Much adoe about Nothing.

As it hath been sundrie times publikely acted by the right honourable, the Lord Chamberlaine his servants.

Written by William Shakespeare.

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Title page of the earliest and most authoritative edition of the play, the Quarto of 1600
Much Ado About Nothing

[Dramatis Personae]

Don Pedro, Prince of Aragon
Don John, his bastard brother
Claudio, a young lord of Florence
Benedick, a young lord of Padua
Leonato, Governor of Messina
Antonio, an old man, his brother
Balthasar, attendant on Don Pedro

Borachio  Conrade  followers of Don John

Friar Francis
Dogberry, a constable
Verges, a headborough
A Sexton
A Boy
Hero, daughter to Leonato
Beatrice, niece to Leonato

Margaret  Ursula  gentlewomen attending on Hero

Messengers, Watch, Attendants, &c.

Scene: Messina]
Much Ado About Nothing

[ACT 1

Scene I. Before Leonato’s house.]

Enter Leonato, Governor of Messina, Hero his daughter, and Beatrice his niece, with a Messenger.

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

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

Leonato. How many gentlemen² have you lost in this action?

Messenger. But few of any sort,° and none of name.°

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

1.1.5 gentlemen men of upper class
7 sort rank
7 name distinguished family

Messenger. Much deserved on hjs part, and equally re memb‘red by Don Pedro. He hath borne himself beyond the promise of his age, doing, in the figure of a lamb, the feats of a lion. He hath indeed better bett’red expectation ° than you must expect of me to tell you how.

Leonato. He hath an uncle° here in Messina will be very much glad of it.

Messenger. I have already delivered him letters, and there appears much joy in him; even so much that joy could not show itself modest enough without a badge° of bitterness.

Leonato. Did he break out into tears?

Messenger. In great measure.
Leonato. A kind overflow of kindness.° There are no faces truer than those that are so washed. How much better is it to weep at joy than to joy at weeping!

Beatrice. I pray you, is Signior Mountanto° returned from the wars or no?

Messenger. I know none of that name, lady. There was none such in the army of any sort.

Leonato. What is he that you ask for, niece? Hero. My cousin means Signior Benedick of Padua.

Messenger. O, he’s returned, and as pleasant° as ever he was.

Beatrice. He set up his bills° here in Messina and challenged Cupid at the flight;° and my uncle’s fool, reading the challenge, subscribed° for Cupid and challenged him at the burbolt.° I pray you, how many hath he killed and eaten in these wars? But how many hath he killed? For indeed, I promised to eat all of his killing.

15-16 better bett‘red expectation greatly exceeded anticipated valor

18 uncle (does not appear in the play)
23 badge emblem
26 kind overflow of kindness natural overflow of tenderness
29 Mountanto a fencing thrust
35 pleasant lively
37 bills advertising placards
37 flight shooting contest (i.c., he thought himself a lady-killer)
39 subscribed signed up
40 burbolt blunt arrow

Leonato. Faith, niece, you tax° Signior Benedick too much; but he’ll be meet° with you, I doubt it not.

Messenger. He hath done good service, lady, in these wars.

Beatrice. You had musty victual, and he hath holp to eat it. He is a very valiant trencherman;° he hath an excellent stomach.

Messenger. And a good soldier too, lady.

Beatrice. And a good soldier to° a lady. But what is he to a lord?

Messenger. A lord to a lord, a man to a man; stuffed with all honorable 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. For it is all the wealth that he hath left to be known a reasonable creature. Who is his companion now? He hath every month a new sworn brother.

Messenger. Is’t possible?

Beatrice. Very easily possible. He wears his faith but as the fashion of his hat; it ever changes with the next block.°

44 tax i.e., tease too hard
45 meet even
49 trencherman eater
52 to in comparison with
56-57 stuffed man dummy
63 five wits common sense, imagination, fancy, estimation, memory
63 halting limping
73 next block most recent shape

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

Beatrice. No. And° he were, I would burn my study. But I pray you, who is his companion? Is there no young squarer° now that will make a voyage with him to the devil?

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

Beatrice. O Lord, he will hang upon him like a disease. He is sooner caught than the pestilence, and the taker runs presently° mad. God help the noble Claudio if he have caught the Benedict;° it will cost him a thousand pound ere ‘a° be cured.

Messenger. 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.
*Messenger.* Don Pedro is approached.

*Enter Don Pedro, Claudio, Benedick, Balthasar, and John the Bastard.*

*Don Pedro.* Good Signior Leonato, are you 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\(^o\) too willingly. I think this is your daughter.

*Leonato.* Her mother hath many times told me so.

75 books favor
76 And if
78 squarer brawler
84 presently immediately (the usual sense in Shakespeare)
85 Benedict (the change in spelling suggests a disease based on Benedick’s name)
86 ‘a he
89 run mad catch the Benedict
99 charge burden (of my visit)

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.\(^o\) Be happy, lady, for you are like an honorable father.

*Benedick.* If Signior Leonato be her father, she would not have his head\(^o\) on her shoulders for all Messina, as like him as she is.

*Beatrice.* I wonder that you will still\(^o\) 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,\(^o\) 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 humor 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 predesti- nate scratched face.

Beatrice. Scratching could not make it worse and ‘twere such a face as yours were.

107 fathers herself shows who her father is by resembling him
110 his head white-haired and bearded (?)
112 still always (the susual sense in Shakespeare)
121 loved of all ladies (he had “challenged Cupid”)
126-27 of your humor for that in agreement on that

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 continual.° But keep your way, a 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. Manent°

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?
142 parrot-teacher i.e., monotonous speaker of nonsense
137 continuer staying power
140 jade’s trick trick of a vicious horse (i.e., a sudden stop?)
142 the sum of all the end of the sparring match
155 s.d. Manent remain (Latin)
158 noted (1) scrutinized (2) set to music (3) stigmatized

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 lik’st
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. But speak you this with a sad brow?°
Or do you play the flouting Jack, to tell us Cupid is a good hare-finder and
Vulcan a rare carpenter?° Come, in what key shall a man take you to go in
the song?
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? In faith, hath not the world one man but he will
wear his cap with suspicion?°

177 with a sad brow seriously
178-79 to tell us ... carpenter i.e., to mock us with nonsense
(Cupid was blind, Vulcan was a blacksmith)
191 but he ... suspicion who (because he is unmarried) will not
fear that he has a cuckold’s horns

Shall I never see a bachelor of threescore again? Go to, i’ faith! And 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.

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 utt’red.

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.

193-94 thrust thy neck ... Sundays i.e., enjoy the tiresome bondage of marriage

200 allegiance solemn obligation to a prince

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 have a rechate° winded in my forehead, or 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, if ever thou dost fall from this faith, thou wilt prove a notable argument.°

Benedick. If I do, hang me in a bottle° like a cat and shoot at me; and he that hits me, let him be clapped on the shoulder and called Adam.°

Don Pedro. Well, as time shall try:

225-26 in the despite of in contempt of
228 will sexual appetite
231 rechate rechate, notes on a hunting horn
233 baldrick belt, sling (the reference here, and in rechate, is to the horns of a cuckold)
235 fine finis, result
247 notable argument famous example
248 bottle basket
250 Adam i.e., Adam Bell, one of the three superlative archers in the ballad “Adam Bell”

“In time the savage bull doth bear the yoke.”

Benedick. The savage bull may, but if ever the sensible Benedick bear it, pluck off the bull’s horns and set them in my forehead, and let me be vilely painted, and in such great letters as they write “Here is good horse to hire,” let them signify under my sign “Here you may see Benedick the married man.”

Claudio. If this should ever happen, thou wouldst be horn-mad.°

Don Pedro. Nay, if Cupid have not spent all his quiver in Venice,° thou wilt quake for this shortly.

Benedick. I look for an earthquake too then.

Don Pedro. Well, you will 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.

Benedick. I have almost matter° enough in me for such an embassage, and so
I commit you—

_Claudio_. To the tuition\(^o\) of God. From my house, if I had it—

_Don Pedro_. The sixth of July. Your loving friend, Benedick.

275 _Benedick_. Nay, mock not, mock not. The body of your discourse is sometime guarded\(^o\) with fragments, and the guards are but slightly basted on neither. Ere you flout old ends\(^o\) any further, examine your conscience. And so I leave you. _Exit._

_Claudio_. My liege, your Highness now may do me good.

260 **horn-mad** mad with jealousy (perhaps also “sexually insatiable”)
262 Venice (famous for sexual license)
264 **temporize with the hours** change temper or attitude with time
269 **matter** sense
271 **tuition** custody
276 **guarded** trimmed (used of clothing)
278 **flout old ends** i.e., indulge in derision at my expense

_Don Pedro_. My love is thine to teach. Teach it but how, And thou shalt see how apt it is to learn Any-hard lesson that may do thee good.

_Claudio_. Hath Leonato any son, my lord?

_Don Pedro_. No child but Hero; she’s his only heir. Dost thou affect\(^o\) her, Claudio?

_Claudio_. O my lord, When you went onward on this ended action,\(^o\) I looked 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 returned and that\(^o\) 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 break\(^o\) with her and with her father, And thou shalt have her. Was’t not to this end That thou began’st to twist so fine a story?

_Claudio_. How sweetly you do minister to love, That know love’s grief by his complexion!\(^o\) But lest my liking might too sudden seem, I would have salved it with a longer treatise.
Don Pedro. What need the bridge much broader than the flood?
The fairest grant is the necessity.° Look, what will serve is fit. ‘Tis once,°
thou lovest, And I will fit thee with the remedy. I know we shall have
reveling tonight.

286 affect love
287 ended action war just concluded
291 that because
299 break open negotiations
303 complexion appearance
307 The fairest grant is the necessity the most attractive giving is
when the receiver really needs something
308 ‘Tis once in short

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 practice let us put it
presently. Exeunt.

[Scene 2. Leonato’s house.]

Enter Leonato and an old man [Antonio], brother
to Leonato.

Leonato. How now, brother? Where is my cousin° your son? Hath he
provided this music?
Antonio. He is very busy about it; But, brother, I can tell you strange news
that you yet dreamt not of.
Leonato. Are they° good?
Antonio. As the events stamps° them. But they have a good cover, they show
well outward. The Prince and Count Claudio, walking in a thick-pleached
alley in mine orchard,° were thus much overheard by a man of mine. The
Prince discovered° to Claudio that he loved my niece your daughter and
meant to acknowledge it this night in a dance, and if he found her accordant,°
he meant to take the present time by the top° and instantly break with you of
it.
Leonato. Hath the fellow any wit that told you this?

1.2.1 cousin kinsman
5 they i.e., the news (plural in the sixteenth century)
6 As the events stamps them as the outcome proves them to be (a
   plural noun, especially when felt to be singular often has a verb
   ending in -s)
8-9 thick-pleached alley in mine orchard walk or arbor fenced by
   interwoven branches in my garden
10 discovered disclosed
13 accordant agreeing
14 top forelock

Antonio. A good sharp fellow. I will send for him, and question him yourself.
Leonato. No, no. We will hold it as a dream till it appear itself. But I will
acquaint my daughter withal, that she may be the better prepared for an
answer, if peradventure this be true. Go you and tell her of it.

[Enter Attendants.]
Cousin, you know what you have to do. O, I cry you mercy,° friend. Go you
with me, and I will use your skill. Good cousin, have a care this busy time.
Exeunt.

[Scene 3. Leonato’s house.]

Enter Sir John the Bastard and Conrade, his
companion.

Conrade. What the goodyear,° 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 humor.°

23-24 cry you mercy beg your pardon
1.3.1 What the goodyear (an expletive)
2 out of measure sad unduly morose
11 under Saturn i.e., naturally sullen

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 carnage° 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.

12 mortifying mischief killing calamity
17 claw no man in his humor i.e., flatter no man (claw=pat or scratch on the back; humor = whim)
24 frame bring about
25 canker wild rose
27 fashion a carriage contrive a behavior
42 intelligence information

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, one Hero, the daughter and heir of Leonato.

Don John. A very forward March-chick! How came you to this?

Borachio. Being entertained for a perfumer, as I was smoking a musty room, comes me the Prince and Claudio, hand in hand in sad conference. I whipped me behind the arras and there heard it agreed upon that the Prince should woo Hero for himself, and having obtained her, give her to Count Claudio.

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.

Don John. Let us to the great supper. Their cheer is the greater that I am subdued. Would the cook were o’ my mind! Shall we go prove what’s to be done?

Borachio. We’ll wait upon your lordship.

Exit [with others].

47 Marry (an expletive, from “by the Virgin Mary”)
50 proper squire fine young fellow
54 forward March-chick precocious fellow (i.e., born in early spring)
56 entertained for employed as
57 smoking fumigating (or possibly merely perfuming)
58 sad serious 66 sure reliable
70 prove try

[ACT 2]
Scene 1. Leonato’s house.]

Enter Leonato, his brother [Antonio], Hero his daughter, and Beatrice his niece, [also Margaret and Ursula].

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 heartburned an hour after.
Hero. He is of a very melancholy\(^\circ\) 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,\(^\circ\) 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,\(^\circ\) uncle, and money enough in his purse, such a man would win any woman in the world, if ‘a could get her good will.

2.1.5 melancholy ill-tempered
9 eldest son i.e., overly confident (as heir presumptive)
14 foot (perhaps with a pun on French foutre, to copulate—i.e., a good lover)

Leonato. By my troth, niece, thou wilt never get thee a husband if thou be so shrewd\(^\circ\) of thy tongue.
Antonio. In faith, she’s too curst.\(^\circ\)
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 homs.\(^\circ\)
Beatrice. Just,\(^\circ\) if he 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 woolen!\(^\circ\)
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 gentle- woman? 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 befford° 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.

19 shrewd sharp
20 curst shrewish
25-26 no horns (i.e., horn used as phallic symbol, as Beatrice’s
next remark makes plain).
27 just exactly
31 in the woolen between scratchy blankets
40 in earnest (1) advance payment (2) in all seriousness
40 berrord bearward, animal keeper
41 lead his apes into hell traditional punishment for dying unwed

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 cursy° and say, “Father,
as it please you.” But yet for all that, cousin, let him be a handsome fellow, or
else make another cursy, and say, “Father, as it please me.”
Leonato. [To Beatrice] 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 piece 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. Daughter, remember what I told you. If the Prince do solicit you in
that kind, you know your answer.
Beatrice. The fault will be in the music, cousin, if you be not wooed in good
time. If the Prince be too important,° tell him there is measure° in everything,
and so dance out the answer. For, hear me, Hero: wooing, wedding, and
repenting is as a Scotch jig, a measure, and a cinquepace.° The first suit is hot and hasty like a Scotch jig (and full as fantastical); the wedding, mannerly modest, as a measure, full of state and ancentry; and then comes Repentance and with his bad legs falls into the cinquepace faster and faster, till he sink into his grave.

48 **bachelors** unwed persons (female as well as male)
53 **cursy** curtsy
58 **fitted** (continues playful sexual innuendo of the scene)
59 **metal** substance
62 **marl** earth
70 **important** importunate
70 **measure** (1) dis cemible time sequence (2) moderation (the entire speech is a light parody of Sir John Davies’ *Orchestra*. A Poem of Dancing* [1596]; cf. stanza 23: “Time the measure of all moving is/And dancing is a moving all in measure”)
73 **cinquepace** lively dance

**Leonato.** Cousin, you apprehend passing shrewdly.
**Beatrice.** I have a good eye, uncle; I can see a church by daylight.
**Leonato.** The revelers are ent‘ring, brother. Make good room.
[All put on their masks.]

    **Enter Prince** [Don] Pedro, Claudio, and Benedick, and Balthasar [masked; and without masks]
    **Borachio and**] Don John.

**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.
**Don Pedro.** With me in your company?
**Hero.** I may say so when I please.
**Don Pedro.** And when please you to say so?
**Hero.** When I like your favor,° for God defend° the lute should be like the case!°
**Don Pedro.** My visor° is Philemon‘sv° roof; within the house is Jove.
**Hero.** Why then, your visor should be thatched.
**Don Pedro.** Speak low if you speak love.
[Draws her aside.]
Benedick. ° Well, I would you did like me.

86 friend lover
93 favor face
93 defend forbid
93-94 the lute ... case i.e., your face be as ugly as your mask
95 visor mask
95 Philemon peasant who entertained Jove in his house
99 Benedick (many beditors emend the Quarto, and give this and Benedick’s two subsequent speeches to Balthasar; but in 5.2 Benedick and Margaret spar, and they may well do so here)

Margaret. So would not I for your own sake, for I have many ill qualities.
Benedick. Which is one?
Margaret. I say my prayers aloud.
Benedick. I love you the better. The hearers may cry amen.
Margaret. God match me with a good dancer!
Margaret. And God keep him out of my sight when the dance is done!
Answer, clerk.
Balthasar. No more words. The clerk is answered.
Ursula. I know you well enough. You are Signior Antonio.
Antonio. At a word, I am not.
Ursula. I know you by the wagging° of your head.
Antonio. To tell you true, I counterfeit him.
Ursula. You could never do him so ill-well unless you were the very man.
Here’s his dry° hand up and down. You are he, you are he!
Antonio. At a word I am not.
Ursula. Come, come, do you think I do not know you by your excellent wit?
Can virtue hide itself? Go to, mum, you are he. Graces will appear, and there’s an end.
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, and that I had my good wit out of the “Hundred Merry Tales.”° Well, this was Signior Benedick that said so.
114 waggling i.e., palsy
117 dry dried-up (with age)

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 o 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. I am sure he is in the fleet;° I would he had boarded me.
Benedick. When I know the gentleman, I’ll tell him what you say.
Beatrice. Do, do. He’ll but break a comparison or two on me; which peradventure (not marked or not laughed at), strikes him into melancholy, and then there’s a partridge wing saved, for the fool will eat no supper that night. [Music.] We must follow the leaders.
Benedick. In every good thing.
Beatrice. Nay, if they lead to any ill, I will leave them at the next turning.
Dance. Exeunt [all except Don John, Borachio and Claudio].
Don John. Sure my brother is amorous on Hero and hath withdrawn her father to break with him about it. The ladies follow her and but one visor remains.

129 Hundred Merry Tales a popular collection of amusing, coarse anecdotes
137 Only his his only
142 fleet group (the related meaning, group of ships, leads to boarded me, but perhaps too there is an allusion to Fleet Prison)

Borachio. And that is Claudio. I know him by his bearing.
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 enamored on Hero. I pray you dissuade him from her; she is no equal for his birth. You
may do the part of an honest man in it.

**Claudio.** How know you he loves her?

**Don John.** I heard him swear his affection.

**Borachio.** So did I too, and he swore he would marry her tonight.

**Don John.** Come, let us to the banquet.°

**Exeunt. Manet Claudio.**

**Claudio.** Thus answer I in name of Benedick But hear these ill news with the ears of Claudio. ‘Tis certain so. The Prince woos for himself. Friendship is constant in all other things Save in the office° and affairs of love. Therefore all hearts in love use their own tongues; Let every eye negotiate for itself And trust no agent; for beauty is a witch Against whose charms faith melteth into blood.° This is an accident of hourly proof,° Which I mistrusted not. Farewell therefore Hero!

**Enter Benedick.**

**Benedick.** Count Claudio?

**Claudio.** Yea, the same.

**Benedick.** Come, will you go with me?

169 **banquet** light meal, or course, of fruit, wine, and dessert
174 **office** business
178 **blood** passion, desire
179 **accident of hourly proof** common happening

**Claudio.** Whither?

**Benedick.** Even to the next° willow,° about your own business, County.° What fashion will you wear the garland of? About your neck, like an usurer’s chain? Or under your arm, like a lieutenant’s scarf? You must wear it one way, for the Prince hath got your Hero.

**Claudio.** I wish him joy of her.

**Benedick.** Why, that’s spoken like an honest drovier.° So they sell bullocks. But did you think the Prince would have served you thus?

**Claudio.** I pray you leave me.

**Benedick.** Ho! Now you strike like the blind man! ‘Twas the boy that stole your meat, and you’ll beat the post.°

**Claudio.** If it will not be, I’ll leave you. Exit.

**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! 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.

Enter the Prince [Don Pedro], Hero, Leonato.

Don Pedro. Now, signior, where’s the Count? Did you see him?
Benedick. Troth, my lord, I have played the part of Lady Fame.° 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 this young lady, and I off red him my company to a willow tree, either to make him a garland, as being forsaken, or to bind him up a rod, as being worthy to be whipped.

185 next nearest
185 willow symbol of unrequited love
186 County Count 192 drovier cattle dealer
197-98 beat the post i.e., strike out blindly
205-07 It is ... gives me out it is the low and harsh disposition of Beatrice to assume her opinion of me is the world’s opinion of me
212 Lady Fame goddess of rumor

Don Pedro. To be whipped? What’s his fault?
Benedick. The flat transgression of a schoolboy who, being overjoyed with finding a bird’s nest, shows it his companion, and he steals it.
Don Pedro. Wilt thou make a trust a transgression? The transgression is in the stealer.
Benedick. Yet it had not been amiss the rod had been made, and the garland too; for the garland he might have worn himself, and the rod he might have bestowed on you, who (as I take it) have stol’n his bird’s nest.
Don Pedro. I will but teach them to sing and restore them to the owner.
Benedick. If their singing answer your saying, by my faith you say honestly.
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! An oak but with one green leaf on it would have answered her; my very visor began to assume life and scold with her. She told me, not thinking I had been myself, that I was the Prince’s jester, that I was duller than a great thaw; huddling jest upon jest with such impossible conveyance° upon me that I stood like a man at a
mark,° with a whole army shooting at me. She speaks poniards, and every word stabs. If her breath were as terrible as her terminations,° there were no living near her; she would infect to the North Star. I would not marry her though she were endowed with all that Adam had left him before he transgressed. She would have made Hercules have turned spit, yea, and have cleft his club to make the fire too. Come, talk not of her. You shall find her the infernal Ate° in good apparel. I would to God some scholar would conjure her,° for certainly, while she is here, a man may live as quiet in hell as in a sanctuary; and people sin upon purpose, because they would go thither; so indeed all disquiet, horror, and perturbation follows her.

213 in a warren i.e., in a lonely place
243 impossible conveyance incredible dexterity
244 mark target

Enter Claudio and Beatrice.

Don Pedro. Look, here she comes.

Benedick. Will your Grace command me any service to the world’s end? I will go on the slightest errand now to the Antipodes that you can devise to send me‘on; I will fetch you a toothpicker now from the furthest inch of Asia; bring you the length of Prester John’s° foot; fetch you a hair off the great Cham’s° beard; do you any embassage to the Pygmies—rather than hold three words’ conference with this harpy. You have no employment for me?

Don Pedro. None, but to desire your good company.

Benedick. O God, sir, here’s a dish I love not! I cannot endure my Lady Tongue. Exit.

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.

247 terminations words
253 Ate goddess of discord
255 conjure her i.e., exorcise the devil out of her
265-66 Prester John legendary Christian king in remote Asia
266 Cham Khan
276 use interest
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. I’ faith, lady, I think your blazon° to be true; though I’ll be
sworn, if he be so, his conceit° is false. 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 all 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.

283 fools babies
291 civil polite (with a pun on orange of Seville)
292 complexion (1) disposition (2) color (i.e., yellowish for
jealousy)
293 blazon description
294 conceit idea, concept

Don Pedro. In faith, lady, you have a merry heart.
Beatrice. Yea, my lord; I thank it, poor fool, it keeps on the windy° side of
care. My cousin tells him in his ear that he is in her heart.
Claudio. And so she doth, cousin.
Beatrice. Good Lord, for alliance! Thus goes every one to the world but I,
and I am sunburnt.° I may sit in a comer 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. 325 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 o’ 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!

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

_Beatrice._ I cry you mercy,° uncle. By your Grace’s pardon.

Exit _Beatrice._

_Don Pedro._ By my troth, a pleasant-spirited lady.

311 _windy_ windward, safe
314-15 _Good Lord..._ sunburnt i.e., everyone gets a husband but me, and I am ugly (sunburnt=tanned, and therefore ugly in the sixteenth century)
319 _getting_ begetting
335 _cry_ you mercy beg your pardon

_Leonato._ There’s little of the melancholy element in her, my lord. She is never sad but when she sleeps, and not ever° sad then; for I have heard my daughter say she hath often dreamt of unhappiness and waked herself with laughing.

_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 Benedick.

_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._ Tomorrow, my lord. Time goes on crutches till Love have all his rites.

_Leonato._ Not till Monday, my dear son, which is hence a just sevennight; 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 un-
dertake one of Hercules’ labors, which is, to bring Signior Benedick and the
Lady Beatrice into a mountain of affection th’ one with th’ 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?

340 ever always
366-67 ten nights’ watchings ten nights awake

Hero. I will do any modest office, my lord, to help my 370 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° valor and confirmed
honesty. I will teach you how to humor your cousin, that she shall fall in love
with Benedick; and I [to Leonato and Claudio], with your two helps, will so
practice 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.
Exit [with the others].

[Scene 2. Leonato’s house.]

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. Any bar, any cross, any impediment will be medicinable to me. I
am sick in displeasure to him, and whatsoever comes athwart his affection
ranges evenly° with mine. 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.
374 approved tested
378 practice on deceive
2.2.7 ranges evenly goes in a straight line (i.e., suits me exactly)

Borachio. I think I told your lordship, a year since, how much I am in the favor 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 honor in marrying the renowned Claudio (whose estimation do you mightily hold up) to a contaminated stale,° such a one as Hero.

Don John. What proof shall I make of that?

Borachio. Proof enough to misuse the Prince, to vex Claudio, to undo Hero, and kill Leonato. Look you for any other issue?

Don John. Only to despite them I will endeavor anything.

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; intend° a kind of zeal both to the Prince and Claudio (as in love of your brother’s honor, who hath made this match, and his friend’s reputation, who is thus like to be cozened° with the semblance of a maid) that you have discovered thus. 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.

25 stale prostitute
33 meet hour suitable time
35 intend pretend
39 cozened cheated
41 instances proofs
Don John. Grow this to what adverse issue it can, I will put it in practice. 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.

Exit [with Borachio].

[Scene 3. Leonato’s garden.]

Enter Benedick alone.

Benedick. Boy!

[Enter Boy.]

Boy. Signior?

Benedick. In my chamber window lies a book. Bring it hither to me in the orchard.°

Boy. I am here already, sir.

Benedick. I know that, but I would have thee hence and here again. (Exit [Boy].) 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. I have known when there was no music with him but the drum and the fife; and now had he rather hear the tabor and the pipe.° I have known when he would have walked ten mile afoot to see a good armor; and now will he lie ten nights awake carving the fashion ° of a new doublet. He was wont to speak plain and to the purpose, like an honest man and a soldier; and now is he turned orthography;° his words are a very fantastical banquet—just so many strange dishes. 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 color it please God. Ha, the Prince and Monsieur Love! [Retiring] I will hide me in the arbor.

48—49 jealousy mistrust
2.3.4 orchard garden
11 argument subject matter

Enter Prince [Don Pedro], Leonato, Claudio,
[to the sound of] music.

Don Pedro. Come, shall we hear this music?
Claudio. Yea, my good lord. How still the evening is, As hushed on purpose to grace harmony!
Don Pedro. See you where Benedick hath hid himself?

15 tabor and the pipe music of an unmartial sort
17 carving the fashion considering the design
20 orthography i.e., into a pedant (?)
31 cheapen bargain for
32-33 noble ... angel (puns: both words are Elizabethan coins)
33 discourse conversation

Claudio. O, very well, my lord. The music ended, We’ll fit the kid fox with a pennyworth.°

Enter Balthasar with music.
Don Pedro. Come, Balthasar, we’ll hear that song again.
Balthasar. O, good my lord, tax not so bad a voice To slander music any more than once.
Don Pedro. It is the witness still of excellency To put a strange face on his own perfection. I pray thee sing, and let me woo no more.
Balthasar. 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.
Don Pedro. Nay, pray thee come; Or if thou wilt hold longer argument, Do it in notes.
Balthasar. Note this before my notes: There’s not a note of mine that’s worth the noting.
Don Pedro. Why, these are very crotchets° that he speaks! Note notes, forsooth, and nothing!° [Music.]
Benedick. [Aside] Now divine air! Now is his soul ravished! Is it not strange that sheep’s guts should hale souls out of men’s bodies? Well, a horn for my money, when all’s done. [Balthasar sings.]

The Song
Sigh no more, ladies, sigh no more,
Men were deceivers ever,

42 We’ll ... pennyworth i.e., we’ll give Benedick a little something (perhaps kid fox means “young fox,” perhaps “known fox”)
56 crotchets (I) whims (2) musical notes
57 nothing (pronounced “noting,” hence a pun)

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 leavy.
Then sigh not so, &c.

Don Pedro. By my troth, a good song.
Balthasar. And an ill singer, my lord.

Don Pedro. Ha, no, no, faith! Thou sing’st well enough for a shift.°
Benedick. [Aside] And he had been a dog that should have howled thus, they would have hanged him; and I pray God his bad voice bode no mischief. I had as live° have heard the night raven, come what plague could have come after it.

Don Pedro. Yea, marry. Dost thou hear, Balthasar? I pray thee get us some excellent music; for tomorrow night we would have it at the Lady Hero’s chamber window.
Balthasar. The best I can, my lord.
Don Pedro. Do so. Farewell.
Exit Balthasar [with Musicians].

Come hither, Leonato. What was it you told me of today? That your niece Beatrice was in love with Signior Benedick?
Claudio. O, ay! [In a low voice to Don Pedro] Stalk on, stalk on; the fowl sits. [In full voice] I did never think that lady would have loved any man.

72 dumps sad songs
79 shift makeshift
83 live lief

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. [Aside] Is’t possible? Sits the wind in that corner?
Leonato. By my troth, my lord, I cannot tell what to think of it, but that she loves him with an enraged affection, it is past the infinite of thought.

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. Why, what effects of passion shows she?
Claudio. [In a low voice] Bait the hook well! This fish will bite.
Leonato. What effects, my lord? She will sit you, you heard my daughter tell you how.

Claudio. She did indeed.

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

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

Benedick. [Aside] I should think this a gull but that the white-bearded fellow speaks it. Knavery cannot, sure, hide himself in such reverence.

Claudio. [In a low voice] He hath ta’en th’ infection; hold it up.

109 discovers reveals, betrays
121 gull trick
125 hold keep

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 encount’red 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. That.
Leonato. O, she tore the letter into a thousand halfpence, ɹ railed at herself that she should be so im- modest to write to one that she knew would flout her. “I measure him,” says she, “by my own spirit; for I should flout him if he writ to me. Yea, though I love him, I should.”
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 ɹ hath so much overborne her that my daughter is sometime afeard she will do a des- perate 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.

143—44 halfpence i.e., small pieces
153 ecstasy madness

Claudio. To what end? He would make but a sport of it and torment the poor lady worse.
Don Pedro. And he should, it were an alms ɹ 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 everything but in loving Benedick.
Leonato. O, my lord, wisdom and blood ɹ combating in so tender a body, we have ten proofs to one that blood hath the victory. I am sorry for her, as I have just cause, being her uncle and her guardian.
Don Pedro. I would she had bestowed this dotage on me; I would have daffed all other respects ɹ and made her half myself. 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.

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.

Claudio. He is a very proper man.

Don Pedro. He hath indeed a good outward happiness.

Claudio. Before God, and in my mind, very wise.

Don Pedro. He doth indeed show some sparks that are like wit.

Claudio. And I take him to be valiant.

160 an alms a charity
165 blood passion
170 daffed all other respects put aside all other considerations (i.e., of disparity in rank)
177 bate abate, give up
179 tender offer
181 contemptible disdainful
182 proper handsome
186 wit intelligence

Don Pedro. As Hector, I assure you. And in the managing of quarrels you may say he is wise, for either he avoids them with great discretion, or undertakes them with a most Christianlike fear.

Leonato. If he do fear God, ‘a must necessarily keep peace. If he break the peace, he ought to enter into a quarrel with fear and trembling.

Don Pedro. And so will he do; for the man doth fear God, howsoever it seems not in him by some large jests he will make. Well, I am sorry for your niece. Shall we go seek Benedick and tell him of her love?

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.
[They walk away.]
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 your daughter and her gentlewomen carry.° The sport will be, when they hold one an opinion of another’s dotage, and no such matter. That’s the scene that I would see, which will be merely a dumb show.° Let us send her to call him in to dinner.
[Exeunt Don Pedro, Claudio, and Leonato.]
Benedick. [Advancing] 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 hear how I am censured. They say I will bear myself proudly if I perceive the love come from her. They say too that she will rather die than give any sign of affection. I did never think to marry; I must not seem proud. Happy are they that hear their detractions and can put them to mending. They say the lady is fair—‘tis a truth, I can bear them witness; and virtuous—‘tis so, I cannot reprove it; and wise, but for loving me; by my troth, it is no addition to her wit, nor no great argument of her folly; for 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 humor? 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.

196—97 large jests broad jokes
212 carry manage
215 dumb show pantomime (because of embarrassment)
218 sadly seriously

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,° signor? Fare you well. Exit.

220 affections have their full bent emotions are tightly stretched (like a bent bow)
236 sentences maxims
238 career course

Benedick. Ha! “Against my will I am sent to bid you come in to dinner.” There’s a double meaning in that. “I took no more pains for those thanks than you took pains to thank me.” That’s as much as to say, “Any pains that I take for you is as easy as thanks.” If I do not take pity of her, I am a villain; if I do not love her, I am a Jew. I will go get her picture. Exit:

251 withal with
252 no stomach no wish to argue (as well as “no appetite”)

[ACT 3

Scene 1. Leonato’s garden.]

Enter Hero and two Gentlewomen, Margaret and Ursula. Hero. Good Margaret, run thee to the parlor. There shalt thou find my cousin Beatrice Proposing with° the Prince and Claudio. Whisper her ear and tell her, I and Ursley Walk in the orchard, and our whole discourse Is all of her. Say that thou overheard’st us; And bid her steal into the pleased bower, Where honeysuckles, ripened by the sun, Forbid the sun to enter—like favorites, Made proud by princes, that advance their pride Against that power that bred it.° There will she hide her To listen our propose. This is thy office;° Bear thee well in it and leave us alone. Margaret. I’ll make her come, I warrant you, presently. [Exit. ] Hero. Now, Ursula, when Beatrice doth come, As we do trace° this alley up and down, Our talk must only be of Benedick. When I do name him, let it be
thy part To praise him more than ever man did merit. 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.

3.1.3 proposing with talking to
10-11 Made proud... bred it (an Elizabethan audience of c.1600
would be reminded of the Earl of Essex)
12 office duty
16 trace walk

Enter Beatrice.
Now begin;
For look where Beatrice like a lapwing runs Close by the ground, to hear our
conference.
Ursula. 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, who even now Is couched in the woodbine coverture.° Fear you not
my part of the dialogue.
Hero. Then go we near her, that her ear lose nothing Of the false sweet bait
that we lay for it.
[They approach the bower.]
No, truly, Ursula, she is too disdainful. I know her spirits are as coy° and wild
As haggards’ of the rock.
Ursula. But are you sure That Benedick loves Beatrice so entirely?
Hero. So says the Prince, and my new-trothed lord.
Ursula. 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.
Ursula. Why did you so? Doth not the gentleman

22 crafty skillfully wrought
23 only solely
30 woodbine coverture honeysuckle thicket
35 coy disdainful
36 haggards wild and intractable hawks

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, Misprizing\(^o\) 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\(^o\) of affection, She is so self-endearèd.

Ursula. Sure I think so; And therefore certainly it were not good She knew his love, lest she’ll 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,\(^o\) why, Nature, drawing of an antic,\(^o\) Made a foul blot; if tall, a lance ill-headed; If low, an agate very vilely cut;\(^o\) 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.

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

Hero. No, not to be so odd, and from all fashions,\(^o\) As Beatrice is, cannot be commendable. But who dare tell her so? If I should speak, She would mock me into air; O, she would laugh me Out of myself, press me to death with wit! Therefore let Benedick, like covered fire, Consume away in sighs, waste inwardly. It were a better death than die with mocks, Which is as bad as die with tickling.

52 Misprizing despising  
55 project notion  
63 black dark-complexioned  
63 antic grotesque figure  
65 agate very vilely cut poorly done miniature  
72 from all fashions contrary

Ursula. 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\(^o\) slanders To stain my cousin with. One doth not know How much an ill word may empoison liking.

Ursula. 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.

Ursula. I pray you be not angry with me, madam, Speaking my fancy. Signior Benedick, For shape, for bearing, argument, and valor, Goes foremost in report through Italy.

Hero. Indeed he hath an excellent good name.

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

Hero. Why, everyday tomorrow!° Come, go in. I’ll show thee some attires, and have thy counsel Which is the best to furnish° me tomorrow.

[They walk away.]

Ursula. She’s limed,° I warrant you! We have caught her, madam.

Hero. If it prove so, then loving goes by haps;° Some Cupid kills with arrows, some with traps.

[Exeunt Hero and Ursula.]

84 honest appropriate
101 everyday tomorrow i.e., tomorrow I shall be married forever
103 furnish dress
104 limed caught (as a bird is caught in birdlime, a sticky substance smeared on branches) 105 haps chance

Beatrice. [Coming forward] What fire is in mine ears? Can this be true? Stand I condemned 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 2. Leonato’s house.]
Enter Prince [Don Pedro], Claudio, Benedick, and Leonato.

Don Pedro. I do but stay till your marriage be consummate, and then go I toward Aragon.

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.

116 reportedly i.e., mere hearsay
3.2.3-4 vouchsafe permit
10-1 ] cut Cupid s bowstring i.e., avoided falling in love

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. I have the toothache.

Don Pedro. Draw it.

Benedick. Hang it!

Claudio. You must hang it first and draw it afterwards.

Don Pedro. What? Sigh for the toothache?

Leonato. Where is but a humor or a worm.

Benedick. Well, everyone cannot master a grief but he that has it.

Claudio. Yet say I he is in love.

Don Pedro. There is no appearance of fancy in him, unless it be a fancy that he hath to strange disguises; as to be a Dutchman today, a Frenchman tomorrow; or in the shape of two countries at once, as a German from the waist downward, all slops, and a Spaniard from the hip upward, no doublet. Unless he have a fancy to this foolery, as it appears he hath, he is no fool for fancy, as you would have it appear he is.
Claud. 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?

16 **sadder** graver
18 **truant** i.e., as unfaithful to his antiromantic stance
22 **Draw** it extract it (but draw also means eviscerate; traitors were hanged, drawn, and quartered. Draw it thus leads to the exclamation Hang it)
26 **a humor or a worm** (supposed causes of tooth decay, *humor* = secretion)
27-28 **Well ... has it** i.e., a man has to have a grief first before he can master it (Benedick does not admit that he has a grief; but some editors emend cannot to “can”)
30 **fancy** love
34 **slops** loose breeches
35 **doublet** close-fitting jacket

Don Pedro. Hath any man seen him at the barber’s?
Claud. No, but the barber’s man hath been seen with him, and the old ornament of his cheek hath already stuffed tennis balls.°
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?
Claud. That’s as much as to say, the sweet youth’s in love.
Don Pedro. The greatest note of it is his melancholy.
Claud. And when was he wont to wash his face?
Don Pedro. Yea, or to paint himself?° For the which I hear what they say of him.
Claud. Nay, but his jesting spirit, which is now crept into a lutestring, and now governed by stops.°
Don Pedro. Indeed that tells a heavy tale for him. Conclude, conclude, he is in love.
Claud. Nay, but I know who loves him.
Don Pedro. That would I know too. I warrant, one that knows him not.
Claud. Yes, and his ill conditions;° and in despite of all, dies° for him.
Don Pedro. She shall be buried with her face up- wards.°
Benedick. Yet is this no charm for the toothache. 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.

44—the old ornament... tennis balls (cf. Beatrice’s remark,
2.1.29—30 “I could not endure a husband with a beard on his
face”)
48 civet perfume
54 to paint himself to use cosmetics
57 stops frets (on the lute)
63 conditions qualities
63—64 in despite of all notwithstanding
64 dies (1) pines away (2) is willing to “die” in the act of sex
65—66 She shall... upwards (continues sexual innuendo)

[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 John the Bastard.

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 tomorrow?
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 dis- cover 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 holf to effect your ensuing marriage
—surely suit ill spent and labor ill bestowed!

69-70 hobbyhorses jokers (originally an imitation horse fastened
around the waist of a morris dancer)
77 Good den good evening
92 **aim** better at me judge better of me
92 **that** that which

*Don Pedro.* Why, what’s the matter?
*Don John.* I came hither to tell you, and, circumstances short‘ned (for she has been too long a-talking of), the lady is disloyal.
*Claudio.* Who? Hero?
*Don John.* Even she—Leonato’s Hero, your Hero, every man’s Hero.
*Claudio.* Disloyal?
*Don John.* The word is too good to paint out her wick edness. 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 tonight, you shall see her chamber window ent‘red, even the night before her wedding day. If you love her then, tomorrow wed her. But it would better fit your honor 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. If you will follow me, I will show you enough; and when you have seen more and heard more, proceed accordingly.
*Claudio.* If I see anything tonight why I should not marry her tomorrow, in the congregation where I should wed, there will I shame her.
*Don Pedro.* And, as I wooed for thee to obtain her, I will join with thee to disgrace her.
*Don John.* I will disparage her no farther till you are my witnesses. Bear it coldly° but till midnight, and let the issue show itself.

125 coldly calmly

*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 3. A street.]**

*Enter Dogberry and his comptarner [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,° neighbor Dogberry.
Dogberry. First, who think you the most desartless man to be constable?
First Watch. Hugh Oatcake, sir, or George Seacole, for they can write and read.
Dogberry. Come hither, neighbor Seacole. God hath blessed you with a good name. To be a well-favored° man is the gift of fortune, but to write and read comes by nature.
Second Watch. Both which, Master Constable—
Dogberry. You have; I knew it would be your answer. Well, for your favor, sir, why, give God thanks and make no boast of it; and for your writing and reading, let that appear when there is no need of such vanity. You are thought here to be the most senseless and fit man for the constable of the watch. Therefore bear you the lanthorn. This is your charge: you shall comprehend all vagrom° men; you are to bid any man stand,° in the Prince’s name.

3.3.3 salvation damnation (the beginning of the malapropisms basic to the comedy of Dogberry and Verges)
7 charge instructions
14 well-favored handsome

Second Watch. 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. You shall also make no noise in the streets; for, for the watch to babble and to talk is most tolerable, and not to be endured.
Watch.° We will rather sleep than talk; we know what belongs to a watch.
Dogberry. Why, you speak like an ancient and Most quiet watchman, for I cannot see how sleeping should offend. Only, have a care that your bills° be not stol’n. Well, you are to call at all the ale-houses and bid those that are drunk get them to bed.

Watch. How if they will not?

Dogberry. Why then, let them alone till they are sober. If they make you not then the better answer, you may say they are not the men you took them for.

Watch. Well, sir.

25 comprehend all vagrom i.e., apprehend all vagrant
26 stand halt, stop
38 Watch (neither the Quarto nor the Folio differentiates again between First Watch and Second Watch until the end of this scene)
42 bills constables’ pikes

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.

Watch. 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. Truly, I would not hang a dog by my will, much more a man who hath any honesty in him.

Verges. If you hear a child cry in the night, you must call to the nurse and bid her still it.

Watch. How if the nurse be asleep and will not hear us?

Dogberry. Why then, depart in peace and let the child wake her with crying; for the ewe that will not hear her lamb when it baes will never answer a calf when he bleats.

Verges. ‘Tis very true.

Dogberry. This is the end of the charge: you, constable, are to present the Prince’s own person. If you meet the Prince in the night, you may stay him.

Verges. Nay, by ‘r lady, that I think ’a cannot.

Dogberry. Five shillings to one on’t, with any man ) that knows the statutes, he may stay him! Marry, not without the Prince be willing; for indeed the
watch ought to offend no man, and it is an offense to stay a man against his will.

Verges. By'r lady, I think it be so.

Dogberry. Ha, ah, ha! Well, masters, good night. And there be any matter of weight chances, call up me. Keep your fellows’ counsels and your own, and good night. Come, neighbor.

Watch. 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 neighbors. I pray you watch about Signior Leonato’s door; for the wedding being there tomorrow, there is a great coil tonight. Adieu. Be vigilant, I beseech you.

Exeunt [Dogberry and Verges].

Enter Borachio and Conrade.

Borachio. What, Conrade!

Watch. [Aside] Peace! Stir not!

Borachio. Conrade, I say!

Conrade. Here, man. I am at thy elbow.

Borachio. Mass, and my elbow itched; I thought there would a scab follow.

Conrade. I will owe thee an answer for that; and now forward with thy tale.

Borachio. Stand thee close then under this penthouse, for it drizzles rain, and I will, like a true drunkard, utter all to thee.

Watch. [Aside] Some treason, masters; yet stand close.

Borachio. Therefore know I have earned of Don John a thousand ducats.

Conrade. Is it possible that any villainy should be so dear?

94 coil to-do, turmoil
100 Mass (an interjection, from “by the Mass”)
101 scab (I) crust over a wound (2) contemptible person
104 penthouse shed, lean-to
105 drunkard (his name is based on the Spanish borracho, “drunkard”)

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

Conrade. I wonder at it.

Borachio. That shows thou art unconfirmed. Thou knowest that the fashion
of a doublet, or a hat, or a cloak, is nothing to a man.°

Conrade. Yes, it is apparel.

Borachio. I mean the fashion.

Conrade. Yes, the fashion is the fashion.

Borachio. Tush! I may as well say the fool’s the fool. But seest thou not what a deformed thief this fashion is?

Watch. [Aside] I know that Deformed; ‘a has been a vile thief this seven year; ’a goes up and down like a gentleman. I remember his name.

Borachio. Didst thou not hear somebody?

Conrade. No; ’twas the vane on the house.

Borachio. Seest thou not, I say, what a deformed thief this fashion is? How giddily ‘a turns about all the hotbloods between fourteen and five-and-thirty? Sometimes fashioning them like Pharaoh’s soldiers in the reechy° painting, sometime like god Bel’s priests° in the old church window, sometime like the shaven Hercules in the smirched worm-eaten tapestry, where his codpiece° seems as massy as his club?

Conrade. All this I see; and I see that the fashion wears out more apparel than the man. But art not thou thyself giddy with the fashion too, that thou hast shifted out of thy tale into telling me of the fashion?

117 unconfirmed innocent  
119 is nothing to a man i.e., fails to reveal his actual character  
135 reechy grimy, filthy  
135—36 god Bel’s priests (from the Apocrypha)  
138 codpiece (decorative pouch at the fly of a sixteenth-century man’s breeches)

Borachio. Not so neither. But know that I have tonight 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, away went Claudio enragéd; 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’ernight and send her home again without a husband.

First Watch. We charge you in the Prince’s name stand!
Second Watch. Call up the right Master Constable. We have here recovered the most dangerous piece of lechery that ever was known in the commonwealth.
First Watch. And one Deformed is one of them; I know him; ‘a wears a lock.

Conrade. Masters, masters—
Second Watch. You’ll be made bring Deformed forth, I warrant you.

**151 possessed** informed, deluded
**172 lock** lovelock, curl of hair hanging by the car

Conrade. Masters, never speak; we charge you let us obey you to go with us.

Borachio. We are like to prove a goodly commodity, being taken up of these men’s bills.

Conrade. A commodity in question, I warrant you. Come, we’ll obey you. Exeunt.

[Scene 4. Leonato’s house.]

Enter Hero, and Margaret, and Ursula.

Hero. Good Ursula, wake my cousin Beatrice and desire her to rise.

Ursula. I will, lady.

Hero. And bid her come hither.

Ursula. Well. [Exit.]

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. I saw the Duchess of Milan’s gown that they praise so.
176—77 Masters ... with us (Conrade is mocking the language of the Second Watch; he means, “Say no more, we will go along with you”) 1


180 in question (1) subject to judicial examination (2) of doubtful value

3.4.6 rabato ruff
13 tire headdress
13 within in the next room

Hero. O, that exceeds, they say.

Margaret. By my troth, ’s but a nightgown° in respect of yours—cloth o’ gold and cuts,° and laced with silver, set with pearls, down sleeves, side-sleeves,° and skirts, round underborne with a bluish tinsel. But for a fine, quaint,° graceful, and excellent fashion, yours is worth ten on’t.

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 honorably? Is not marriage honorable in a beggar? Is not your lord honorable without marriage? I think you would have me say, “saving your reverence, a husband.” And bad thinking do not wrest true speaking, I’ll offend nobody. Is there any harm in “the heavier for a husband”? None, I think, and it be the right husband and the right wife; otherwise ‘tis light,° and not heavy. Ask my Lady Beatrice else. Here she comes.

Enter Beatrice.

Hero. Good morrow, coz.

Beatrice. Good morrow, sweet Hero.

Hero. Why, how now? Do you speak in the sick tune?

Beatrice. I am out of all other tune, methinks.

18 nightgown dressing gown
19 cuts slashes to show rich fabric underneath
20 down sleeves, side-sleeves long sleeves covering the arms, open sleeves hanging from the shoulder
22 quaint pretty, dainty
36 light (pun on “wanton”)

Margaret. Clap’s into° “Light o’ love.” That goes without a burden.° Do you sing it, and I’ll dance it.
Beatrice. Ye light o’ love with your heels!° Then, if your husband have stables enough, you’ll see he shall lack no barns.°
Margaret. O illegitimate construction! I scorn that with my heels.
Beatrice. ‘Tis almost five o’clock, cousin; ‘tis time you were ready. By my troth, I am exceeding ill. Heigh-ho!
Margaret. For a hawk, a horse, or a husband?
Beatrice. For the letter that begins them all, H.°
Margaret. Well, and you be not turned Turk,° there’s no more sailing by the star.
Beatrice. What means the fool, trow?°
Margaret. Nothing I; but God send everyone their heart’s desire!
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.
6.5 Beatrice. O, God help me! God help me! How long have you professed apprehension?°
Margaret. Ever 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.°

43 Clap’s into let us sing
44 burden bass part (with pun on “the heavier for a husband”)
45 Ye ... your heels (sexual innuendo)
47 barns (pun on “baims,” children)
54 H (“ache” was pronounced “aitch”)
55 turned Turk completely changed
57 trow I wonder
62 I am stuffed I have a head cold
63 stuffed filled (as with a child)
66 apprehension wit
Hero. There thou prick‘st her with a thistle.
Beatrice. Benedictus? Why Benedictus? You have some moral° in this Benedictus.
Margaret. Moral? No, by my troth, I have no moral meaning. I meant plain holy thistle. You may think perchance that I think you are in love. Nay, by‘r lady, I am not such a fool to think what I list;° nor I list not to think what I can; nor indeed I cannot think, if I would think my heart out of thinking, that you are in love, or that you will be in love, or that you can be in love. Yet Benedick was such another, and now is he become a man. He swore he would never marry; and yet now in despite of his heart he eats his meat without grudging.° And how you may be converted I know not; but methinks you look with your eyes as other women do.
Beatrice. What pace is this that thy tongue keeps?
Margaret. Not a false gallop.

Enter Ursula.

Ursula. Madam, withdraw. The Prince, the Count, Signior Benedick, Don John, and all the gallants of the town are come to fetch you to church.

Hero. Help to dress me, good coz, good Meg, good Ursula. [Exeunt.]

[Scene 5. Another room in Leonato’s house.]

Enter Leonato and the Constable [Dogberry], and the Headborough [Verges].

71—72 Carduus Benedictus blessed thistle, a medicinal herb
73 qualm sensation of sickness
76 moral special meaning
80 list please
87 he eats his meat without grudging he finds that he can still eat

Leonato. What would you with me, honest neighbor?
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 an old man and no honester than I.
15 Dogberry. Comparisons are odorous; Palabras,° neighbor Verges.
Leonato. Neighbors, you are tedious.
Dogberry. It pleases your worship to say so, but we are the poor Duke’s officers; but truly, for mine own part, if I were as tedious as a king, I could find in my heart to bestow it all of your worship.
Leonato. All thy tediousness on me, ah?
Dogberry. Yea, and ‘twere a thousand pound more than ’tis; for I hear as good exclamation on your worship as of any man in the city, and though I be but a poor man, I am glad to hear it.
Verges. And so am I.
Leonato. I would fain know what you have to say.
Verges. Marry, sir, our watch tonight, excepting your worship’s presence, ha’ ta’en a couple of as arrant knaves as any in Messina.

3.5.15 Palabras (for Spanish pocas palabras, few words)

Dogberry. A good old man, sir; he will be talking. As they say, “When the age is in, the wit is out.” God help us! It is a world to see! Well said, i’ faith, neighbor Verges. Well, God’s a good man. And two men ride of a horse, one must ride behind. An honest soul, i’ faith, sir, by my troth he is, as ever broke bread; but God is to be worshiped; all men are not alike, alas, good neighbor!
Leonato. Indeed, neighbor, he comes too short of you.
Dogberry. Gifts that God gives.
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 a Messenger.]

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

Leonato. I’ll wait upon them. I am ready.

Exit [Leonato, with Messenger].

Dogberry. Go, good partner, go get you to Francis Seacole; bid him bring his pen and inkhorn to the jail. We are now to examination these men.

Verges. And we must do it wisely.

Dogberry. We will spare for no wit, I warrant you; here’s that shall drive some of them to a non-come.° Only get the learned writer to set down our excommunication, and meet me at the jail. [Exeunt.]  

60 non-come non compos mentis

[ACT 4

Scene 1. A church.]

Enter Prince [Don Pedro], [Don John the] Bastard, Leonato, Friar [Francis], Claudio, Benedict, Hero, and 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. You come hither, my lord, to marry this lady?

Claudio. No.

Leonato. To be married to her; Friar, you come to marry her.

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

Hero. I do.

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

Claudio. Know you any, Hero?

Hero. None, my lord.

4.1.3 particular personal
Friar. 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!
Benedick. How now? Interjections? Why then, some be of° laughing, as, ah, ha, he!°
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. And what have I to give you back whose worth May counterpoise this rich and precious gift?
Don Pedro. Nothing, unless you render her again.
Claudio. Sweet Prince, you learn me noble thankfulness.

There, Leonato, take her back again. Give not this rotten orange to your friend. She’s but the sign and semblance of her honor. 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 vanquished the resistance of her youth And made defeat of her virginity—

20—21 some be of some are concerned with
21 ah, ha, he! (examples of interjections)
22 Stand thee by stand aside
40 luxurious lustful
43 approved tested
44 proof experience

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, showed Bashful sincerity and comely love.

*Hero.* And seemed I ever otherwise to you?

*Claudio.* Out on thee, seeming! I will write against it. You seem to me as Dian in her orb, As chaste as is the bud ere it be blown;° But you are more intemperate in your blood° Than Venus, or those pamp‘red animals That rage in savage sensuality.

*Hero.* Is my lord well that he doth speak so wide?°

*Leonato.* Sweet Prince, why speak not you?

*Don Pedro.* What should I speak? I stand dishonored 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.

*Benedick.* This looks not like a nuptial.

*Hero.* “True,” O God!

*Claudio.* Leonato, stand I here? Is this the Prince? Is this the Prince’s brother? Is this face Hero’s? Are our eyes our own?

*Leonato.* All this is so. But what of this, my lord?

47 **known** had intercourse with
57 **blown** blossomed
58 **blood** sexual desire
61 **so** wide so far from the truth
64 **stale** prostitute

*Claudio.* Let me but move one question to your daughter; And by that fatherly and kindly° power That you have in her, bid her answer truly.

*Leonato.* I charge thee do so, as thou art my child.

*Hero.* O, God defend me! How am I beset! What kind of catechizing 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.* Marry, that can Hero! Hero itself can blot out Hero’s virtue. What man was he talked with you yesternight, Out at your window betwixt twelve and one? Now, if you are a maid, answer to this.

*Hero.* I talked 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 honor Myself, my brother, and this grieved 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, Confessed 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 offense to utter them. Thus, pretty lady, I am sorry for thy much misgovernment.

*Claudio.* O Hero! What a Hero hadst thou been If half thy outward graces had been placed About thy thoughts and counsels of thy heart! But fare thee well, most foul, most fair, farewell; Thou pure impiety and impious purity, For thee I’ll lock up all the gates of love, And on my eyelids shall conjecture’ hang, To turn all beauty into thoughts of harm, And never shall it more be gracious.

73 **kindly** natural
91 **liberal** licentious

*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 wished for.

*Beatrice.* How now, cousin Hero?

*Friar.* Have comfort, lady.

*Leonato.* Dost thou look up?

*Friar.* 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? Chid I for that at frugal nature’s frame?° O, one too much by thee! Why had I one? Why ever wast thou lovely in my eyes? Why had I not with charitable hand
Took up a beggar’s issue at my gates, Who smirched thus and mired with infamy, I might have said, “No part of it is mine; This shame derives itself from unknown loins”? 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 fall’n 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!

105 conjecture suspicion
121 printed in her blood written in her blushes
127 frame plan

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

_Beatrice._ O, on my soul, my cousin is belied!
_Benedick._ Lady, were you her bedfellow last night?
_Beatrice._ No, truly, not; although, until last night, I have this twelvemonth been her bedfellow.
_Leonato._ Confirmed, confirmed! O, that is stronger made Which was before barred up with ribs of iron! Would the two princes lie, and Claudio lie, Who loved her so that, speaking of her foulness, Washed it with tears? Hence from her! Let her die.
_Friar._ Hear me a little; For I have only been silent so long, And given way unto this course of fortune, By noting of the lady. I have marked 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 appeared 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.

141 season give act as a preservative

_Leonato._ Friar, it cannot be. Thou seest that all the grace that she hath left Is that she will not add to her damnation A sin of perjury; she not denies it. Why seek‘st thou then to cover with excuse That which appears in proper nakedness?
Friar. 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! O my father, Prove you that any man with me conversed At hours unmeet, or that I yesternight Maintained the change of words with any creature, Refuse me, hate me, torture me to death!

Friar. There is some strange misprision in the princes.

Benedick. Two of them have the very bent of honor; And if their wisoms be misled in this, The practice of it lives in John the bastard, Whose spirits toil in frame of villainies.

Leonato. I know not. If they speak but truth of her, These hands shall tear her. If they wrong her honor, 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,

165 experimental seal seal of experience
166 tenor purport )
182 maintained the change held exchange
184 misprision mistaking
185 bent shape (or perhaps “inclination”)
187 practice scheming
193 invention inventiveness

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. 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. Marry, this well carried shall on her behalf Change slander to remorse; that is some good. But not for that dream I on this strange course, But on this travail look for greater birth. She dying, as it must be so maintained, Upon the instant that she was accused, Shall be lamented, pitied, and excused Of every hearer. For it so falls out That what we have we prize not to the worth
While we enjoy it; but being lacked and lost, Why, then we rack° the value, then we find The virtue that possession would not show us While it was ours. So will it fare with Claudio. When he shall hear she died upon his words, Th’ idea of her life shall sweetly creep Into his study of imagination,° And every lovely organ° of her life Shall come appareled in more precious habit,° More moving, delicate, and full of life,

199 quit revenge

204 Maintain a mourning ostentation perform the outward show of mourning

219 rack stretch

224 study of imagination meditation, musing

225 organ physical feature

226 habit dress

Into the eye and prospect of his soul Than when she lived indeed. Then shall he mourn, If ever love had interest in his liver,° And wish he had not so accused her, No, though he thought his accusation true. Let this be so, and doubt not but success° Will fashion the event° in better shape Than I can lay it down in likelihood. But if all aim, but this, be leveled false,° The supposition of the lady’s death Will quench the wonder of her infamy; 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 honor, 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. ‘Tis well consented. Presently away; For to strange sores strangely they strain the cure. Come, lady, die to live. This wedding day Perhaps is but prolonged. Have patience and endure. Exit [with all but Beatrice and Benedick].

Benedick. Lady Beatrice, have you wept all this while?

Beatrice. Yea, and I will weep a while longer.

Benedick. I will not desire that.
230 **liver** (supposed seat of love)
233 **success** what follows
234 **event** outcome
236 **But if ... false** but if all conjecture, except this (i.e., the mere supposition of Hero’s death), be aimed (**leveled**) falsely
239 **sort** turn out
244 **inwardness** most intimate feelings

*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 evenº 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 protestº I love thee.
*Beatrice.* Why then, God forgive me!
*Benedick.* What offense, sweet Beatrice?
*Beatrice.* You have stayed me in a happy hour.º 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.

263 **even** direct
278 **protest** avow
281 **in a happy** hour just in time

*Benedick.* Come, bid me do anything for thee.
Beatrice. Kill Claudio.
Benedick. Ha! Not for the wide world!
Beatrice. You kill me to deny it. Farewell.
Benedick. Tarry, sweet Beatrice. [He holds her.]
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. [He lets her go.]
Beatrice. You dare easier be friends with me than fight with mine enemy.
Benedick. Is Claudio thine enemy?
Beatrice. Is ‘a not approved in the height a villain, that hath slandered, scorned, dishonored my kinswoman? O that I were a man! What, bear her in hand\(^1\) until they come to take hands; and then, with public accusation, uncovered slander, unmitigated rancor—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 sland’red, she is undone.
Benedick. Beat—
Beatrice. Princes and counties! Surely, a princely testimony, a goodly count, Count Comfect;\(^2\) a sweet gal- lant surely! 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 cursies,\(^3\) valor 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.

301 **bear** her in hand fool her
314 **Comfect** sugar candy

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 2. A prison.]

Enter the Constables [Dogberry and Verges] and the Town Clerk [Sexton] in gowns, Borachio, [Conrade, and Watch].

Dogberry. Is our whole dissembly appeared?
Verges. O, a stool and a cushion for the sexton.
Sexton. Which be the malefactors?
Dogberry. Marry, that am I and my partner.

317 cursies curtsies

Verges. Nay, that’s certain. We have the exhibition to examine.
Sexton. 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?
Both. 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 marvelous 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?
Sexton. Master Constable, you go not the way to examine. You must call forth the watch that are their accusers.

   4.2.12 sīrrah (term of address used to an inferior)
   26 go about with him get the better of him
   29 none (apparently pronounced the same as “known,” and so taken by Dogberry in his next speech)
   30—31 they are both in a tale their stories agree

Dogberry. Yea, marry, that’s the eftest° way. Let the watch come forth. Masters, I charge you in the Prince’s name, accuse these men.
First Watch. 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.
Sexton. What heard you him say else?
Second Watch. Marry, that he had received a thousand ducats of Don John for accusing the Lady Hero wrongfully.
Dogberry. Flatburglary as ever was committed.
Verges. Yea, by mass, that it is.
Sexton. What else, fellow?
First Watch. 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.
Sexton. What else?
Watch. That is all.
Sexton. And this is more, masters, than you can deny. Prince John is this morning secretly stol’n 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.]
35 **eflest** quickest

_Dogberry._ [To the Watch] Come, let them be opinioned. °
_Verges._ Let them be in the hands of Coxcomb.°

_Dogberry._ God’s my life, where’s the sexton? Let him 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 offi- cer; 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 everything handsome about him. Bring him away. O that I had been writ down an ass! _Exit [with the others]._

66-67 **opinioned** (he means “pinioned”)

68 **Coxcomb** (apparently Verges thinks this is an elegant name for one of the Watch; editors commonly emend “of Coxcomb” to “off, coxcomb,” and give to Conrade)

71 **naughty** wicked

[ACT 5

**Scene 1. Before Leonato’s house.]**

_Enter Leonato and his brother [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 overwhelmed like mine,
And bid him speak of patience. Measure his woe the length and breadth of
mine, And let it answer every strain\ of for strain, As thus for thus, and such a
grief for such, In every lineament, branch, shape, and form. If such a one will
smile and stroke his beard, And sorrow wag,\ cry “hem” when he should
groan; Patch grief with proverbs, make misfortune drunk With candle-
wasters;\ bring him yet\ to me, 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, Fetter strong madness
in a silken thread,

5.1.2 second assist
7 suit with accord with
12 strain quality, trait
16 wag wave away
18 candle-wasters revelers (?) philosophers (?)
18 yet then

Charm ache with air and agony with words. No, no! ‘Tis all men’s office to
speak patience To those that wring under the load of sorrow, But no man’s
virtue nor sufficiency To be so moral\ when he shall endure The like himself.
Therefore give me no counsel; My griefs cry louder than advertisement.\n
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, However they have
writ the style of gods And made a push at chance and sufferance.\n
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 dishonor her.

Enter Prince [Don Pedro] and Claudio.
Antonio. Here comes the Prince and Claudio hastily. 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.
24 preceptial medicine medicine of precepts (cf. line 17: “Patch grief with proverbs”)
30 moral moralizing
32 advertisement counsel
38 made ... sufferance defied mischance and suffering

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! Nay, never lay thy hand upon thy sword; I fear thee not.
Claudio. Marry, beshrew my hand If it should give your age such cause of fear. In faith, my hand meant nothing to my sword.
Leonato. Tush, tush, man! Never fleer and jest at me. I speak not like a dotard nor a fool, As under privilege of age to brag What I have done being young, or what would do, Were I not old. Know, Claudio, to thy head, Thou hast so wronged mine innocent child and me That I am forced to lay my reverence by And, with gray 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 villainy!
Claudio. My villainy?
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, Despite his nice fence and his active practice, His May of youth and bloom of lustihood.

55 beshrew curse (but not a strong word)
58 fleer sneer
62 head face
66 trial of a man manly test, i.e., a duel
71 framed made
Claudio. Away! I will not have to do with you.
Leonato. Canst thou so daff° me? Thou hast killed my child.
If thou kill‘st me, boy, thou shalt kill a man.
Antonio. He shall kill two of us, and men indeed. But that’s no matter; let him
kill one first. Win me and wear me! Let him answer me. Come, follow me,
boy; come, sir boy; come, follow me. Sir boy, I’ll whip you from your
foining° fence! Nay, as I am a gentleman, I will.
Leonato. Brother—
Antonio. Content yourself. God knows I loved my niece; And she is dead,
slanded to death by villains, That dare as well answer a man indeed As I
dare take a serpent by the tongue. Boys, apes, braggarts, Jacks,° milksops!
Leonato. Brother Anthony—
Antonio. Hold you content. What, man! I know them, yea, And what they
weigh, even to the utmost scruple;° Scambling,° outfacing, fashionmonging°
boys, That lie and cog° and flout, deprave and slander, Go anticly,° and show
outward hideousness, And speak off half a dozen dang‘rous words, How they
might hurt their enemies, if they durst; And this is all.
Leonato. But, brother Anthony—

75 nice fence elegant fencing  
78 daff put off 84 foining thrusting  
91 Jacks (a contemtuous term of no precise meaning)  
93 scruple smallest unit  
94 Scambling brawling  
94 fashionmonging fashion following  
  cog cheat  
96 anticly grotesquely dressed

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 honor, 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 ambo° [Leonatio and Antonio].
Enter Benedick.

Don Pedro. See, see! Here comes the man we went to seek.
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 liked to have had our two noses snapped off with two old men without teeth.
Don Pedro. Leonato and his brother. What think’st thou? Had we fought, I doubt° we should have been too young for them.
Benedick. In a false quarrel there is no true valor. 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?

102 wake your patience arouse your indulgence (heavily ironic)
109 s. d ambo both (Latin)
118 doubt suspect
123 high-proof in the highest degree

Benedick. It is in my scabbard. Shall I draw it?
Don Pedro. Dost thou wear thy wit by thy side?
Claudio. Never any did so, though very many have been beside their wit. I will bid thee draw, as we do the minstrels: draw° to pleasure us.
Don Pedro. As I am an honest man, he looks pale. Art thou sick, or angry?
Claudio. What, courage, man! What though care killed a cat, thou hast mettle enough in thee to kill care.
Benedick. Sir, I shall meet your wit in the career° and you charge° it against me. I pray you choose another subject.
Claudio. Nay then, give him another staff. This last was broke cross.°
Don Pedro. By this light, he changes more and more. I think he be angry indeed.
Claudio. If he be, he knows how to turn his girdle.°
Benedick. Shall I speak a word in your ear?
Claudio. God bless me from a challenge!
Benedick. [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.
Claudio. Well, I will meet you, so I may have good cheer.
Don Pedro. What, a feast, a feast?
Claudio. I’ faith, I thank him; he hath bid me to a calf’s head and a capon; the which if I do not carve most curiously,° say my knife’s naught. Shall I not find a woodcock° too?

129 **draw** i.e., draw not a sword but a fiddle bow
134 **in the career** headlong
135 **charge** i.e., as in tilting with staves or lances
138 **broke cross** ineptly broken (by crossing the opponent’s shield instead of striking it headlong)
141 **turn his girdle** challenge me (by reaching for his dagger?)
147 **protest** proclaim

Benedick. Sir, your wit ambles well; it goes easily.
Don Pedro. I’ll tell thee how Beatrice praised thy wit the other day. I said thou hadst a fine wit. “True,” said she, “a fine little one.” “No,” said I, “a great wit.” “Right,” says she, “a great gross one.” “Nay,” said I, “a good wit.” “Just,” said she, “it hurts nobody.” “Nay,” said I, “the gentleman is wise.” “Certain,” said she, “a wise gentleman.” “Nay,” said I, “he hath the tongues.”° “That I believe,” said she, “for he swore a thing to me on Monday night which he forswore on Tuesday morning; there’s a double tongue; there’s two tongues.” Thus did she an hour together transshape° thy particular virtues. Yet at last she concluded with a sigh, thou wast the prop’rest° man in Italy.
Claudio. For the which she wept heartily and said she cared not.
Don Pedro. Yea, that she did; but yet, for all that, and if she did not hate him deadly, she would love him dearly. The old man’s daughter told us all.
Claudio. All, all! And moreover, God saw him when he was hid in the garden.
Don Pedro. But when shall we set the savage bull’s horns on the sensible Benedick’s head?
Claudio. Yea, and text underneath, “Here dwells Benedick, the married man”?
Benedick. Fare you well, boy; you know my mind. I will leave you now to your gossiplike humor; you break jests as braggards do their blades, which God be thanked hurt not. [To Don Pedro] My lord, for your many courtesies I
thank you. I must discontinue your company. Your brother the bastard is fled from Messina. You have among you killed a sweet and innocent lady. For my Lord Lackbeard there, he and I shall meet; and till then peace be with him.

[Exit.]

155 curiously skillfully
156 woodcock stupid bird (Claudio reduces the duel to a carving up of symbols of stupidity—a calf’s head, a capon, and a woodcock)
165 hath the tongues knows foreign languages
169 transshape distort
171 prop‘rest most handsome

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.
Don Pedro. What a pretty thing man is when he goes in his doublet and hose and leaves off his wit!

Enter Constables [Dogberry, Verges, and the Watch, with] Conrade and Borachio.

Claudio. He is then a giant to an ape; but then is an ape a doctor to such a man.○
Don Pedro. But, soft you, let me be! Pluck up, my heart, and be sad. Did he not say my brother was fled?
Dogberry. Come you, sir. If justice cannot tame you, she shall ne‘er weigh more reasons in her balance. Nay, and you be a cursing hypocrite once, you must be looked to.
Claudio. Hearken after○ their offense, my lord.
Don Pedro. Officers, what offense have these men done?

200-01 He is then ... a man i.e., an ape would consider him important, but an ape is actually a scholar (doctor) compared to such a fool
211 Hearken after inquire into

Dogberry. Marry, sir, they have committed false report; moreover, they have
spoken untruths; sec ondarily, 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 offense; sixth and lastly, why they are committed; and to conclude, what you lay to their charge.

*Claudio.* Rightly reasoned, and in his own division; and, by my troth, there’s one meaning well suited.°

*Don Pedro.* Who have you offended, masters, that you are thus bound° to your answer? This learned constable is too cunning° to be understood. What’s your offense?

*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 villainy 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 uttered it.

*Don Pedro.* But did my brother set thee on to this?

> 224 **well suited** well dressed out<br>226 **bound** arraigned<br>227 **cunning** intelligent<br><br>*Borachio.* Yea, and paid me richly for the practice of it.

*Don Pedro.* He is composed and framed of treachery, And fled he is upon this villainy.

*Claudio.* Sweet Hero, now thy image doth appear<br>In the rare semblance that I loved it first.

*Dogberry.* Come, bring away the plaintiffs. By this time our sexton 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 sexton too.

Enter Leonato, his brother [Antonio], and the Sexton.

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 killed Mine innocent child?

Borachio. Yea, even I alone.

Leonato. No, not so, villain! Thou beliest thyself. Here stand a pair of honorable 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 sinned I not But in mistaking.

272 pray your patience ask your forgiveness
274 invention imagination

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 labor aught in sad invention, Hang her an epitaph upon her tomb, And sing it to her bones, sing it tonight. Tomorrow 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 giv’n her cousin, And so dies my revenge.

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

Leonato. Tomorrow then I will expect your coming; Tonight I take my leave. This naughty man Shall face to face be brought to Margaret, Who I believe was packed° 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 anything that I do
know by her.

282 **Possess** inform

292 **right** (Hero had a right to claim Claudio as her husband; probably there is also a pun on “rite”)

300 **packed** combined, i.e., an accomplice

*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 rememb‘red in his punishment. And also the watch heard them talk of one Deformed; they say he wears a key° in his ear, and a lock hanging by it, and borrows money in God’s name, the which he hath used so long and never paid that now men grow hard-hearted and will lend nothing for God’s sake. Pray you examine him upon that point.

*Leonato.* I thank thee for thy care and honest pains.

*Dogberry.* Your worship speaks like a most thankful and reverent youth, and I praise God for you.

*Leonato.* There’s for thy pains. *[Gives money.]

*Dogberry.* God save the foundation!°

*Leonato.* Go, I discharge° thee of thy prisoner, and I thank thee.

*Dogberry.* I leave an arrant knave with your worship, which I beseech your worship to correct yourself, for the example of others. God keep your worship! I wish your worship well. God restore you to health! I humbly give you leave to depart; and if a merry meeting may be wished, God prohibit it!

Come, neighbor. *[Exeunt Dogberry and Verges.]*

*Leonato.* Until tomorrow morning, lords, farewell.

*Antonio.* Farewell, my lords. We look for you to mor- row.

*Don Pedro.* We will not fail.

*Claudio.* Tonight I’ll mourn with Hero. *[Exeunt Don Pedro and Claudio.]*

305-06 **not under white and black** not in the official record

309 **key** ring (but perhaps Dogberry merely assumes that if a man wears a lock in his hair he must wear a key too)

319 **the foundation** (as if Leonato were a charitable institution)

320 **discharge** relieve

*Leonato.* *[To the Watch]* Bring you these fellows on. We’ll talk with Margaret,
How her acquaintance grew with this lewd° fellow.
Exeunt [separately].

[Scene 2. 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 belowstairs?‘

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. I give thee the bucklers.°

Margaret. Give us the swords; we have bucklers of our own.

Benedick. If you use them, Margaret, you must put in the pikes° with a vice;° and they are dangerous weapons for maids.

333 lewd low
5.2.6 style (pun on “stile,” a set of steps for passing over a fence)
9 come over me (the beginning of an interchange of sexual innuendoes)

10 keep belowstairs dwell in the servants quarters
16-17 I give thee the bucklers I yield

Margaret. Well, I will call Beatrice to you, who I think hath legs. Exit Margaret.

Benedick. And therefore will come. [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, Leander the good swimmer, Troilus° the first employer of panders, and a whole book full of these quondam carpetmongers,
° whose names yet run smoothly in the even road of a blank verse—why, they were never so truly turned over and over as my poor self in love. 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 omi 40 nous 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.

21 pikes spikes in the center of bucklers  
21 vice screw  
30-31 Leander ... Troilus (legendary lovers; Leander nightly swam the Hellespont to visit Hero, Troilus was aided in his love for Cressida by Pan-dams)  
32-33 quondam carpetmongers ancient boudoir knights

Beatrice. Foul words is but foul wind, and foul wind is but foul breath, and foul breath is noisome. Therefore I will depart unkissed.  
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. An old, an old instance,⁹ Beatrice, that lived in the time of good neighbors. If a man do not erect in this age his own tomb ere he dies, he shall live no longer in monument than the bell rings and the widow weeps.

Beatrice. And how long is that, think you?

Benedick. Question: why, an hour in clamor and a quarter in rheum;⁹ therefore is it most expedient for the wise, if Don Worm, his conscience, find no impediment to the contrary, to be the trumpet of his own virtues, as I am to myself. So much for praising myself, who, I myself will bear witness, is praiseworthy. And now tell me, how doth your cousin?

58-59 subscribe him write him down
63 politic a state well-ordered a community
75 instance example
82 rheum tears

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.

Enter Ursula.

Ursula. Madam, you must come to your uncle. Yon- der’s old coil⁹ 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. Exit [with Beatrice and Ursula].

[Scene 3. A church.]

Enter Claudio, Prince [Don Pedro, Lord.] and three or four with tapers [followed by Musicians].

Claudio. Is this the monument of Leonato?
Lord. It is, my lord.

[Claudio reads from a scroll.]

95 **old coil** plenty of confusion

*Epitaph.*
Done to death by slanderous tongues
Was the Hero that here lies;
Death, in guerdon⁰ of her wrongs,
Gives her fame which never dies.
So the life that died with shame
Lives in death with glorious fame.

[Hangs up the scroll.]
Hang thou there upon the tomb,
Praising her when I am dumb.

*Claudio.* Now, music, sound, and sing your solemn hymn.

*Song.*
Pardon, goddess of the night,⁰
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.

*Claudio.* Now unto thy bones good night! Yearly will I do this rite.
*Don Pedro.* Good morrow, masters; put your torches out.
The wolves have preyed, and look, the gentle day,
Before the wheels of Phoebus,⁰ round about Dapples the drowsy east with spots of gray.
Thanks to you all, and leave us. Fare you well.
*Claudio.* Good morrow, masters; each his several way.

5.3.5 **guerdon** reward
12 **goddess of the night** Diana, goddess of the moon and of chastity
26 **wheels of Phoebus** wheels of the sun god’s chariot

*Don Pedro.* Come, let us hence and put on other weeds,°
And then to Leonato’s we will go.
*Claudio.* And Hymen° now with luckier issue speeds° Than this for whom we rend‘red up this woe.
*Exeunt.*

**[Scene 4. Leonato’s house.]**

*Enter Leonato, Benedick, [Beatrice,] Margaret, Ursula, Old Man [Antonio], Friar [Francis], Hero.*

*Friar.* Did I not tell you she was innocent?
*Leonato.* So are the Prince and Claudio, who accused her

Upon the error that you heard debated.
But Margaret was in some fault for this,
Although against her will, as it appears
In the true course of all the question.°

*Antonio.* Well, I am glad that all things sorts° so well.
*Benedick.* And so am I, being else by faith enforced To call young Claudio to a reckoning for it.
*Leonato.* Well, daughter, and you gentlewomen all, Withdraw into a chamber by yourselves, And when I send for you, come hither masked. The Prince and Claudio promised by this hour To visit me. You know your office, brother; You must be father to your brother’s daughter, And give her to young Claudio. *Exeunt Ladies.*
*Antonio.* Which I will do with confirmed° countenance.

30 **weeds** apparel
32 **Hymen** god of marriage
32 **speeds** succeeds
5.4.6 **question** investigation
7 sorts turn out
17 confirmed steady

Benedick. Friar, I must entreat your pains, I think.
Friar. 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 favor.
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 conjoined
In the state of honorable marriage;
In which, good friar, I shall desire your help.

Leonato. My heart is with your liking.
Friar. And my help. Here comes the Prince and Claudio.

Enter Prince [Don Pedro] and Claudio and two
or three other.

Don Pedro. Good morrow to this fair assembly.
Leonato. Good morrow, Prince; good morrow, Claudio.

We here attend you. Are you yet determined
Today to marry with my brother's daughter?

Claudio. I'll hold my mind, were she an Ethiope.
Leonato. Call her forth, brother. Here's the friar ready. [Exit Antonio.]
Don Pedro. Good morrow, Benedick. Why, what's the matter

That you have such a February face,
So full of frost, of storm, and cloudiness?

Claudio. I think he thinks upon the savage bull.°

Tush, fear not, man! We'll tip thy horns with gold,°
And all Europa° shall rejoice at thee,
As once Europa did at lusty Jove
When he would play the noble beast in love.

_Benedick._ Bull Jove, sir, had an amiable low,
And some such strange bull leaped your father’s cow
And got a calf in that same noble feat
Much like to you, for you have just his bleat.

_Enter [Leonato’s] brother [Antonio], Hero,
Beatrice, Margaret, Ursula, [the ladies wearing
   masks].

_Claudio._ For this I owe you.° Here comes other reck‘nings.
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.

43 **savage bull** (refers to 1.1.252)
44 **tip thy horns with gold** i.e., make your cuckolding something
to be proud of
45 **Europa** Europe (though in the next line the word designates the
girl that Jupiter wooed in the guise of a bull)
52 **I owe you** i.e., I will pay you back (for calling me a calf and a
bastard)

_Don Pedro._ The former Hero! Hero that is dead!
_Leonato._ She died, my lord, but whiles° her slander lived.
_Friar._ 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. [Unmasking] 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, and Ursula 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, Fashioned to
Beatrice.

66 but whiles only while
67 qualify abate
69 largely in detail

Hero. And here’s another,
Writ in my cousin’s hand, stol’n 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. [Kisses 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 humor. Dost thou think I care for a satire or an epigram? No. If a
man will be beaten with brains, ‘a shall wear nothing handsome about him. In
brief, since I do pur- pose to marry, I will think nothing to any purpose that
the world can say against it; and therefore never flout at me for what I have said against it; for man is a giddy thing, and this is my conclusion. 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 cudgeled thee out of thy single life, to make thee a double-dealer,9 which out of question thou wilt be if my cousin do not look exceeding 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.

87 halting limping
97 Benedick (both Quarto and Folio assign this line to Leonato; possibly the original reading is correct, and Lconato forces Benedick to kiss Beatrice)
114 double-dealer (1) married man (2) unfaithful husband

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! There is no staff more reverend than one tipped with horn.9

Enter Messenger.
Messenger. My lord, your brother John is ta’en in flight, And brought with armed men back to Messina. Benedick. Think not on him till tomorrow. I’ll devise thee brave punishments for him. Strike up, pipers! Dance. [Exeunt.]
FINIS.

123-24 with horn (final reference to the horns of a cuckold)