't that he loves her;  
For here's a paper written in his hand,  
A halting sonnet of his own pure brain,  
Fashion'd to Beatrice.

**HERO**

And here's another  
Writ in my cousin's hand, stolen from her pocket,  
Containing her affection unto Benedick.

**BENEDICK**

A miracle! here's our own hands against our hearts. Come, I will have thee; but, by this light, I take thee for pity.

**BEATRICE**

I would not deny you; but, by this good day, I yield upon great persuasion; and partly to save your life, for I was told you were in a consumption.

**BENEDICK**

Peace! I will stop your mouth.

**DON PEDRO**

How dost thou, Benedick, the taken man?

**BENEDICK**

I'll tell thee what, prince; a college of wit-crackers cannot flout me out of my humour. For man is a giddy thing, and this is my conclusion. Let's have a dance ere we are merry: therefore play, music.

*Dance*

*Exeunt*

