

Much ado about nothing

ACT 4

Mustafa Ali; robinhood; Mustafa

1/13/2012

By William Shakespeare

Act 4, Scene 1

Original Text

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

LEONATO

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

FRIAR FRANCIS

(to CLAUDIO) You come hither, my
lord, to marry this lady?

CLAUDIO

5 No.

LEONATO

To be married to her.—Friar, you
come to marry her.

FRIAR FRANCIS

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

HERO

I do.

FRIAR FRANCIS

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

CLAUDIO

Know you any, Hero?

HERO

None, my lord.

Modern Text

DON PEDRO, DON JOHN, LEONATO,
FRIAR FRANCIS, CLAUDIO,
BENEDICK, HERO, and BEATRICE enter
with ATTENDANTS.

LEONATO

All right, Friar Francis, let's keep this
short. Do a simple ceremony, and list all
the particular duties of marriage later.

FRIAR FRANCIS

(to CLAUDIO) Have you come here, my
lord, to marry this lady?

CLAUDIO

No.

LEONATO

No, he comes to be married *to* her. Friar,
you are the one who has come to marry
her.

FRIAR FRANCIS

Lady, do you come here to be married to
this count?

HERO

I do.

FRIAR FRANCIS

If either of you knows any secret reason
why you two should not be joined in
marriage, I order you on your souls to say
so.

CLAUDIO

Do you know any, Hero?

HERO

None, my lord.

FRIAR FRANCIS
Know you any, count?

FRIAR FRANCIS
Do you know any, count?

Act 4, Scene 1, Page 2

Original Text

Modern Text

LEONATO

LEONATO

15 I dare make his
answer, none.

I'm sure I can answer for him—he doesn't know any,
either.

CLAUDIO

CLAUDIO

O, what men dare do!
What men may do!
What men daily
do, not knowing what
they do!

Oh, the things men dare to do! The things men are allowed
to do! The things men do daily, not knowing what they're
doing!

BENEDICK

BENEDICK

How now,
interjections? Why,
then, some be of
laughing,
as, ah, ha, he!

What, are we playing with interjections? Well then, add
some interjections that indicate laughter, like "ah," "ha,"
and "he!"

CLAUDIO

Stand thee by,
Friar.—Father, by
your leave,

CLAUDIO

20 Will you with free
and unconstrained
soul

Hold on, Friar. (to LEONATO) Father, are you giving me
your daughter freely?

Give me this maid,
your daughter?

LEONATO

LEONATO

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

As freely, son, as God gave her to me.

CLAUDIO
25 And what have I to
give you back whose
worth
May counterpoise
this rich and precious
gift?

DON PEDRO
Nothing, unless you
render her again.

CLAUDIO
Sweet Prince, you
learn me noble
thankfulness.—
There, Leonato, take
her back again.
Give not this rotten
orange to your friend.
She's but the sign
and semblance of her
honor.
Behold how like a
maid she blushes
here!

30 Oh, what authority
and show of truth
Can cunning sin cover
itself withal!
Comes not that blood
35 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

CLAUDIO
And what should I give you that would be equal in value to
this rare and precious gift?

DON PEDRO
Nothing, sir, except grandchildren.

CLAUDIO
Good Prince, you have taught me how to accept things
nobly. There, Leonato, take your daughter back. Don't
insult a friend by giving him a beautiful orange that rots
inside. She only appears honorable from the outside. Look,
how she blushes like a virgin! Oh, sin can disguise itself so
artfully! Doesn't that rising blush suggest that she is
virtuous and innocent? All of you who are looking at her,
wouldn't you swear that she's a virgin, judging by these
outward shows? But she is no virgin. She has been in a
man's bed. She blushes from guilt, not modesty.



none.
She knows the heat
of a luxurious bed.
Her blush is
guiltiness, not
modesty.

Act 4, Scene 1, Page 3

	Original Text	Modern Text
	LEONATO	LEONATO
40	What do you mean, my lord?	What do you mean, my lord?
	CLAUDIO	
	Not to be married, Not to knit my soul to an approved wanton.	CLAUDIO I won't be married. I won't join my soul to such a proven slut.
	LEONATO	
	Dear my lord, if you in your own proof	LEONATO
	Have vanquished the resistance of her youth And made defeat of her virginity—	My dear lord, if it was you who conquered her and took her virginity—
	CLAUDIO	CLAUDIO
45	I know what you would say: if I have known her, You will say she did embrace me as	I know what you're about to say. If I had slept with her, you'd say that we did so as husband and wife, merely anticipating our eventual marriage. No, Leonato. I never seduced her, or tempted her with indecent words. I treated her like a brother would treat a sister, with modest sincerity
50	a husband, And so extenuate	and appropriate affection.

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?

HERO

And have I ever seemed less than modest or appropriate 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.

CLAUDIO

Curse you for your false appearances! To me, you seemed like
Diana in her orbit—as virginal as the flower bud before it
blooms. But you're actually as hot-blooded as Venus, or a
pampered animal allowed to run wild.

55

But you are more
intemperate in
your blood
Than Venus, or
those pampered
animals
That rage in
savage sensuality.

HERO

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

HERO

Are you sick, my lord? Is that why you're talking so wildly?

LEONATO

Sweet Prince, why
speak not you?

LEONATO

Good Prince, say something!

60

DON PEDRO

What
should I speak?

I stand

dishonored, that
have gone about
To link my dear
friend to a
common stale.

DON PEDRO

What should I say? I've been dishonored: I arranged for a
friend of mine to marry a common whore.

LEONATO

Are these things
spoken, or do I
but dream?

LEONATO

Are you really saying these things, or am I dreaming?

Act 4, Scene 1, Page 4

Original Text

Modern Text

DON JOHN

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

DON JOHN

They're really being spoken, sir, and they're true.

BENEDICK

65 This looks not like a
nuptial.

BENEDICK

This doesn't look like a wedding.

HERO

True! O God!

HERO

It's true! Oh God!

CLAUDIO

Leonato, stand I
here?

Is this the Prince?

Is this the Prince's
brother?

Is this face Hero's?

Are our eyes our
own?

CLAUDIO

Leonato, am I standing here? Is this the Prince? Is this the
Prince's brother? Is this face Hero's? Are these our eyes?

LEONATO

All this is so, but
70 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

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

HERO

Oh, God defend me!
how am I beset!—
75 What kind of
catechizing call you
this?

CLAUDIO

To make you answer
truly to your name.

HERO

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

CLAUDIO

Marry, that
80 can Hero!
Hero itself can blot
out Hero's virtue.

LEONATO

Yes, that's all true—but what do you mean by it, my lord?

CLAUDIO

Let me just ask her one question, and by your authority as
her father, order her to answer truthfully.

LEONATO

As my child, I order you to do so.

HERO

Oh, God help me! How I'm being attacked! What kind of
game is this?

CLAUDIO

We just want you to answer to your real name.

HERO

Isn't my name Hero? Who can stain that name with a just
accusation?

CLAUDIO

Indeed, Hero herself can! You've stained your virtue with
your own actions. What man were you talking to at your
window last night, between the hours of midnight and one?
If you're a virgin, you'll answer this question.

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.

HERO

I wasn't talking to any man at that time, my lord.

Act 4, Scene 1, Page 5

Original Text

Modern Text

DON PEDRO

Why, then are you no
maiden.—Leonato,
I am sorry you must
hear. Upon mine
honor,

85 Myself, my brother, **DON PEDRO**

and this grievèd
count

Did see her, hear

her, at that hour last
90 night

Talk with a ruffian at
her chamber window
Who hath indeed,
most like a liberal
villain,
Confessed the vile

Well then, you are no virgin. Leonato, I'm sorry you have
to hear this. I swear on my honor that we saw and heard
Hero talking to a brute at her window last night.
And that man confessed at length how he has secretly
come to her bedroom thousands of times.

encounters they have
had
A thousand times in
secret.

DON JOHN

Fie, fie, they are not
to be named, my lord,
Not to be spoke of!

DON JOHN

There is not chastity No, my lord, don't name her sinful acts or speak of them!
enough in language, There's no way to describe them without offending
95 Without offense, to everyone here. Pretty lady, I'm much ashamed of your
utter them.—Thus, shocking behavior.

pretty lady,
I am sorry for thy
much misgovernment.

CLAUDIO

O Hero, what a Hero
hadst thou been
If half thy outward
graces had been
placed

About thy thoughts
and counsels of thy
heart!

100 But fare thee well,
most foul, most fair!

Farewell,
Thou pure impiety
and impious purity.

105 For thee I'll lock up
all the gates of love,

And on my eyelids
shall conjecture
hang,
To turn all beauty
into thoughts of
harm,
And never shall it

CLAUDIO

Oh Hero, you could have equaled the [mythical Hero](#) if
only half your outward beauty matched your inner
thoughts and desires! Goodbye, beautiful sinner. Goodbye
to your pure wickedness and your wicked purity. Because
of you, I'll keep myself away from love. I'll hang suspicion
on my eyelids, so that all the beautiful things I see are
transformed into dangers and are never able to trick me
again.

more be gracious.

LEONATO

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

LEONATO

Does anyone have a dagger for me?

HERO swoons

HERO faints.

BEATRICE

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

BEATRICE

What's wrong, cousin? Why have you collapsed?

DON JOHN

Come, let us go.

These things, come
thus to light,

110

Smother her spirits
up.

DON JOHN

Come, let's go. These revelations have overwhelmed her.

Exeunt **DON PEDRO**,

DON JOHN, and

CLAUDIO

DON PEDRO **DON JOHN**, and **CLAUDIO** exit.

Act 4, Scene 1, Page 6

Original Text

Modern Text

BENEDICK

How doth the
lady?

BENEDICK

How is she?

BEATRICE

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

BEATRICE

She's dead, I think.—Help, uncle!—Hero, why Hero! Uncle!
Signior Benedick! Friar!

LEONATO

O Fate! Take not
away thy heavy

115 hand!

LEONATO

Oh Fate, don't spare Hero from being punished! Death is
the best way to cover over her shame.

Death is the
fairest cover for
her shame
That may be
wished for.

BEATRICE

How now, cousin
Hero!

HERO stirs

FRIAR FRANCIS

(to HERO) Have
comfort, lady.

LEONATO

(to HERO) Dost
thou look up?

FRIAR FRANCIS

Yea,
wherefore should
she not?

LEONATO

Wherefore! Why,
doth not every
earthly thing

120 Cry shame upon
her? Could she
here deny

The story that is
printed in her
125 blood?—

Do not live, Hero,
do not open thine
eyes,

130 For, did I think
thou wouldst not
quickly die,

Thought I thy
spirits were
stronger than thy

BEATRICE

How are you, Hero?

HERO stirs.

FRIAR FRANCIS

(to HERO) Take comfort, lady.

LEONATO

(to HERO) Are you looking up?

FRIAR FRANCIS

Yes, why shouldn't she?

LEONATO

Why not! Isn't every living thing condemning her? Can she deny the accusations that are proven by her guilty blush?

Die, Hero, don't open your eyes. If I didn't think you were about to die soon—if I thought your spirit could bear this shame—I would risk punishment and kill you myself. Am I

sorry that I only had one child? Do I blame Nature for being so thrifty? Oh, one child is one too many! Why did I

ever have one? Why did you once seem lovely to me? Why didn't I just adopt a beggar's child left at my doorstep,

whose shame and dishonor I could have denied, not being its true father?

But you were mine, and I loved and praised you for being mine, and was proud of you for being mine—I loved you so

much that I hardly cared about myself.

shames,
Myself would, on
the rearward of
reproaches,
Strike at thy life.
Grieved I I had
but one?
Chid I for that at
frugal Nature's
frame?
O, one too much by
thee! Why had I
one?
Why ever wast
thou lovely in my
eyes?
Why had I not
with charitable
hand
Took up a beggar's
issue at my gates,
Who, smirchèd
thus, and mired
with infamy,
I might have said,
"No part of it is
mine;
This shame derives
itself from
unknown loins"?



Nothing

by William Shakespeare

Act 4, Scene 1, Page 7

Original Text Modern Text

But mine, and mine
I loved, and mine I
praised,
And mine that I
was proud on, mine
so much

That I myself was
135 to myself not mine,
Valuing of her—

why, she, O she is
fall'n
Into a pit of ink,

140 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

145 Oh, on my soul, my
cousin is belied!

BENEDICK

Lady, were you her
bedfellow last

Oh, but now you have fallen into a pit of ink, and there's not
enough water in the whole wide sea to wash you clean again,
and not enough salt to cover your stink.

BENEDICK

Sir, sir, calm down. I'm so amazed by this, I don't know what
to say.

BEATRICE

Oh, on my soul, my cousin has been slandered falsely!

BENEDICK

Lady, did you sleep in her room last night?

night?

BEATRICE

No, truly not,
although until last
night
I have this
twelvemonth been
her bedfellow.

BEATRICE

No, I didn't, but I did every night for the past year.

LEONATO

Confirmed,
confirmed! Oh,
that is stronger
made
Which was before
barred up with
ribs of iron!

LEONATO

Then it's confirmed! That's even more proof, and the case
against her was airtight already. Would the two princes and
Claudio lie? Claudio, who loved her so much that talking
about her wickedness made him weep?

150 Would the two
princes lie and
Claudio lie,
Who loved her so
that, speaking of
her foulness,
Washed it with
tears? Hence from
her. Let her die.

FRIAR FRANCIS

Hear me a little,
For I have only
155 And given way unto
this course of
fortune,
By noting of the
lady. I have
160 marked
A thousand
blushing
apparitions

FRIAR FRANCIS

Listen to me a moment. I've only remained silent this whole
time because I've been watching Hero. I've seen her begin
to blush a thousand times, only to watch those blushes
disappear a thousand times and an innocent paleness take
over her face. And in her eyes I see a fire that would seem
to burn away the lies the princes have told about her
chastity. Call me a fool,
don't trust my observations—the truth of which is backed
up by all my years of experience—don't trust my age, my
reputation, my position, and my holiness.

To start into her
face, a thousand
innocent shames
In angel whiteness
beat away those
blushes,
And in her eye
there hath
appeared a fire
To burn the errors
that these princes
hold
Against her maiden
truth. Call me a
fool,

Act 4, Scene 1, Page 8

Original Text Modern Text

Trust not my
reading nor my
observations,
Which with
experimental seal
doth warrant
The tenor of my
165 book; trust not my
age,
My reverence,
calling, nor
divinity,
If this sweet lady
lie not guiltless
here
Under some biting
error.

About
Nothing
By William Shakespeare
You can doubt all these things if this sweet lady turns out
to be guilty.



LEONATO

Friar, it
cannot be.
Thou seest that all
the grace that she
hath left
Is that she will not
add to her
170 damnation

A sin of perjury.
She not denies it.
Why seek'st thou
then to cover with
excuse
That which
appears in proper
nakedness?

FRIAR FRANCIS

Lady, what man is
175 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
180 mercy!—O my

father,
Prove you that any
man with me
conversed
At hours unmeet,
or that I

LEONATO

But she must be, Friar. You see that any morals she has left
are preventing her from denying the charges: she doesn't
want to add perjury to her list of sins.

FRIAR FRANCIS

Lady, who do they accuse you of having taken as your lover?

HERO

You should ask them. I don't know who they're talking about.
If I've been with a man in any improper way, let all my sins
be punished! Oh, father, if you yourself can prove that I
talked with a man at an indecent hour, or indeed that I
spoke to any creature last night, you can disown me, hate
me, and torture me to death!

yesternight
Maintained the
change of words
with any creature,
Refuse me, hate
me, torture me to
death!

FRIAR FRANCIS

There is some
strange misprision
in the princes.

BENEDICK

Two of them have
the very bent of
honor,

And if their
wisdoms be misled
in this,

185.

The practice of it
lives in John the
Bastard,
Whose spirits toil
in frame of
villainies.

FRIAR FRANCIS

The princes are under some strange misunderstanding.

BENEDICK

Two of them are completely honorable, and if they have
been tricked in this, we must blame John the Bastard, who
lives to create conflict.

Nothing
By William Shakespeare

Act 4, Scene 1, Page 9

Original Text Modern Text

LEONATO

I know not. If they
speak but truth of
her,

These hands shall
tear her; if they
wrong her honor,
The proudest of
them shall well
hear of it.

Time hath not yet
so dried this blood

190 of mine
Nor age so eat up
my invention

Nor fortune made
such havoc of my
means

195 Nor my bad life
reft me so much
of friends

But they shall find,
awaked in such a
kind,

Both strength of
limb and policy of
mind,

Ability in means
and choice of
friends,

To quit me of them
thoroughly.

LEONATO

I don't know. If they have spoken the truth about Hero, I
will tear her apart with my bare hands. But if they have
accused her falsely, even the greatest of them will have to
deal with me. Age hasn't dried up my body or eroded my
intelligence so much, and luck hasn't robbed me of so much
of my fortune, and my bad ways
haven't deprived me of so many friends, that they won't
find me ready to seek revenge both physically and mentally,
with money and friends at my disposal.

Nothing

By William Shakespeare

FRIAR FRANCIS FRIAR FRANCIS

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

LEONATO

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

FRIAR FRANCIS FRIAR FRANCIS

Marry, this, well
210 carried, shall on
her behalf
Change slander to
remorse. That is
some good.
215 But not for that
dream I on this
strange course,

Listen, if we do this correctly, the men who slandered Hero
will feel remorse for her instead. That will be a good thing.
But I have an even greater goal in mind. We'll maintain that
she died the instant she was accused, and everyone who
hears this will grieve for her, pity her, and excuse her
actions. That's how it goes: we don't value the things we
have until we lose them, when we suddenly rack up their
value and see
all the virtues we were blind to when they were alive and

But on this travail with us. That's how Claudio will respond. When he hears
 look for greater that she died from his words, his imagination will be
 birth. sweetly overtaken by thoughts of her. In death, every
 She, dying, as it aspect of her life will be got up more beautifully, and in his
 must so be mind she will seem more moving, more delicate, and more
 maintained, lively even than when she was alive. Then, if he ever truly
 Upon the instant felt love, he'll mourn and wish he hadn't accused her—even
 that she was though he believed his accu-
 accused,
 Shall be lamented,
 pitied and excused
 Of every hearer.
 For it so falls out
 That what we have
 we prize not to the
 worth
 Whiles we enjoy it,
 but being lacked
 and lost,
 Why then we rack
 the value, then we
 find

Act 4, Scene 1, Page 10

Original Text	Modern Text
220 The virtue that possession would	sation to be true. Follow my plan, and trust that the actual
not show us Whiles it was ours. So will it	events will play out even better than I am describing. And even if they don't, at least Hero's supposed death will stop
225 fare with Claudio.	the rumors of her infidelity. And if it doesn't go well, then
When he shall hear she died upon his words,	you can keep her hidden in a nunnery, the best place for someone with her kind of dirtied reputation—away from the public's eyes, tongues, mind, and insults.
The idea of her 230 life shall sweetly	

creep
Into his study of
imagination,
And every lovely
235 organ of her life
Shall come
apparelled in more
precious habit,
More moving,
240 delicate and full
of life,
Into the eye and
prospect of his
soul
Than when she
lived indeed. Then
shall he mourn,
If ever love had
interest in his
liver,
And wish he had
not so accused
her,
No, though he
thought his
accusation true.
Let this be so,
and doubt not but
success
Will fashion the
event in better
shape
Than I can lay it
down in likelihood.
But if all aim but
this be leveled
false,
The supposition



About

Nothing

By William Shakespeare

of the lady's
death
Will quench the
wonder of her
infamy.
And if it sort not
well, you may
conceal her,
As best befits
her wounded
reputation,
In some reclusive
and religious life,
Out of all eyes,
tongues, minds,
and injuries.

BENEDICK

Signior Leonato,
let the friar
advise you.
And though you
know my
inwardness and
love

245 Is very much unto
the Prince and
Claudio,

Yet, by mine
honor, I will deal
in this
As secretly and
justly as your soul
Should with your
body.

BENEDICK

Signior Leonato, listen to the friar's plan. And even though
you know I'm very close to the Prince and Claudio, I swear
I'll keep your counsel and deal with this secretly and justly.



William Shakespeare

LEONATO

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

LEONATO

Because I'm drowning in my grief, I'll grab onto the smallest
piece of string dangled in front of me.

Act 4, Scene 1, Page 11

Original Text

FRIAR FRANCIS

'Tis well consented.
Presently away,
For to strange sores
strangely they
250 strain the cure.—
Come, lady, die to
live. This wedding
day
Perhaps is but
prolonged. Have
patience and endure.

Exeunt all but

BENEDICK and

BEATRICE

BENEDICK

Lady Beatrice, have
you wept all this
while?

BEATRICE

255 Yea, and I will weep
a while longer.

BENEDICK

I will not desire
that.

Modern Text

FRIAR FRANCIS

This is a good agreement. Now, let's go. A strange disease
requires a strange cure. Come, lady; you must die in order
to live. Hopefully, your wedding day is only postponed.
Have patience and endure.

Everyone but **BENEDICK** and **BEATRICE** exits.

BENEDICK

Lady Beatrice, have you been crying this entire time?

BEATRICE

Yes, and I'll keep crying a while longer.

BENEDICK

I don't wish that on you.

BEATRICE

You have no reason.
I do it freely.

BEATRICE

You don't have to; I do it of my own free will.

BENEDICK

Surely I do believe
your fair cousin is
wronged.

BENEDICK

I really believe your cousin was falsely accused.

BEATRICE

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

BEATRICE

Oh, the man who avenged her could ask anything of me!

BENEDICK

Is there any way to
show such
friendship?

BENEDICK

Is there any way I could show such friendship to you?

BEATRICE

A very even way, but
no such friend.

BEATRICE

A very clear way, but there is no friend who will
undertake it.

BENEDICK

May a man do it?

BENEDICK

Can a man do it?

BEATRICE

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

BEATRICE

It's a job meant for a man, but not you.

BENEDICK

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

BENEDICK

There is nothing in the world that I love as much as you.
Isn't 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,

BEATRICE

It's as strange as this other thing which I don't
understand. I could just as easily say that there is
nothing in the world that I love as much as you. But don't
believe me—though I'm not lying. I confess nothing, and I
deny nothing. I feel awful for my cousin.

and yet I lie not, I
confess nothing, nor
I deny nothing. I am
sorry for my cousin.

Act 4, Scene 1, Page 12

Original Text

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

275 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 offense, sweet
Beatrice?

BEATRICE

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

Modern Text

BENEDICK

By my sword, Beatrice, you love me.

BEATRICE

Don't swear like that and then go back and [eat](#)
[it](#) later.

BENEDICK

I'll swear by my [sword](#) that you love me, too,
and I'll make any man who says that I don't love
you eat it.

BEATRICE

But you won't eat your words?

BENEDICK

Not with any sauce they could provide for
them. I swear, I love you.

BEATRICE

Well then, God forgive me!

BENEDICK

Why, what have you done, sweet Beatrice?

BEATRICE

You got to me first. I was about to swear that
I loved you.

BENEDICK

And do it with all thy heart.

BEATRICE

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

BENEDICK

Come, bid me do anything for thee.

BEATRICE

285 Kill Claudio.

BENEDICK

Ha! Not for the wide world.

BEATRICE

You kill me to deny it. Farewell.

BEATRICE begins to exit

BENEDICK

Then do so, with all your heart.

BEATRICE

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

BENEDICK

Come, ask me to do anything for you.

BEATRICE

Kill Claudio.

BENEDICK

Ha! I wouldn't do that for the whole wide world.

BEATRICE

Then, rejecting my request, you kill *me*, instead. Goodbye.

BEATRICE begins to exit.

Act 4, Scene 1, Page 13

Original Text

Modern Text

BENEDICK

Tarry, sweet
Beatrice.

BEATRICE

I am gone, though I
am here. There is no
290 love in you. Nay,
I pray you let me go.

BENEDICK

Beatrice—

BEATRICE

In faith, I will go.

BENEDICK

Wait, sweet Beatrice.

BEATRICE

My body waits here, but the rest of me is gone. You don't
really love me. I beg you to let me go.

BENEDICK

Beatrice—

BEATRICE

I swear, I'm going.

BENEDICK

We'll be friends
first.

BENEDICK

Not until we part as friends.

BEATRICE

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

BEATRICE

How dare you try to be my friend when you refuse to
fight my enemy.

BENEDICK

Is Claudio thine
enemy?

BENEDICK

Is Claudio your enemy?

BEATRICE

Is he not approved
in the height a
villain, that hath
slandered, scorned,
dishonored my
kinswoman? Oh, that
I
300 were a man! What,
bear her in hand
until they come to
take

BEATRICE

hands and then, with
public accusation,
uncovered
slander, unmitigated
rancor—O God, that
I were a man! I
would eat his heart
in the marketplace.

Hasn't he proven himself to be a great villain—slandering,
scorning, and dishonoring my cousin? Oh, I wish I were a
man! He pretended that everything was fine until the
moment they were exchanging vows, and then—with public
accusation, blatant slander, pure hatred—Oh God, if only
I were a man! I would rip his heart out in public and eat it.

BENEDICK

Hear me, Beatrice—

BENEDICK

Listen to me, Beatrice—

BEATRICE

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

BEATRICE

Talking with a man outside her bedroom window! A likely
story!

BENEDICK 305 Nay, but Beatrice—
BENEDICK No, but Beatrice—

BEATRICE

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

BEATRICE

Sweet Hero, she's been wronged, she's been slandered, she's been ruined.

BENEDICK

Beat—

BENEDICK

Beat—

Act 4, Scene 1, Page 14

Original Text

Modern Text

BEATRICE

Princes and counties! Surely, a princely testimony, a goodly count, Count

Comfext, a sweet gallant, surely! Oh, that I

310 were a man for his sake! Or that I had

any friend would be a man for my sake!

315 But manhood is melted into

curtsies, valor into compliment, and men are only turned into tongue, and trim ones too. He is now as valiant as

BEATRICE

Princes and counts! Oh, of course, it was all so proper and ceremonious—they gave a truly princely testimony. He's a proper count, that Count Sugarplum, a sweet gentleman, for sure! Oh, if only I were a man! Or had a friend who would be a man for me! But there are no real men left.

Their manliness has melted into pretty curtsies and fancy manners, and their bravery is spent on making clever compliments. All this conversing has turned men into tongues—and fancy ones, at that. The man who tells a lie and swears by it is now considered as brave as Hercules. I can't make myself a man by wishing I were, so as a woman I'll die, from grieving.

Hercules
that only tells a lie
and swears it. I
cannot be a man
with
wishing, therefore
I will die a woman
with grieving.

BENEDICK

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

BEATRICE

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

BENEDICK

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

BEATRICE

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

BENEDICK

325 Enough, I am
engaged. I will
challenge him. I will
kiss your
hand, and so I
leave you. By this
hand, Claudio shall
render
me a dear account.
As you hear of me,
so think of me. Go

BENEDICK

Wait, good Beatrice. I swear by this hand that I love you.

BEATRICE

Don't just swear by it; put your hand to some use that will
prove you love me.

BENEDICK

Do you honestly think, in your soul, that Claudio has
wrongly accused [Hero?](#)

BEATRICE

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

BENEDICK

That's enough for me, then. I'll challenge him. I'll kiss your
hand, and with that I leave you. I swear that Claudio will
pay dearly for this. Keep me in your thoughts and go
comfort your cousin. I'll go tell them that she's dead.
Goodbye.

comfort your
cousin. I must say
she is dead, and so,
farewell.

Exeunt

They exit.

Act 4, Scene 2

Original Text

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

DOGBERRY

Is our whole dissembly appeared?

VERGES

Oh, a stool and a cushion for the
Sexton.

A stool is brought in. **SEXTON** sits

SEXTON

Which be the malefactors?

DOGBERRY

Marry, that am I and my partner.

VERGES

5 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.

Modern Text

DOGBERRY, **VERGES**, the **SEXTON** (in
his official gown), and the **WATCHMEN**
enter, bringing **CONRADE** and
BORACHIO.

DOGBERRY

Is our whole dissembly here?

VERGES

Oh, we need a stool and a cushion for the
sexton.

A stool is brought in. The **SEXTON** sits
down.

SEXTON

Which ones are the malefactors?

DOGBERRY

Sir, that would be me and my partner.

VERGES

Yes, yes, we've been exhibitioned to
examine this case.

SEXTON

No, you've misunderstood me—where are
the criminals whom I'm supposed to
examine? Have them come in front of the
master constable.

DOGBERRY

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

BORACHIO and **CONRADE** come
forward

10 What's your name, friend?

BORACHIO

Borachio.

DOGBERRY

Pray, write down, "Borachio."—Yours,
sirrah?

CONRADE

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

DOGBERRY

Yes, indeed, bring them before me.

BORACHIO and **CONRADE** come
forward.

What's your name, friend?

BORACHIO

Borachio.

DOGBERRY

Please, write down "Borachio."—And
yours?

CONRADE

I'm a gentleman, sir, and my name is
Conrade.

Act 4, Scene 2, Page 2

Original Text

Modern Text

DOGBERRY

Write down "Master
Gentleman

15 Conrade."—Masters,
do

you serve God?

**CONRADE,
BORACHIO**

Yea, sir, we hope.

DOGBERRY

Write down that
they hope they
serve God; and write
God

20 defend but God
should go before
such

DOGBERRY

Write down "Master Gentleman Conrade."—Gentlemen, are
you good Christians, and do you serve God?

CONRADE, BORACHIO

Yes, sir, we hope so.

DOGBERRY

Write down that they hope they serve God. Oh, and write
"God" first—for God forbid we put these criminals before
God!—Gentlemen, it's already been proven that you aren't
much better than lying criminals, and soon we'll know almost
for certain. How do you both plead?

villains!—Masters, it
is proved already
that you are little
better than false
knaves, and it will go
near to be thought
so
shortly. How answer
you for yourselves?

CONRADE

Marry, sir, we say
we are none.

CONRADE

Honestly, sir, we say that we are not criminals.

DOGBERRY

A marvelous witty
fellow, I assure you,
but I will go about
with him.—Come you
hither, sirrah, a
word in your ear.

DOGBERRY

He's a marvelously witty fellow, no doubt, but I'll
outmaneuver him.—Come over here; I'll whisper a word in
your ear. Sir, I tell you we believe you're both lying
criminals.

25 Sir, I say to you it is
thought you are
false knaves.

BORACHIO

Sir, I say to you we
are none.

BORACHIO

Sir, I tell you that we are not.

DOGBERRY

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

DOGBERRY

Well, okay.—I swear to God, both their stories match.
Have you written that down, that they aren't criminals?

SEXTON

Master Constable,
you go not the way
to examine. You
30 must call forth the
watch that are their
accusers.

SEXTON

Master Constable, you're going about this all wrong. First,
you have to speak to the watchmen who accused them.

DOGBERRY

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

DOGBERRY

Yes, good idea; that's the eftest way. Bring the watchmen forward. Gentlemen, I order you in the Prince's name to accuse these men.

Act 4, Scene 2, Page 3**Original Text****FIRST WATCHMAN**

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

DOGBERRY

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

BORACHIO

Master Constable—

DOGBERRY

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

SEXTON

(to Watch) What heard you
him say else?

Modern Text**FIRST WATCHMAN**

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

DOGBERRY

Write down that Prince John is a villain. Why,
that's flat-out perjury—to call a prince's brother
a villain.

BORACHIO

Master Constable—

DOGBERRY

Be quiet, you. I swear, I don't like the look of you.

SEXTON

(to the watchmen) What else did you hear him
say?

SECOND WATCHMAN

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

DOGBERRY

Flat burglary as ever was committed.

VERGES

45 Yea, by Mass, that it is.

SEXTON

What else, fellow?

FIRST WATCHMAN

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

DOGBERRY

(to BORACHIO) O villain!

50 Thou wilt be condemned into everlasting redemption for this.

SEXTON

What else?

FIRST WATCHMAN

This is all.

SECOND WATCHMAN

That Don John had given him a thousand pieces of gold for wrongfully accusing the Lady Hero.

DOGBERRY

That's burglary, that is.

VERGES

Yes, by God, that it is.

SEXTON

What else did you hear?

FIRST WATCHMAN

I heard that Count Claudio meant to disgrace Hero in front of the whole wedding party and refuse to marry her.

DOGBERRY

(to BORACHIO) Oh, you villain! You'll be condemned to everlasting redemption for this!

SEXTON

What else?

FIRST WATCHMAN

That's all.

By William Shakespeare

Act 4, Scene 2, Page 4

Original Text

Modern Text

SEXTON

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

is this morning
secretly stolen
away. Hero was in
this
manner accused, in
this very manner
refused, and upon
the
grief of this,
suddenly died.—

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

Exit

DOGBERRY

Come, let them be
opinioned.

VERGES

Let them be in the
hands—

CONRADE

Off, coxcomb!

SEXTON

(to CONRADE and BORACHIO) You can't deny this,
gentlemen. This morning, Prince John secretly snuck out of
Messina. Hero was accused exactly as the watchman
described, and died on the spot from the grief.

Master Constable, tie up these men and bring them to
Leonato's. I'll get there first and tell him what we found
out.

He exits.

DOGBERRY

Come on, let's get them opinioned.

VERGES

Let them be in the hands—

CONRADE

Get off me, you fool!

55

60

DOGBERRY God's my life, where's the Sexton? Let him write down the Prince's officer "coxcomb." Come, bind them.—Thou naughty varlet!

DOGBERRY Honest to God, where's the sexton? He should write down that the Prince's officer was called a fool. Come on, tie them up. (to CONRADE) You're a nasty little stinker!

CONRADE
Away! You are an ass, you are an ass!

CONRADE
Get away from me, you ass! You ass!

DOGBERRY
Dost thou not suspect my place? Dost thou not suspect my years? Oh, that he were here to write me down an ass! But masters, remember that I am an ass, though it be not written down, yet forget not that I am an ass.—No, thou villain, thou art full of piety, as shall be proved upon thee by good witness. I am a wise fellow and, which is more, an officer and, which is more, a householder and, which is more, as pretty a

DOGBERRY
How can you call me that? Don't you suspect my office? Don't you suspect my age? Oh, if only the sexton were here to write down that I'm an ass! Gentlemen, remember that I am an ass; even though it's not written down, don't forget that I'm an ass. Oh, you're a rotten bastard, you are. I'm a wise man and, what's more, I'm an officer of the law and, what's more, I'm a householder and, what's more, I'm as handsome a hunk of meat as any in Messina. And I know the law, damn you, and I'm rich enough, damn you, and I used to have more, but I still have two robes and lots of lovely things.—Take him away!—Oh, if only the sexton had recorded that I'm an ass!

piece of flesh as any
is in Messina, and
one
that knows the law,
go to, and a rich
fellow enough, go to,
and a fellow that
hath had losses, and
one that hath two
gowns and
everything
handsome about
him.—Bring him
away.—Oh, that I
had been writ down
an ass!
Exeunt

They all exit.



About Nothing

By William Shakespeare

Summary: Act IV, scene i

Everyone gathers inside the church to celebrate the wedding of Claudio and Hero. But when Friar Francis asks Claudio whether he wishes to marry Hero, Claudio breaks into an outraged speech. He tells Leonato that he sends Hero back to Leonato again, for though she seems outwardly pure and blushes with innocence, her outward features belie her inward corruption and that she is, in fact, an unchaste, unfaithful whore. The happy wedding transforms itself into a chaotic uproar. Leonato and the shaken Hero ask what Claudio means. Claudio tells Leonato, in front of everyone in the church, that the night before Claudio, Don Pedro, and Don John watched Hero “tal[k]” with a vile man at her window (IV.i.82). This man has also “[c]onfessed” to having had sexual encounters with Hero many times before (IV.i.92). Don Pedro supports Claudio’s accusations, and they, together with Don John, accuse Hero of sexual looseness. Leonato cries out in despair, asking for a dagger with which to commit suicide. The overwhelmed Hero sinks to the ground, unconscious. Benedick and Beatrice rush to offer her their assistance, while Claudio, Don Pedro, and Don John leave the church without looking back. Leonato, weeping, tells Benedick and Beatrice to let Hero die, since that would be better than for her to live in shame. Beatrice, however, remains absolutely convinced that her cousin has been slandered. Suddenly and unexpectedly, the friar steps in. A quiet observer to the whole proceeding, he has wisely determined from the expressions of shock he has seen on Hero’s face that she is not guilty of unfaithfulness. Hero regains consciousness and insists that she is a virgin, that she has been entirely faithful to Claudio, and that she has no idea what her accusers are talking about. The intelligent Benedick realizes that if the accusation is a lie, it must originate with the troublemaking Don John, who would happily trick these two to spoil their happiness.

The friar comes up with an unexpected plan: he suggests that Hero’s existence be concealed, and that Leonato tell everyone she has died of shock and grief. When her accusers hear that an innocent woman has died, their anger will turn into regret, and they will start to remember what a virtuous lady Hero was. If the accusation really is a trick, then perhaps the treachery will expose itself, and Hero can return to the world. In the worst-case scenario, Hero can later be taken off quietly and placed in a convent to become a nun. The grieving, confused Leonato agrees to go along with the plan.

The others depart with Hero, leaving Benedick and Beatrice alone together. Benedick, trying to comfort Beatrice, asks if there is any way he can show his friendship to her. He suddenly confesses that he is in love with her, acknowledging how strange it is for his affections to reverse so suddenly, and she, equally startled and confused, replies in similar terms. But when Benedick says that he will do anything for Beatrice, she asks him to kill his friend Claudio. The shocked Benedick refuses. Angry, Beatrice denounces Claudio’s savagery, saying that if she were a man she would kill him herself for his slander of her cousin and the cruelty of his trick. After listening to her, Benedick changes his mind and soberly agrees to challenge Claudio—for the wrong that he has done to Hero and for Beatrice’s sake.

Summary: Act IV, scene ii

Elsewhere, Dogberry, Verges, and the Watch interrogate Borachio and Conrad. Borachio confesses that he received money from Don John for pretending to make love to Hero and then lying about it to Claudio and Don Pedro. When they hear about what has happened at the wedding, the watchmen tie up the captives and take them to Leonato's house.

Dost thou not suspect my place?
Dost thou not suspect my years?
O that he were here to write me down an ass!
But masters, remember that I am an ass.

Analysis

With the wedding scene—the climax of the play—the tone takes an abrupt turn, plunging from high comedy into tragedy. Claudio's rejection of Hero is designed to inflict as much pain as possible, and Hero's and Leonato's reactions to it seem to make things even worse. Few accusations could cause a woman more harm in the Renaissance than that of being unchaste, and Claudio uses deliberately theatrical language to hurt Hero publicly, in front of friends and family. The rejection scene also throws other relationships in the play into question: Claudio and Don Pedro both suggest that it reflects badly on Leonato's social manners to have tried to foist off a woman like Hero on Claudio, and Don Pedro implies that his own reputation has suffered by way of the apparent discovery that he and Claudio have made regarding Hero's virginity. Claudio assaults Leonato by denigrating Hero: "Give not this rotten orange to your friend. / She's but the sign and semblance of her honour" (IV.i.30–31).

Although the usually quiet Hero speaks up in her own defense, Claudio does not allow her even the possibility of defending herself. When she blushes in shock and humiliation, he cries:

. . . 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.
(V.i.36–40)

Hero's reactions of horror become, in Claudio's description of her face, evidence of her guilt, making it impossible for her to offer any defense. Claudio similarly discards Hero's denial of the accusation when she says, "I talked with no man at that hour, my lord" (IV.i.85). Claudio is convinced—by his eyes, by his own suspicious nature, and by his certainty that he cannot have been mistaken—that he knows the truth. He has already tried and convicted Hero in his mind, and she is afforded no chance to prove her virtue.

Following immediately upon these moments of betrayal and pain, however, seeds are sown for resolution and redemption. The trick that the friar plans is ingenious, and it seems to be a good one. It also plays cunningly upon a simple fact of human nature:

That what we have, we prize not to the worth
Whiles we enjoy it, but, being lacked and lost,

...

then we find
The virtue that possession would not show us
Whiles it was ours.

(IV.i.217–221)

As soon as Hero's accusers think her dead, the friar realizes, much of the anger driving Claudio and the others will dissipate, and they will start to remember her good qualities and regret their poor treatment of her. The "greater birth" that the friar envisions will transform Hero from an object of scorn and slander into someone mourned and better beloved than when she was alive (IV.i.212). In order to wash away her alleged sin, then, Hero will have to die and be symbolically reborn.

The scene also marks a critical turning point in the relationship between Benedick and Beatrice. Benedick seems to make an important decision when he stays behind in the church with Beatrice and her family instead of leaving with Claudio, Don Pedro, and Don John. His loyalty, which lies with his soldier friends when he arrives in Messina, now draws him to stay with Beatrice. In their elliptical ways, Beatrice and Benedick confess their love to one another after everyone else has left the church. Beatrice's confused answer to Benedick's blurting out that he loves her reveals that she is hiding something. Indeed, when Benedick exultantly exclaims that she loves him, she finally admits it: "I love you with so much of my heart that none is left to protest" (IV.i.284–285).

Lost in his newfound love, Benedick apparently converts himself to Beatrice's way of thinking. Soberly he asks her whether she truly believes that Claudio has slandered Hero. When Beatrice answers yes, Benedick says, "Enough, I am engaged, I will challenge him. I will kiss your hand, and so I leave you" (IV.i.325–326). Spurred by his own conscience, his love for Beatrice, and his trust in Beatrice's judgment, Benedick makes the radical decision to challenge Claudio to a duel to the death for what he has done to Hero. The lines of loyalty in the play have changed considerably.