

SCENE I. Before LEONATO'S house.

Enter LEONATO, HERO, and BEATRICE, with First Watch

LEONATO

I learn in this letter that Don Pedro of Arragon comes this night to Messina.

FIRST WATCH

He is very near by this: he was not three leagues off when I left him.

BEATRICE

I pray you, is Signior Benedick returned from the wars or no?

FIRST WATCH

O, he's returned; and as pleasant as ever he was. He hath done good service, lady, in these wars. And a good soldier too, lady.

BEATRICE

And a good soldier to a lady: but what is he to a lord?

FIRST WATCH

A lord to a lord, a man to a man; stuffed with all honourable virtues.

BEATRICE

It is so, indeed; he is no less than a stuffed man: but for the stuffing,--well, we are all mortal.

LEONATO

You must not, sir, mistake my niece. There is a kind of merry war betwixt Signior Benedick and her: they never meet but there's a skirmish of wit between them.

BEATRICE

Alas! he gets nothing by that. In our last conflict four of his five wits went halting off, and now is the whole man governed with one: so that if he have wit enough to keep himself warm, let him bear it for a difference between himself and his horse. Who is his companion now? He hath every month a new sworn brother. Is there no young squarer now that will make a voyage with him to the devil?

FIRST WATCH

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

BEATRICE

O Lord, he will hang upon him like a disease: he is sooner caught than the pestilence, and the taker runs presently mad. God help the noble Claudio! if he have caught the Benedick, it will cost him a thousand pound ere a' be cured.

FIRST WATCH

I will hold friends with you, lady.

BEATRICE

Do, good friend.

LEONATO

You will never run mad, niece.

BEATRICE

No, not till a hot January.

FIRST WATCH

Don Pedro is approached.

Enter DON PEDRO, DON JOHN, CLAUDIO, BENEDICK

DON PEDRO

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

LEONATO

Never came trouble to my house in the likeness of your grace: for trouble being gone, comfort should remain; but when you depart from me, sorrow abides and happiness takes his leave.

DON PEDRO

You embrace your charge too willingly. 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

You have it full, Benedick: we may guess by this what you are, being a man. 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. But it is certain I am loved of all ladies, only you excepted: and I would I could find in my heart that I had not a hard heart; for, truly, I love none.

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. I tell him we shall stay here at the least a month; and he heartily prays some occasion may detain us longer. I dare swear he is no hypocrite, but prays from his heart.

LEONATO

If you swear, my lord, you shall not be forsworn.

To DON JOHN

Let me bid you welcome, my lord: being reconciled to the prince your brother, I owe you all duty.

DON JOHN

I thank you: I am not of many words, but I thank you.

LEONATO

Please it your grace lead on?

DON PEDRO

Your hand, Leonato; we will go together.

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

Do you question me, as an honest man should do, for

my simple true judgment; or would you have me speak after my custom, as being a professed tyrant to their sex?

CLAUDIO

No; I pray thee speak in sober judgment.

BENEDICK

Why, i' faith, methinks she's too low for a high praise, too brown for a fair praise and too little for a great praise: only this commendation I can afford her, that were she other than she is, she were unhandsome; and being no other but as she is, I do not like her.

CLAUDIO

Thou thinkest I am in sport: I pray thee tell me truly how thou likest her.

BENEDICK

Would you buy her, that you inquire after her?

CLAUDIO

Can the world buy such a jewel?

BENEDICK

Yea, and a case to put it into.

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, an 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? In faith, hath not the world one man but he will wear his cap with suspicion? Shall I never see a bachelor of three-score again? Go to, i' faith; an thou wilt needs thrust thy neck into a yoke, wear the print of it and sigh away Sundays. Look Don Pedro is returned to seek you.

Re-enter DON PEDRO

DON PEDRO

What secret hath held you here, that you followed not to Leonato's?

BENEDICK

I would your grace would constrain me to tell.

DON PEDRO

I charge thee on thy allegiance.

BENEDICK

You hear, Count Claudio: I can be secret as a dumb man; I would have you think so; but, on my

allegiance, 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.

BENEDICK

Like the old tale, my lord: 'it is not so, nor 'twas not so, but, indeed, God forbid it should be so.'

CLAUDIO

If my passion change not shortly, God forbid it should be otherwise.

DON PEDRO

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

CLAUDIO

You speak this to fetch me in, my lord.

DON PEDRO

By my troth, I speak my thought.

CLAUDIO

And, in faith, my lord, I spoke mine.

BENEDICK

And, by my two faiths and troths, my lord, I spoke mine.

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 that I will hang my bugle in an invisible baldrick, 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

I shall see thee, ere I die, look pale with love.

BENEDICK

With anger, with sickness, or with hunger, my lord,

not with love: prove that ever I lose more blood with love than I will get again with drinking, pick out mine eyes with a ballad-maker's pen and hang me up at the door of a brothel-house for the sign of blind Cupid.

DON PEDRO

Well, you temporize with the hours. In the meantime, good Signior Benedick, repair to Leonato's: commend me to him and tell him I will not fail him at supper; for indeed he hath made great preparation.

CLAUDIO

Hath Leonato any son, my lord?

DON PEDRO

No child but Hero; she's his only heir. Dost thou affect her, Claudio?

CLAUDIO

O, my lord,
When you went onward on this ended action,
I look'd upon her with a soldier's eye,
That liked, but had a rougher task in hand
Than to drive liking to the name of love:
But now I am return'd and that war-thoughts
Have left their places vacant, in their rooms
Come thronging soft and delicate desires,
All prompting me how fair young Hero is,
Saying, I liked her ere I went to wars.

DON PEDRO

Thou wilt be like a lover presently
And tire the hearer with a book of words.
If thou dost love fair Hero, cherish it,
And I will fit thee with the remedy.
I know we shall have revelling to-night:
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 III. The same.

Enter DON JOHN and CONRADE

CONRADE

What the good-year, my lord! why are you thus out of measure sad?

DON JOHN

There is no measure in the occasion that breeds; therefore the sadness is without limit.

CONRADE

You should hear reason.

DON JOHN

And when I have heard it, what blessing brings it?

CONRADE

If not a present remedy, at least a patient sufferance.

DON JOHN

I wonder that thou, being, as thou sayest thou art, born under Saturn, goest about to apply a moral medicine to a mortifying mischief. I cannot hide what I am: I must be sad when I have cause and smile at no man's jests, eat when I have stomach and wait for no man's leisure, sleep when I am drowsy and tend on no man's business, laugh when I am merry and claw no man in his humour.

CONRADE

Yea, but you must not make the full show of this till you may do it without controlment. You have of late stood out against your brother, and he hath ta'en you newly into his grace; where it is impossible you should take true root but by the fair weather that you make yourself: it is needful that you frame the season for your own harvest.

DON JOHN

I had rather be a canker in a hedge than a rose in his grace, and it better fits my blood to be disdained of all than to fashion a carriage to rob love from any: in this, though I cannot be said to be a flattering honest man, it must not be denied but I am a plain-dealing villain. I am trusted with a muzzle and enfranchised with a clog; therefore I have decreed not to sing in my cage. 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.

CONRADE

Can you make no use of your discontent?

DON JOHN

I make all use of it, for I use it only.

Who comes here?

Enter BORACHIO

What news, Borachio?

BORACHIO

I came yonder from a great supper: the prince your brother is royally entertained by Leonato: and I can give you intelligence of an intended marriage.

DON JOHN

Will it serve for any model to build mischief on?

What is he for a fool that betroths himself to unquietness?

BORACHIO

Marry, it is your brother's right hand.

DON JOHN

Who? the most exquisite Claudio?

BORACHIO

Even he.

DON JOHN

A proper squire! And who, and who? which way looks he?

BORACHIO

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

DON JOHN

Come, come, let us thither: this may prove food to my displeasure. That young start-up hath all the glory of my overthrow: if I can cross him any way, I bless myself every way. You are both sure, and will assist me?

CONRADE

To the death, my lord.

BORACHIO

We'll wait upon your lordship.

Exeunt

ACT II**SCENE I. A hall in LEONATO'S house.**

Enter LEONATO, ANTONIO, HERO, BEATRICE, and others

LEONATO

Was not Count John here at supper?

ANTONIO

I saw him not.

BEATRICE

How tartly that gentleman looks! I never can see him but I am heart-burned an hour after.

HERO

He is of a very melancholy disposition.

BEATRICE

He were an excellent man that were made just in the midway between him and Benedick: the one is too like an image and says nothing, and the other too like my lady's eldest son, evermore tattling.

LEONATO

Then half Signior Benedick's tongue in Count John's mouth, and half Count John's melancholy in Signior Benedick's face,--

BEATRICE

With a good leg and a good foot, uncle, and money enough in his purse, such a man would win any woman in the world, if a' could get her good-will.

LEONATO

By my troth, niece, thou wilt never get thee a husband, if thou be so shrewd of thy tongue.

ANTONIO

In faith, she's too curst.

BEATRICE

Just, if God send me no husband; for the which blessing I am at him upon my knees every morning and evening. 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: therefore, I will even take sixpence in earnest of the bear-ward, and lead his apes into hell.

LEONATO

Well, then, go you into hell?

BEATRICE

No, but to the gate; and there will the devil meet me, like an old cuckold, with horns on his head, and say 'Get you to heaven, Beatrice, get you to heaven; here's no place for you maids:' so deliver I up my apes, and away to Saint Peter for the heavens; he shows me where the bachelors sit, and there live we as merry as the day is long.

ANTONIO

[To HERO] Well, niece, I trust you will be ruled by your father.

BEATRICE

Yes, faith; it is my cousin's duty to make curtsy and say 'Father, as it please you.' But yet for all that, cousin, let him be a handsome fellow, or else make another curtsy and say 'Father, as it please me.'

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. Would it not grieve a woman to be overmastered with a pierce of valiant dust? to make an account of her life to a clod of wayward marl? No, uncle, I'll none: Adam's sons are my brethren; and, truly, I hold it a sin to match in my kindred.

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, brother: make good room.

All put on their masks

Enter DON PEDRO, CLAUDIO, BENEDICK, DON JOHN, BORACHIO, MARGARET, and others, masked

HERO

Because you talk of wooing, I will sing; Since many a wooer doth commence his suit To her he thinks not worthy, yet he woos, Yet will he swear he loves.

Sigh no more, ladies, sigh no more,
Men were deceivers ever,
One foot in sea and one on shore,
To one thing constant never:
Then sigh not so, but let them go,
And be you blithe and bonny,
Converting all your sounds of woe
Into Hey nonny, nonny.
Sing no more ditties, sing no moe,
Of dumps so dull and heavy;
The fraud of men was ever so,
Since summer first was leafy:
Then sigh not so, & c.

CLAUDIO

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

With me in your company?

HERO

I may say so, when I please.

CLAUDIO

And when please you to say so?

HERO

When I like your favour

CLAUDIO

Speak low, if you speak love.

Drawing her aside

BORACHIO

Well, I would you did like me.

MARGARET

So would not I, for your own sake; for I have many ill-qualities.

BORACHIO

Which is one?

MARGARET

I say my prayers aloud.

BORACHIO

I love you the better: the hearers may cry, Amen.

MARGARET

God match me with a good dancer!

BORACHIO

Amen.

MARGARET

And God keep him out of my sight when the dance is done!

They dance out

BEATRICE

Will you not tell me who told you so?

BENEDICK

No, you shall pardon me.

BEATRICE

Well this was Signior Benedick that said so.

BENEDICK

What's he?

BEATRICE

I am sure you know him well enough.

BENEDICK

Not I, believe me.

BEATRICE

Did he never make you laugh?

BENEDICK

I pray you, what is he?

BEATRICE

Why, he is the prince's jester: a very dull fool; only his gift is in devising impossible slanders: none but libertines delight in him; and the commendation is not in his wit, but in his villany; for he both pleases 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 boarded me.

Exits.

BENEDICK

But that my Lady Beatrice should know me, and not know me! The prince's fool! Ha? It may be I go under that title because I am merry. Yea, but so I am apt to do myself wrong; I am not so reputed: it is the base, though bitter, disposition of Beatrice that puts the world into her person and so gives me out. Well, I'll be revenged as I may.

Re-enter DON PEDRO

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.

The band stops; Leonato has an announcement

LEONATO

Count, take of me my daughter, and with her my fortunes: his grace hath made the match, and an 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. Good Lord, for alliance! Thus goes every one to the world but I, and I am sunburnt; I may sit in a corner and cry heigh-ho for a husband!

DON PEDRO

Lady Beatrice, I will get you one.

BEATRICE

I would rather have one of your father's getting. Hath your grace ne'er a brother like you? Your father got excellent husbands, if a maid could come by them.

DON PEDRO

Will you have me, lady?

BEATRICE

No, my lord, unless I might have another for working-days: your grace is too costly to wear every day. But, I beseech your grace, pardon me: I was born to speak all mirth and no matter.

DON PEDRO

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

BEATRICE

No, sure, my lord, my mother cried; but then there was a star danced, and under that was I born.

Cousins, God give you joy!

Exit

DON PEDRO

She cannot endure to hear tell of a husband.

LEONATO

O, by no means: she mocks all her wooers out of suit.

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, which is hence a just
seven-night; and a time too brief, too, to have all
things answer my mind.

DON PEDRO

Come, you shake the head at so long a breathing:
but, 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. I would fain have
it a match, and I doubt not but to fashion it, if
you three will but minister such assistance as I
shall give you direction.

LEONATO

My lord, I am for you, though it cost me ten
nights' watchings.

CLAUDIO

And I, my lord.

DON PEDRO

And you too, gentle Hero?

HERO

I will do any modest office, my lord, to help my
cousin to a good husband.

DON PEDRO

And Benedick is not the unhopefullest husband that
I know. Thus far can I praise him; he is of a noble
strain, of approved valour and confirmed honesty. I
will teach you how to humour your cousin, that she
shall fall in love with Benedick; and I, with your
two helps, will so practise on Benedick that, in
despite of his quick wit and his queasy stomach, he
shall fall in love with Beatrice. If we can do this,
Cupid is no longer an archer: his glory shall be
ours, for we are the only love-gods. Go in with me,
and I will tell you my drift.

Exeunt

SCENE II. The same.

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.

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

I can, at any unseasonable instant of the night,
appoint her to look out at her lady's chamber window.

DON JOHN

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

BORACHIO

The poison of that lies in you to temper. Go you to
the prince your brother; spare not to tell him that
he hath wronged his honour in marrying the renowned
Claudio to a contaminated stale, such a one as Hero.

DON JOHN

Only to despise them, I will endeavour any thing.

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: bring them to see this the very night
before the intended wedding, and there shall appear
such seeming truth of Hero's disloyalty that jealousy
shall be called assurance and all the preparation
overthrown.

DON JOHN

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

Exeunt

SCENE III. LEONATO'S orchard.

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 failing 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, but love may transform me to an oyster; but
I'll take my oath on it, till he have made an oyster
of me, he shall never make me such a fool. One
woman is fair, yet I am well; another is wise, yet I am
well; another virtuous, yet I am well; but till all
graces be in one woman, one woman shall not come

in my grace. Rich she shall be, that's certain; wise, or I'll none; virtuous, or I'll never cheapen her; fair, or I'll never look on her; mild, or come not near me; noble, or not I for an angel; of good discourse, an excellent musician, and her hair shall be of what colour it please God. Ha! the prince and Monsieur Love! I will hide me in the arbour.

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

I did never think that lady would have loved any man.

DON PEDRO

May be she doth but counterfeit.

CLAUDIO

Faith, like enough.

LEONATO

O God, counterfeit! There was never counterfeit of passion came so near the life of passion as she discovers it.

DON PEDRO

How, how, pray you? You amaze me: I would have I thought her spirit had been invincible against all assaults of affection.

LEONATO

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

CLAUDIO

He hath ta'en the infection: hold it up.

DON PEDRO

Hath she made her affection known to Benedick?

LEONATO

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

CLAUDIO

'Tis true, indeed; so your daughter says: 'Shall I,' says she, 'that have so oft encountered him with scorn, write to him that I love him?'

LEONATO

This says she now when she is beginning to write to him; for she'll be up twenty times a night, and there will she sit in her smock till she have writ a sheet of paper: my daughter tells us all.

CLAUDIO

Now you talk of a sheet of paper, I remember a pretty jest your daughter told us of.

LEONATO

O, when she had writ it and was reading it over, she found Benedick and Beatrice between the sheet?

CLAUDIO

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

LEONATO

She doth indeed; my daughter says so: and the ecstasy hath so much overborne her that my daughter is sometime afeared she will do a desperate outrage to herself: it is very true.

DON PEDRO

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

CLAUDIO

To what end? He would make but a sport of it and torment the poor lady worse.

DON PEDRO

An he should, it were an alms to hang him. She's an excellent sweet lady; and, out of all suspicion, she is virtuous.

CLAUDIO

And she is exceeding wise.

DON PEDRO

In every thing but in loving Benedick.

LEONATO

O, my lord, wisdom and blood combating in so tender a body, we have ten proofs to one that blood hath the victory. I am sorry for her.

DON PEDRO

I pray you, tell Benedick of it, and hear what a' will say.

LEONATO

Were it good, think you?

CLAUDIO

Hero thinks surely she will die; for she says she will die, if he love her not, and she will die, ere she make her love known, and she will die, if he woo her, rather than she will bate one breath of her accustomed crossness.

CLAUDIO

Never tell him, my lord: let her wear it out with good counsel.

LEONATO

Nay, that's impossible: she may wear her heart out first.

DON PEDRO

Well, we will hear further of it by your daughter: let it cool the while. 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 us send her to call him in to dinner.

Exeunt DON PEDRO, CLAUDIO, and 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. I will be horribly in love with her. I may chance have some odd quirks and remnants of wit broken on me, because I have railed so long against marriage: but doth not the appetite alter? a man loves the meat in his youth that he cannot endure in his age. Shall quips and sentences and these paper bullets of the brain awe a man from the career of his humour? No, the world must be peopled. 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 and choke a daw withal. You have no stomach, signior: fare you well.

Exit

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. I will go get her picture.

Exit

ACT III**SCENE I. LEONATO'S garden.**

Enter HERO, MARGARET

HERO

Now, Margaret, when Beatrice doth come, My talk to thee must be how Benedick Is sick in love with Beatrice. Of this matter Is little Cupid's crafty arrow made, That only wounds by hearsay.

Enter BEATRICE, behind

MARGARET

The pleasant'st angling is to see the fish Cut with her golden oars the silver stream, And greedily devour the treacherous bait: So angle we for Beatrice.

HERO

Then go we near her, that her ear lose nothing Of the false sweet bait that we lay for it.

Approaching the bower

No, truly, she is too disdainful; I know her spirits are as coy and wild As haggerds of the rock.

MARGARET

But are you sure That Benedick loves Beatrice so entirely?

HERO

So says the prince and my new-trothed lord.

MARGARET

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.

MARGARET

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; Disdain and scorn ride sparkling in her eyes, Misprising what they look on, and her wit Values itself so highly that to her All matter else seems weak: she cannot love, Nor take no shape nor project of affection, She is so self-endear'd.

MARGARET

Sure, I think so;
And therefore certainly it were not good
She knew his love, lest she make sport at it.

HERO

Why, you speak truth. I never yet saw man,
How wise, how noble, young, how rarely featured,
But she would spell him backward: if fair-faced,
She would swear the gentleman should be her sister;
If black, why, Nature, drawing of an antique,
Made a foul blot; if tall, a lance ill-headed;
If low, an agate very vilely cut;
If speaking, why, a vane blown with all winds;
If silent, why, a block moved with none.
So turns she every man the wrong side out
And never gives to truth and virtue that
Which simpleness and merit purchaseth.

MARGARET

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.
And, truly, I'll devise some honest slanders
To stain my cousin with: one doth not know
How much an ill word may empoison liking.

MARGARET

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

Indeed, he hath an excellent good name.

MARGARET

His excellence did earn it, ere he had it.
When are you married, madam?

HERO

Why, every day, to-morrow. Come, go in:
I'll show thee some attires, and have thy counsel
Which is the best to furnish me to-morrow.

MARGARET

She's limed, I warrant you: we have caught her,
madam.

HERO

If it proves so, then loving goes by haps:
Some Cupid kills with arrows, some with traps.
Exeunt HERO and MARGARET

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!

No glory lives behind the back of such.
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.
Exit

SCENE II. A room in LEONATO'S house

Enter DON PEDRO, CLAUDIO, BENEDICK, and LEONATO

DON PEDRO

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

CLAUDIO

I'll bring you thither, my lord, if you'll vouchsafe me.

DON PEDRO

Nay, that would be as great a soil in the new gloss of your marriage as to show a child his new coat and forbid him to wear it. I will only be bold with Benedick for his company; for, from the crown of his head to the sole of his foot, he is all mirth: he hath twice or thrice cut Cupid's bow-string and the little hangman dare not shoot at him; he hath a heart as sound as a bell and his tongue is the clapper, for what his heart thinks his tongue speaks.

BENEDICK

Gallants, I am not as I have been.

LEONATO

So say I methinks you are sadder.

CLAUDIO

I hope he be in love.

DON PEDRO

Hang him, truant! there's no true drop of blood in him, to be truly touched with love: if he be sad, he wants money.

BENEDICK

Well, every one can master a grief but he that has it.

CLAUDIO

If he be not in love with some woman, there is no believing old signs: a' brushes his hat o' mornings; what should that bode?

LEONATO

Indeed, he looks younger than he did, by the loss of a beard.

DON PEDRO

Nay, a' rubs himself with civet: can you smell him out by that?

CLAUDIO

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

DON PEDRO

The greatest note of it is his melancholy.

CLAUDIO

And when was he went to wash his face?

DON PEDRO

Indeed, that tells a heavy tale for him: conclude, conclude he is in love.

CLAUDIO

Nay, but I know who loves him.

DON PEDRO

That would I know too: I warrant, one that knows him not.

CLAUDIO

Yes, and his ill conditions; and, in despite of all, dies for him.

DON PEDRO

She shall be buried with her face upwards.

BENEDICK

Old signior, walk aside with me: I have studied eight or nine wise words to speak to you, which these hobby-horses must not hear.

Exeunt BENEDICK and LEONATO

DON PEDRO

For my life, to break with him about Beatrice.

CLAUDIO

'Tis even so. Hero and Margaret have by this played their parts with Beatrice; and then the two bears will not bite one another when they meet.

Enter DON JOHN

DON JOHN

My lord and brother, God save you!

DON PEDRO

Good den, brother.

DON JOHN

If your leisure served, I would speak with you.

DON PEDRO

In private?

DON JOHN

If it please you: yet Count Claudio may hear; for what I would speak of concerns him.

DON PEDRO

What's the matter?

DON JOHN

[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.

CLAUDIO

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

DON JOHN

You may think I love you not: let that appear hereafter, and aim better at me by that I now will manifest. For my brother, I think he holds you well, and in dearness of heart hath help to effect your ensuing marriage;--surely suit ill spent and labour ill bestowed.

DON PEDRO

Why, what's the matter?

DON JOHN

I came hither to tell you; and, circumstances shortened, for she has been too long a talking of, the lady is disloyal.

CLAUDIO

Who, Hero?

DON PEDRO

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

CLAUDIO

Disloyal?

DON JOHN

The word is too good to paint out her wickedness; I could say she were worse: think you of a worse title, and I will fit her to it. 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: if you love her then, to-morrow wed her; but it would better fit your honour to change your mind.

CLAUDIO

May this be so?

DON PEDRO

I will not think it.

DON JOHN

If you dare not trust that you see, confess not that you know:

DON PEDRO

O day untowardly turned!

CLAUDIO

O mischief strangely thwarting!

DON JOHN

O plague right well prevented! so will you say when you have seen the sequel.

Exeunt

SCENE III. A street.

Enter DOGBERRY and VERGES with the Watch

DOGBERRY

Are you good men and true?

VERGES

Yea, or else it were pity but they should suffer salvation, body and soul.

DOGBERRY

Nay, that were a punishment too good for them, if they should have any allegiance in them, being chosen for the prince's watch.

VERGES

Well, give them their charge, neighbour Dogberry.

DOGBERRY

This is your charge: you shall comprehend all vagrom men; you are to bid any man stand, in the prince's name.

SECOND WATCHMAN

How if a' will not stand?

DOGBERRY

Why, then, take no note of him, but let him go; and presently call the rest of the watch together and thank God you are rid of a knave.

VERGES

If he will not stand when he is bidden, he is none of the prince's subjects.

DOGBERRY

True, and they are to meddle with none but the prince's subjects.

FIRST WATCHMAN

Well, sir.

DOGBERRY

If you meet a thief, you may suspect him, by virtue of your office, to be no true man; and, for such kind of men, the less you meddle or make with them, why the more is for your honesty.

SECOND WATCHMAN

If we know him to be a thief, shall we not lay hands on him?

DOGBERRY

Truly, by your office, you may; but I think they that touch pitch will be defiled: the most peaceable way for you, if you do take a thief, is to let him show himself what he is and steal out of your company.

VERGES

You have been always called a merciful man, partner.

DOGBERRY

Ha, ha, ha! Well, masters, good night: an there be any matter of weight chances, call up me: keep your fellows' counsels and your own; and good night. Come, neighbour.

FIRST WATCHMAN

Well, masters, we hear our charge: let us go sit here

upon the church-bench till two, and then all to bed.

DOGBERRY

One word more, honest neighbours. I pray you watch about Signior Leonato's door; for the wedding being there to-morrow, there is a great coil to-night.

Adieu: be vigitant, I beseech you.

Exeunt DOGBERRY and VERGES

Enter BORACHIO and CONRADE

BORACHIO

What Conrade!

FIRST WATCHMAN

[Aside] Peace! stir not.

BORACHIO

Conrade, I say!

CONRADE

Here, man; I am at thy elbow.

BORACHIO

Therefor know I have earned of Don John a thousand ducats

CONRADE

Is it possible that any villainy should be so dear?

BORACHIO

Thou shouldst rather ask if it were possible any villany should be so rich; for when rich villains have need of poor ones, poor ones may make what price they will.

FIRST WATCHMAN

[Aside] Some treason, masters: yet stand close.

CONRADE

I wonder at it.

BORACHIO

Didst thou not hear somebody?

CONRADE

No; 'twas the vane on the house.

BORACHIO

Not so, neither: but know that I have to-night wooed Margaret, the Lady Hero's gentlewoman, by the name of Hero: she leans me out at her mistress' chamber-window, bids me a thousand times good night,--I tell this tale vilely:--I should first tell thee how the prince, Claudio and my master, planted and placed and possessed by my master Don John, saw afar off in the orchard this amiable encounter.

CONRADE

And thought they Margaret was Hero?

BORACHIO

Two of them did, the prince and Claudio; but the devil my master knew she was Margaret; and partly by his oaths, which first possessed them, partly by the dark night, which did deceive them, but chiefly by my villainy, which did confirm any slander that

Don John had made.

FIRST WATCHMAN

We charge you, in the prince's name, stand!

SECOND WATCHMAN

Call up the right master constable. We have here recovered the most dangerous piece of lechery that ever was known in the commonwealth.

CONRADE

Come, we'll obey you.

Exeunt

SCENE IV. HERO's apartment.

Enter HERO, MARGARET

MARGARET

Troth, I think your other rabato were better.

HERO

No, pray thee, good Meg, I'll wear this.

MARGARET

By my troth, 's not so good; and I warrant your cousin will say so.

HERO

My cousin's a fool, and thou art another: I'll wear none but this.

MARGARET

I like the new tire within excellently, if the hair were a thought browner; and your gown's a most rare fashion, i' faith.

HERO

God give me joy to wear it! for my heart is exceeding heavy.

MARGARET

'Twill be heavier soon by the weight of a man.

HERO

Fie upon thee! art not ashamed?

MARGARET

Of what, lady? of speaking honourably? Ask my Lady Beatrice else; here she comes.

Enter BEATRICE

HERO

Good morrow, coz.

BEATRICE

'Tis almost five o'clock, cousin; tis time you were ready. By my troth, I am exceeding ill: heigh-ho!

HERO

These gloves the count sent me; they are an excellent perfume.

BEATRICE

I am stuffed, cousin; I cannot smell.

MARGARET

A maid, and stuffed! there's goodly catching of cold.

BEATRICE

O, God help me! God help me! how long have you professed apprehension?

MARGARET

Even since you left it. Doth not my wit become me rarely?

BEATRICE

It is not seen enough, you should wear it in your cap. By my troth, I am sick.

MARGARET

Get you some of this distilled Carduus Benedictus, and lay it to your heart: it is the only thing for a qualm.

BEATRICE

Benedictus! why Benedictus? you have some moral in this Benedictus.

MARGARET

Moral! no, by my troth, I have no moral meaning

Enter LEONATO

LEONATO

Withdraw: the prince, the count, Signior Benedick, Don John, and all the gallants of the town, are come to fetch you to church.

Exeunt

SCENE V. Another room in LEONATO'S house.

Enter LEONATO, with DOGBERRY and VERGES

LEONATO

What would you with me, honest neighbour?

DOGBERRY

Marry, sir, I would have some confidence with you that decerns you nearly.

LEONATO

Brief, I pray you; for you see it is a busy time with me.

DOGBERRY

Marry, this it is, sir.

VERGES

Yes, in truth it is, sir.

LEONATO

What is it, my good friends?

DOGBERRY

Goodman Verges, sir, speaks a little off the matter: an old man, sir, and his wits are not so blunt as, God help, I would desire they were; but, in faith, honest as the skin between his brows.

VERGES

Yes, I thank God I am as honest as any man living that is no honestest than I.

LEONATO

I would fain know what you have to say.

VERGES

Marry, sir, our watch to-night, excepting your worship's presence, ha' ta'en a couple of as arrant knaves as any in Messina.

DOGBERRY

A good old man, sir; he will be talking: as they say, when the age is in, the wit is out:

LEONATO

I must leave you.

DOGBERRY

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

LEONATO

Take their examination yourself and bring it me: I am now in great haste, as it may appear unto you.

DOGBERRY

It shall be suffigance.

LEONATO

Drink some wine ere you go: fare you well.

Enter Friar Francis

FRIAR FRANCIS

My lord, they stay for you to give your daughter to her husband.

LEONATO

I'll wait upon them: I am ready.

Exeunt LEONATO and Francis

Exeunt

ACT IV**SCENE I. A church.**

Enter DON PEDRO, DON JOHN, LEONATO, FRIAR FRANCIS, CLAUDIO, BENEDICK, HERO, BEATRICE, and Attendants

LEONATO

Come, Friar Francis, be brief; only to the plain form of marriage, and you shall recount their particular duties afterwards.

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

O, what men dare do! what men may do! what men daily

do, not knowing what they do!

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:

She's but the sign and semblance of her honour.

Behold how like a maid she blushes here!

O, what authority and show of truth

Can cunning sin cover itself withal!

Comes not that blood as modest evidence

To witness simple virtue? Would you not swear,

All you that see her, that she were a maid,

By these exterior shows? 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.

LEONATO

Dear my lord, if you, in your own proof,

Have vanquish'd the resistance of her youth,

And made defeat of her virginity,--

CLAUDIO

I know what you would say: if I have known her,

You will say she did embrace me as a husband,

And so extenuate the 'forehand sin:

No, Leonato,

I never tempted her with word too large;

But, as a brother to his sister, show'd

Bashful sincerity and comely love.

HERO

And seem'd I ever otherwise to you?

LEONATO

Sweet prince, why speak not you?

DON PEDRO

What should I speak?

I stand dishonour'd, that have gone about
To link my dear friend to a common stale.

LEONATO

Are these things spoken, or do I but dream?

DON JOHN

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

VERGES

This looks not like a nuptial.

CLAUDIO

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.

DON PEDRO

Why, then are you no maiden. Leonato,
I am sorry you must hear: upon mine honour,
Myself, my brother and this griev'd count
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.

DON JOHN

Fie, fie! they are not to be named, my lord,
Not to be spoke of;
There is not chastity enough in language
Without offence to utter them. Thus, pretty lady,
I am sorry for thy much misgovernment.

LEONATO

Hath no man's dagger here a point for me?
HERO swoons

BEATRICE

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

DON JOHN

Come, let us go. These things, come thus to light,
Smother her spirits up.
Exeunt DON PEDRO, DON JOHN, and 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.

BEATRICE

How now, cousin Hero!

FRIAR FRANCIS

Have comfort, lady.

LEONATO

Dost thou look up?

FRIAR FRANCIS

Yea, wherefore should she not?

LEONATO

Wherefore! Why, doth not every earthly thing
Cry shame upon her? Could she here deny
The story that is printed in her blood?
Do not live, Hero; do not ope thine eyes:
For, did I think thou wouldst not quickly die,
Thought I thy spirits were stronger than thy shames,
Myself would, on the rearward of reproaches,
Strike at thy life. Grieved I, I had but one?
But mine and mine I loved and mine I praised
And mine that I was proud on, mine so much
That I myself was to myself not mine,
Valuing of her,--why, she, O, she is fallen
Into a pit of ink, that the wide sea
Hath drops too few to wash her clean again
And salt too little which may season give
To her foul-tainted flesh!

BENEDICK

Sir, sir, be patient.
For my part, I am so attired in wonder,
I know not what to say.

LEONATO

Would the two princes lie, and Claudio lie,
Who loved her so, that, speaking of her foulness,
Wash'd it with tears? Hence from her! let her die.

FRIAR FRANCIS

Hear me a little;
By noting of the lady I have mark'd
A thousand blushing apparitions
To start into her face, a thousand innocent shames
In angel whiteness beat away those blushes;
And in her eye there hath appear'd a fire,
To burn the errors that these princes hold
Against her maiden truth. Call me a fool;
Trust not my reading nor my observations,
Which with experimental seal doth warrant
The tenor of my book; trust not my age,
My reverence, calling, nor divinity,
If this sweet lady lie not guiltless here
Under some biting error.
Lady, what man is he you are accused of?

HERO

They know that do accuse me; I know none:
 If I know more of any man alive
 Than that which maiden modesty doth warrant,
 Let all my sins lack mercy!

FRIAR FRANCIS

There is some strange misprision in the princes.

BENEDICK

Two of them have the very bent of honour;
 And if their wisdoms be misled in this,
 The practise of it lives in John the bastard,
 Whose spirits toil in frame of villanies.

LEONATO

I know not. If they speak but truth of her,
 These hands shall tear her; if they wrong her honour,
 The proudest of them shall well hear of it.
 Time hath not yet so dried this blood of mine,
 Nor age so eat up my invention,
 Nor fortune made such havoc of my means,
 Nor my bad life reft me so much of friends,
 But they shall find, awaked in such a kind,
 Both strength of limb and policy of mind,
 Ability in means and choice of friends,
 To quit me of them throughly.

FRIAR FRANCIS

Pause awhile,
 And let my counsel sway you in this case.
 Your daughter here the princes left for dead:
 Let her awhile be secretly kept in,
 And publish it that she is dead indeed;
 Maintain a mourning ostentation
 And on your family's old monument
 Hang mournful epitaphs and do all rites
 That appertain unto a burial.

LEONATO

What shall become of this? what will this do?

FRIAR FRANCIS

Marry, this well carried shall on her behalf
 Change slander to remorse; that is some good:
 She dying, as it must so be maintain'd,
 Upon the instant that she was accused,
 Shall be lamented, pitied and excused
 Of every hearer:
 So will it fare with Claudio:
 When he shall hear she died upon his words,
 The idea of her life shall sweetly creep
 Into his study of imagination,
 And every lovely organ of her life
 Shall come apparell'd in more precious habit,
 More moving-delicate and full of life,
 Into the eye and prospect of his soul,
 Than when she lived indeed; then shall he mourn,

And if it sort not well, you may conceal her,
 As best befits her wounded reputation,
 In some reclusive and religious life,
 Out of all eyes, tongues, minds and injuries.

BENEDICK

Signior Leonato, let the friar advise you:
 And though you know my inwardness and love
 Is very much unto the prince and Claudio,
 Yet, by mine honour, I will deal in this
 As secretly and justly as your soul
 Should with your body.

LEONATO

Being that I flow in grief,
 The smallest twine may lead me.

FRIAR FRANCIS

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.

BENEDICK

Ha! not for the wide world.

BEATRICE

You kill me to deny it. Farewell.

BENEDICK

Tarry, sweet Beatrice.

BEATRICE

I am gone, though I am here: there is no love in you: nay, I pray you, let me go.

BENEDICK

Beatrice,--

BEATRICE

In faith, I will go.

BENEDICK

We'll be friends first.

BEATRICE

You dare easier be friends with me than fight with mine enemy.

BENEDICK

Is Claudio thine enemy?

BEATRICE

Is he not approved in the height a villain, that hath slandered, scorned, dishonoured my kinswoman?

O

that I were a man! What, bear her in hand until they come to take hands; and then, with public accusation, uncovered slander, unmitigated rancour, --O God, that I were a man! I would eat his heart

in the market-place.

BENEDICK

Hear me, Beatrice,--

BEATRICE

Talk with a man out at a window! A proper saying!

BENEDICK

Nay, but, Beatrice,--

BEATRICE

Sweet Hero! She is wronged, she is slandered, she is undone.

BENEDICK

Beat--

BEATRICE

O that I were a man for his sake! or that I had any friend would be a man for my sake! But manhood is melted into courtesies, valour into compliment, and men are only 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 die a woman with grieving.

BENEDICK

Tarry, good Beatrice. By this hand, I love thee.

BEATRICE

Use it for my love some other way than swearing by it.

BENEDICK

Think you in your soul the Count Claudio hath wronged Hero?

BEATRICE

Yea, as sure as I have a thought or a soul.

BENEDICK

Enough, I am engaged; I will challenge him. I will kiss your hand, and so I leave you. By this hand, Claudio shall render me a dear account. As you hear of me, so think of me. Go, comfort your cousin: I must say she is dead: and so, farewell.

Exeunt

SCENE II. A prison.

Enter DOGBERRY, VERGES, and Friar, in gowns; and the Watch, with CONRADE and BORACHIO

DOGBERRY

Is our whole dissembly appeared?

FRIAR FRANCIS

Which be the malefactors?

DOGBERRY

Marry, that am I and my partner.

VERGES

Nay, that's certain; we have the exhibition to examine.

FRIAR FRANCIS

But which are the offenders that are to be examined? let them come before master constable.

DOGBERRY

Yea, marry, let them come before me. What is your name, friend?

BORACHIO

Borachio.

DOGBERRY

Pray, write down, Borachio. Yours, sirrah?

CONRADE

I am a gentleman, sir, and my name is Conrade.

DOGBERRY

Write down, master gentleman Conrade. Masters, do you serve God?

CONRADE BORACHIO

Yea, sir, we hope.

DOGBERRY

Write down, that they hope they serve God: and write God first; for God defend but God should go before such villains! Masters, it is proved already that you are little better than false knaves; and it will go near to be thought so shortly. How answer you for yourselves?

CONRADE

Marry, sir, we say we are none.

DOGBERRY

A marvellous witty fellow, I assure you: but I will go about with him. Come you hither, sirrah; a word in your ear: sir, I say to you, it is thought you are false knaves.

BORACHIO

Sir, I say to you we are none.

DOGBERRY

Well, stand aside. 'Fore God, they are both in a tale. Have you writ down, that they are none?

FRIAR FRANCIS

Master constable, you go not the way to examine: you must call forth the watch that are their accusers.

DOGBERRY

Yea, marry, that's the efastest way. Let the watch come forth. Masters, I charge you, in the prince's name, accuse these men.

FIRST WATCHMAN

This man said, sir, that Don John, the prince's brother, was a villain.

DOGBERRY

Write down Prince John a villain. Why, this is flat perjury, to call a prince's brother villain.

BORACHIO

Master constable,--

DOGBERRY

Pray thee, fellow, peace: I do not like thy look, I promise thee.

FRIAR FRANCIS

What heard you him say else?

SECOND WATCHMAN

Marry, that he had received a thousand ducats of Don John for accusing the Lady Hero wrongfully.

DOGBERRY

Flat burglary as ever was committed.

VERGES

Yea, by mass, that it is.

FRIAR FRANCIS

What else, fellow?

FIRST WATCHMAN

And that Count Claudio did mean, upon his words, to disgrace Hero before the whole assembly. and not marry her.

DOGBERRY

O villain! thou wilt be condemned into everlasting redemption for this.

FRIAR FRANCIS

What else?

FIRST WATCHMAN

This is all.

FRIAR FRANCIS

And this is more, masters, than you can deny.

Prince John is this morning secretly stolen away; Hero was in this manner accused, in this very manner refused, and upon the grief of this suddenly died. Master constable, let these men be bound, and brought to Leonato's: I will go before and show him their examination.

Exit

DOGBERRY

Come, let them be opinioned.

VERGES

Let them be in the hands--

CONRADE

Off, coxcomb!

DOGBERRY

God's my life! Write down the prince's officer coxcomb. Come, bind them. Thou naughty varlet!

CONRADE

Away! you are an ass, you are an ass.

DOGBERRY

Dost thou not suspect my place? dost thou not suspect my years? O that he were here to write me down an ass! But, masters, remember that I am an ass; though it be not written down, yet forget not that I am an ass. No, thou villain, thou art full of

piety, as shall be proved upon thee by good witness. I am a wise fellow, and, which is more, an officer, and, which is more, a householder, and, which is more, as pretty a piece of flesh as any is in Messina, and one that knows the law, go to; and a rich fellow enough, go to; and a fellow that hath had losses, and one that hath two gowns and every thing handsome about him. Bring him away. O that I had been writ down an ass!

Exeunt

ACT V

SCENE I. Before LEONATO'S house.

Enter LEONATO and ANTONIO

ANTONIO

If you go on thus, you will kill yourself:
And 'tis not wisdom thus to second grief
Against yourself.

LEONATO

I pray thee, cease thy counsel,
Which falls into mine ears as profitless
As water in a sieve: give not me counsel;
Nor let no comforter delight mine ear
But such a one whose wrongs do suit with mine.
Bring me a father that so loved his child,
Whose joy of her is overwhelm'd like mine,
And bid him speak of patience;
Measure his woe the length and breadth of mine
And I of him will gather patience.
But there is no such man: for, brother, men
Can counsel and speak comfort to that grief
Which they themselves not feel; but, tasting it,
Their counsel turns to passion, which before
Would give preceptual medicine to rage,
Therefore give me no counsel:
My griefs cry louder than advertisement.

ANTONIO

Therein do men from children nothing differ.

LEONATO

I pray thee, peace. I will be flesh and blood;
For there was never yet philosopher
That could endure the toothache patiently.

ANTONIO

Yet bend not all the harm upon yourself;
Make those that do offend you suffer too.

LEONATO

There thou speak'st reason: nay, I will do so.
My soul doth tell me Hero is belied;
And that shall Claudio know; so shall the prince
And all of them that thus dishonour her.

ANTONIO

Here comes the prince and Claudio hastily.
Enter DON PEDRO and CLAUDIO

DON PEDRO

Good den, good den.

CLAUDIO

Good day to both of you.

LEONATO

Hear you. my lords,--

DON PEDRO

We have some haste, Leonato.

LEONATO

Some haste, my lord! well, fare you well, my lord:
Are you so hasty now? well, all is one.

DON PEDRO

Nay, do not quarrel with us, good old man.

ANTONIO

If he could right himself with quarreling,
Some of us would lie low.

CLAUDIO

Who wrongs him?

LEONATO

Marry, thou dost wrong me; thou dissembler, thou:--
Know, Claudio, to thy head,
Thou hast so wrong'd mine innocent child and me
That I am forced to lay my reverence by
And, with grey hairs and bruise of many days,
Do challenge thee to trial of a man.
I say thou hast belied mine innocent child;
Thy slander hath gone through and through her heart,
And she lies buried with her ancestors;
O, in a tomb where never scandal slept,
Save this of hers, framed by thy villany!

CLAUDIO

My villany?

LEONATO

Thine, Claudio; thine, I say.

DON PEDRO

You say not right, old man.

LEONATO

My lord, my lord,
I'll prove it on his body, if he dare,

CLAUDIO

Away! I will not have to do with you.

LEONATO

Thou hast kill'd my child:
If thou kill'st me, boy, thou shalt kill a man.

ANTONIO

Hold you content. What, man! I know them, yea,
And what they weigh, even to the utmost scruple,--
Scrambling, out-facing, fashion-monging boys,
That lie and cog and flout, deprave and slander,

Go anticly, show outward hideousness,
And speak off half a dozen dangerous words,
How they might hurt their enemies, if they durst;
And this is all.

LEONATO

But, brother Antony,--

ANTONIO

Come, 'tis no matter:

Do not you meddle; let me deal in this.

DON PEDRO

Gentlemen both, we will not wake your patience.
My heart is sorry for your daughter's death:
But, on my honour, she was charged with nothing
But what was true and very full of proof.

LEONATO

My lord, my lord,--

DON PEDRO

I will not hear you.

LEONATO

No? Come, brother; away! I will be heard.

ANTONIO

And shall, or some of us will smart for it.

Exeunt LEONATO and ANTONIO

DON PEDRO

See, see; here comes the man we went to seek.

Enter BENEDICK

CLAUDIO

Now, signior, what news?

BENEDICK

Good day, my lord.

DON PEDRO

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

CLAUDIO

We had like to have had our two noses snapped off
with two old men without teeth.

DON PEDRO

Leonato and his brother. What thinkest thou? Had
we fought, I doubt we should have been too young for
them.

BENEDICK

In a false quarrel there is no true valour. I came
to seek you both.

DON PEDRO

As I am an honest man, he looks pale. Art thou
sick, or angry?

BENEDICK

Shall I speak a word in your ear?

[Aside to CLAUDIO] You are a villain; I jest 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 cowardice. You have killed a sweet

lady, and her death shall fall heavy on you. Let me
hear from you.

Exit

DON PEDRO

He is in earnest.

CLAUDIO

In most profound earnest; and, I'll warrant you, for
the love of Beatrice.

DON PEDRO

And hath challenged thee.

CLAUDIO

Most sincerely.

*Enter DOGBERRY, VERGES, and the Watch, with
CONRADE and BORACHIO*

DOGBERRY

Come you, sir: if justice cannot tame you, she
shall ne'er weigh more reasons in her balance: nay,
an you be a cursing hypocrite once, you must be
looked to.

DON PEDRO

How now? two of my brother's men bound! Borachio
one!

CLAUDIO

Hearken after their offence, my lord.

DON PEDRO

Officers, what offence have these men done?

DOGBERRY

Marry, sir, they have committed false report;
moreover, they have spoken untruths; secondarily,
they are slanders; sixth and lastly, they have
belied a lady; thirdly, they have verified unjust
things; and, to conclude, they are lying knaves.

DON PEDRO

First, I ask thee what they have done; thirdly, I
ask thee what's their offence; sixth and lastly, why
they are committed; and, to conclude, what you lay
to their charge.

BORACHIO

Sweet prince, let me go no farther to mine answer:
do you hear me, and let this count kill me. I have
deceived even your very eyes: what your wisdoms
could not discover, these shallow fools have brought
to light: who in the night overheard me confessing
to this man how Don John your brother incensed me
to slander the Lady Hero, how you were brought into
the orchard and saw me court Margaret in Hero's
garments, how you disgraced her, when you should
marry her: my villany they have upon record; which
I had rather seal with my death than repeat over
to my shame. 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

Runs not this speech like iron through your blood?

CLAUDIO

I have drunk poison whiles he utter'd it.

DON PEDRO

But did my brother set thee on to this?

BORACHIO

Yea, and paid me richly for the practise of it

DOGBERRY

Come, bring away the plaintiffs: by this time our friar hath reformed Signior Leonato of the matter: and, masters, do not forget to specify, when time and place shall serve, that I am an ass.

VERGES

Here, here comes master Signior Leonato, and the friar too.

Re-enter LEONATO and ANTONIO, with FRIAR FRANCIS

LEONATO

Which is the villain? let me see his eyes,
That, when I note another man like him,
I may avoid him: which of these is he?

BORACHIO

If you would know your wronger, look on me.

LEONATO

Art thou the slave that with thy breath hast kill'd
Mine innocent child?

BORACHIO

Yea, even I alone.

LEONATO

No, not so, villain; thou beliest thyself:
Here stand a pair of honourable men;
A third is fled, that had a hand in it.
I thank you, princes, for my daughter's death:
Record it with your high and worthy deeds:
'Twas bravely done, if you bethink you of it.

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: yet sinn'd I not
But in mistaking.

DON PEDRO

By my soul, nor I:
And yet, to satisfy this good old man,
I would bend under any heavy weight
That he'll enjoin me to.

LEONATO

I cannot bid you bid my daughter live;
That were impossible: but, I pray you both,
Possess the people in Messina here
How innocent she died; and if your love

Can labour ought in sad invention,
Hang her an epitaph upon her tomb
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 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

O noble sir,
Your over-kindness doth wring tears from me!
I do embrace your offer; and dispose
For henceforth of poor Claudio.

LEONATO

To-morrow then I will expect your coming;
To-night I take my leave. This naughty man
Shall face to face be brought to Margaret,
Who I believe was pack'd in all this wrong,
Hired to it by your brother.

BORACHIO

No, by my soul, she was not,
Nor knew not what she did when she spoke to me,
But always hath been just and virtuous
In any thing that I do know by her.

DOGBERRY

Moreover, sir, which indeed is not under white and black, this plaintiff here, the offender, did call me ass: I beseech you, let it be remembered in his punishment.

LEONATO

There's for thy pains.

DOGBERRY

God save the foundation!

LEONATO

Go, I discharge thee of thy prisoner, and I thank thee.

DOGBERRY

Come, neighbour.
Exeunt DOGBERRY and VERGES

LEONATO

Until to-morrow morning, lords, farewell.

ANTONIO

Farewell, my lords: we look for you to-morrow.

DON PEDRO

We will not fail.

CLAUDIO

To-night I'll mourn with Hero.

LEONATO

[To the Watch] Bring you these fellows on. We'll talk with Margaret,
How her acquaintance grew with this lewd fellow.

Exeunt, severally

SCENE II. LEONATO'S garden.

Enter BENEDICK and MARGARET, meeting

BENEDICK

Pray thee, sweet Mistress Margaret, deserve well at my hands by helping me to the speech of Beatrice.

MARGARET

Will you then write me a sonnet in praise of my beauty?

BENEDICK

In so high a style, Margaret, that no man living shall come over it; for, in most comely truth, thou deservest it.

MARGARET

To have no man come over me! why, shall I always keep below stairs?

BENEDICK

Thy wit is as quick as the greyhound's mouth; it catches.

MARGARET

And yours as blunt as the fencer's foils, which hit, but hurt not.

BENEDICK

A most manly wit, Margaret; it will not hurt a woman: and so, I pray thee, call Beatrice:

Exit MARGARET

Sings

The god of love,

That sits above,

And knows me, and knows me,

How pitiful I deserve,--

I mean in singing; but in loving. Marry, I cannot show it in rhyme; I have tried: I can find out no rhyme to 'lady' but 'baby,' an innocent rhyme; for 'scorn,' 'horn,' a hard rhyme; for, 'school,' 'fool,' a babbling rhyme; very ominous endings: no, I was not born under a rhyming planet, nor I cannot woo in festival terms.

Enter BEATRICE

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

Only foul words; and thereupon I will kiss thee.

BEATRICE

Foul words is but foul wind, and foul wind is but foul breath, and foul breath is noisome; therefore I will depart unknissed.

BENEDICK

Thou hast frightened the word out of his right sense, so forcible is thy wit. But 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, I pray thee now, tell me for which of my bad parts didst thou first fall in love with me?

BEATRICE

For them all together; which maintained so politic a state of evil that they will not admit any good part to intermingle with them. But for which of my good parts did you first suffer love for me?

BENEDICK

Suffer love! a good epithet! I do suffer love indeed, for I love thee against my will.

BEATRICE

In spite of your heart, I think; alas, poor heart! If you spite it for my sake, I will spite it for yours; for I will never love that which my friend hates.

BENEDICK

Thou and I are too wise to woo peaceably.

BEATRICE

It appears not in this confession: there's not one wise man among twenty that will praise himself.

BENEDICK

So much for praising myself, who, I myself will bear witness, is praiseworthy: 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. There will I leave you too, for here comes one in haste.

MARGARET

Madam, you must come to your uncle. Yonder's old coil at home: it is proved my Lady Hero hath been falsely accused, the prince and Claudio mightily abused; and Don John is the author of all, who is fled 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 to thy uncle's.

Exeunt

SCENE III. A church.

Enter DON PEDRO, CLAUDIO, and three or four with tapers

Enter Hero, disguised

HERO

SONG.

Pardon, goddess of the night,
Those that slew thy virgin knight;
For the which, with songs of woe,
Round about her tomb they go.
Midnight, assist our moan;
Help us to sigh and groan,
Heavily, heavily:
Graves, yawn and yield your dead,
Till death be uttered,
Heavily, heavily.

Exeunt

SCENE IV. A room in LEONATO'S house.

Enter LEONATO, ANTONIO, BENEDICK, FRIAR FRANCIS

FRIAR FRANCIS

Did I not tell you she was innocent?

BENEDICK

Friar, I must entreat your pains, I think.

FRIAR FRANCIS

To do what, signior?

BENEDICK

To bind me, or undo me; one of them.
Signior Leonato, truth it is, good signior,
Your niece regards me with an eye of favour.

LEONATO

That eye my daughter lent her: 'tis most true.

BENEDICK

And I do with an eye of love requite her.

LEONATO

The sight whereof I think you had from me,
From Claudio and the prince: but what's your will?

BENEDICK

Your answer, sir, is enigmatical:
But, for my will, my will is your good will

May stand with ours, this day to be conjoin'd
In the state of honourable marriage:
In which, good friar, I shall desire your help.

LEONATO

My heart is with your liking.

FRIAR FRANCIS

And my help.

Here comes the prince and Claudio.

Enter DON PEDRO and CLAUDIO

CLAUDIO

Enter the Ladies masked

Which is the lady I must seize upon?

ANTONIO

This same is she, and I do give you her.

CLAUDIO

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

LEONATO

No, that you shall not, till you take her hand
Before this friar and swear to marry her.

CLAUDIO

Give me your hand: before this holy friar,
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

Another Hero!

HERO

Nothing certainer:

One Hero died defiled, but I do live,
And surely as I live, I am a maid.

DON PEDRO

The former Hero! Hero that is dead!

LEONATO

She died, my lord, but whiles her slander lived.

FRIAR FRANCIS

All this amazement can I qualify:
When after that the holy rites are ended,
I'll tell you largely of fair Hero's death:
Meantime let wonder seem familiar,
And to the chapel let us presently.

BENEDICK

Soft and fair, friar. Which is Beatrice?

BEATRICE

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 Margaret
is much deceived; for she 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.

Kissing her

DON PEDRO

How dost thou, Benedick, the married man?

BENEDICK

I'll tell thee what, prince; a college of
wit-crackers cannot flout me out of my humour. For
thy part, Claudio, I did think to
have beaten thee, but in that thou art like to be my
kinsman, live unbruised and love my cousin.

CLAUDIO

I had well hoped thou wouldst have denied Beatrice,
that I might have cudgelled thee out of thy single
life, to make thee a double-dealer; which, out of
question, thou wilt be, if my cousin do not look
exceedingly narrowly to thee.

BENEDICK

Come, come, we are friends: let's have a dance ere
we are married, that we may lighten our own hearts
and our wives' heels.

LEONATO

We'll have dancing afterward.

BENEDICK

First, of my word; therefore play, music. Prince,
thou art sad; get thee a wife, get thee a wife:

Enter First Watch

FIRST WATCH

My lord, your brother John is ta'en in flight,
And brought with armed men back to Messina.

BENEDICK

Think not on him till to-morrow:
I'll devise thee brave punishments for him.
Strike up, pipers.

Dance

Exeunt