

Much ado about nothing

Act 5

Mustafa Ali; robinhood; Mustafa

1/13/2012

By William Shakespeare

Act 5, Scene 1

Original Text

Enter LEONATO
and ANTONIO

ANTONIO

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

LEONATO

I pray thee,
cease thy counsel,
Which falls into
5 mine ears as
profitless
As water in a sieve.
Give not me counsel,
Nor let no
10 comforter delight
mine ear
But such a one
whose wrongs do
suit with mine.
15 Bring me a father
that so loved his
child,
Whose joy of her is
overwhelmed like
20 mine,
And bid him speak
of patience.
Measure his woe the
length and breadth
25 of mine,
And let it answer

Modern Text

LEONATO and ANTONIO enter.

ANTONIO

If you keep on the way you've been going, you'll kill yourself.
There's no point in adding to your grief.

LEONATO

Stop advising me; your words pass through my ears like water through a sieve. Don't counsel me. Only someone who's been wronged as I have can comfort me. Find a father who loved his child as overwhelmingly as I loved Hero and ask *him* to be patient. Compare the length and width of that man's sadness against my own; match up all the complaints and strong emotions that run through our bodies. If a man who has suffered as I have gave me advice the way you do—smiling and stroking his beard, telling me to toss away my sorrow, giving speeches when he should be wailing with me, trying to heal my grief with little proverbs, spinning my head around with philosophy—then I would take his advice and be patient. But that man doesn't exist. You can try to comfort a man who feels a pain that you have never felt, but once you feel it too, your sober advice will also turn into passion. You can't treat madness with rules or bind up insanity with little silken threads or cure heartache with hot air or lighten agony with pat phrases.

every strain for
strain,
As thus for thus
and such a grief for
such,
In every lineament,
branch, shape, and
form.

If such a one will
smile and stroke his
beard,

Bid sorrow wag, cry
"hem" when he
should groan,

Patch grief with
proverbs, make
misfortune drunk
With candle-
wasters, bring him
yet to me

And I of him will
gather patience.
But there is no such
man. For, brother,
men

Can counsel and
speak comfort to
that grief
Which they
themselves not feel,
but, tasting it,
Their counsel turns
to passion which
before
Would give
preceptial med' cine
to rage,
Fetter strong



Nothing

By William Shakespeare

madness in a silken
thread,
Charm ache with air,
and agony with
words.

Act 5, Scene 1, Page 2

Original Text

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

30 To be so moral when
he shall endure

The like himself.

Therefore give me
no counsel.

My griefs cry louder

Modern Text

Every man thinks it's his duty to advise those who are
overwrought with sorrow to be patient. But no man is so
moral or so strong that they can endure the same advice
when they themselves are grieving. So don't advise me. My
sorrow is crying too loudly to hear what you have to say.



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
35 the toothache
patiently,
However they have
writ the style of
gods
And made a push at
chance and
sufferance.

ANTONIO

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

LEONATO

There thou speak'st
reason. Nay, I will
do so.

My soul doth tell me
Hero is belied,
And that shall
Claudio know; so
shall the Prince
And all of them that
thus dishonor her.

Enter **DON PEDRO** **DON PEDRO** and **CLAUDIO** enter.

ANTONIO

Well then you're no better than a child.

LEONATO

Please, leave me alone. I intend to be flesh and blood, not airy philosophy, for there has never yet been a philosopher who could endure a toothache patiently, even though they all write as if they had risen above human suffering and misfortune.

ANTONIO

But don't take all that pain on yourself. Make sure the ones who have wronged you suffer too.

LEONATO

Now you're talking. I definitely will. In my soul, I believe Hero has been falsely accused. And I'll make sure that Claudio, the Prince, and anyone else who helped dishonor her know about it.

and **CLAUDIO**

ANTONIO

Here comes the
45 Prince and Claudio
hastily.

ANTONIO

The Prince and Claudio are hurrying this way.

DON PEDRO

Good e'en, good
e'en.

DON PEDRO

Good evening, good evening.

CLAUDIO

Good day to
both of you.

CLAUDIO

Good day to both of you.

LEONATO

Hear you, my lords—

LEONATO

Listen, my lords—

DON PEDRO

We have
some haste,
Leonato.

DON PEDRO

We're in a bit of a hurry, Leonato.

Act 5, Scene 1, Page 3

Original Text

Modern Text

LEONATO

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

LEONATO

A bit of a hurry, my lord! Well then, good bye, my lord.
You're in a hurry, are you? Well then, don't bother.

DON PEDRO

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

DON PEDRO

Come on, don't quarrel with us, good old man.

ANTONIO

If he could right

ANTONIO

If it's fighting he is after, some of us here should run and

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
55 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
60 jest at me.
I speak not like a
dotard nor a fool,
As under privilege
of age to brag
65 What I have done
being young, or
what would do
Were I not old.
Know, Claudio, to
70 thy head,

hide.

CLAUDIO

Who has wronged him?

LEONATO

Indeed, you have wronged me, you liar. Don't bother trying to
intimidate me by putting your hand on your sword. I'm not
scared of you.

CLAUDIO

Curse my hand if it ever threatened an old man like you.
Really, I had no intention of going for my sword.

LEONATO

Damn you, don't mock and sneer at me. I'm not a doddering
old fool who brags about the things he did when he was
young, and what he would do now if he weren't so old. Claudio,
I'm telling you right to your face that you have wronged me
and my innocent child. I am forced to lay aside my old man's
respectability, and with my gray hairs and my aching body I
challenge you to a duel. You have ruined my innocent child.
Your slander has broken her heart, and now she lies buried
with her ancestors in a tomb—ancestors who had never been
tainted by scandal until you caused one with your wickedness.

Thou hast so
wronged mine
innocent child and
me
That I am forced
to lay my
reverence by,
And with gray
hairs and bruise of
many days
Do challenge thee
to trial of a man.
I say thou hast
belied mine
innocent child.
Thy slander hath
gone through and
through her heart,
And she lies
buried with her
ancestors,
Oh, in a tomb
where never
scandal slept
Save this of hers,
framed by thy
villainy.

CLAUDIO
My villainy?

CLAUDIO
My wickedness?



About

Nothing

by William Shakespeare

Act 5, Scene 1, Page 4

Original Text **Modern Text**

LEONATO

Thine, Claudio,
thine, I say.

LEONATO

Yours, Claudio, yours, I say.

DON PEDRO

You say not right,
old man.

DON PEDRO

You've got it wrong, old man.

LEONATO

My lord,
my lord,

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

75

LEONATO

My lord, if he dares to accept my challenge, I'll beat him and prove he's guilty. I'll beat him despite his fancy fencing techniques and all the practicing he does, despite his youth and manliness.

CLAUDIO

Away! I will not
have to do with
you.

CLAUDIO

Not a chance! I'll have nothing to do with you.

LEONATO

Canst thou so daff
me? Thou hast
killed my child.
If thou kill'st me,
boy, thou shalt kill
a man.

LEONATO

You think you can get rid of me that easily? You killed my child. Take on someone your own size: if you kill me, boy, you'll have killed a man.

ANTONIO

He shall kill two of
us, and men
indeed,

80

But that's no
matter. Let him
kill one first.
Win me and wear
me! Let him

85

answer me.—
Come, follow me,
boy. Come, sir boy,
come, follow me.

ANTONIO

He'll have to kill both of us, and indeed we're both men. But let him start off easy by killing one of us. Come on—kill me and brag about it! Let me at him. Come on, come after me, little boy. Come on and get me. Little man, I'll be right in your face with my sword. I will, as surely as I am a gentleman.

Sir boy, I'll whip
you from your
foining fence,
Nay, as I am a
gentleman, I will.

LEONATO

Brother—

LEONATO

Brother—

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

90 As I dare take a

serpent by the
tongue.—

Boys, apes,
braggarts, jacks,
milkshops!

LEONATO

Brother Anthony—

ANTONIO

Quiet. God knows I loved my niece, and now she's dead—
slandered to death by cowards who would just as likely fight
a real man as I would grab a poisonous snake by the tongue.

Boys, fools, braggers, scoundrels, babies!

LEONATO

Brother Anthony—

Act 5, Scene 1, Page 5

Original Text

ANTONIO

Hold you content.

Modern Text

ANTONIO

Hold your peace. I know their kind, I know them exactly.

What, man! I know
95 them, yea,
And what they
weigh, even to the
utmost scruple—
Scrambling,
100 outfacing, fashion-
monging boys,
That lie and cog and
flout, deprave and
slander,
Go anticly and show
outward
hideousness,
And speak off half a
dozen dang'rous
words
How they might
hurt their enemies,
if they durst,
And this is all.

LEONATO

But brother
Anthony—

ANTONIO

Come, 'tis no
matter.
Do not you meddle.
Let me deal in this.

DON PEDRO

Gentlemen both, we
will not wake your
patience.
My heart is sorry
for your daughter's
105 death,
But, on my honor,
she was charged

They're petulant, disrespectful, fashion-crazy boys who lie
and cheat and mock, defame and slander. They walk around
in outlandish outfits, pretending to be brave and wild and
saying a few inflammatory things about how they'll hurt
their enemies—and that's all they do.

LEONATO

But brother Anthony—

ANTONIO

Don't, it's no big deal. Don't bother with it. Let me deal
with this.

DON PEDRO

Gentlemen, we won't stay here and anger you further. I'm
sorry about your daughter's death, but I swear our
accusations were true, and backed up with proof.



much
And
About
Nothing
William Shakespeare

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
110 of us will smart for
it.

Exeunt **LEONATO**
and **ANTONIO**

Enter **BENEDICK**

DON PEDRO

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

CLAUDIO

Now, Signior, what
news?

LEONATO

My lord, my lord—

DON PEDRO

I don't want to hear any more about it.

LEONATO

No? Come on, brother! I'm determined to be heard by
someone.

ANTONIO

And you will be, or some people here will suffer for it.

LEONATO and **ANTONIO** exit.

BENEDICK enters.

DON PEDRO

Look, here comes just the man we were looking for.

CLAUDIO

What's up, mister?

By William Shakespeare

Act 5, Scene 1, Page 6

Original Text

BENEDICK

(to DON PEDRO) Good day, my lord.

DON PEDRO

115 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 think'st
thou? Had we
fought, I doubt we should have been too
young for them.

BENEDICK

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

CLAUDIO

We have been up and down to seek thee,
for we are high-
proof melancholy and would fain have it

Modern Text

BENEDICK

(to DON PEDRO) Hello, my lord.

DON PEDRO

Welcome, sir. You just missed a fight
that was barely
avoided.

CLAUDIO

We were about to have our noses
snapped off by two
old men with no teeth.

DON PEDRO

Leonato and his brother. What do you
think? I think
if we had fought, we would have
proven too young and
strong for them after all.

BENEDICK

There's no bravery in an unfair fight.
I've been look-
ing for you two.

CLAUDIO

We've been looking for you, too.
We're really
depressed. Will you tell us some jokes

beaten away. Wilt
thou use thy wit?

BENEDICK

125 It is in my scabbard. Shall I draw it?

DON PEDRO

Dost thou wear thy wit by thy side?

CLAUDIO

Never any did so, though very many have
been beside their
wit. I will bid thee draw, as we do the
minstrels: draw to
pleasure us.

DON PEDRO

As I am an honest man, he looks pale.—

130 Art thou sick, or
angry?

CLAUDIO

(to **BENEDICK**) What, courage, man!
What though care
killed a cat? Thou hast mettle enough in
thee to kill care.

to beat our sad-
ness away?

BENEDICK

My wit's in my [scabbard](#). Should I
unsheath it?

DON PEDRO

You wear your wit next to you?

CLAUDIO

No one carries their wit next to
them, though some
people are [beside their wit](#). Come on,
draw your wit,
just as musicians draw their bows
across the instru-
ments: draw for our pleasure.

DON PEDRO

Look: Benedick is so pale—are you
sick, or angry?

CLAUDIO

(to **BENEDICK**) Buck up, man! [Care](#)
may have killed the
cat, but you are strong enough to kill
care. Lighten up.

Act 5, Scene 1, Page 7

Original Text

Modern Text

BENEDICK

Sir, I shall meet your
wit in the career, an
you charge it
135 against me. I pray you,
choose another
subject.

CLAUDIO

BENEDICK

Sir, don't even try to beat me in a battle of wits. I'll
meet all your attacks, even if you come charging at me
with a lance at full gallop. Choose another tack.

CLAUDIO

(to DON PEDRO) Nay, (to DON PEDRO) That was poor, Benedick! Give him then, give him another another lance—that last one got broken in half. staff. This last was broke 'cross.

DON PEDRO

By this light, he changes more and more. I think he be angry indeed.

DON PEDRO

Lord, he seems to be getting paler by the minute. I think he really is angry.

CLAUDIO

140 If he be, he knows how to turn his girdle.

CLAUDIO

If he is, that's his problem.

BENEDICK

Shall I speak a word in your ear?

BENEDICK

Can I have a word with you privately?

CLAUDIO

God bless me from a challenge!

CLAUDIO

God forbid he wants to challenge me!

BENEDICK

(aside to CLAUDIO)

You are a villain. I jest not. I will make it good how you dare, with what you dare, and when you dare. Do me right, or I

BENEDICK

145 will protest your cowardice. You have killed a sweet lady, and her death shall fall heavy on you. Let me hear from you.

(speaking so that only CLAUDIO can hear) You are a villain. I'm not kidding. I challenge you however you like—with whatever weapons you choose, and whenever you want. Meet this challenge, or I'll say that you're a coward. You've killed an innocent woman, and you're going to pay dearly for her death. What do you say?

CLAUDIO

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

CLAUDIO

I'll be there, and I'll enjoy myself.

DON PEDRO

What, a feast, a feast?

CLAUDIO

I' faith, I thank him.
He hath bid me to a
calf's head and a
capon, the which if I
do not carve most
curiously, say my
knife's naught. Shall I
not find a woodcock
too?

BENEDICK

Sir, your wit ambles
well; it goes easily.

DON PEDRO

What, are we having a feast?

CLAUDIO

Yes, we are. He has invited me to have a [calf's head and a capon](#). He says if I don't carve them up and serve them elegantly, he'll declare I have no skills with a knife.
Should I go get us a woodcock, too?

BENEDICK

Sir, you have a very slow, rambling wit.

Act 5, Scene 1, Page 8

Original Text

DON PEDRO

I'll tell thee how
Beatrice praised
thy wit he 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."

Modern Text

DON PEDRO

Benedick, Beatrice praised your wit the other day. I said you had a fine wit. "True," she said, "a fine little one." "No," I said, "a huge wit." "Right," she said, "a hugely awful one." "No," I said, "he has a good wit." "Exactly," she said, "it's good and mild; it doesn't hurt anyone." "No," I said, "Benedick is wise." "He is certainly," she said, "[a wise gentleman](#)." "No," I said, "he can speak many languages:" "I can believe that," she said, "because he swore one thing to me on Monday night and took it back on Tuesday morning. He spoke two languages then." She turned all your virtues into vices just about an hour ago. But in the end she sighed and admitted you were the handsomest man in Italy.

"Just," said she, "it hurts nobody."

"Nay," said I, "the gentleman is wise."

"Certain," said she, "a wise gentleman."

"Nay," said I, "he hath the tongues."

"That I believe," said she, "for he swore

a thing to me on Monday night, which he forswore on

Tuesday morning; there's a double tongue, there's two tongues." Thus did she an hour together transshape thy particular virtues.

Yet at last she concluded with a sigh, thou wast the proper'st 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

CLAUDIO

She cried a lot at that, and said she didn't care.

DON PEDRO

That she did. And yet for all that, if she didn't hate him to death, she'd love him to death. Leonato's daughter had told us everything.



Nothing

By William Shakespeare

him deadly, she
would love him
dearly. The old
man's
daughter told us
all.

CLAUDIO

All, all. And,
moreover, God saw
170 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
175 dwells Benedick the
married man?"

BENEDICK

Fare you well, boy.
You know my mind.
I will leave you now
to your gossip-like
humor. You break
jests as braggarts
do
their blades, which,
180 God be thanked,
hurt not.—My lord,
for your many
courtesies I thank
you. I must
discontinue

CLAUDIO

Absolutely everything. And, moreover, God saw Benedick
when he was hid in the garden.

DON PEDRO

But when exactly will we see Benedick married?

CLAUDIO

Yes, with the sign underneath him that says: "Here lives
175 Benedick the married man?"

BENEDICK

Goodbye, boy. You know what I intend. I'll leave you now to
chatter and gossip like an old woman. The wit you flaunt is
like a blunt sword—it can't hurt anyone, thank God.—My
lord, I thank you for your many kindnesses. I'm leaving your
court now.

your company.

Act 5, Scene 1, Page 9

Original Text

Your brother the Bastard is fled from Messina. You have among you killed a sweet and innocent lady. For my Lord Lackbeard there, he and I shall meet, and till then peace be with him.

Exit

DON PEDRO

185 He is in earnest.

CLAUDIO

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

DON PEDRO

And hath challenged thee?

CLAUDIO

Most sincerely.

DON PEDRO

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

CLAUDIO

He is then a giant to an ape; but then is an ape a doctor to such a man.

DON PEDRO

195 But soft you, let me be. Pluck up, my heart, and be sad. Did he not say my brother was fled?

Modern Text

Your brother Don John the Bastard has run away from Messina. The three of you have killed a sweet, innocent woman. Lord Babyface over there will meet me in a duel, and good luck to him then.

He exits.

DON PEDRO

He's serious.

CLAUDIO

Very serious, and I'm sure it's because of Beatrice.

DON PEDRO

And he challenged you to a duel?

CLAUDIO

He did, very sincerely.

DON PEDRO

190 What a strange sight—a man who has put on all his fancy clothes but forgotten his brain at home!

CLAUDIO

A guy like that is bigger than an ape, but the ape could be his doctor, it's so much smarter.

DON PEDRO

But wait a minute. Let me gather my wits and get serious here. Didn't he say my brother has run away?

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

DOGBERRY

Come you, sir. If justice cannot tame you, she shall ne'er weigh more reasons in her balance. Nay, an you be a cursing

hypocrite once, you must be looked to.

DON PEDRO

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

DOGBERRY, VERGES, and the WATCHMEN enter with CONRADE and BORACHIO.

DOGBERRY

Come on, you. If they let you off, then we'll have to assume that Lady Justice has lost all her power. Since you are a lying hypocrite, we must look after you.

DON PEDRO

What's this? Two of my brother's men, all tied up! And Borachio is one of them!

Act 5, Scene 1, Page 10

Original Text

CLAUDIO

Modern Text

CLAUDIO

200 Hearken after their Find out what they're being held for.

offense, my lord.

DON PEDRO

Officers, what
offense have these
men done?

DON PEDRO

Officers, what crime have these men committed?

DOGBERRY

Marry, sir, they
have committed
false report;
moreover,

they have spoken
untruths;

secondarily, they
are slanders;

sixth and lastly,

205 they have belied a
lady; thirdly, they
have

verified unjust

things; and, to

conclude, they are

lying

knaves.

DON PEDRO

First, I ask thee

what they have

done; thirdly, I ask

thee

what's their

offense; sixth and

lastly, why they are

committed; and, to

conclude, what you

lay to their charge.

CLAUDIO

Rightly reasoned,

210 and in his own

division; and, by my

DOGBERRY

Well sir, they've lied; moreover, they have said things that were not true; secondarily, they are slanderers; sixth and lastly, they have falsely accused a lady; thirdly, they have confirmed things that did not in fact happen; and, in conclusion, they are lying scoundrels.

DON PEDRO

First, I ask you what they've done; thirdly, I ask you what offense they're charged with; sixth and lastly, I ask you why they've been committed here; and, in conclusion, I ask what they're accused of.

CLAUDIO

Nicely done, and organized in just the way he'll

understand. My God, he manages to say the same thing six different ways.

troth, there's one meaning well suited.

DON PEDRO

(to BORACHIO and CONRADE) Who have you offended, masters, that you are thus bound to your answer? This

215 learned constable is too cunning to be understood. What's your offense?

BORACHIO

Sweet Prince, let me go no farther to mine answer. Do you hear me, and let this count kill me. I have deceived even your very eyes. What

220 your wisdoms could not discover, these shallow fools have brought to light, who in the night overheard me confessing to this

225 man how Don John your brother incensed me to slander the Lady Hero, how you were brought into the orchard and saw me court Margaret in

DON PEDRO

(to BORACHIO and CONRADE) What have you done, gentlemen? This educated constable is too brilliant for me to understand. What is your crime?

BORACHIO

Prince, I won't wait for my trial: listen to my story, and let the count kill me now. I tricked your own eyes. These stupid fools have uncovered what you in all your wisdom could not. They heard me confess to Conrade how Don John, your brother, prompted me to slander Hero—how you came to the orchard and saw me making sexual advances toward Margaret, who was disguised as Hero; how you disgraced Hero when you should have married her. They've recorded my crimes, and I would rather die than have to retell this shameful story. The lady has died because of the false accusations of me and my master. I desire nothing now but a criminal's punishment.

Hero's garments,
how you disgraced
her when you should
marry her. My
villainy they have
upon record, which
I had
rather seal with my
death than repeat
over to my shame.

The
lady is dead upon
mine and my
master's false
accusation.
And, briefly, I
desire nothing but
the reward of a
villain.



Act 5, Scene 1, Page 11

Original Text

DON PEDRO

(to CLAUDIO) Runs not
this speech like iron
through your
blood?

CLAUDIO

230 I have drunk poison
whiles he uttered it.

DON PEDRO

(to BORACHIO) But did

Modern Text

DON PEDRO

(to CLAUDIO) Doesn't this make your blood run cold?

CLAUDIO

His words are like poison to me.

DON PEDRO

(to BORACHIO) But did my brother prompt you to do

my brother set thee on all this?
to this?

BORACHIO

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

BORACHIO

Yes, and paid me well for doing it.

DON PEDRO

He is composed and
framed of treachery,
And fled he is upon this crimes.
villainy.

DON PEDRO

He is made of treachery, and has run away to avoid his
crimes.

CLAUDIO

235 Sweet Hero, now thy
image doth appear
In the rare semblance
that I loved it first.

CLAUDIO

Sweet Hero; when I imagine you now, you seem as
beautiful as you did when I first loved you.

DOGBERRY

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

DOGBERRY

Come, take away the [plaintiffs](#). By now the sexton will
have reformed Signior Leonato of the matter. (to
CLAUDIO and DON PEDRO) And, gentlemen, please do
not forget to specify, whenever it is convenient, that I
am an ass.

VERGES

Here, here comes
Master Signior Leonato,
and the Sexton
too.

VERGES

Here comes Master Signior Leonato with the sexton.

Enter **LEONATO**

and **ANTONIO**, with
the **SEXTON**

LEONATO and **ANTONIO** enter with the **SEXTON**.

LEONATO

Which is the villain?
Let me see his eyes,
245 That, when I note

LEONATO

Which one of them did it? Let me see what he looks
like, so when I see another man who resembles him, I'll
know to avoid him. Which one is it?

another man like him,
I may avoid him. Which
of these is he?

BORACHIO

If you would know your
wronger, look on me.

BORACHIO

If you want to see your deceiver, then look at me.

LEONATO

Art thou the slave that
with thy breath hast
killed

LEONATO

Are you the slave who, with your slanderous words,
killed my innocent child?

Mine innocent child?

Act 5, Scene 1, Page 12

Original Text

Modern Text

BORACHIO

Yea, even I
alone.

BORACHIO

Yes, I am the one.

LEONATO

No, not so, villain,
thou beliest
thyself.

Here stand a pair
of honorable
men—

A third is fled—
250 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

LEONATO

No, villain, but you didn't work alone. (*indicating CLAUDIO and DON PEDRO*) For here are two noblemen—the third has run away—who helped you. (*to CLAUDIO and DON PEDRO*) Thank you, gentlemen, for my daughter's death.

Make a note of it on your long lists of righteous and worthy deeds. It was very brave of you.

bethink you of it.

CLAUDIO

I know not how to
pray your patience,
Yet I must speak.

Choose your

255 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

260 I would bend
under any heavy
weight

That he'll enjoin
me to.

LEONATO

I cannot bid you
bid my daughter

265 live—
That were

impossible—but, I
pray you both,

Possess the people
270 in Messina here

How innocent she
died. And if your
love

Can labor ought in

275 sad invention,

CLAUDIO

I don't know how to ask you for forgiveness, but I have to say something. Choose your revenge. Punish me through any means you can devise, though I sinned by mistake.

DON PEDRO

Me too—but to satisfy this good old man, I too will bear any punishment he gives me.

LEONATO

I can't ask you to make my daughter live—that's impossible—but I beg you both to tell the people of Messina that she was innocent when she died. And if your love can produce something from its sadness, write a poem for her; hang it on her grave and sing it to her bones. Sing it tonight. Then come to my house tomorrow morning, and since you couldn't be my son-in-law, be my nephew instead. My brother has a daughter who looks exactly like Hero; this girl is heir to both our estates. Marry her as you should have married her cousin, and I will let my revenge die.

Hang her an
epitaph upon her
tomb
And sing it to her
bones. Sing it
tonight.
Tomorrow morning
come you to my
house,
And since you
could not be my
son-in-law,
Be yet my nephew.
My brother hath a
daughter,
Almost the copy of
my child that's
dead,
And she alone is
heir to both of us.
Give her the right
you should have
given her cousin,
And so dies my
revenge.



Act 5, Scene 1, Page 13

Original Text

CLAUDIO

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

Modern Text

CLAUDIO

Oh, noble sir! Your overwhelming kindness makes me weep.
I willingly accept your offer and put my future in your
hands.

poor Claudio.

LEONATO

Tomorrow then I
will expect your
coming.

Tonight I take my
leave. This naughty

280 man

Shall face to face
be brought to
Margaret,

Who I believe was
packed in all this
wrong,

Hired to it by your
brother.

BORACHIO

No, by my soul, she
was not,

285

Nor knew not what
she did when she
spoke to me,

But always hath
been just and
virtuous

In any thing that I
do know by her.

DOGBERRY

(to LEONATO)

290

Moreover, sir, which
indeed is not under
white and black, this
plaintiff here, the
offender, did call
me

295 ass. I beseech you,

let it be

remembered in his

LEONATO

I will see you tomorrow, then. Now I have to leave. This
wicked man will be brought face to face with Margaret,
who I believe was hired by Don John to take part in this
plot.

BORACHIO

No, she wasn't, and she didn't know anything about it. She
has always been honest and good.

DOGBERRY

(to LEONATO) Also, sir, this hasn't been put down in
writing, but I should let you know that this [plaintiff](#) here,
the criminal, did in fact call me an ass. Please remember
that when you're punishing him. Plus, the watchmen heard
the criminals talking about some man named [Deformed](#).
They say that he has an earring made out of a key, with a
lock hanging from it. Apparently, he borrows money from
people in the name of God and then never pays it back,
which angers everyone so much that they now refuse to
fund anything in the name of God. Make sure you ask him

punishment. about this.

And also the watch
heard them talk of
one Deformed. They
say he wears a key
in his ear and a lock
hanging by it and
borrows money in
God's name, the
which he hath used
so

long and never paid
that now men grow
hard-hearted and
will lend nothing for
God's sake. Pray you,
examine him
upon that point.

LEONATO

I thank thee for thy **LEONATO**
care and honest Thank you for all your efforts.
pains.

DOGBERRY

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

DOGBERRY

You speak like a very thankful and respectful boy, and
may God bless you.

LEONATO

(giving him money)
There's for thy
pains.

LEONATO

(giving DOGBERRY money) This is for your trouble.

300



Act 5, Scene 1, Page 14

Original Text

DOGBERRY

God save the
foundation!

LEONATO

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

DOGBERRY

I leave an arrant
knave with your
Worship, which I
beseech
your Worship to
correct yourself, for
the example of
others.

305 God keep your
Worship! I wish your
Worship well. God
restore you to
health! I humbly give
you leave to depart,
and

if a merry meeting
may be wished, God
prohibit it!—
Come, neighbor.

Exeunt **DOGBERRY**
and **VERGES**

LEONATO

310 Until tomorrow

Modern Text

DOGBERRY

God save the charitable organization!

LEONATO

Go, you're relieved of your duty. Thank you.

DOGBERRY

I leave a slimy bastard with you, your Worship, for you to
punish and make an example of. God bless your Worship!
I wish you well. I hope that God restores you to health. I
will humbly let you go now, God prohibiting we will meet
again in the future.—Come on, man.

DOGBERRY and **VERGES** exit.

LEONATO

I'll see you tomorrow morning, gentlemen.

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.

LEONATO

(to the Watch)

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

ANTONIO

Goodbye, gentlemen. We'll see you tomorrow.

DON PEDRO

We'll be there.

CLAUDIO

I will mourn Hero tonight.

LEONATO

(to the watchmen) Bring these criminals with us. We'll go
talk to Margaret, to see how she got involved with this
worthless man.

They all exit.

Act 5, Scene 2

Original Text

Enter **BENEDICK**
and **MARGARET**

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?

Modern Text

BENEDICK and **MARGARET** enter.

BENEDICK

Please Margaret, help me write this poem for
Beatrice.

MARGARET

Afterward, will you write a sonnet for me, praising
my beauty?

BENEDICK

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

MARGARET

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

BENEDICK

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

MARGARET

And yours as blunt as the
fencer's foils, which hit
10 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.

BENEDICK

I'll write you such a glorious sonnet, Margaret, that
no man will ever be able to come over it. You certainly
deserve it.

MARGARET

No man will come [over me!](#) What a life that would be!

BENEDICK

Your wit is as quick as a greyhound's jaws—it catches
whatever it goes after.

MARGARET

And your wit is as blunt as a practice sword, with its
dull tip; it hits people but doesn't hurt them.

BENEDICK

It's just that my wit is very gentlemanly, Margaret,
and refuses to hurt a woman. Now please, tell
Beatrice to come out. I admit defeat; I give you the
[bucklers](#).

MARGARET

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

BENEDICK

If you use them,
Margaret, you must put in
15 the pikes with
a vice, and they are
dangerous weapons for

MARGARET

No, you should give a woman your sword—we have our
own [bucklers!](#)

BENEDICK

Watch out, though, Margaret—virgins shouldn't be
brandishing their bucklers around.

maids.

MARGARET

MARGARET

Well, I will call Beatrice to I'll go get Beatrice for you, who can walk here by you, who I think hath legs. herself—she has legs.

Act 5, Scene 2, Page 2

Original Text

BENEDICK

And therefore will come.

Exit **MARGARET**

(sings)

*The god of love,
That sits above,
And knows me, and knows me,
How pitiful I deserve—*

I mean in singing. But in loving, Leander the good swimmer, Troilus the first employer of panders, and a whole bookful of these quondam carpetmongers, whose names yet run smoothly in the even road of a blank verse, why, they were never so truly turned over and over as my poor self in love. Marry, I cannot show it in rhyme. I have tried. I can find out no rhyme to "lady" but "baby"—an innocent rhyme; for "scorn," "horn"—a hard rhyme; for, "school," "fool"—a babbling rhyme; very ominous endings. No, I was not born under a rhyming planet, nor I cannot woo in festival terms.

Enter **BEATRICE**

30 Sweet Beatrice, wouldst thou come when

Modern Text

BENEDICK

So that means she'll come.

MARGARET exits.

(singing)

*The god of love
He sits in heaven above
And he knows me, he knows me
He knows how much pity I deserve—*

I'm really a pitiful singer. But as a lover, well, that's another story. Take [Leander, Troilus](#), or an entire book's worth of those legendary lover-boys, whose names sound so smooth and nice in a line of verse—not one of them has been driven as crazy by love as I have been. But I can't prove it in a poem. I have tried. I can't think of any rhyme for "lady" but "baby," which is a childish rhyme. The only rhyme for "scorn" I can come up with is "[horn](#)"—a bit off for a love poem. Nothing rhymes with "school" but "fool," and that's a ridiculous jingle. These are all very unpromising line endings. No, I wasn't destined to be a poet, and I can't woo a lady with pretty words.

BEATRICE enters.

Beatrice, have you come because I

I called thee?

BEATRICE

Yea, Signior, and depart when you bid me.

BENEDICK

Oh, stay but till then!

BEATRICE

"Then" is spoken. Fare you well now. And yet, ere I go, let me go with that I came, which is, with
35 knowing what hath passed between you and Claudio.

BENEDICK

Only foul words, and thereupon I will kiss thee.

called for you?

BEATRICE

Yes, sir, and I'll leave when you ask me to.

BENEDICK

Oh, well, stay till then!

BEATRICE

There—you said "then." So I'll leave now. But before I go, let me get what I came for. What happened between you and Claudio?

BENEDICK

I spoke angry, foul words to him, and with that I will kiss you.

Act 5, Scene 2, Page 3

Original Text

Modern Text

BEATRICE

Foul words is but foul wind, and foul wind is but foul breath, and foul breath is noisome. Therefore I will depart
unkissed.

BENEDICK

40 Thou hast frightened the word out of his right sense, so forcible is thy wit. But I must tell thee

BEATRICE

If you had foul words in your mouth, then your breath must be foul, and foul breath is nauseating. Thus, I'll leave without being kissed.

BENEDICK

Your wit is so forceful, it frightens the very meaning out of your words. But I will tell you this very plainly: I have challenged Claudio, and either he'll accept the challenge or admit he's a coward. Now, tell me—which of my bad qualities did you fall in love with first?

45 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
50 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

BEATRICE

With all of them at once: they work together to create
such an entirely evil person that no good ever manages to
enter the mix. But tell me—which of my good qualities first
made you suffer love for me?

BENEDICK

Suffer love! That's a good way of putting it. I do suffer
love, because I love you against my will.

BEATRICE

You love me in spite of your heart, I think. If you spite your
heart for my sake, then I will spite it for yours. I will never
love the thing my friend hates.

spite it for yours,
for I will never love
that which my friend
hates.

BENEDICK

Thou and I are too
55 wise to woo
peaceably.

BENEDICK

You and I are too wise to woo each other peacefully.

BEATRICE

It appears not in
this confession.

BEATRICE

There's not one wise
man
among twenty that
will praise himself.

It's said that no truly wise man will praise himself. If you
say that you are wise, it's likely you're not.

BENEDICK

An old, an old
instance, Beatrice,
that lived in the
lime of

BENEDICK

60 good neighbors. If a
man do not erect in
this age his own
tomb ere he dies,
he shall live no
longer in monument
than
the bell rings and
the widow weeps.

That's an old proverb, Beatrice, from the time when
neighbors praised each other. In this day and age, if a man
doesn't erect his own monument before he dies, he won't be
remembered past the funeral bell's ringing and his widow's
crying.

BEATRICE

And how long is
that, think you?

BEATRICE

Exactly how long is that, do you think?

Act 5, Scene 2, Page 4

Original Text

Modern Text

BENEDICK

Question: why, an hour in clamor and a quarter in rheum.

Therefore is it most expedient for the wise, if Don Worm, his conscience, find no impediment to the

65 contrary, to be the trumpet of his own virtues, as I am to myself. So much for praising myself, who, I myself will bear witness, is praiseworthy. An now tell me, how doth your cousin?

BEATRICE

Very ill.

BENEDICK

70 And how do you?

BEATRICE

Very ill, too.

BENEDICK

Serve God, love me, and mend. There will I leave you too, for here comes one in haste.

Enter **URSULA**

URSULA

75 Madam, you must come to your uncle. Yonder's old coil at home. It is proved my Lady Hero hath

BENEDICK

About an hour for the ringing and fifteen minutes for the crying. That's why it's better for wise men to trumpet their own virtues, like I do. That's why I praise myself, who—if I do say so myself—is quite praiseworthy. But tell me, how is your cousin?

BEATRICE

She's very sick.

BENEDICK

And how are you?

BEATRICE

I'm very sick, too.

BENEDICK

Have faith, love me, and you will get better. And that's where I'll end, because someone is hurrying this way.

URSULA enters.

URSULA

Madam, you have to go to your uncle's. There's a huge racket going on there. It's been proven that Lady Hero is innocent, that the Prince and Claudio have been utterly deceived, and that Don John—who has run away—is the source of all the trouble. Will you come immediately?

been falsely
accused, the Prince
and Claudio mightily
abused, and Don
John is the author of
all, who is fled and
gone. Will you
come presently?

Exit

She exits.

BEATRICE

Will you go hear this
news, Signior?

BEATRICE

Will you come with me to hear this news, sir?

BENEDICK

I will live in thy
heart, die in thy lap,
and be buried in thy
eyes—and moreover,
I will go with thee to
thy uncle's.

BENEDICK

I will live in your heart, die in your lap, and be buried in
your eyes—and, what's more, I will go with you to your
uncle's.

Exeunt

They exit.

Act 5, Scene 3

Original Text

Enter **DON PEDRO**, **CLAUDIO**,
three or four **LORDS** with tapers,
and musicians

CLAUDIO

Is this the monument of Leonato?

FIRST LORD

It is, my lord.

CLAUDIO

(reading an epitaph)

Done to death by slanderous tongues

5 Was the Hero that here lies.

Death, in guerdon of her wrongs,

Modern Text

DON PEDRO and **CLAUDIO** enter with
three or four **LORDS** carrying candles,
and musicians.

CLAUDIO

Is this the family tomb of Leonato?

FIRST LORD

It is, my lord.

CLAUDIO

(reading an epitaph)

Here lies Hero,

The heroic maiden killed by slanderous
words.

Gives her fame which never dies.
So the life that died with shame
Lives in death with glorious fame.

Hangs the scroll

Hang thou there upon the tomb,
10 Praising her when I am dumb.
Now, music, sound, and sing your
solemn hymn.

(Song)

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

To repay her for her troubles, Death
Gives her undying fame.

So the life that died with shame
Lives on with fame.

(he hangs the scroll)

This epitaph will hang here forever,
Continuing to praise Hero after I die.
Now start the music, and sing the solemn
hymn.

(singing)

*Please pardon, goddess of the night,
The men who killed your [virgin knight](#).
These men now walk around her tomb,
Singing songs of woe.
Oh, midnight, join our moaning
Help us with our sighs and groaning
Heavily, heavily.
Graves, open up and release your
corpses
Until Hero's death is fully mourned
Heavily, heavily.*

Act 5, Scene 3, Page 2

Original Text

Modern Text

CLAUDIO

Now, unto thy bones
good night!

15 Yearly will I do this
rite.

DON PEDRO

Good morrow,
masters. Put your
torches out.

The wolves have
20 preyed, and look, the

CLAUDIO

Now I say good night to your bones, Hero. I will perform
this ceremony every year.

DON PEDRO

Good morning, gentlemen. Put out your torches. The wolves
have finished preying for the night, and look—the gentle
dawn is rising, dappling the sleepy eastern sky with spots
of light.

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.

Exeunt **LORDS** and
Musicians

DON PEDRO

Come, let us hence,
and put on other
weeds,
And then to
Leonato's we will go.

CLAUDIO

And Hymen now with
luckier issue speed's

25 Than this for whom
we rendered up this
woe.

Exeunt

CLAUDIO

Good morning, gentlemen. We go our separate ways.

LORDS and musicians exit

DON PEDRO

Come, let's go and change our clothes. Then we'll visit
Leonato's.

CLAUDIO

And I hope Hymen will give us better luck than Hero got.

They all exit

Act 5, Scene 4

Original Text

Enter LEONATO, ANTONIO,
BENEDICK, BEATRICE,
MARGARET, URSULA, FRIAR

Modern Text

LEONATO, ANTONIO, BENEDICK,
BEATRICE, MARGARET, URSULA, FRIAR
FRANCIS, and HERO enter.

FRANCIS, and HERO

FRIAR FRANCIS

Did I not tell you she was innocent?

LEONATO

So are the Prince and Claudio, who accused her

Upon the error that you heard debated.

But Margaret was in some fault for this,

5 Although against her will, as it appears

In the true course of all the question.

ANTONIO

Well, I am glad that all things sort 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,

10 Withdraw into a chamber by yourselves,
And when I send for you, come hither masked.

The Prince and Claudio promised by this hour

15 To visit me.—You know your office, brother.

You must be father to your brother's daughter,
And give her to young Claudio.

Exeunt Ladies

FRIAR FRANCIS

Didn't I tell you she was innocent?

LEONATO

And the Prince and Claudio, who accused her, are innocent as well, because they were deceived by Don John. Margaret is partially guilty, although our investigation shows that she acted unintentionally.

ANTONIO

Well, I'm glad that everything has been sorted out.

BENEDICK

Me too—otherwise I would have had to duel with Claudio.

LEONATO

Hero, you and the other women should all retreat to a room. When I send for you, come out wearing masks. The Prince and Claudio are supposed to be here by now.—You know your job, brother. You have to pretend to be your niece's father, and give her away to Claudio.

The ladies exit.

ANTONIO

Which I will do with confirmed
countenance.

BENEDICK

Friar, I must entreat your
pains, I think.

FRIAR FRANCIS

To do what, Signior?

ANTONIO

I'll do that, without giving away our secret.

BENEDICK

Friar, I think I need a favor from you.

FRIAR FRANCIS

What do you need me to do?

Act 5, Scene 4, Page 2

Original Text

BENEDICK

To bind me or undo me,
one of them.—

20 Signior Leonato, truth it
is, good Signior,
Your niece regards me
with an eye of favor.

LEONATO

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

BENEDICK

And I do with an eye of
love requite her.

LEONATO

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

BENEDICK

Your answer, sir, is
enigmatical.
But for my will, my will is
30 your goodwill

Modern Text

BENEDICK

To tie me up, or to undo me: one or the other. Signior
Leonato, the truth is, your niece likes me.

LEONATO

She sees you with the eyes my daughter lent her, it's
true.

BENEDICK

And I see her also through the eyes of love.

LEONATO

And those eyes were endowed with sight by Claudio,
the Prince, and me. But what did you want?

BENEDICK

Sir, I'm puzzled by what you just said. But as far as
what I want—I want you to give Beatrice and me your
blessing to be married. That, good Friar, is where you
come in.

May stand with ours, this
day to be conjoined
In the state of honorable
marriage—
In which, good Friar, I
shall desire your help.

LEONATO

My heart is with your
liking.

FRIAR FRANCIS

And my help.
Here comes the Prince
and Claudio.

Enter **DON PEDRO**
and **CLAUDIO**, and two or
three others

DON PEDRO

Good morrow to this fair
assembly.

LEONATO

Good morrow, Prince;
good morrow, Claudio.

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

CLAUDIO

I'll hold my mind were she I wouldn't change my mind even if she were black-
an Ethiopie. skinned.

LEONATO

Our wishes are aligned, then: I give you my blessing.

FRIAR FRANCIS

And I'll help you. Here comes the Prince and Claudio.

DON PEDRO and **CLAUDIO** enter with two or three
others.

DON PEDRO

Good morning to all these lovely people.

LEONATO

Good morning, Prince; good morning, Claudio. We're
waiting here for you. Are you still set on marrying my
brother's daughter?

CLAUDIO

Act 5, Scene 4, Page 3

Original Text

LEONATO

Call her forth, brother. Here's
the friar ready.

Exit **ANTONIO**

DON PEDRO

Good morrow, Benedick. Why,
what's the matter

40 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

45 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,

50 And some such strange bull

Modern Text

LEONATO

Bring her out, brother. The friar's ready.

ANTONIO exits.

DON PEDRO

Good morning, Benedick. What's the matter?
Your face looks like the month of February—full
of frost, storms, and cloudiness.

CLAUDIO

I think he's nervous—he's about to become the
savage bull who got domesticated. Oh, don't
worry about it—we'll dip your [horns](#) in gold and
make you pretty, and you'll delight all of Europe,
just like Jove delighted Europa when *he* was a
bull.

BENEDICK

[Jove](#) came to earth lowing for love. A strange
bull just like him mated with one of your father's
cows and, voilà, gave birth to a calf like you—you

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

For this I owe you. Here
comes other reck'nings.
Enter **ANTONIO, HERO,**
BEATRICE, MARGARET,
URSULA, the ladies masked
Which is the lady I must seize
upon?

LEONATO

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

CLAUDIO

55 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.

bleat the same as him.

CLAUDIO

I'll get you for that one. But here are other
matters to be dealt with.

ANTONIO, HERO, BEATRICE,
MARGARET, URSULA enter. The ladies wear
masks.

Which is the lady I'm supposed to marry?

LEONATO

This one, and I will give her to you.

CLAUDIO

Well, then she's the one for me. Sweetheart, let
me see your face.

LEONATO

No, you can't do that until you take her hand and,
in front of this friar, swear to marry her.

Act 5, Scene 4, Page 4

Original Text

CLAUDIO

(to HERO) Give me
your hand before
this holy friar.
I am your husband,
if you like of me.

HERO

Modern Text

CLAUDIO

(to HERO) Give me your hand. With the friar as my
witness, I am your husband, if you want me.

HERO

60 And when I lived, I And when I lived, I was your other wife. And when you
was your other wife, loved me, you were my other husband. *(she removes her*
And when you loved, *mask)*
you were my other
husband.

(She unmask)

CLAUDIO

Another Hero!

CLAUDIO

It's another Hero!

HERO

Nothing

certainer.

One Hero died

65 And surely as I live, I am a maid. Exactly right. One Hero died when she was slandered, but
defiled, but I do live, I am alive. And as surely as I am alive, I am a virgin.

And surely as I live,

I am a maid.

DON PEDRO

The former Hero!

Hero that is dead!

DON PEDRO

It's the former Hero! The Hero that died!

LEONATO

She died, my lord,

but whiles her

slander lived.

LEONATO

She was only dead, my lord, as long as her slander lived.

FRIAR FRANCIS

All this amazement

can I qualify

When after that the **FRIAR FRANCIS**

holy rites are ended I can confirm that all these shocking things are true.

I'll tell you largely of After the wedding ceremony, I'll tell you all about

70 fair Hero's death. beautiful Hero's "death." In the meantime, just accept all

Meantime let wonder these wonderful things, and let's head to the chapel.

seem familiar,

And to the chapel let

us presently.

BENEDICK

Soft and fair,

Friar.—Which is

Beatrice?

BENEDICK

Wait a moment, Friar. Which one of you is Beatrice?

BEATRICE

BEATRICE

(unmasking) I answer *(taking off her mask)* That's my name. What do you want?
to that name. What
is your will?

BENEDICK

75 Do not you love me?

BENEDICK

Do you love me?

BEATRICE

Why no, no
more than reason.

BEATRICE

No, no more than is reasonable.

BENEDICK

Why then, your uncle
and the Prince and
Claudio
Have been deceived.
They swore you did.

BENEDICK

Well then, your uncle and the Prince and Claudio have been
deceived. They swore you did.

BEATRICE

Do not you love me?

BEATRICE

Do you love me?

Act 5, Scene 4, Page 5

Original Text

BENEDICK

Troth, no, no more than
reason.

BEATRICE

80 Why then, my cousin,
Margaret, and Ursula
Are much deceived, for
they did swear you did.

Modern Text

BENEDICK

Truly, no—no more than is reasonable.

BEATRICE

Well then, Margaret, Ursula, and my cousin have been
very much deceived, for they swore you did.

BENEDICK

They swore that you
were almost sick for me.

BENEDICK

They swore that you were sick with love for me.

BEATRICE

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

BEATRICE

They swore that you were nearly dead with love for
me.

BENEDICK

BENEDICK

'Tis no such matter. Then Oh, well. So you don't love me?
you do not love me?

BEATRICE

85 No, truly, but in friendly
recompense.

BEATRICE

No, I don't—except as a friend.

LEONATO

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

LEONATO

Come on, niece, I'm sure you love him.

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
90 own pure brain,
Fashioned to Beatrice.
(Shows a paper)

CLAUDIO

And I'll swear that he loves her. Here's a clumsy
sonnet, in Benedick's handwriting, dedicated to
Beatrice. *(holding up a piece of paper)*

HERO

And here's
another,
Writ in my cousin's hand,
stol'n from her pocket,
Containing her affection
unto Benedick.
(Shows a paper)

HERO

And here's another poem, which I stole from my
cousin's pocket—in her handwriting and all about her
adoration for Benedick. *(holding up a piece of paper)*

BENEDICK

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

BENEDICK

What a miracle! Our handwriting gives away our
hearts. Come on, I'll take you, but honestly I'm only
doing it out of pity.

BEATRICE

I would not deny you,
but, by this good day, I
yield upon
great persuasion, and
partly to save your life,

BEATRICE

I won't say no to you, but let it be known that I'm
only doing this after a lot of persuasion and to save
your life—I hear you were quickly wasting away
without me.

for I was told
you were in a
consumption.

BENEDICK

100 Peace! I will stop your
mouth.

BENEDICK

Oh, shut up! I'll stop your mouth with a kiss.

Act 5, Scene 4, Page 6

Original Text

They 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
humor. Dost thou
think I care for a
satire

105 or an epigram? No.

If a man will be
beaten with brains,
he

shall wear nothing

110 handsome about him.

In brief, since I do
purpose to marry, I
will think nothing to
any purpose that

Modern Text

They kiss.

DON PEDRO

How does it feel to be Benedick the Married Man?

BENEDICK

I'll tell you what, Prince: a whole university full of wisecrackers couldn't change my mood today. You think I care what I'm called? Well, I don't. If a man is always afraid of what others think, he won't even dare to dress nicely, because he'll be afraid people will talk about him. In short, since I intend to get married, I won't hear anyone say a bad thing about it. So don't go making fun of me for what I said before. Man is a giddy, flighty thing: that's my conclusion. And Claudio—though I'm sure I would have beaten you in our duel—since you're likely to become my relative, I'll let you go, unbruised, and love my cousin Hero.

the world can say
against it, and
therefore never
flout at me
for what I have said
against it. For man is
a giddy thing, and
this is my
conclusion.—For thy
part, Claudio, I did
think to
have beaten thee,
but in that thou art
like to be my
kinsman,
live unbruised, and
love my cousin.

CLAUDIO

I had well hoped
thou wouldst have
denied Beatrice, that
I

might have cudged **CLAUDIO**

thee out of thy
single life, to make
thee

115 a double-dealer,
which out of
question, thou wilt
be, if my
cousin do not look
exceedingly narrowly
to thee.

BENEDICK

Come, come, we are
friends. Let's have a
dance ere we are
married, that we may

I was sort of hoping you would say no to Beatrice, so that
I could have smacked you out of your single life and made
you a [double dealer](#). Which you'll probably turn into
anyway, if my cousin Beatrice doesn't keep you on a short
leash.

BENEDICK

Come on, we're all friends. Let's do a dance, and have
some fun, before we're wed.



lighten our own
hearts and our
wives'
heels.

LEONATO

We'll have dancing
afterward.

BENEDICK

First, of my word!

Therefore play,
music.—Prince, thou
art

120 sad. Get thee a wife,
get thee a wife.

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

Enter a

MESSENGER

LEONATO

We'll dance after the wedding.

BENEDICK

No, before! Musicians, play us a song.—Prince, you look
sad. You should get a wife! Your royal staff would be so
much more impressive if it were topped off by a [horn](#).

A **MESSENGER** enters.

About
Nothing
By William Shakespeare

Act 5, Scene 4, Page 7

Original Text

MESSENGER

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

BENEDICK

(to DON PEDRO) Think not
on him till tomorrow. I'll
125 devise
thee brave punishments for
him.—Strike up, pipers.
Dance
Exeunt

Modern Text

MESSENGER

(to DON PEDRO) My lord, your brother John was
caught by armed soldiers as he fled. He's been
brought back to Messina.

BENEDICK

(to DON PEDRO) Leave him till tomorrow. I'll
think of some awful punishment for him. Play on,
musicians!

They all dance.

They all exit.

About
Nothing

By William Shakespeare

Act V, scenes i-ii

Summary: Act V, scene i

Leonato, Hero's father, falls into a state of deep grief and shock. Torn by his worries about whether Hero is indeed chaste as she claims and his questions about what actually occurred, he cannot function. His brother Antonio tries to cheer him, telling him to have patience. But Leonato answers that although people can easily give advice when they are themselves not unhappy, people in great pain cannot follow the advice so easily. Don Pedro and Claudio enter, see Leonato and Antonio, and quickly try to leave. But Leonato follows them and accuses Claudio of having lied about Hero and having caused her death. Leonato announces that, despite his great age, he challenges Claudio to a duel for the crime Claudio has committed against Hero by ruining her good name; Leonato states that he is not too old to kill or die for honor and for the love of his child. The embarrassed Claudio and Don Pedro pretend to ignore their challengers. Finally, Leonato and Antonio leave, vowing that they will have their revenge.

After Leonato and Antonio depart, Benedick enters. Claudio and Don Pedro welcome him, asking Benedick to employ his famous wit to cheer them up. But Benedick is in no mood to be funny. He tells Claudio that he believes Claudio has slandered Hero, and he quietly challenges him to a duel. When the other two keep on trying to joke with him, Benedick finally discloses that he can no longer be their companion since their slanderous accusations have murdered an innocent woman. Benedick informs Don Pedro that Don John has fled the city and leaves. At first, Claudio and Don Pedro take in this change in Benedick's behavior and the information of Don John's flight with shock and confusion. Slowly they begin to realize Benedick's serious intent—and they rightly guess that his love for Beatrice must be the only thing that could have motivated him to challenge his dearest friend to a fight to the death.

Dogberry and Verges suddenly enter, accompanied by the other men of the Watch, dragging behind them the captured villains Conrad and Borachio. Dogberry tells Claudio and Don Pedro that Borachio has confessed to treachery and lying, and Borachio admits his crime again. Shocked and horrified, Claudio and Don Pedro realize that this information supports Hero's true innocence and that she has died (so they think) because they have wrongly accused her, tarnished her reputation forever, and ruined her family.

Leonato and Antonio return. Claudio and Don Pedro beg Leonato's forgiveness, offering themselves up to any punishment Leonato thinks fit for killing his daughter with wrongful accusations. Leonato orders Claudio to clear Hero's name by telling the entire city that she was innocent and to write her an epitaph—that is, a poem honoring her in death—and to read and sing it at her tomb. He also tells Claudio that Antonio has a daughter who is very much like Hero, and he asks Claudio to marry his niece in Hero's place in order to make up for the lost Hero. Claudio, weeping at Leonato's generosity, accepts these terms. Leonato orders that Borachio be carted away for further interrogation.

Summary: Act V, scene ii

Meanwhile, near Leonato's estate, Benedick asks Margaret to bring Beatrice to speak to him. Alone, he laments his inability to write poetry. He has unsuccessfully attempted to write Beatrice a love sonnet according to the flowery and ornamental conventions of Renaissance love poetry. Ironically, despite his great skill at improvising in conversation, he is no good at all at writing. Beatrice arrives, and the two lovers flirt and tease each other with gentle insults but also with great affection—as they now seem always to have done. Benedick tells Beatrice he has challenged Claudio to a duel according to her wishes and that Claudio must respond to his challenge soon. Suddenly, the maid Ursula arrives in great haste to tell them that the scheme against Hero has come to light. Benedick pledges his love to Beatrice once again, and the two follow Ursula to Leonato and the rest of the house, which is in an uproar.

Analysis: Act V, scenes i-ii

By showing Leonato's grief and anger to the audience, Shakespeare drives home the intensity of the pain and distress that Claudio's accusation against Hero has caused Hero and her family. Although Hero is not really dead, Leonato grieves as if she were, because she has lost her reputation. He has come to her side, believing

that Claudio must have been wrong about her—"My soul doth tell me Hero is belied," he confesses to Antonio (V.i.42). But his concern for her, coupled with the shock of Claudio's public humiliation of her, is enough to overwhelm him with grief. He rejects Antonio's attempts to make him feel better, telling him that "men / Can counsel and speak comfort to that grief / Which they themselves not feel" (V.i.20-22). He suggests that once a person actually becomes unhappy, good advice does him or her no good: "For there was never yet philosopher / That could endure the toothache patiently" (V.i.35-36). His anger at Claudio for ruining his daughter is very real, and this scene provides the audience with a fascinating view of Leonato. He is powerful here in his righteous anger, just as much as he is overwhelmed with despair in Act IV, scene i.

The revelation of Borachio's crime to Claudio and the rest marks another turning point in the play. Don John's deception has led inexorably to Claudio's rejection of Hero, darkening the play's atmosphere of lighthearted comedy. Dogberry and the Watch's accusation of Borachio and Conrad seems to open the way to understanding and resolution. Claudio's reaction to the information mirrors what the wise friar predicts in Act IV, scene i: he begins to remember Hero's good qualities. "Sweet Hero, now thy image doth appear / In the rare semblance that I loved it first," he says to himself (V.i.235-236). The punishment that Leonato extracts from him might seem light revenge for the death of a daughter, but, of course, we know—as he knows—that Hero isn't really dead. The punishment obviously establishes the grounds for a happy ending. If all goes well, it seems, Claudio is being set up to marry Hero, in a sort of redemptive masquerade.

Act V, scene ii, which develops the growing relationship between Benedick and Beatrice, is one of the funniest and most touching courtship scenes in Shakespeare's works. It gives the audience a chance to laugh at Benedick and Beatrice as they grapple with the apparent folly of their love for one another, and also to see that their relationship is developing into one that is both affectionate and mature. Moreover, somehow they manage to speak sweetly to each other without losing their biting wit. Benedick, in fact, laughs at himself when he laments his inability to write love poetry. "No," Benedick concludes, "I was not born under a rhyming planet, nor I cannot woo in festival terms" (V.ii.34-35). Benedick's inability to write underlines the difference between the witty and improvisatory court rhetoric that he is so good at and the very stylized conventions of Renaissance love poetry.

Beatrice and Benedick interlace their conversation with news about developments in the main plot of the play, but, throughout, they tease one another with gentle affection—and, of course, with never-ending insults. Benedick sums up their situation by saying, "Thou and I are too wise to woo peaceably" (V.ii.61). This assessment seems to be true in several respects—they will never have peace, for both are too lively and independent. But both are also wise, and it looks as if their love will grow into a deep, mature relationship in which both will continue to sparkle in the other's company. The two also express genuine fondness. To Beatrice's assertion that she feels unwell psychologically, Benedick asks her to "serve God, love me, and mend" (V.ii.78). When she invites him to come with her to talk with Leonato, he answers, "I will live in thy heart, die in thy lap, and be buried in thy eyes. And moreover, I will go with thee to thy uncle's" (V.ii.86-87). Here Benedick plays with a typical Renaissance sexual euphemism, the idea of dying referring to a sexual orgasm.

Summary: Act V, scene iii

Early in the morning, at the tomb where Hero supposedly lies buried, Claudio carries out the first part of the punishment that Leonato has ordered him to perform. Claudio has written an epitaph, or death poem, celebrating Hero's innocence and grieving the slander that (he believes) led to her death. He reads the epitaph out loud and hangs it upon the tomb. He solemnly promises that he will come and read it here at this time every year. Everyone then goes off to prepare for Claudio's wedding to Leonato's niece, the supposed Hero look-alike, which is to occur that very day.

Summary: Act V, scene iv

Meanwhile, in the church, Leonato, Antonio, Beatrice, Benedick, Hero, Margaret, Ursula, and the friar prepare for the second wedding of Claudio and Hero. We learn from their conversation that Margaret has been interrogated, and that she is innocent of conspiring with Borachio and Don John—she never realized that she was taking part in Don John's treachery. Benedick is also very relieved that Don John's trick has come to light, for now he does not need to fight his friend Claudio. Quietly, Benedick also takes Leonato aside and asks him for his permission to marry Beatrice. Don Pedro and Claudio enter, and Antonio goes off to fetch the masked women. While they are waiting, Don Pedro and Claudio tease Benedick about his love for Beatrice and about the fact that he will soon be married, although they do not know that he actually does plan to be married that very day. Hero, Beatrice,

and the waiting women enter, all wearing masks. Claudio vows to marry the masked woman by his side, whom he believes to be Leonato's mysterious niece. But when Hero takes off her mask, the shocked Claudio realizes that it really is Hero. Leonato and Hero tell him that now that Hero's name has been cleared, she can figuratively come back to life and be his wife, as she should have been before.

The party prepares to go to the chapel to finish the ceremony, but Benedick stops everybody. He asks Beatrice, out loud and in public, whether she loves him. Beatrice denies it, and Benedick, in turn, denies loving her. They both agree that they are good friends, but not in love. But, laughingly, Claudio and Hero tell them that they know that isn't the truth—and both whip out scribbled, half-finished love poems that they have found in their friends' rooms and pockets, written from Benedick to Beatrice and from Beatrice to Benedick. Benedick and Beatrice realize that they have been caught red-handed and, giving in, finally agree to marry. Benedick silences Beatrice, for the first time, by kissing her. Claudio and Don Pedro begin to tease Benedick again, but Benedick laughingly says that he does not care—he remains determined to be married, and nothing he has ever said against marriage in the past makes any difference to him now. He and Claudio assert their friendship again, and Benedick calls for a dance before the double wedding. Suddenly, a messenger rushes in to inform the company that Leonato's men have arrested Don John in his flight from Messina. They have brought him back to Messina a prisoner. Benedick instructs Don Pedro to put off thinking about the villain until tomorrow, when Benedick will invent fine tortures for him. In the meantime, Benedick insists that all must dance joyfully in celebrating the marriages, and he commands the pipers to strike up the music.

Analysis: Act V, scenes iii-iv

This final scene brings the play to a joyous conclusion, drawing it away from the tragedy toward which it had begun to move and letting everyone wind up safe and sound. Claudio and Hero are about to be happily married, as are Benedick and Beatrice. The deception has been revealed, and Don John has been caught and brought to justice. Everybody has made friends again, and the final dance symbolizes the restoration of order and happiness in a world that has been thrown into chaos by Don John's accusation and Don Pedro and Claudio's rash action.

But in order for the play to reach this point, Hero must go through a symbolic death and rebirth, washing away the taint of the accusation of her supposed sin. Claudio's writing and reading of an epitaph at her tomb seems to create a sense of

closure, in relation to his false accusation of Hero and her supposed death. He acknowledges his error in having accused Hero: "Done to death by slanderous tongues / Was the Hero that here lies" (V.iii.3-4). The song similarly pleads, "Pardon, goddess of the night, / Those that slew thy virgin knight" (V.iii.12-13). When dawn arrives at the end of the scene, and Don Pedro says, "Good morrow, masters, put your torches out," we can literally see the plot emerging from darkness (V.iii.24). It is now time to attend the wedding meant to release Claudio from his guilt for Hero's death. From darkness and pain, the story now returns to daylight and happiness.

The emotional dynamics of the masked wedding must be complicated, and many readers wonder why Hero still loves Claudio after what he has done to her. The story can be read as one of real love that has been tainted by misunderstanding, paranoia, and fear but that has miraculously ended happily. Hero does seem to love Claudio still, and they are joyful at being reunited. Claudio's amazement, awe, and wonder at finding Hero still alive may serve to wipe out any last traces of resentment or anger on either side.

Beatrice and Benedick finally profess their love in public—amid the laughter and teasing of all their friends—and are clearly happy to be marrying one another. Unlike Hero and Claudio, they are both very communicative people, and there is little doubt as to how they feel about one another. Benedick's long struggle with his aversion to marriage is also finally brought to an end. Just as he privately declares his decision to change his mind after he comes to believe, through Claudio and Don Pedro's trick, that Beatrice loves him, he now announces to the entire world that he is determined to get married, in spite of everything he has said against the institution.

Benedick also renews his friendship with Claudio, and the two of them note with considerable pleasure that they are now relatives. Leonato partakes in this sentiment as well, since Benedick will be Leonato's nephew-in-law. Benedick is so fully changed from a willful cavalier into a submissive lover that he even commands Don Pedro, "Prince, thou art sad, get thee a wife, get thee a wife" (V.iv.117). This order serves partly as a joke, but it contains a drop of melancholy. Perhaps Don Pedro really *is* sad—an idea that seems even more probable when we recall his lighthearted, but perhaps not entirely joking, proposal to Beatrice, in Act II, scene i, and her gentle rejection of it. As so often happens in Shakespeare's comedies, it seems as if somebody must be left out of the circle of happiness and marriage.

At the play's end, Don John is more alienated from the happy company of nobles than he is at the beginning of the play. But Benedick does not even permit us to think about Don John. The villain's torture will take place offstage, after the play's end. The play's closing words are a call to music, and the play's final action is a joyful wedding dance. With the exception of a sad prince and a villain who remains to be punished, everybody has come to a happy ending.

