

Act I. [211 lines/ 13:11]

Scene 1. [211 lines /13:11]

*[Enter LEONATO, with a letter, and BALTHASAR.]*

LEONATO: I learn in this letter that Don Pedro of Aragon comes this night to Messina!

*[EXCITEMENT!]*

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

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

BALTHASAR: 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 honour on a young Florentine called Claudio.

*[HERO reacts and MARGARET notices.]*

BALTHASAR: Much deserved on his part, and equally remembered 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 bettered expectation than you must expect of me to tell you how.

BEATRICE: I pray you, is Signor Mount-on-to returned from the wars, or no?

BALTHASAR: 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 Signor Benedick of Padua.

BALTHASAR: O he's returned, and as pleasant as ever he was.

BEATRICE: 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.

LEONATO: Faith, niece, you tax Signor Benedick too much. But he'll be meet with you, I doubt it not.

BALTHASAR: He hath done good service, lady, in these wars.

BEATRICE: You had musty victual, and he hath help to eat it. He is a very valiant trencherman; he hath an excellent stomach.

BALTHASAR: And a good soldier too, lady.

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

LEONATO: You must not, sir, mistake my niece. There is a kind of merry war betwixt Signor 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.

BALTHASAR: Is't possible?

BEATRICE: Very easily possible. He wears his faith but as the fashion of his hat; it ever changes.

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

BEATRICE: No. An he were, I would burn my study. But I pray you, who is his companion?

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

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

BALTHASAR: 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.

BALTHASAR: Don Pedro is approached.

*[Enter grandly, with military formality, DON PEDRO, DOÑA JUANITA, BORACHIO, CONRAD, CLAUDIO, and BENEDICK. Bows, curtsies, and obeisances.]*

DON PEDRO: Good Signor 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 too willingly. I think this is your daughter.

LEONATO: Her mother hath many times told me so.

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

LEONATO: Signor Benedick, no, for then were you a child.

DON PEDRO: You have it full, Benedick. We may guess by this what you are, being a man. Truly, the lady fathers herself. Be happy, lady, for you are like an honourable father.

*[DON PEDRO takes LEONATO aside to speak privately.]*

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

BEATRICE: I wonder that you will still be talking, Signor 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 Signor Benedick? Courtesy itself must convert to disdain if you come in her presence.

BENEDICK: Then is courtesy a turncoat. But it is certain I am loved of all ladies, only you excepted. And I would I could find in my heart that I had not a hard heart, for truly I love none.

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

BENEDICK: God keep your ladyship still in that mind. So some gentleman or other shall scape a predestinate scratched face.

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

BENEDICK: Well, you are a rare parrot-teacher.

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

BENEDICK: I would my horse had the speed of your tongue, and so good a continuer.

*[interrupts BEATRICE's rejoinder.]* —But keep your way, o' God's name. I have done. *[moving off to get the last word]*

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

DON PEDRO: That is the sum of all, Leonato.

*[DON PEDRO and LEONATO rejoin the others.]*

—Signor Claudio and Signor 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 DOÑA JUANITA]* Let me bid you welcome, my lady. Being reconciled to the Prince your brother, I owe you all duty.

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

LEONATO *[to DON PEDRO]*: Please it your grace lead on?

DON PEDRO: Your hand, Leonato, we will go together.

*[Exeunt DON PEDRO, DOÑA JUANITA, LEONATO, supporting ANTONIO (leaving his cane behind), HERO, BEATRICE, CONRAD, DOGBERRY, and BALTHASAR and BORACHIO, both flirting with MARGARET. HERO and BEATRICE reappear promptly on the balcony, deep in conversation and unaware of the conversation below.]*

CLAUDIO: Benedick, didst thou note the daughter of Signor Leonato?

BENEDICK: I noted her not; but I looked on her.

CLAUDIO: Is she not a modest young lady?

BENEDICK: Do you question me as an honest man should do, for my simple true judgment, or would you have me speak after my custom, as being a professed tyrant to their sex?

CLAUDIO: No, I pray thee speak in sober judgment.

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

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

BENEDICK: Would you buy her, that you enquire after her?

CLAUDIO: Can the world buy such a jewel? In mine eye she is the sweetest lady that ever I looked on.

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

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

*[Exeunt HERO and BEATRICE above.]*

BENEDICK: Is't come to this? Shall I never see a bachelor of three-score again? Go to, i' faith, an thou wilt needs thrust thy neck into a yoke, wear the print of it and sigh away Sundays. Look, Don Pedro is returned to seek you.

*[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 *[kneels]*—he is in love. With who? Now that is your grace's part. Mark how short his answer is—with Hero, Leonato's short daughter.

CLAUDIO: If this were so, so were it uttered.

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

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

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

CLAUDIO: You speak this to fetch me in, my lord.

DON PEDRO: By my troth, I speak my thought.

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

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

CLAUDIO: That I love her, I feel.

DON PEDRO: That she is worthy, I know.

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

*[Enter, unnoticed, MARGARET, stealthily and amorously stalked by BORACHIO.*

*MARGARET slips off and exits, but BORACHIO, unseen, lingers to eavesdrop.]*

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

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

BENEDICK: That a woman conceived me, I thank her. That she brought me up, I likewise give her most humble thanks. But that I will hang my bugle in an invisible baldrick, all women shall pardon me. Because I will not do them the wrong to mistrust any, I will do myself the right to trust none. And the fine is—for the which I may go the finer—I will live a bachelor.

DON PEDRO: I shall see thee ere I die look pale with love.

BENEDICK: With anger, with sickness, or with hunger, my lord; not with love. Prove that ever I lose more blood with love than I will get again with drinking, pick out mine eyes with a ballad-maker's pen and hang me up at the door of a brothel-house for the sign of blind Cupid.

DON PEDRO: Well, if ever thou dost fall from this faith, thou wilt prove a notable argument. "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, thou wilt quake for this shortly.

BENEDICK: I look for an earthquake too, then.

DON PEDRO: Well, as time shall try. In the meantime, good Signor 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 embassy. And so I leave you.

*[Exit BENEDICK.]*

CLAUDIO: My liege, your highness now may do me good.

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 her, Claudio?

CLAUDIO: O my lord,  
 When you went onward on this ended action  
 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 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 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 complexiön.  
 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?  
 Look what will serve is fit: 'tis once, thou lovest,  
 And I will fit thee with the remedy.  
 I know we shall have revelling tonight.  
 I will assume thy part in some disguise,  
 And tell fair Hero I am Claudio.

*[Enter, unnoticed, to retrieve his cane, ANTONIO, who eavesdrops with his ear trumpet.]*

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,  
*[exiting with CLAUDIO.]* And the conclusion is, she shall be thine.  
 In practise let us put it presently.

*[Exeunt DON PEDRO and CLAUDIO, then enter LEONATO, who almost collides with ANTONIO. Exit BORACHIO, unnoticed.]*

LEONATO: How now, brother!

ANTONIO: Brother, I can tell you strange news that you yet dreamt not of.

LEONATO: Are they good?

ANTONIO: As the event stamps them. But they have a good cover; they show well outward. The Prince and Count Claudio, walking in this thick-pleached alley in mine

orchard, were thus much overheard by me: 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: 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 we and tell her of it.

*[Exeunt LEONATO and ANTONIO.]*

Act II. [487 lines/30:26]

Scene 1. [323 lines /20:11]

*[Enter DOÑA JUANITA, attended by CONRAD.]*

CONRAD: What the goodyear, my lady. Why are you thus out of measure sad?

DOÑA JUANITA: There is no measure in the occasion that breeds it; therefore the sadness is without limit.

CONRAD: You should hear reason.

DOÑA JUANITA: And when I have heard it, what blessing brings it?

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

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

CONRAD: 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.

DOÑA JUANITA: I had rather be a canker in a hedge than a rose in his grace. And it better fits my blood to be disdained of all than to fashion a carriage to rob love from any. In this, though I cannot be said to be a flattering lady, it must not be denied but I am a plain-dealing bitch. 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.

CONRAD: Who comes here?

*[Enter BORACHIO, who bows.]*

DOÑA JUANITA: What news, Borachio?

BORACHIO: The Prince your brother is royally entertained by Leonato, and I can give you intelligence of an intended marriage.

DOÑA JUANITA: Will it serve for any model to build mischief on? What is she for a fool that betroths herself to unquietness?

BORACHIO: Marry, it is Hero, the daughter and heir of Leonato.

DOÑA JUANITA: A very forward March-chick. And who, and who? Which way looks she?

BORACHIO: Marry, even as far as your brother's right hand.

DOÑA JUANITA: Who, the most exquisite Claudio?

BORACHIO: Even he.

DOÑA JUANITA: A proper squire.

BORACHIO: I heard it agreed upon that the Prince should woo Hero for himself and, having obtained her, give her to Count Claudio.

DOÑA JUANITA: Come, come, let us to the dance. Their cheer is the greater that I am subdued, but this may prove music 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?

CONRAD: To the death, my lady.

*[Exeunt DOÑA JUANITA, BORACHIO, and CONRAD one way as LEONATO, holding an ape mask, ANTONIO, holding a different ape mask, HERO, BEATRICE, and MARGARET, enter another way.]*

BEATRICE: How tartly that lady looks! I never can see her but I am heartburned an hour after.

HERO: She is of a very melancholy disposition.

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

LEONATO: Then half Signor Benedick's tongue in Countess Juanita's mouth, and half Countess Juanita's melancholy in Signor Benedick's face—

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

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

ANTONIO: In faith, she's too curst.

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

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

BEATRICE: Just, if he send me no husband; 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.

LEONATO: You may light on a husband that hath no beard.

BEATRICE: What should I do with him? Dress him in my apparel and make him my waiting gentlewoman? He that hath a beard is more than a youth, and he that hath no beard is less than a man; and he that is more than a youth is not for me, and he that is less than a man, I am not for him. Therefore I will even take sixpence in earnest of the bearherd and lead his apes into hell.

LEONATO: Well then, go you into hell?

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

ANTONIO *[to HERO]*: Well, niece, I trust you will be ruled by your father.

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

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

BEATRICE: Not till God make men of some other mettle 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 *[to HERO]*: 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.

LEONATO: Cousin, you apprehend passing shrewdly.

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

ANTONIO *[to LEONATO]*: The revellers are entering, brother.

*[ANTONIO and LEONATO leave the women and mask themselves as URSULA and DOÑA JUANITA enter separately and join the women, all unmasked.]*

LEONATO: Make good room.

*[Enter, all outrageously masked, DON PEDRO, CLAUDIO, BENEDICK, BALTHASAR, and BORACHIO. Music! DON PEDRO, DOÑA JUANITA, ANTONIO, CLAUDIO, HERO, BENEDICK, BEATRICE, BORACHIO, MARGARET, and URSULA pair up to dance a pavane (or other dance); however, like musical chairs, every time partners change, one man is left without a partner for that bout. LEONATO looks on.]*

#### The First Bout

DON PEDRO *[to HERO]*: Lady, will you walk a bout 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 favour; for God defend the lute should be like the case.

DON PEDRO: My visor is Philemon's roof.

Within the house is Jove.

HERO: Why, then, your visor should be thatched.

DON PEDRO: Speak low if you speak love.

*[Partners change, DON PEDRO left without a partner.]*

#### The Second Bout

BALTHASAR *[to MARGARET]*: Well, I would you did like me.

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

BALTHASAR: Which is one?

MARGARET: I say my prayers aloud.

BALTHASAR: I love you the better; the hearers may cry amen.

MARGARET: God match me with a good dancer.

BALTHASAR: Amen.

MARGARET: And God keep him out of my sight when the dance is done.

*[BALTHASAR doesn't reply.]*

MARGARET: Answer, clerk.

BALTHASAR: No more words. The clerk is answered.

*[Partners change, BALTHASAR left without a partner.]*

The Third Bout

URSULA *[to ANTONIO]*: I know you well enough, you are Signor 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 *[annoyed]*: 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.

*[Partners change, ANTONIO left without a partner.]*

The Fourth Bout

BEATRICE *[to BENEDICK]*: Will you not tell me who told you so?

BENEDICK *[disguising his voice]*: No, you shall pardon me.

BEATRICE: Nor will you not tell me who you are?

BENEDICK *[disguising his voice]*: Not now.

BEATRICE: That I was disdainful—well this was Signor Benedick that said so.

BENEDICK *[disguising his voice]*: What's he?

BEATRICE: I am sure you know him well enough.

BENEDICK *[disguising his voice]*: Not I, believe me.

BEATRICE: Did he never make you laugh?

*[Partners change, but BENEDICK steps into CLAUDIO's place and contrives to match with BEATRICE again, CLAUDIO left without a partner. DON PEDRO is matched with HERO again, BORACHIO with DOÑA JUANITA.]*

The Fifth Bout

BENEDICK *[disguising his voice]*: I pray you, what is he?

BEATRICE: Why, he is the Prince's jester, a very dull fool. Only his gift is in devising impossible slanders. None but libertines delight in him, and the commendation is not in his wit but in his villany, for he both pleases men and angers them, and then they laugh at him and beat him. I am sure he is in the fleet. I would he had boarded me.

BENEDICK *[disguising his voice]*: 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. We must follow the leaders.

*[Music changes to a new dance. Exeunt, dancing, LEONATO, BALTHASAR, MARGARET, ANTONIO, URSULA, BENEDICK and BEATRICE. ANTONIO becomes SEACOAL. DON PEDRO retreats with HERO to a corner and woos her, observed from across the space by CLAUDIO.]*

DOÑA JUANITA *[false aside to BORACHIO]*: Sure my brother is amorous on Hero.

*[DOÑA JUANITA and BORACHIO approach CLAUDIO.]*

DOÑA JUANITA: Are not you Signor Benedick?

CLAUDIO: You know me well. I am he.

DOÑA JUANITA: Signor, you are very near my brother in his love. He is enamoured on Hero. I pray you dissuade him from her. She is no equal for his birth. You may do the part of an honest man in it.

CLAUDIO: How know you he loves her?

DOÑA JUANITA: I heard him swear his affection.

*[BORACHIO unmask.]*

BORACHIO: So did I, too, and he swore he would marry her tonight.

*[Exeunt DON PEDRO hand-in-hand with HERO.]*

DOÑA JUANITA: Come, let us to the banquet.

*[Exeunt DOÑA JUANITA and BORACHIO. CLAUDIO unmask.]*

CLAUDIO: Thus answer I in the name of Benedick,

But hear these ill news with the ears of Claudio.

'Tis certain so; the prince wooes for himself.

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?

CLAUDIO: Whither?

BENEDICK: Even to the next willow, about your own business, County. What fashion will you wear the garland of? You must wear it one way, for the Prince hath got your Hero.

CLAUDIO: I wish him joy of her.

BENEDICK: But did you think the Prince would have served you thus?

CLAUDIO: I pray you leave me!

*[CLAUDIO strikes wildly at BENEDICK.]*

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 CLAUDIO.]*

BENEDICK: Alas, poor hurt fowl, now will he creep into sedges.—But that my Lady Beatrice should know me, and not know me! The Prince's fool! Ha, 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 and 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 LEONTES and DON PEDRO, hand-in-hand with HERO. BENEDICK bows.]*

DON PEDRO: Now, signior, where's the Count? Did you see him?

BENEDICK: Troth, my lord, I told him—and I think I told him true—that your grace had got the good will of this young lady, and I offered him my company to a willow tree, either to make him a garland, as being forsaken, or to bind him up a rod, as being worthy to be whipped.

DON PEDRO: To be whipped? What's his fault?

BENEDICK: The flat transgression of a schoolboy who, being overjoyed with finding a birds' 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 stolen 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.

*[Enter BEATRICE, unseen by BENEDICK. She silently curtsies to DON PEDRO.]*

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. Come, talk not of her. 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.

DON PEDRO: Look, here she comes.

*[BENEDICK notices BEATRICE.]*

BENEDICK: Will your grace command me any service to the world's end? I will fetch you a tooth-picker 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 embassy to the pigmies, 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.

*[BENEDICK bows and exits.]*

DON PEDRO: Come, lady, come, you have lost the heart of Signor Benedick.

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

DON PEDRO: You have put him down, lady, you have put him down.

BEATRICE: So I would not he should do me, my lord, lest I should prove the mother of fools.

*[Enter CLAUDIO, who, seeing DON PEDRO, turns to go, but is swiftly intercepted by BEATRICE.]*

I have found Count Claudio, whom you sent me to seek.

*[CLAUDIO awkwardly bows. Enter, unnoticed, BORACHIO and MARGARET. They eavesdrop.]*

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, *Seville* 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.

*[Silence.]*

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. *[to HERO]* Lady, as you are mine, I am yours. I give away myself for you and dote upon the exchange.

*[Exeunt, unnoticed, BORACHIO and MARGARET.]*

BEATRICE *[to HERO]*: Speak, cousin; or, if you cannot, stop his mouth with a kiss, and let not him speak, neither.

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 everyone to the world but I, and I am sunburnt. I may sit in a corner and cry “Heigh-ho for a husband.”

DON PEDRO: Lady Beatrice, I will get you one.

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

DON PEDRO: Will you have me, lady?

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

DON PEDRO: Your silence most offends me, and to be merry best becomes you; for out 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. *[to HERO and CLAUDIO]* Cousins, God give you joy! *[to DON PEDRO]* By your grace's pardon.

*[BEATRICE curtsies and exits.]*

DON PEDRO: By my troth, a pleasant-spirited lady.

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.

*[General merriment and incredulity.]*

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 sevensnight; and a time too brief, too, to have all things answer my mind.

DON PEDRO: Come, you shake the head at so long a breathing, but I warrant thee, Claudio, the time shall not go dully by us. I will in the interim undertake one of Hercules' labours, which is to bring Signor 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?

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

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

*[Enter DOÑA JUANITA and BORACHIO as exeunt DON PEDRO, LEONATO, CLAUDIO, and HERO—the latter two arm-in-arm.]*

DOÑA JUANITA: It is so. The Count Claudio shall marry the daughter of Leonato.

BORACHIO: Yea, my lady, but I can cross it.

DOÑA JUANITA: Any bar, any cross, any impediment will be medicinal 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 lady, but so covertly that no dishonesty shall appear in me.

DOÑA JUANITA: Show me briefly how.

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

DOÑA JUANITA: I remember.

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

DOÑA JUANITA: What life is in that to be the death of this marriage?

BORACHIO: The poison of that lies in you to temper. Go you to the Prince your brother. Spare not to tell him that he hath wronged his honour in marrying the renowned Claudio—whose estimation do you mightily hold up—to a contaminated stale, such a one as Hero.

DOÑA JUANITA: 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?

DOÑA JUANITA: Only to despite them I will endeavour 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 honour 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. 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.

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

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

DOÑA JUANITA: I will presently go learn their day of marriage.

*[Exeunt DOÑA JUANITA and BORACHIO.]*

Scene 2. [164 lines /10:15]

*[Faint sound of BALTHASAR singing and playing offstage. Enter BENEDICK from that direction.]*

BENEDICK: I do much wonder that one man, seeing how much another man is a fool when he dedicates his behaviors to love, will, after he hath laughed at such shallow follies in others, become the argument of his own scorn by falling in love. And such a man is Claudio.

*[Offstage music ends.]*

May I be so converted and see with these eyes? I cannot tell; I think not. I will not be sworn but love may transform me to an oyster. But I'll take my oath on it: till he have made an oyster of me he shall never make me such a fool. One woman is fair, yet I am well. Another is wise, yet I am well. Another virtuous, yet I am well. But till all graces be in one woman, one woman shall not come in my grace. Rich she shall be, that's certain. Wise, or I'll none. Virtuous, or I'll never cheapen her. Fair, or I'll never look on her. Mild, or come not near me. Noble, or not I for an angel. Of good discourse, an excellent musician, and her hair shall be of what colour it please God.

*[Enter DON PEDRO, LEONATO, CLAUDIO, and BALTHASAR.]*

—Ha! The Prince and Monsieur Love! I will hide me in the arbour.

*[BENEDICK hides in the audience.]*

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: 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: Now, 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: Note notes, forsooth, and nothing.

*[BALTHASAR plays a guitar.]*

BENEDICK *[aside]*: Now, divine air! Now is his soul ravished. Is it not strange that  
 sheeps' guts should hale souls out of men's bodies? Well, a horn for my money, when all's  
 done.

BALTHASAR *[sings]*: Sigh no more, ladies, sigh no more.  
 Men were deceivers ever,  
 One foot in sea, and one on shore,  
 To one thing constant never.

BALTHASAR *[sings]*: Then sigh not so, but let them go,

DON PEDRO *[aside to CLAUDIO and LEONATO]*: See you where Benedick  
 hath hid himself?

BALTHASAR *[sings]*: And be you blithe and bonny,  
 Converting all your sounds of woe  
 Into hey nonny, nonny.

Sing no more ditties, sing no more  
 Of dumps so dull and heavy.  
 The fraud of men was ever so,  
 Since summer first was leafy.  
 Then sigh not so, but let them go,  
 And be you blithe and bonny,  
 Converting all your sounds of woe  
 Into hey nonny, nonny.

DON PEDRO: By my troth, a good song.

BALTHASAR: And an ill singer, my lord.

DON PEDRO: Ha, no, no, faith. Thou singest well enough for a shift.

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.

BENEDICK *[aside]*: An 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 lief have heard the night-raven,  
 come what plague could have come after it.

*[Exit BALTHASAR. BALTHASAR becomes DOGBERRY.]*

DON PEDRO: Come hither, Leonato. What was it you told me of today, that your niece  
 Beatrice was in love with Signor Benedick?

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

LEONATO: No, nor I neither. But most wonderful that she should so dote on Signor Benedick, whom she hath in all outward behaviors seemed ever to abhor.

LEONATO: By my troth, my lord,	BENEDICK <i>[aside]</i> : Is't possible?
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LEONATO *[CONT'D]*: 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: Maybe 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?

LEONATO: What effects, my lord? She will sit you—

*[LEONATO's improvisation runs dry.]*

you heard my daughter tell you how.

CLAUDIO: She did, indeed.

DON PEDRO: How, how, I pray you?

*[Poor LEONATO has got nothing.]*

*You amaze me.* I would have I thought her spirit had been invincible against all assaults of affection.

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

DON PEDRO: Hath she made her affection known to Benedick?

LEONATO: No, and swears she never will. That's her torment.

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

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

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

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

CLAUDIO: That.

LEONATO: O she tore the letter into a thousand halfpence, railed at herself that she should be so immodest 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 hath so much overborne her that my daughter is sometime afeared she will do a desperate outrage to herself. It is very true.

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

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

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

CLAUDIO: And she is exceeding wise.

DON PEDRO: In every thing but in loving Benedick.

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

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. And 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.

*[Offstage dinner bell.]*

LEONATO: My lord, will you walk? Dinner is ready.

*[DON PEDRO, CLAUDIO, and LEONATO start out.]*

DON PEDRO *[aside]*: Let us send her to call him in to dinner.

*[Exeunt DON PEDRO, CLAUDIO, and LEONATO. LEONATO becomes OATCAKE. BENEDICK comes forward.]*

BENEDICK: This can be no trick. The conference was sadly borne. 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 humour?

No. The world must be peopled. When I said I would die a bachelor, I did not think I should live till I were married.

*[Enter BEATRICE with the dinner bell.]*

*[aside]* Here comes Beatrice. By this day, she's a fair lady. I do spy some marks of love in her.

*[BENEDICK scrambles to assume a casual, gallant pose.]*

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

*[BEATRICE rings the dinner bell.]*

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.

*[BEATRICE turns to go, but when BENEDICK doesn't respond, she stops and turns back.]*

You have no stomach, signior? Fare you well.

*[Exit BEATRICE.]*

BENEDICK: Ha! "Against my will I am sent to bid you come in to dinner." There's a double meaning in that.

*[Exit BENEDICK.]*

### ACT III. [394 lines/24:38]

#### Scene 1. [95 lines /5:56]

*[Enter HERO, MARGARET, and URSULA.]*

HERO: Good Margaret, run thee to the parlor.

There shalt thou find my cousin Beatrice.  
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 pleachèd bower  
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 MARGARET.]*

HERO: Now, Ursula, when Beatrice doth come,

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.

*[Enter BEATRICE, who hides amongst the audience in the exact locations BENEDICK hid in the last scene; throughout this scene, BEATRICE moves through BENEDICK's same hiding places in the same order as well.]*

*[aside to URSULA]* She comes!

*[aloud]* —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-trothèd 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  
 Deserve as full as fortunate a bed  
 As ever Beatrice shall couch upon?

HERO: O god of love! I know he doth deserve  
 As much as may be yielded to a man,  
 But Nature never framed a woman's heart  
 Of prouder stuff than that of Beatrice.  
 Disdain and scorn ride sparkling in her eyes,  
 Misprising what they look on, and her wit  
 Values itself so highly that to her  
 All matter else seems weak. She cannot love,  
 Nor take no shape nor project of affection,  
 She is so self-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, why Nature, drawing of an antic,  
 Made a foul blot; if tall, a lance ill-headed;  
 If low, an agate very vilely cut;  
 If speaking, why, a vane blown with all winds;  
 If silent, why, a block movèd 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 còmmendable.

HERO: No, not to be so odd and from all fashions  
 As Beatrice is, cannot be còmmendable.  
 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.

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 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 Signor 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, Signor Benedick,  
For shape, for bearing, argument, and valour,  
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, every day, tomorrow. Come, go in.  
I'll show thee some attires and have thy counsel  
Which is the best to furnish me tomorrow.

*[Exeunt HERO and URSULA. URSULA becomes CONRAD. BEATRICE emerges from hiding.]*

BEATRICE: 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.  
*[Exit BEATRICE.]*

Scene 2. [78 lines /4:53]

*[Daylight fading. Enter, riding his police bicycle, OATCAKE. He props it up somewhere and casually greets fellow audience members as fellow members of the Bicycle Patrol. Offstage bicycle bell! OATCAKE suddenly lunges for a seat in the audience. Enter, running, SEACOAL, who grabs another seat in the audience. Offstage bicycle bell continues!]*

OATCAKE: Friend Seacoal—*[to the audience]*—fellows all!—forget you not that when the Head Constable comes, we must present ourselves and stand.

SEACOAL: —at attention.

OATCAKE: Pay attention? You pay attention!

SEACOAL: I am paying attention!

OATCAKE: You're the one didn't stand up!

*[Enter, ringing their bicycle bell, DOGBERRY and VERGES on their police bicycle-built-for-two; they dismount.]*

SEACOAL/OATCAKE *[to each other and audience members]*: Stand up! Stand up! Stand! Stand!

*[SEACOAL, OATCAKE, and the whole audience stand at attention. Terrified silence. DOGBERRY marches along the audience, inspecting their "uniforms", eyeballing some, and abruptly lunging at others to see if they flinch. More terrified silence. DOGBERRY moves to stand before the audience.]*

DOGBERRY: Are you good men and true?

VERGES *[squeaky menace]*: 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.

*[Significant pause, then DOGBERRY gestures everyone to their seats.]*

At your easiness.

*[SEACOAL, OATCAKE and the audience sit.]*

VERGES: Well, give them their charge, neighbour Dogberry.

DOGBERRY *[to the director or assistant director]*: First!—who think you the most *desertless* man to be constable?

*[DIRECTOR or ASSISTANT DIRECTOR shoots up to stand at attention.]*

DIRECTOR *[terrified military formality]*: Hugh Oatcake, sir! or George Seacoal, sir! for they can write and read.

*[DIRECTOR or ASSISTANT DIRECTOR sits.]*

DOGBERRY: Neighbour Seacoal.

*[SEACOAL stands.]*

God hath blessed you with a good name. To be a well-favoured man is the gift of *fortune*, but to write and read comes by *nature*.

SEACOAL: Both which, Master Constable—

DOGBERRY: You have. I knew it would be your answer. Well, for your *favour*, 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 Lantern.

*[VERGES appears from behind a screen wheeling a snazzy police bicycle bearing the name "The Lantern".]*

This is your charge: You shall comprehend all *vagrom* men. You are to bid any man *stand*, in the Prince's name.

SEACOAL: How if a will not stand?

*[Dead silence. SEACOAL is terrified. DOGBERRY looks expectantly at VERGES, who begins frantically paging through a book entitled The Law..]*

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.

*[SEACOAL and OATCAKE laugh uneasily along with DOGBERRY. SEACOAL sits. VERGES shows DOGBERRY a passage in the book.]*

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*.

OATCAKE [*stands*]: We will rather sleep than talk. We know what belongs to a watch.

[*OATCAKE laughs at his own joke. DOGBERRY stares at him. OATCAKE stops laughing. Then DOGBERRY laughs, then VERGES laughs, then OATCAKE and SEACOAL laugh.*]

DOGBERRY: Why, you speak like an ancient and most quiet watchman, for I cannot see how sleeping should offend. Only have a care that [*DOGBERRY swipes OATCAKE's bicycle helmet to prove the point.*] your *bills* be not stolen. [*DOGBERRY chucks the helmet back to OATCAKE and OATCAKE sits.*] Well [*to audience member*], you are to call at all the alehouses and bid those that are *drunk* get them to *bed*.

SEACOAL [*stands*]: How if they will not?

DOGBERRY: Why *then*, [*DOGBERRY menaces SEACOAL*] let them alone till they are sober. [*DOGBERRY suddenly laughs and everyone joins in again.*] If they make you not then the better answer, you may say they are not the men you took them for.

SEACOAL: Well, sir. [*sits*]

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

SEACOAL [*stands*]: If we know him to be a thief, shall we not lay hands on him?

DOGBERRY: Truly, by your office, you *may*, but 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.

[*DOGBERRY laughs and everyone joins in again. SEACOAL sits.*]

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 [*reading from his book to audience member*]: If you hear a child cry in the night, you must call to the nurse and bid her still it.

OATCAKE [*stands*]: 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.

VERGES [*finding that exact quote in his book and showing it to the audience*]: 'Tis very true!

[*OATCAKE sits.*]

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 [*aside to DOGBERRY*]: Nay, by'r Lady, that I think a cannot.

[*Silent beat as DOGBERRY looks at VERGES.*]

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 offence to stay a man against his will.

VERGES [*finding that quote in his book too*]: By'r Lady, I think it be so.

DOGBERRY: Ha, ha, ha!

VERGES/OATCAKE/SEACOAL [*unison with identical inflection*]: Ha, ha, ha!

DOGBERRY: Well, masters, good night.

*[DOGBERRY and VERGES mount their police bicycle-built-for-two.]*

An there be any matter of *weight* chances, call up *me*. Keep your fellows' counsels and your own, and good night. *[to VERGES]* Come, neighbour.

*[Ringing the bicycle bell, exeunt DOGBERRY and VERGES on their police bicycle-built-for-two.]*

SEACOAL: Well, masters, we hear our charge. Let us go patrol till two, and then all to bed.

*[SEACOAL and OATCAKE mount their bicycles. Offstage bicycle bell as suddenly DOGBERRY and VERGES ride in again from a new entrance and continue riding in circles through the following lines while SEACOAL and OATCAKE stand at attention.]*

DOGBERRY: One word more, honest neighbours. I pray you watch about Signor Leonato's door, for the wedding being there tomorrow, there is a great *coil* tonight. Adieu. Be *vigitant*, I beseech you.

*[Ringing the bicycle bell, exeunt DOGBERRY and VERGES on their police bicycle-built-for-two. SEACOAL and OATCAKE relax, then exeunt riding their police bicycles.]*

Scene 3. [68 lines /4:15]

*[Dusk. Enter DON PEDRO and CLAUDIO.]*

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

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

DON PEDRO: Nay, that would be as great a soil in the new gloss of your marriage as to show a child his new coat and forbid him to wear it.

*[Enter, from another way, BENEDICK, in new clothes and a flashy hat, with a scarf wrapped about his chin, and overly odoriferous of cologne. At sight of DON PEDRO and CLAUDIO, BENEDICK turns to go, but DON PEDRO spies him.]*

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.

*[BENEDICK bows to DON PEDRO.]*

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.

DON PEDRO: 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: What? Sigh for the toothache?

BENEDICK: Well, everyone can 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.

*[DON PEDRO plucks at BENEDICK's new clothes, and BENEDICK moves away.]*

CLAUDIO: If he be not in love with some woman, there is no believing old signs.

*[CLAUDIO snatches BENEDICK's hat.]*

A brushes his hat o'mornings; what should that bode?

*[BENEDICK tries to grab back his hat, but CLAUDIO tosses it to DON PEDRO.]*

DON PEDRO: Hath any man seen him at the barber's?

*[BENEDICK tries to grab back his hat, but DON PEDRO tosses it to CLAUDIO.]*

CLAUDIO: No, but the barber's man hath been seen with him.

*[BENEDICK grabs his hat as CLAUDIO snatches off BENEDICK's scarf, revealing him to be clean-shaven.]*

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

*[CLAUDIO tosses the scarf to DON PEDRO, who smells it.]*

DON PEDRO: Nay, a rubs himself with civet. Can you smell him out by that?

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

DON PEDRO: The greatest note of it is his melancholy.

*[Enter DOÑA JUANITA, unnoticed. She eavesdrops.]*

CLAUDIO: And when was he wont to wash his face?

DON PEDRO: Conclude—

CLAUDIO: conclude—

DON PEDRO/CLAUDIO: he is in love!

CLAUDIO: Nay, but I know who loves him.

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

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

DON PEDRO: She shall be buried with her face upwards.

BENEDICK: Yet is this no charm for the toothache.

*[BENEDICK curtly bows and exits as DON PEDRO and CLAUDIO laugh and laugh. Then DOÑA JUANITA comes forward. CLAUDIO bows.]*

DOÑA JUANITA: My lord, and brother, God save you!

DON PEDRO: Good-e'en, sister.

DOÑA JUANITA: If your leisure served I would speak with you.

DON PEDRO: In private?

DOÑA JUANITA: If it please you.

*[CLAUDIO bows and starts to exit.]*

Yet Count Claudio may hear, for what I would speak of concerns him.

DON PEDRO: What's the matter?

DOÑA JUANITA *[to CLAUDIO]*: Means your lordship to be married tomorrow?

DON PEDRO: You know he does.

DOÑA JUANITA: I know not that when he knows what I know.

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

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

DON PEDRO: Why, what's the matter?

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

CLAUDIO: Who, Hero?

DOÑA JUANITA: Even she—Leonato's Hero, your Hero, every man's Hero.

CLAUDIO: Disloyal?

DOÑA JUANITA: The word is too good to paint out her wickedness; I could say she were worse. Think you of a worse title, and I will fit her to it. Wonder not till further warrant. Go but with me tonight, you shall see her chamber window entered, even the night before her wedding day. If you love her then, tomorrow wed her. But it would better fit your honour to change your mind.

CLAUDIO: May this be so?

DON PEDRO: I will not think it!

DOÑA JUANITA: Bear it coldly but till midnight, and let the issue show itself. I will disparage her no farther till you are my witnesses.

*[DOÑA JUANITA produces the INTERMISSION sign from its hiding place.]*

If you will follow me I will show you enough, and when you have seen more and heard more, proceed accordingly.

*[DOÑA JUANITA sets the INTERMISSION sign and exits, followed by CLAUDIO and DON PEDRO. Lights dim to night. Music: Movement 3 of Berlioz' Symphonie Fantastique (Scène aux champs)]*

#### Ten Minutes Into Intermission

*[Enter DOÑA JUANITA leading DON PEDRO and CLAUDIO.]*

DON PEDRO: O day untowardly turned.

CLAUDIO: O mischief strangely thwarting.

DOÑA JUANITA: O plague right well prevented: So will you say when you have seen the sequel.

*[DOÑA JUANITA shows the others where to hide among the audience.]*

#### Eleven Minutes Into Intermission

*[Enter, on the dark balcony, BORACHIO and MARGARET, wearing HERO's wedding dress. BORACHIO proceeds to loudly ravish MARGARET, calling her "Hero" all the while. CLAUDIO erupts in anguished rage and has to be restrained and silenced by DON PEDRO.]*

#### Twelve Minutes Into Intermission

*[BORACHIO and MARGARET embrace and exit. CLAUDIO, DON PEDRO, and DOÑA JUANITA rise from their hiding place to exit.]*

CLAUDIO: 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.

*[Exeunt CLAUDIO and DON PEDRO. DOÑA JUANITA lingers a moment until BORACHIO reappears above. DOÑA JUANITA smiles at BORACHIO. Exeunt DOÑA JUANITA below and BORACHIO above.]*

#### Scene 4. [40 lines /2:30]

*[Music ends. Lights remain at night levels. Enter SEACOAL and OATCAKE on their police bicycles. They dismount, break out the doughnuts, and relax munching among the audience.]*

BORACHIO *[offstage]*: What, Conrad!

*[OATCAKE starts off to silence the disturbance, but SEACOAL stops him. They remain hidden amongst the audience.]*

SEACOAL *[aside]*: Peace, stir not.

*[Enter BORACHIO, in the talkative stage of drunkenness, with a beer.]*

BORACHIO: Conrad, I say!

*[Enter CONRAD, tipsy, behind him.]*

CONRAD: Here, man, I am at thy elbow.

BORACHIO: Mass, an my elbow itched, I thought there would a scab follow.

CONRAD: 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.

BORACHIO: Therefore, know I have earned of Doña	OATCAKE <i>[aside to SEACOAL]</i> : Some treason, master! SEACOAL <i>[aside to OATCAKE]</i> : Yet stand close.
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BORACHIO *[cont'd]*: Juanita a thousand ducats.

CONRAD: Is it possible that any villany should be so dear?

BORACHIO: Thou shouldst rather ask if it were possible any villany should be so rich.

BORACHIO <i>[cont'd]</i> : For when rich villains have need of poor ones, poor ones may make what price they will. CONRAD: I wonder at it. BORACHIO: That shows thou art unconfirmed—	OATCAKE <i>[aside to SEACOAL]</i> : I know that one. A has been a vile thief this seven year. A goes up and down like a gentleman. I remember his name.
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*[BORACHIO stops to listen.]*

BORACHIO *[cont'd]*: Didst thou not hear somebody?

CONRAD: No, 'twas the vane on the house.

BORACHIO: 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 mistress, planted and placed and possessed by my mistress Doña Juanita, saw afar off in the orchard this amiable encounter.

CONRAD: And thought they Margaret was Hero?

BORACHIO: Two of them did, the Prince and Claudio. But the devil my mistress knew she was Margaret. And partly by her oaths, which first possessed them, partly by the dark night, which did deceive them, but chiefly by my villany, which did confirm any slander that Doña Juanita had made—away went Claudio enraged, swore he would meet her as he was appointed next morning at the temple, and there, before the whole congregation, shame her with what he saw o'ernight, and send her home again without a husband.

SEACOAL *[coming forward]*: We charge you in the Prince's name. Stand!

*[Here follows the most ridiculous chase and apprehension in the history of Theatre, which culminates with SEACOAL pinning one of the perps on the ground and yelling, "Stand!" Once on his feet, CONRAD produces a pair of twenty dollar bills to bribe the watch.]*

OATCAKE: Call up the right Master Constable. SEACOAL: We have here recovered the most dangerous piece of lechery that ever was known in the commonwealth. OATCAKE: And I know him; a wears a lock. <i>[grabs BORACHIO's lock]</i>	CONRAD: Masters— CONRAD: Masters— CONRAD: Masters—
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*[SEACOAL, perceiving the bribe, regards it with disdain.]*

SEACOAL: Never speak, we charge you.

OATCAKE *[to BORACHIO and CONRAD]*: Let us *obey* you to go with us.

*[BORACHIO and CONRAD laugh condescendingly.]*

CONRAD: *[to SEACOAL and OATCAKE]* Come, we'll obey you.

*[Exeunt SEACOAL and OATCAKE, with BORACHIO, and CONRAD prisoners between their bicycles. CONRAD becomes URSULA. BORACHIO becomes FRANCIS. SEACOAL becomes ANTONIO. OATCAKE becomes LEONATO.]*

Scene 5. [66 lines /4:08]

*[Lights return to warm sunlight. Enter into HERO's dressing chamber, frantic, MARGARET, still in the wedding dress, half-unfastened; rushing, MARGARET steps out of the dress and hurries to dress in her own clothes and hang the wedding dress back where it belongs as the following lines are spoken.]*

HERO *[offstage]*: Good Ursula! Wake my cousin Beatrice, and desire her to rise!

URSULA *[offstage elsewhere]*: I will, lady!

HERO *[offstage]*: And bid her come hither!

URSULA *[offstage elsewhere]*: Well!

*[Just as MARGARET finishes dressing, HERO enters, half-dressed, holding some clothes and fastening an elaborate collar around her neck.]*

MARGARET: Troth, I think your other rebato 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.

HERO: O that exceeds, they say!

MARGARET: By my troth, 's but a night-gown 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 honourably? Is not marriage honourable in a beggar? Is not your lord honourable without marriage? I think you would have me say, "saving your reverence, a husband"? An 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, stuffed up and sick, with a box of tissues, a cup of coffee, and hunched in a quilt.]*

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.

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.

*[MARGARET walks away.]*

BEATRICE *[to HERO]*: 'Tis almost five o'clock, cousin. 'Tis time you were ready. By my troth, I am exceeding ill. *[sighing it out]* Heigh-ho.

MARGARET: For a hawk, a horse, or a husband?

BEATRICE: For the letter that begins them all—*[BEATRICE sighs out the "h" sound.]*

MARGARET: Well, an 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 every one 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.

BEATRICE: O God help me, God help me! How long have you professed apprehension?

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

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

MARGARET *[holding up a pillbottle]*: Get you some of this distilled *carduus benedictus*, and lay it to your heart. It is the only thing for a qualm.

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, fast, URSULA.]*

URSULA *[to HERO]*: Madam, withdraw! The Prince, the Count, Signor Benedick, 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, rushing, HERO, BEATRICE, URSULA, and MARGARET with clothing and dresses.]*

Scene 6. [47 lines /2:56]

*[Enter DOGBERRY and VERGES on their bicycle; they dismount and stand at attention. Enter from the house LEONATO, half-dressed and very busy. During the following*

*exchange, LEONATO remains busy and strikes any stray props remaining from the previous scene.]*

LEONATO: What would you with me, honest neighbour?

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

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

DOGBERRY: Marry, this it is, sir.

VERGES: Yes, in truth it is, sir.

*[A beat.]*

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.

DOGBERRY: Comparisons are *odorous*, neighbour Verges.

LEONATO: Neighbours, 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 it in my heart to bestow it all of your worship.

LEONATO: All thy tediousness on me, ah?

DOGBERRY: Yea, an '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.

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, neighbour Verges.

Well, God's a good man. An 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 worshipped; all men are not alike, alas, good neighbour.

LEONATO: Indeed, neighbour, he comes too short of you.

DOGBERRY: Gifts that God gives!

*[Beat while DOGBERRY pleasantly muses.]*

LEONATO: I must leave you.

DOGBERRY: One word, sir. Our watch, sir, have indeed *comprehended* two *auspicious* 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*.

*[A beat of LEONATO's puzzlement.]*

LEONATO: Drink some wine ere you go. Fare you well.

*[Offstage wedding music. Enter ANTONIO.]*

ANTONIO: Brother, they stay for you to give your daughter to her husband.

LEONATO: I'll wait upon them, I am ready.

*[Exeunt LEONATO and ANTONIO.]*

DOGBERRY: Go, good partner, go get you to Frances Seacoal. Bid her bring her 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 *[DOGBERRY taps his noggin.]* shall drive some of them to a *non-com*. Only get the learned writer to set down our *excommunication*, and meet me at the jail.

*[Exit VERGES as DOGBERRY grabs up every bottle of wine in sight, then exits with them.]*

Act IV. [347 lines/21:41]

Scene 1. [278 lines /17:23]

*[Wedding music continues. Enter, in a formal wedding procession, FRANCIS, followed by DON PEDRO, DOÑA JUANITA, LEONATO, ANTONIO, CLAUDIO, BENEDICK, HERO, BEATRICE, MARGARET, and URSULA.]*

LEONATO: Come, Francis, be brief. Only to the plain form of marriage, and you shall recount their particular duties afterwards.

FRANCIS *[to CLAUDIO]*: You come hither, my lord, to marry this lady?

CLAUDIO: No.

LEONATO: To *be* married to her. Friar, *you* come to marry her.

*[Some laughter among the assembly.]*

FRANCIS *[to HERO]*: Lady, you come hither to be married to this count?

HERO: I do.

FRANCIS: 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.

FRANCIS: Know you any, Count?

*[A beat.]*

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!

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.

*[CLAUDIO grabs HERO and hurls her at LEONATO. Everyone reacts!]*

Give not this rotten orange to your friend!

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

Behold how like a maid she blushes here.  
 O what authority and show of truth  
 Can cunning sin cover itself withal!  
 Comes not that blood as modest evidence  
 To witness simple virtue? Would you not swear—  
 All you that see her—that she were a maid  
 By these exterior shows? But she is none.  
 She knows the heat of a luxurious bed.  
 Her blush is guiltiness, not modesty.

*[LEONATO roughly intercepts CLAUDIO.]*

LEONATO: What do you mean, my lord?

CLAUDIO: Not to be married,  
 Not to knit my soul to an approvèd wanton.

*[LEONATO grabs CLAUDIO close.]*

LEONATO: Dear my lord, if you in your own proof  
 Have vanquished the resistance of her youth,  
 And made defeat of her virginity—

CLAUDIO: I know what you would say. If I have known her,  
 You will say she did embrace me as a husband,  
 And so extenuate the forehead 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 pampered animals  
 That rage in savage sensuality.

*[CLAUDIO spits on HERO.]*

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 dishonoured, that have gone about  
 To link my dear friend to a common stale!

LEONATO: Are these things spoken, or do I but dream?

DOÑA JUANITA: Sir, they are spoken, and these things are true.

HERO: True? O God!

CLAUDIO: Leonato, stand I here?  
 Is this the Prince? is this the Prince's sister?  
 Is this face Hero's? Are our eyes our own?

LEONATO: All this is so. But what of this, my lord?

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 grabs hold of HERO.]*

LEONATO *[to HERO]*: I charge thee do so, as thou art my child.

HERO: O God defend me! How am I beset!

CLAUDIO: 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 honour,  
 Myself, my sister, and this grievèd 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.

DOÑA JUANITA: Fie, fie, they are  
 Not to be named, my lord, not to be spoke of.  
*[Exit MARGARET, unnoticed by the others. MARGARET becomes SEXTON.]*  
 There is not chastity enough in language  
 Without offence to utter them. Thus, pretty lady,  
 I'm sorry for thy much misgovernment.

CLAUDIO *[to HERO]*: O 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.

LEONATO: Hath no man's dagger here a point for me?  
*[HERO swoons and falls to the ground, and BEATRICE rushes to her.]*

BEATRICE: Why, how now, cousin, wherefore sink you down?

DOÑA JUANITA: Come, let us go. These things come thus to light  
 Smother her spirits up.  
*[DON PEDRO, DOÑA JUANITA, CLAUDIO, and BENEDICK begin to exit, but—a crucial moment—BENEDICK hesitates—not knowing whether to go or stay—he turns back.]*

BENEDICK: How doth the lady?

BEATRICE: Dead, I think! Help, uncle!  
*[CLAUDIO turns back too but DON PEDRO and DOÑA JUANITA move him along and all three exeunt. BENEDICK wavers, but at the sound of his name, remains.]*  
 Hero, why, Hero! Uncle, Signor 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?

FRANCIS: Have comfort, lady.  
*[HERO awakens.]*

LEONATO: Dost thou look up?

FRANCIS: Yea, wherefore should she not?

LEONATO: Wherefore? Why, doth not every earthly thing  
Cry shame upon her? Could she here deny  
The story that is printed in her blood?

*[LEONATO grabs HERO.]*

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.

*[LEONATO moves to strike HERO, but FRANCIS, BENEDICK, and ANTONIO  
restrain him. HERO cowers.]*

Grieved I, I had but one?

Chid I for that at frugal nature's frame?  
O one too much by thee!

*[LEONATO, as if spent, takes HERO tenderly in his arms.]*

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, smirchèd 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 fallen  
Into a pit of ink,

*[LEONATO flings HERO at BEATRICE, and ANTONIO, FRANCIS, and  
BENEDICK once more restrain him.]*

that the wide sea

Hath drops too few to wash her clean again,  
And salt too little which may season give  
To her foul, tainted flesh!

BENEDICK: Sir, sir, be patient.

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

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.  
Could e'er Don Pedro lie? Or Claudio lie,  
Who loved her so that, speaking of her foulness,  
Washed it with tears? Hence from her, let her die.

FRANCIS: Hear me a little!

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 away the errors that are held  
 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.

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?

FRANCIS: 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!

FRANCIS: There is some strange misprision in the Prince.

LEONATO: I know not. If they speak but truth of her,  
 These hands shall tear her. If they wrong her honour,  
 The proudest of them shall well hear of it.  
 Time hath not yet so dried this blood of mine,  
 Nor age so eat up my invention,  
 But they shall find awaked in such a kind  
 Both strength of limb and policy of mind  
 To quit me of them thoroughly.

*[LEONATO and ANTONIO shake hands to seal a pact of vengeance.]*

FRANCIS: Pause awhile,

And let my counsel sway you in this case.  
 Your daughter here was left behind for dead.  
 Let her awhile be secretly kept in,  
 And publish it that she is dead indeed.

LEONATO: What shall become of this? What will this do?

FRANCIS: Marry, this, well carried, shall on her behalf  
 Change slander to remorse. That is some good.



BENEDICK: Is there any way to show such friendship?

BEATRICE: A very even way, but no such friend.

BENEDICK: May a man do it?

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

*[A beat.]*

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

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

BENEDICK: By my sword, Beatrice, thou lovest me.

BEATRICE: Do not swear and eat it.

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

BEATRICE: Will you not eat your word?

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

BEATRICE: Why, then, God forgive me—

BENEDICK: What offence, sweet Beatrice?

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

BENEDICK: And do it with all thy heart.

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

*[BEATRICE and BENEDICK kiss.]*

BENEDICK: Come, bid me do any thing for thee.

BEATRICE: Kill Claudio.

BENEDICK: Ha! Not for the wide world.

BEATRICE: You kill me to deny it. Farewell.

*[BEATRICE tries to exit, but BENEDICK bars her way.]*

BENEDICK: Tarry, sweet Beatrice.

BEATRICE: I am gone, though I am here. There is no love in you.

BEATRICE: You kill me to deny it. Farewell.

*[BEATRICE tries to exit, but BENEDICK holds her.]*

—Nay, I pray you, let me go.

BENEDICK: Beatrice—

BEATRICE: In faith, I will go.

BENEDICK: We'll be friends first.

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

BENEDICK: Is Claudio thine enemy?

BEATRICE: Is a not approved in the height a villain, that hath slandered, scorned, dishonoured my kinswoman? O that I were a man! What, bear her in hand until they come to take hands, and then, with public accusation, uncovered slander, unmitigated rancour—O God that I were a man! I would eat his heart in the market place!

BENEDICK: Hear me, Beatrice—

BEATRICE: Talk with a man out at a window—a proper saying!

BENEDICK: Nay, but Beatrice—

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

BENEDICK: Beat—

BEATRICE: Princes and counties! Surely a princely testimony, a goodly count; Count Comfit, a sweet gallant, 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 curtsies, valour into compliment, and men are only turned into tongue, and trim ones too. He is now as valiant as Hercules that only tells a lie and swears it. I cannot be a man with wishing; therefore I will die a woman with grieving.

BEATRICE: You kill me to deny it. Farewell.

*[BEATRICE tries to exit, but BENEDICK bars her way.]*

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

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

*[A beat.]*

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 *[taking her hand and kissing it]*. 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 BENEDICK and BEATRICE separately.]*

Scene 2. [69 lines /4:19]

*[Enter OATCAKE and SEACOAL with an overhead projector and a screen, which they set up. Then enter on their bicycle DOGBERRY and VERGES, both in judicial robes, dragging CONRAD and BORACHIO behind, both bound at the wrists; they dismount and guard their prisoners as SEXTON enters, also in judicial robes.]*

DOGBERRY: Is our whole *dissembly* appeared?

VERGES: O a stool and a cushion for the Sexton!

*[OATCAKE exits to fetch a stool and cushion then returns.]*

SEXTON *[sits]*: Which be the malefactors?

DOGBERRY: Marry, that am I, and my partner.

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.

*[DOGBERRY signals and the lights go out to pitch black, BORACHIO and CONRAD are forced into chairs by OATCAKE and SEACOAL, and VERGES trains an unbearably bright interrogation light in their eyes.]*

What is your name, friend?

BORACHIO: Borachio.

DOGBERRY *[to SEXTON]*: Pray, write down *[imitates him]* "Borachio".

*[SEXTON begins writing down all of the proceedings verbatim on the overhead projector so that the whole record of the interrogation appears on the screen.]*

*[to CONRAD]* Yours, sirrah?

CONRAD: I am a gentleman, sir, and my name is Conrad.

DOGBERRY: Write down "Master Gentleman Conrad". Masters, do you serve God?

CONRAD: Yea, sir—

BORACHIO: 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?

CONRAD: Marry, sir, we say we are none.

DOGBERRY: A marvellous witty fellow, I assure you, but I will go about with him.—Come you hither, sirrah.

*[BORACHIO, tied up, is unable to move. DOGBERRY approaches him instead.]*

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.

*[BORACHIO is unable to move.]*

Fore God, they are both in a tale. *[to SEXTON]* 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.

DOGBERRY: Yea, marry, that's the *eftest* way. Let the watch come forth.

*[VERGES trains the bright light into the eyes of SEACOAL and OATCAKE. During the following exchange, VERGES keeps jerking the interrogation light between BORACHIO and CONRAD, and SEACOAL and OATCAKE, depending on who is speaking or being spoken to.]*

—Masters, I charge you in the Prince's name accuse these men.

SEACOAL: This man said, sir, that Doña Juanita, the Prince's sister, was a villain.

DOGBERRY *[to SEXTON]*: Write down Princess Juanita a villain. Why, this is flat *perjury*, to call a prince's sister 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?

OATCAKE: Marry, that he had received a thousand ducats of Doña Juanita for accusing the Lady Hero wrongfully.

DOGBERRY: Flat *burglary*, as ever was committed.

VERGES: Yea, by th'mass, that it is.

SEXTON: What else, fellow?

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

DOGBERRY *[to BORACHIO]*: O villain! Thou wilt be condemned into everlasting *redemption* for this.

SEXTON: What else?

SEACOAL: This is all.

*[SEXTON signals and lights come up again; she turns off the projector and stands.]*

SEXTON: And this is more, masters, than you can deny. Princess Juanita is this morning secretly stolen away. Hero was in this manner accused, in this very manner refused, and upon the grief of this suddenly died.

*[BORACHIO and CONRAD react to the news. At a signal from SEXTON, OATCAKE and SEACOAL strike screen, projector, stool, and cushion and exeunt. OATCAKE becomes LEONATO. SEACOAL becomes ANTONIO.]*

Master Constable, let these men be brought to Leonato's. I will go before and show him their examination.

[Exit SEXTON.]

DOGBERRY: Come, keep them *opinioned*.

VERGES: Let them be in the hands—

[VERGES is lifting up BORACHIO as DOGBERRY is lifting up CONRAD.]

CONRAD: Off, coxcomb!

DOGBERRY: God s'my life, where's the Sexton? Let him write down the Prince's officer "Coxcomb". Come along!

[CONRAD struggles.]

Thou naughty varlet!

CONRAD: Away, you are an ass! You, are, an, ass!

[Stunned silence.]

DOGBERRY: Dost thou not *suspect* my place? Dost thou not *suspect* my years? O that he were here to write me down an ass! [to AUDIENCE] But masters, remember that I am an ass. Though it be not written down, yet forget not that I am an ass. [to CONRAD] No, thou villain, thou art full of *piety*, as shall be proved upon thee by good witness. I am a *wise* fellow, and which is more, an *officer*; and which is more, a *householder*; and which is more, as pretty a piece of flesh as any is in Messina; and one that knows the *law*, go to; and a *rich* fellow enough, go to; and a fellow that hath had *losses*; and one that hath *two gowns*, and every thing handsome about him. [to VERGES]—Come away. O that I had been writ down an ass!

[Exeunt DOGBERRY and VERGES on their bicycle, dragging BORACHIO and CONRAD behind.]

Act V. [436 lines/27:15]

Scene 1. [236 lines /14:45]

[Daylight. Enter LEONATO and ANTONIO in mourning clothes, but with weapons.]

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,  
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.  
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.  
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.

ANTONIO: Therein do men from children nothing differ.

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

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

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

*[Enter DON PEDRO and CLAUDIO.]*

ANTONIO: Here comes the Prince and Claudio hastily.

DON PEDRO: Good e'en, good e'en.

CLAUDIO: Good day to both of you.

LEONATO: Hear you, my lords!

DON PEDRO: We have some haste, Leonato.

LEONATO: Some haste, my lord! Well, fare you well, my lord.

*[LEONATO slams shut the door through which DON PEDRO and CLAUDIO were about to exit.]*

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 flear 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 grey hairs and bruise of many days  
 Do challenge thee to trial of a man.  
 I say thou hast belied mine innocent child.  
 Thy slander hath gone through and through her heart,  
 And she lies buried with her ancestors—

O in a tomb where never scandal slept  
 Save this of hers, framed by thy villany!

CLAUDIO: My villany?

LEONATO: Thine, Claudio, thine, I say.

DON PEDRO: You say not right, old man!

LEONATO: My lord, my lord,

I'll prove it on his body if he dare,  
 Despite his nice fence and his active practise,  
 His May of youth and bloom of lustihood.

CLAUDIO: Away, I will not have to do with you.

LEONATO: Canst thou so doff 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.

*[ANTONIO strikes CLAUDIO.]*

Come, follow me, boy; come, *[strikes]* sir boy, come, *[strikes]* follow me!

Sir boy, I'll whip you from your foining fence.

*[ANTONIO strikes at CLAUDIO as LEONATO tries to restrain him.]*

ANTONIO: Nay, as I am a gentleman, I will.	LEONATO: Brother—
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ANTONIO: Content yourself. God knows I loved my niece,

And she is dead, slandered to death by villains

That dare as well answer a man indeed

As I dare take a serpent by the tongue.

*[ANTONIO strikes over and over at CLAUDIO while LEONATO tries to restrain him. During the commotion, unseen by all, MARGARET appears on the balcony and eavesdrops.]*

ANTONIO: Boys, apes, braggarts, jacks, milksops!	LEONATO: Brother Antony—
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ANTONIO: Hold you content. What, man, I know them, yea,

Scambling, outfacing, fashion-monging boys,

That lie and cog and flout, deprave and slander,

Go anticly, show outward hideousness,

And speak off half a dozen dangerous words,

How they might hurt their enemies, if they durst,

ANTONIO: And this is all. Come, 'tis no matter.	LEONATO: But, brother Antony—
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ANTONIO: Do not you meddle, let me deal in this.

DON PEDRO: Gentlemen both, we will not wake your patience.

My heart is sorry for your daughter's death,

But on my honour she was charged with nothing

But what was true and very full of proof.

LEONATO: My lord, my lord—

DON PEDRO: I will not hear you!

LEONATO: No?

Come, brother; away. I will be heard!

ANTONIO: And shall, or some of us will smart for it!

*[Exeunt LEONATO and ANTONIO.]*

DON PEDRO: See, see, here comes the man we went to seek.

*[Enter BENEDICK.]*

CLAUDIO: Now, signior, what news?

*[BENEDICK walks right past CLAUDIO and gives a formal greeting to DON PEDRO.]*

BENEDICK *[to DON PEDRO]*: Good day, my lord.

DON PEDRO: Welcome, signior. You are almost come to part almost a fray.

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

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

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

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

BENEDICK: It is in my scabbard. Shall I draw it?

DON PEDRO: Dost thou wear thy wit by thy side?

CLAUDIO: Never any did so, though very many have been beside their wit.

*[DON PEDRO and CLAUDIO laugh.]*

BENEDICK *[to CLAUDIO]*: Sir, your wit ambles well; it goes easily.

*[During the following speech, DON PEDRO needs to imply that wit=penis.]*

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, "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 trans-shape thy particular virtues. Yet at last she concluded with a sigh thou wast the properest 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, an if she did not hate him deadly, she would love him dearly.

CLAUDIO: 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".

*[DON PEDRO and CLAUDIO are laughing and laughing by now.]*

BENEDICK: Shall I speak a word in your ear?

CLAUDIO *[laughing harder]*: God bless me from a challenge!

*[BENEDICK slaps CLAUDIO across the face with a glove and throws it down.]*

BENEDICK: 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 *[thoroughly insolent and incensed]*: Well, I will meet you, so I may have good cheer.

BENEDICK *[to CLAUDIO]*: Fare you well, boy, you know my mind. I will leave you now to your gossip-like humour. You break jests as braggarts 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 bastard sister 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 *BENEDICK*.]

DON PEDRO: He is in earnest.

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

DON PEDRO: But, soft you, let me be. Pluck up, my heart, and be sad. Did he not say my sister was fled?

[Enter *DOGBERRY* and *VERGES* on their bicycle, dragging *CONRAD* and *BORACHIO* behind. Only *BORACHIO* notices *MARGARET* watching above.]

*DOGBERRY* [to *CONRAD*]: Come you, sir. Nay, an you be a cursing hypocrite once, you must be looked to.

DON PEDRO: How now, two of my sister's men bound? Borachio one!

CLAUDIO: Hearken after their offence, my lord.

DON PEDRO: Officers, what offence have these men done?

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

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

*DOGBERRY* [pleased as punch]: I thank your graceship.

DON PEDRO [to *CONRAD* and *BORACHIO*]: Who have you offended, masters, that you are thus bound to your answer? This learned constable is too cunning to be understood. [*DOGBERRY* even more pleased.] What's your offence?

*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 Doña Juanita your sister incensed me to slander the Lady Hero, how you were brought into the orchard and saw me court Margaret in Hero's garments, how you disgraced her when you should marry her. My villany they have upon record, which I had rather seal with my death than repeat over to my shame. The lady is dead upon mine and my mistress' 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 [to *BORACHIO*]: But did my sister set thee on to this?

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

DON PEDRO: She is composed and framed of treachery,

And fled she is upon this villany!

*DOGBERRY*: Come, bring away the plaintiffs. By this time our sexton hath *reformed* Signor Leonato of the matter. [to *VERGES*] And, master, do not forget to specify, when time and place shall serve, that I am an ass.

*VERGES*: Here, here comes Master Signor Leonato and the Sexton too.

[Enter *LEONATO*, and *ANTONIO*.]

*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?  
*[LEONATO almost looks up at the balcony, but BORACHIO distracts him.]*  
 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 moves to strike BORACHIO but hesitates.]*  
 LEONATO: No, not so, villain, thou beliest thyself.  
 Here stand a pair of honourable ones.  
*[DOGBERRY and VERGES believe this to be a reference to themselves.]*  
 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 patiënce,  
 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.  
 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.  
*[A beat.]*  
 LEONATO: I cannot bid you bid my daughter live;  
 That were impossible; but, I pray you both,  
 Possess the people in Messina here  
 How innocent she died. And if your love  
 Can labour ought in sad inventiön,  
 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,  
*[ANTONIO barely manages to hide his surprise.]*  
 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,

*[DOGBERRY and VERGES start leading BORACHIO and CONRAD off into the house.]*

Who I believe was packed in all this wrong,  
Hired to it by your sister.

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.

*[DOGBERRY and VERGES exeunt on foot, leading BORACHIO and CONRAD.  
CONRAD becomes URSULA. Exit MARGARET above, distraught but still  
unnoticed by all but BORACHIO.]*

LEONATO: Until tomorrow morning, lords, farewell.

ANTONIO: Farewell, my lords. We look for you tomorrow.

DON PEDRO: We will not fail.

CLAUDIO: Tonight I'll mourn with Hero.

*[Exeunt DON PEDRO and CLAUDIO one way as DOGBERRY and VERGES enter  
another.]*

DOGBERRY: Moreover, sir, which indeed is not under white and black, that plaintiff  
there, the offender, did call me ass. Pray you, examine him upon that point. I beseech  
you, let it be remembered in his punishment.

LEONATO: I thank thee for thy care and honest pains.

DOGBERRY: Your worship speaks like a most thankful and reverend youth, and I  
praise God for you.

*[A beat in which DOGBERRY goes nowhere. Then LEONATO, realizing, hands him  
money.]*

LEONATO: There's for thy pains.

DOGBERRY: God save the foundation!

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

DOGBERRY *[going and turning back, going and turning back, etc. etc.]*: 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, neighbour.

*[Exeunt DOGBERRY and VERGES on their bicycle. DOGBERRY becomes  
BALTHASAR.]*

LEONATO: Bring you these fellows on.—We'll talk with Margaret,  
How her acquaintance grew with this lewd fellow.

*[Exeunt LEONATO and ANTONIO.]*

#### Scene 2. [56 lines /3:30]

*[Evening light. Enter MARGARET, sad and scared, in traveling clothes, with her bags  
packed; she heads toward the outside door, only to be accidentally intercepted as  
BENEDICK enters, scribbling in a notebook. MARGARET stashes her suitcase before  
BENEDICK spies it.]*

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.

MARGARET: To have no man come over me? Why, shall I always keep below stairs?

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

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

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

MARGARET: Well, I will call Beatrice to you, who I think hath legs.

*[Exit MARGARET back into the house, snatching up her suitcase as she goes.]*

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—why, Romeo was never so truly turned over and over as my poor self in love. Marry, I cannot show it in rhyme. I have tried. *[BENEDICK takes a poem out of a pocket.]* I can find out no rhyme to “lady” but “baby”—an innocent rhyme; for “scorn” “horn”—a hard rhyme; for “school” “fool”—a babbling rhyme. Very ominous endings. No, I was not born under a rhyming planet.

*[Enter BEATRICE.]*

Sweet Beatrice, wouldst thou come when I called thee?

BEATRICE: Yea, signor, and depart when you bid me.

BENEDICK: O stay but till then.

BEATRICE: “Then” is spoken. Fare you well now. *[BEATRICE starts to exit but turns back.]* And yet, ere I go, let me go with that I came for, which is with knowing what hath passed between you and Claudio.

BENEDICK: Only foul words, and thereupon I will kiss thee.

*[BENEDICK moves to kiss BEATRICE but she avoids him.]*

BEATRICE: Foul words is but foul wind, and foul wind is but foul breath, and foul breath is noisome. Therefore I will depart unknissed.

*[BEATRICE moves to exit, but BENEDICK intercepts her.]*

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. And now tell me, how doth your cousin?

BEATRICE: Very ill.

BENEDICK: And how do you?

BEATRICE: Very ill too.

BENEDICK: Serve God, love me, and mend.

*[BENEDICK moves to kiss BEATRICE, but URSULA enters.]*

There will I leave you too, for here comes one in haste.

URSULA: Madam, you must come to your uncle. Yonder's old coil at home. It is proved my Lady Hero hath been falsely accused, the Prince and Claudio mightily abused, and Doña Juanita 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, be buried in thy eyes!—and moreover I will go with thee to thy uncle's.

*[Exeunt URSULA, BEATRICE, and BENEDICK.]*

Scene 3. [29 lines/1:49]

*[Night and darkness. Music. Enter in formal procession the entire cast in black robes and death masks, holding tapers, with DON PEDRO, CLAUDIO, and BALTHASAR in mourning clothes, unmasked, at the end. Music ceases.]*

DON PEDRO: Is this the monument of Leonato?

BALTHASAR: It is, my lord.

CLAUDIO *[reading from a scroll]*: Done to death by slanderous tongues  
Was the Hero that here lies.

DON PEDRO *[reading from the scroll]*: Death, in guerdon of her wrongs,  
Gives her fame which never dies.

CLAUDIO *[reading from the scroll]*: So the life that died with shame  
Lives in death with glorious fame.

*[CLAUDIO hangs the epitaph on the tomb.]*

DON PEDRO: Hang thou there upon the tomb,

CLAUDIO: Praising her when I am dumb.

DON PEDRO: Now, music sound, and sing your solemn hymn.

*[Music plays.]*

BALTHASAR *[sings]*: Pardon, goddess of the night,  
Those that slew thy virgin knight,  
For the which with songs of woe  
Round about her tomb they go.  
Midnight, assist our moan,  
Help us to sigh and groan,  
Heavily, heavily.

Graves yawn, and yield your dead  
Till death be utterèd,  
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, round about

Dapples the drowsy east with spots of grey.

Thanks to you all, and leave us. Fare you well.

CLAUDIO: Good morrow, masters. Each his several way.

*[The cast blows out their tapers and the stage goes BLACK. DON PEDRO, CLAUDIO, and BALTHASAR exeunt in the dark, while the cast discards their robes and masks.*

*BALTHASAR becomes DOGBERRY.]*

Scene 4. [115 lines /7:11]

*[Enter LEONATO, ANTONIO, BENEDICK, BEATRICE, URSULA, FRANCIS, HERO, and MARGARET, crying.]*

FRANCIS: Did I not tell you she was innocent?

LEONATO: 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.

*[Exeunt BEATRICE, HERO, MARGARET, and URSULA.]*

The Prince and Claudio promised by this hour  
To visit me. *[to ANTONIO]* You know your office, brother;  
You must be father to your brother's daughter  
And give her to young Claudio.

ANTONIO: Which I will do with confirmed countenance.

BENEDICK: Friar, I must entreat your pains, I think.

FRANCIS: To do what, signior?

BENEDICK: To bind me, or undo me, one of them.  
Signor Leonato, truth it is, good signor,  
Your niece regards me with an eye of favour.

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

BENEDICK: And I do with an eye of love requite her.

LEONATO: The sight whereof I think you had from me,  
From Claudio and the Prince. But what's your will?

BENEDICK: Your answer, sir, is enigmatical.  
But for my will—my will is your good will  
May stand with ours this day to be conjoined  
In the state of honourable marriage—  
In which, good Friar, I shall desire your help.

LEONATO: My heart is with your liking.

FRANCIS: And my help.  
Here comes the Prince and Claudio.

*[Enter DON PEDRO and CLAUDIO.]*

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 Ethiop.

LEONATO: Call her forth, brother; here's the Friar ready.

*[Exit ANTONIO. An awkward beat—BENEDICK doesn't look at CLAUDIO or DON PEDRO.]*

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 leapt your father's cow,  
And got a calf in that same noble feat  
Much like to you, for you have just his bleat.

*[CLAUDIO steps aggressively toward BENEDICK, but enter ANTONIO leading HERO, BEATRICE, MARGARET, and URSULA, all masked or veiled and dressed indistinguishably.]*

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;  
*[HERO unmask.]*

And when you loved, you were my other husband.

CLAUDIO: Another Hero!

HERO: Nothing certainer.  
One Hero died defiled, but I do live,  
And surely as I live, I am a maid.

DON PEDRO: The former Hero, Hero that is dead!

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

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

*[FRANCIS starts to exit, leading all but BENEDICK after him.]*

BENEDICK: Soft and fair, Friar! Which is Beatrice?

BEATRICE: I answer to that name. *[she unmask]* 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,

*[BEATRICE manages to snatch the sonnet from CLAUDIO and greedily reads it.]*

Fashioned to Beatrice.

HERO: And here's another

Writ in my cousin's hand, stol'n from her pocket,

Containing her affection unto Benedick.

*[HERO hands this sonnet to BENEDICK, who reads it.]*

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.

*[BENEDICK silences BEATRICE's riposte with a kiss.]*

DON PEDRO: How dost thou, "Benedick the married man"?

BENEDICK: I'll tell thee what, Prince: A college of wit-crackers cannot flout me out of  
my humour. In brief, since I do purpose 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. *[kisses BEATRICE]* 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 *[not without an edge]*: I had well hoped thou wouldst have denied Beatrice,  
that I might have cudgelled thee out of thy single life to make thee a double dealer, which  
out of question thou wilt be, if my cousin do not look 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.

LEONATO: We'll have dancing afterward.

BENEDICK: First, of my word! Therefore play, music. *[to DON PEDRO]* Prince, thou  
art sad. Get thee a wife, get thee a wife. There is no staff more reverend than one tipped  
with horn.

*[Enter DOGBERRY and VERGES on their bicycle, dragging behind them a bound and  
deeply humiliated DOÑA JUANITA.]*

DOGBERRY: Marry, your graceship, your sister Princess is ta'en in flight and, truly, it is we have *comprehended* her. Pray you, sir, inquire me not how this deed was *demolished*, know only that my *wit*, saving your worships, has *personally* demolished it.

BENEDICK: Think not on her till tomorrow. I'll devise thee brave punishments for her. Strike up, pipers!

*[Music plays! The entire cast begins to dance and this dance becomes the curtain call.]*