From the income of the Robert Charles Billings Fund
MUCH ADO ABOUT NOTHING
A COMEDY,
By WILLIAM (SHAKESPEARE)

M.DCC.LXVI.
Dramatis Personae.

DON PEDRO, Prince of Arragon.
Leonato, Governor of Messina.
Don John, Bastard Brother to Don Pedro.
Claudio, a young Lord of Florence, Favourite to Don Pedro.
Benedick, a young Lord of Padua, favour'd likewise by Don Pedro.
Balthazar, Servant to Don Pedro.
Antonio, Brother to Leonato.
Borachio, Confident to Don John.
Conrade, Friend to Borachio.
Dogberry, two foolish Officers.
Verges.

Innogen, Wife to Leonato.
Hero, Daughter to Leonato and Innogen.
Beatrice, Niece to Leonato.
Margaret, two Gentlewomen attending on Hero.
Ursula.

A Friar, Messenger, Watch, Town-Clerk, Sexton, and Attendants.

SCENE. Messina.

The Story from Ariosto, Orl. Furl. l. 5.
Much Ado about Nothing.

ACT I. SCENE I.

A Court before Leonato's House.

Enter Leonato, Innogen, Hero and Beatrice, with a Messenger.

Leonato,

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

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

Leon. How many gentlemen have you lost in this action?

Mess. But few of any sort, and none of name.

Leon. A victory is twice itself, when the atchiever brings home full numbers; I find here that Don Pedro hath bestowed much honour on a young Florentine, call’d Claudio.

Mess. Much deserved on his part, and equally remembred by Don Pedro: he hath borne himself beyond the promise of his age, doing in the figure of a lamb the feats of a lion: he hath indeed better better’d expectation, than you must expect of me to tell you how.

Leon. He hath an uncle here in Messina will be very much glad of it.
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Mess. I have already delivered him letters, and there appears much joy in him, even so much, that joy could not shew itself modest enough, without a badge of bitterness.

Leon. Did he break out into tears?
Mess. In great measure.
Leon. A kind overflow of kindness; there are no faces truer than those that are so wash'd. how much better is it to weep at joy, than to joy at weeping?
Beat. I pray you, is Signior Montanto returned from the wars or no?
Mess. I know none of that name, lady; there was none such in the army of any sort.
Leon. What is he that you ask for, niece?
Hero. My cousin means Signior Benedick of Padua.
Mess. O he's return'd, and as pleasant as ever he was.
Beat. He set up his bills here in Messina, and challeng'd Cupid at the flight; and my uncle's fool reading the challenge, sub'crib'd for Cupid, and challeng'd him at the bird-boit. I pray you, how many hath he kill'd and eaten in these wars? but how many hath he kill'd? for indeed I promis'd to eat all of his killing.
Leon. 'Faith, niece, you tax Signior Benedick too much; but he'll be meet with you, I doubt it not.
Mess. He hath done good service lady, in these wars.
Beat. You had musty victuals, and he hath holp to eat it; he's a very valiant trencher-man, he hath an excellent stomach.
Mess. And a good soldier too, lady.
Beat. And a good soldier to a lady! But what is he to a lord?
Mess. A lord to a lord, a man to a man, fluft with all honourable virtues.
Beat. It is so indeed, he is no less than a fluft man: but for the fluffling,—well, we are all mortal.
Leon. You must not, Sir, mistake my niece: there is a kind of merry war betwixt Signior Benedick and her; they never meet, but there's a skirmish of wit between them.
Beat. Alas, he gets nothing by that. In our last conflit, four of his five wits went halting off, and now is the
the whole man govern'd with one: So that, if he have wit enough to keep himself warm, let him bear it for a difference between himself and his horse, for it is all the wealth that he hath left to be known a reasonable creature. Who is his companion now? He hath every month a new sworn brother.

*Meit:* Is it possible?

*Beat:* Very easily possible; he wears his faith but as the fashion of his hat, it ever changes with the next block.

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

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

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

*Beat:* O lord, he well hang upon him like a disease; he is sooner caught than the pestilence, and the taker runs presently mad. God help the noble Claudio, if he have caught the Benedick, it will cost him a thousand pound ere it be cur'd.

*Meit:* I will hold friends with you, lady.

*Beat:* Do, good friend.

*Leon:* You'll ne'er run mad, niece.

*Beat:* No, not 'till a hot January.

*Meit:* Don Pedro is approach'd.

*Enter Don Pedro, Claudio, Benedick, Balthazar and Don John.*

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

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

*Pedro:* You embrace your charge most willingly: I think this is your daughter.

*Leon:* Her mother hath many times told me so.

*Bene.* Were you in doubt, that you ask'd her?

*Leon:* Signior Benedick, no, for then were you a child.
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Pedro You have it full, Benedick; you may guess by this what you are, being a man: truly the lady favours herself; be happy, lady, for are you like an honourable father.

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

Beat. I wonder that you will still be talking, Signior Benedick, no body marks you.

Bene. What, my dear lady Disdain! are you yet living?

Beat. Is it possible disdain should die, while the hath such meet food to feed it, as Signior Benedick? Courtey itself must convert to disdain, if you come in her presence.

Bene. Then is courtey a turn-coat: but it is certain I am lov'd of all ladies, only you excepted; and I would I could find in my heart that I had not a hard heart, for truly I love none.

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

Bene. God keep your ladyship still in that mind, so some gentleman or other shall scape a predestinate scratch'd face.

Beat. Scratching could not make it worse, if 'twere such a face as yours were.

Bene. Well you are a rare parrot-teacher.

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

Bene. I would my horse had the speed of your tongue, and so good a continuer; but keep your way a God's name, I have done.

Beat. You always end with a jade's trick, I know you of old.

Pedro. This is the sum of all: Leonato, Signior Claudio, and Signior Benedick; my dear friend Leonato hath invited you all; I tell him we shall stay here at the least a month, and he heartily prays some occasion may detain us longer: I dare swear he is no hypocrite, but prays from his heart.
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Leon. If you swear, my Lord, you shall not be forsworn. Let me bid you welcome, my lord; being reconciled to the prince your brother, I owe you all duty.

John. I thank you; I am not of many words, but I thank you.

Leon. Please it your grace lead on?

Pedro. Your hand, Leonato, we will go together.

Claud. Benedick, didst thou note the daughter of Signior Leonato?

Bene. I noted her not, but I look’d on her.

Claud. Is she not a modest young lady?

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

Claud. No, I pr’ythee speak in sober judgment.

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

Claud. Thou think’st I am in sport, I pray thee tell me truly how thou lik’st her.

Bene. Would you buy her, that you enquire after her?

Claud. Can the world buy such a jewel?

Bene. Yea, and a case to put it into; but speak you this with a sad brow? or do you play the flouting jack, to tell us Cupid is a good hare finder, and Vulcan a rare carpenter? come, in what key shall a man take you, to go in the song.

Claud. In mine eye, she is the sweetest lady that I ever look’d on.

Bene. I can see yet without spectacles, and I see no such matter; there’s her cousin, if she were not possessed with such a fury, exceeds her as much in beauty, as the first of May doth the last of December: but I hope you have no intent to turn husband, have you?

Claud. I would scarce trust myself; though I had sworn the contrary, if Hero would be my wife.
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Bene. Is't come to this in faith? hath not the world one man, but he will wear his cap with suspicion? shall I never see a bachelor of threescore again? go to i'faith, if thou wilt needs thrust thy neck into a yoke, wear the print of it, and fly away Sundays: look Don Pedro is return'd to seek you.

Re enter Don Pedro and Don John.

Pedro. What secret hath held you here, that you follow'd not to Leonato's house?

Bene. I would your grace would constrain me to tell.

Pedro. I charge thee on thy allegiance.

Bene. You hear, Count Claudio: I can be secret as a dumb man, I would have you think so; but on my allegiance, mark you this: on my allegiance, he is in love, with whom? now that is your Grace's part: mark, how short, his answer is, with Hero, Leonato's short daughter.

Claud. If this were so, so were it uttered.

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

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

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

Claud. You speak this to fetch me in, my lord.

Pedro. By my troth I speak my thought.

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

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

Claud. That I love her, I feel.

Pedro. That she is worthy, I know.

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

Pedro. Thou wast ever an obstinate heretick in the despiught of beauty.

Claud. And never could maintain his part, but in the force of his will.

Bene. That a woman conceived me, I thank her; that she brought me up, I likewise give her most humble thanks; but that I will have a recheate winded in my forehead, or hang my bugle in an invisible bald-rick,
rick, all women shall pardon me; because I will not do them the wrong to mistrust any, I will do myself the right to trust none; and the fine is, for the which I may go the finer, I will live a bachelor.

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

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

Pedro. Well, if ever thou dost fall from this faith, thou wilt prove a notable argument.

Bene. If I do, hang me in a bottle like a cat, and shoot at me, and he that hits me, let him be clapt on the shoulder, and call’d Adam.

Pedro. Well, as time shall try; in time the savage bull doth bear the yoke.

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

Claud. If this should ever happen, thou wouldst be horn mad.

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

Bene. I look for an earthquake too then.

Pedro. Well, you will temporize with the hours; in the mean time, good Signior Benedick, repair to Leonato’s, commend me to him, and tell him I will not fail him at supper, for indeed he hath made great preparation.

Bene. I have almost matter enough in me for such an ambaflage, and so I commit you.

Claud. To the tuition of God. From my house, if I had it.

Pedro. The sixth of July, your loving friend, Benedick.

Bene. Nay, mock not, mock not; the body of your discourse is sometimes guarded with fragments, and the guards are but slightly basted on neither: ere you flour
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old ends any further, examine your conscience, and so
I leave you. [Exit.

Claud. My Liege, your highness may now do me good.

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

Claud. Hath Leonato any son, my Lord?

Pedro. No child but Hero, she's his only heir:

Doist thou affect her, Claudio?

Claud. O my lord,

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

Pedro. Thou wilt be like a lover presently,
And tire the hearer with a book of words:
If thou dost love fair Hero, cherish it,
And I'll break with her: was't not to this end,
That thou began'st to twist so fine a story?

Claud. How sweetly do you minister to love,
That know love's grief by his complexion!
But left my liking might too sudden seem,
I would have salv'd it with a longer treatise.

Pedro. What need the bridge much broader than the
flood?
The fairest grant is the necessity;
Look what will serve, is fit; 'tis once thou lovest,
And I will fit thee with the remedy.
I know we shall have revelling to-night,
I will assume thy part in some disguise,
And tell fair Hero I am Claudio,
And in her bosom I'll unclasp my heart,
And take her hearing prisoner with the force
And strong encounter of my amorous tale;
Then after to her father will I break,
And the conclusion is, she shall be thine;
In practice let us put it presently. [Exeunt]
Leon. How now, brother, where is my cousin your son? hath he provided this music?

Ant. He is very busy about it; but brother, I can tell you news that you yet dream'd not of.

Leon. Are they good?

Ant. As the event stamps them, but they have a good cover; they show well outward. The Prince and Count Claudio, walking in a thick pleach'd alley in my orchard, were thus over-heard by a man of mine: the Prince discover'd to Claudio that he lov'd my neice your daughter, and meant to acknowledge it this night in a dance; and if he found her accordan't, meant to take the present time by the top, and instantly break with you of it.

Leon. Hath the fellow any wit that told you this?

Ant. A good sharp fellow. I will send for him, and question him yourself.

Leon. No, no; we will hold it as a dream, 'till it appear itself: but I will acquaint my daughter with all, that she may be the better prepared for answer, if peradventure this be true; go you and tell her of it: cousins, you know what you have to do. O, I cry you mercy, friend, go you with me, and I will use your skill; good cousin, have a care this busy time.

[Exeunt.

Enter Don John and Conrade.

Conr. What the good-jeer my lord, why are you thus out of measure sad?

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

Conr. You should hear reason.

John. And when I have heard it, what blessing bringeth it?

Conr. If not a present remedy, yet a patient suferance.

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

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

John. I had rather be a canker in a hedge, than a
rose in his grace; and it better fits my blood to be dis-
dain'd of all, than to fashion a carriage to rob love from
any: in this (though I cannot be said to be a flattering
honest man) it must not be deny'd but I am a plain-deal-
ing villain; I am trusted with a muzzel, and infranchised
with a clog, therefore I have decreed not to sing in my
cage: if I had my mouth, I would bite; if I had my
liberty, I would do my liking: in the mean time let me
be that I am, and seek not to alter me.

Conr. Can you make no use of your discontent?

John. I will make all use of it, for I use it only. Who
comes here? What news, Borachio?

Enter Borachio.

Bora. I came yender from a great supper; the
Prince, your Brother, is royally entertain'd by Leo-
nato, and I can give you intelligence of an intended
marriage.

John. Will it serve for any model to build mischie-on? What is he for a fool that betroths himself to un-
quietness?

Bora. Marry, it is your brother's right hand.

John. Who, the most exquisite Claudio?

Bora. Even he.

John. A proper squire; and who, and who? which
way looks he?

Bora. Marry, on Hero, the daughter and heir of Leo-
nato.

John. A very forward March chick! How come you
to this?

Bora. Being entertain'd for a perfumer, as I was
smoking a musky room, comes me the Prince and
Claudio hand in hand in sad conference: I whipt be-
hind the arras, and there heard it agreed upon that the
Prince
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Prince should woo Hero for himself, and having obtained her, give her to count Claudio.

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

Cour. To the death, my lord.

John. Let us to the great supper, their cheer is the greater that I am subdued; would the cook were of my mind: shall we go prove what’s to be done?

Bora. We’ll wait upon your lordship. [Exeunt.

ACT II. SCENE I.

Leonato’s House.

Enter Leonato, Antonio, Innogen, Hero, Beatrice, Margaret and Ursula.

Leonato:

Was not Count John here at supper?

Ant. I saw him not.

Beat. How tartly that gentleman looks! I can never see him, but I am heart burn’d an hour after.

Hero. He is of a very melancholy disposition.

Beat. He were an excellent man that were made just in the mid-way between him and Benedick; the one is too like an image, and says nothing; and the other too like my lady’s eldest son, evermore tattling.

Leon. Then half Signior Benedick’s tongue in Count John’s mouth, and half Count John’s melancholy in Signior Benedick’s face——

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

Leon. By my troth, niece, thou wilt never get thee a husband, if thou be so shrewd of thy tongue.
In faith she's too curt.

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

So by being too curt, God will send you no horns.

Just, if he send me no husband; for the which blessing I am at him upon my knees every morning and evening: Lord! I could not endure a husband with a beard on his face; I had rather lay in woollen.

You may light upon a husband that hath no beard.

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

Well then, go you into hell.

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

Well, niece, I trust you will be rul'd by your father.

Yes, faith, it is my cousin's duty to make curt'fy, and say, as it pleases you; but yet for all that, cousin, let him be a handsome fellow, or else make another curt'fy, and say, father, as it pleases me.

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

Not till God make men of some other metal than earth; would it not grieve a woman to be over-master'd with a piece of valiant dust? to make account of her life to a clod of way-ward marie? No, uncle, I'll none; Adam's sons are my brethren, and truly I hold it a sin to match in my kindred.
Leon. Daughter, remember what I told you; if the Prince do solicit you in that kind, you know your answer.

Beat. The fault will be in the musick, cousin, if you be not woo'd in good time; if the Prince be too importunate, tell him there is measure in every thing, and so dance out the answer: for hear me, Hero, wooing, wedding, and repenting, is a Scotch jig, a measure, and a cinque-pace; the first suit is hot and hasty, like a Scotch jig, and full as fantastical; the wedding mannerly modest, as a measure, full of state and anchENTRY; and then comes repentance, and with his bad legs, falls into the cinque-pace faster and faster, 'till he sinks into his grave.

Leon. Cousin, you apprehend passing shrewdly.

Beat. I have a good eye, uncle, I can see a church by day-light.

Leon. The revellers are entring, brother; make good room.

Enter Don Pedro, Claudio, Benedick, Balthazar, and others in Masquerade.

Pedro. Lady, will you walk about with your friend?
Hero. So you walk softly, and look sweetly, and say nothing, I am yours for the walk, and especially when I walk away.

Pedro. With me in your company?
Hero. I may say so when I please.
Pedro. And when please you to say so?
Hero. When I like your favour; for God defend the lute should be like the cafe.

Pedro. My visor is Philemon's roof, within the house is Jove.

Hero. Why then your visor should be thatch'd.

Pedro. Speak low, if you speak love.
Balth. Well, I would you did like me.
Marg. So would not I for your own sake, for I have many ill qualities.

Balth. Which is one?
Marg. I say my prayers aloud.
Balth. I love you the better, the hearers may cry Amen.
Marg. God match me with a good dancer.
Balth. Amen.
Marg. And God keep him out of my sight when the dance is done: answer clerk.

Balth. No more words, the clerk is answer'd.

Urs. I know you well enough, you are Signior Antonio.

Ant. At a word, I am not.

Urs. I know you by the waggling of your head.

Ant. To tell you true, I counterfeit him.

Urs. You could never do him so ill, well, unless you were the very man: here's his dry hand up and down; you are he, you are he.

Ant. At a word, I am not.

Urs. Come, come, do you think I do not know you by your excellent wit? Can virtue hide itself? go to, mum, you are he; graces will appear, and there's an end.

Beat. Will you not tell me who told you so?

Bene. No, you shall pardon me.

Beat. Nor will you not tell me who you are?

Bene. Not now.

Beat. That I was disdainful, and that I had my good wit out of the hundred merry tales; well, this was Signior Benedick that said so.

Bene. What's he?

Beat. I am sure you know him well enough.

Bene. Not I, believe me.

Beat. Did he never make you laugh?

Bene. I pray you what is he?

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

Bene. When I know the gentleman, I'll tell him what you say.

Beat. Do, do; he'll but break a comparison or two on me, which peradventure not mark'd, or not laugh'd at, strikes him into melancholy, and then there's a partridge wing sav'd, for the fool will eat no supper that night. We must follow the leaders.

Bene. In every good thing.

Beat.
Beat. Nay, if they lead to any ill, I will leave them at the next turning.

Musick for the Dance.

John. Sure my brother is amorous on Hero, and hath withdrawn her father to break with him about it; the ladies follow her, and but one visor remains.

Bora. And that is Claudio, I know him by his bearing.

John. Are not you Signior Benedick?

Claud. You know me well, I am he.

John. Signior, you are very near my brother in his love, he is enamour'd on Hero; I pray you dissuade him from her, she is no equal for his birth; you may do the part of an honest man in it.

Claud. How know you he loves her?

John. I heard him swear his affection.

Bora. So did I too, and he swore he would marry her to-night.

John. Come let us to the banquet.

[Exeunt.]

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

Enter Benedick.

Bene. Count Claudio?

Claud. Yea, the same.

Bene. Come, will you go with me?

Claud. Whither?

Bene. Even to the next willow, about your own business, Count. What fashion will you wear the garland of? about your neck, like an Usurer's chain? or under your arm, like a Lieutenant's scarf? you must wear it one way, for the Prince hath got your Hero.

Claud. I with him joy of her.
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Bene. Why that's spoken like an honest drover: so they fell bullocks: but did you think the Prince would have served you thus?

Claud. I pray you leave me.

Bene. Ho! now you strike like the blind man; 'twas the boy that stole your meat, and you'll beat the post.

Claud. If it will not be, I'll leave you. [Exit.

Bene. Alas poor hurt fowl: Now will he creep into fedges. But that my lady Beatrice should know me, and not know me! the Prince's fool! ha: it may be I go under that title, because I am merry; yea, but so I am apt to do myself wrong: I am not so reputed. It is the base (tho' bitter) disposition of Beatrice, that puts the world into her person, and so gives me out; well, I'll be reveng'd as I may.

Enter Don Pedro.

Pedro. Now, Signior, where's the Count? did you see him?

Bene. Troth, my lord, I have play'd the part of lady Fame. I found him here as melancholy as a lodge in a warren. I told him (and I think, told him true) that your Grace had got the will of this young lady, and I offer'd him my company to a willow tree either to make him a garland as being forfaken, or to bind him a rod, as being worthy to be whipt.

Pedro. To be whipt! what's his fault?

Bene. The flat transgression of a School-boy, who being overjoy'd with finding a bird's nest, shews it his companion, and he steals it.

Pedro. Wilt thou make a trust, a transgression? the transgression is in the stealer.

Bene. Yet it had not been amiss the rod had been made, and the garland too; for the garland he might have worn himself, and the rod he might have bestow'd on you, who (as I take it) have stoll'n his bird's nest.

Pedro. I will but teach them to sing, and restore them to the owner.

Bene. If their singing answer your saying, by my faith you say honestly.

Pedro. The lady Beatrice hath a quarrel to you; the gentleman that danc'd with her, told her she's much wrong'd by you.
Bene. O she misus’d me past the indurance of a block; an oak but with one green leaf on it, would have answer’d her; my very visor began to assume life, and scold with her? she told me, not thinking I had been myself, that I was the Prince’s jester, and that I was duller than a great thaw; hustling jest upon jest, with such impossible conveyance upon me, that I stood like a man at a mark, with a whole army shooting at me; she speaks poinards, and every word stabs; if her breath were as terrible as terminations, there were no living near her, she would infect to the North-Star; I would not marry her, though she were endowed with all that Adam had left him before he transgress’d; she would have made Hercules have turn’d spit, yea and have cleft his club to make the fire too. Come, talk not of her, you shall find her the infernal Até in good apparel. I would to God some Scholar would conjure her, for certainly while she is here a man may live as quiet in hell as in a sanctuary, and people fill upon purpose, because they would go thither; so indeed all disquiet, horror, and perturbation follow her.

Enter Claudio, Beatrice, Leonato and Hero.

Ped. Look, here she comes.

Bene. Will your Grace command me any service to the world’s end? I will go on the lightest errand now to the Antipodes, that you can devise to send me on; I will fetch you a tooth-picker now from the farthest inch of Asia; bring you the length of Preder John’s foot; fetch you a hair off the great Cham’s beard; do you any embassage to the pygmies; rather than hold three words conference with this harpy: you have no employment for me?

Pedro. None, but to desire your good company.

Bene. O God, Sir, here’s a dish I love not. I cannot indure this Lady’s tongue.

[Exit.]

Pedro. Come, Lady, come, you have lost the heart of Signior Benedick.

Beat. Indeed, my lord, he lent it me a while, and I gave him use for it, a double heart for a single one; marry, once before he won it of me with false dice, therefore your Grace may well say I have lost it.

Pedro. You have put him down, lady, you have put him down.

Beat.
Beat. So I would not he should do me, my Lord, lest I should prove the mother of fools: I have brought Count Claudio, whom you sent me to seek.

Pedro. Why, how now, Count, wherefore are you sad?

Claud. Not sad, my Lord.

Pedro. How then? Sick?

Claud. Neither, my lord.

Beat. The Count is neither sad, nor sick, nor merry, nor well; but civil Count, civil as an orange, and some thing of a jealous complexion.

Pedro. I'faith, lady, I think your blazon to be true; though I'll be sworn, if he be so, his conceit is false. Here, Claudio, I have wooed in thy name, and fair Hero is won; I have broke with her father, and his good-will obtained, name the day of marriage, and God give thee joy.

Leon. Count, take of me my daughter, and with her my fortunes: his Grace hath made the match, and all grace say Amen to it.

Beat. Speak, Count, 'tis your cue.

Claud. Silence is the perfectest herald of joy; I were but little happy, if I could say how much. Lady, as you are mine, I am yours; I give away myself for you, and doat upon the exchange.

Beat. Speak, Cousin, or (if you cannot) stop his mouth with a kiss, and let not him speak neither.

Pedro. In faith, lady, you have a merry heart.

Beat. Yea, my lord, I thank it, poor fool, it keeps on the windy side of care; my cousin tells him in his ear that he is in my heart.

Claud. And so she doth, cousin.

Beat. Good Lord, for alliance! Thus goes every one to the world but I, and I am sun-burn'd, I may fit in a corner, and cry heigh ho for a husband.

Pedro. Lady Beatrice, I will get you one.

Beat. I would rather have one of your father's getting: hath your Grace ne'er a brother like you? Your father got excellent Husbands, if a maid could come by them.

Pedro. Will you have me, lady?

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

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

Beat. No, sure, my Lord, my mother cry'd; but then there was a far danc'd, and under that I was born. Cousins, God give you joy.

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


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

Leon. There's little of the melancholy element in her, my Lord; she is never sad but when she sleeps, and not ever sad then: for I have heard my daughter say, she hath often dream'd of happiness, and wak'd herself with laughing.

Pedro. She cannot endure to hear tell of a husband.

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

Pedro. She were an excellent wife for Benedick.

Leon. O Lord, my lord, if they were but a week marry'd, they would talk themselves mad.

Pedro. Count Claudio, when mean you to go to church?

Claud. To-morrow, my Lord; time goes on crutches, 'till love have all its rites.

Leon. Not 'till Monday, my dear son, which is hence a just seven-night, and a time too brief too, to have all things answer my mind.

Pedro. Come, you shake the head at so long a breathing; but I warrant thee, Claudio, the time that I not go dully by us; I will in the Interim undertake one of Hercules's labours, which is to bring Signior Benedick and the lady Beatrice into a mountain of affection the one with the other; I would fain have it a match, and I doubt not to fashion it, if you three will but minister such assistance as I shall give you direction.

Leon. My Lord, I am far you, though it cost me ten nights watchings.

Claud.
MUCH ADO ABOUT NOTHING.

Claud. And I, my Lord.
Pedro. And you too, gentle Hero?
Hero. I will do any modest office, my lord, to help my cousin to a good husband.
Pearo. And Benedick is not the unhopefullest husband that I know; thus far I can praise him, he is of a noble strain, of approv’d valour, and confirm’d honesty. I will teach you how to humour your cousin, that she shall fall in love with Benedick; and I, with your two helps, will so practise on Benedick; that in despite of his quick wit, and his queasy stomach, he shall fall in love with Beatrice: if we can do this, Cupid is no longer an archer, his glory shall be ours, for we are the only Love-Gods; go in with me, and I will tell you my drift. [Exeunt.

Enter Don John and Borachio.

John. Is it so, the Count Claudio shall marry the Daughter of Leonato?
Bora. Yea, my lord, but I can cross it.
John. Any bar, any cross, any impediment will be medicinable to me; I am sick in displeasure to him, and whatsoever comes athwart his affection, ranges evenly with mine. How canst thou cross his marriage?
Bora. Not honestly, my lord, but so covertly that no dishonesty shall appear in me.
John. Shew me briefly how.
Bora. I think I told your lordship a year since, how much I am in the favour of Margaret, the waiting gentlewoman to Hero.
John. I remember.
Bora. I can, at any unseasonable instant of the night, appoint her to look out at her Lady’s chamber window.
John. What life is in that, to be the death of this marriage?
Bora. The poison of that lies in you to temper; go you to the Prince your brother, spare not to tell him, that he hath wrong’d his honour in marrying the renown’d Claudio, (whose estimation do you mightily hold up) to a contaminated state, such a one as Hero.
John. What proof shall I make of that?
MUCH ADO ABOUT NOTHING. 25

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

John. Only to despite them, I will endeavour any thing.

Bora. Go then find me a meet hour, to draw Don Pedro, and the Count Claudio, alone; tell them that you know Hero loves me; intend a kind of zeal both to the Prince and Claudio, as in love of your brother's honour who hath made this match, (and his friend's reputation, who is thus like to be cozen'd with the semblance of a maid,) that you have discover'd thus; they will hardly believe this without tryal: offer them instances, which shall bear no less likelihood than to see me at her chamber-window, hear me call Margaret, Hero; hear Margaret term me Borachio, and bring them to see this, the very night before the intended wedding; for in the mean time I will so fashion the matter, that Hero shall be absent, and there shall appear such seeming truths of Hero's disloyalty, that jealousy shall be call'd assurance, and all the preparation overthrown.

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

Bora. Be thou constant in the accusation, and my cunning shall not shame me.

John. I will presently go learn their day of marriage. [Exeunt.

LEONATO's GARDEN. Enter Benedick and a Boy.

Bene. Boy.

Boy. Signior.

Bene. In my chamber window lies a book, bring it hither to me in the orchard.

Boy. I am here already, Sir. [Exit Boy.

Bene. I know that, but I would have thee hence, and here again. I do much wonder, that one man seeing how much another man is a fool, when he dedicates his behaviours to love, will, after he hath laught at such shallow follies in others, become the argument of his own scorn, by falling in love! and such a man is Claudio. I have known when there was no musick with
with him but the drum and the fife, and now had he rather hear the taber and the pipe: I have known when he would have walk'd ten mile to foot, to see a good armour; and now will he lie ten nights awake, carving the fashion of a new doublet. He was wont to speak plain, and to the purpose, like an honest man and a soldier, and now is he turn'd orthographer, his words are a very fantastical banquet, just so many strange dishes. May I be so converted, and see with these eyes? I cannot tell, I think not. I will not be sworn, but love may transform me to an oyster; but I'll take my oath on it, 'till he have made an oyster of me, he shall never make me such a fool; one woman is fair, yet I am well; another is wise, yet I am well; another virtuous, yet I am well. But 'till all graces be in one woman, one woman shall not come in my grace. Rich she shall be, that's certain; wife, or I'll none; virtuous, or I'll never cheapen her; fair, or I'll never look on her; mild, or come not near me; noble, or not I for an angel; of good discourse, an excellent musician, and her hair shall be of what colour it please God. Ha! the Prince and monsieur Love: I will hide me in the arbour.

Enter Don Pedro, Leonato, Claudio and Balthazar.

Pedro. Come, shall we hear this musick?
Claud. Yea, my good lord; how still the evening is?
As hush'd on purpose to grace harmony.
Pedro. See you where Benedick hath hid himself?
Claud. O very well, my lord; the musick ended,
We'll fit the kid fox with a penny-worth.
Pedro. Come, Balthazar, we'll hear that song again.
Baltb. O good my lord, tax not so bad a voice
To flander musick any more than once.
Pedro. It is the witness still of excellency,
To put a strange face on his own perfection;
I pray thee sing, and let me woo no more.

The S O N G.

Sigh no more, ladies sigh no more,
Men were deceivers ever,
One foot in sea, and one on shooer,
To one thing constant never.

Then
Then sigh not so, but let them go,
And be you blith and bonny,
Converting all your sounds of woe
Into hy nursery, nony.

Sing no more ditties, sing no more,
Of dumbs so dull and heavy;
The frauds of men were ever so,
Since summer first was leafy:
Then sigh not so, &c.

Pedro. By my troth, a good song.
Balth. And an ill finger, my lord.
Pedro. Ha, no; no, faith, thou sing'st well enough
for a shift.
Bene. If he had been a dog that should have howl'd
thus they would have hang'd him, and I pray God his
bad voice bode no mischief; I had as lief have heard
the night-raven, come what plague could have come
after it.

Pedro. Yea, marry, dost thou hear, Balthazar? I pray
thee get us some excellent musick; for to-morrow
we would have it at the lady Hero's chamber-window.
Balth. The best I can, my lord. [Exit Balthazar.
Pedro. Do so; farewell. Come hither, Leonato! what
was it you told me of to-day, that your niece Beatrice
was in love with Signior Benedick?
Claud. O ay, talk on; talk on, the fowl sits. I
did never think that lady would have loved any man.
Leon. No, nor I neither; but most wonderful, that
she should so doat on Signior Benedick, whom she hath
in all outward behaviour seem'd ever to abhor.
Bene. Is't possible, fits the wind in that corner?
Leon. By my troth, my lord, I cannot tell what to
think of it; but that she loves him with an inraged af-
fection, it is past the infinite of thought.
Pedro. May be the doth but counterfeit.
Claud. Faith, like enough.
Leon. O God! counterfeit? there was never coun-
terfeit of passion came so near the life of passion as she
discovers it.
Pedro. Why, what effects of passion shews she?
Claud. Bait the hook well, the fish will bite.
Leon. What effects, my lord? she will fit you: you heard my daughter tell you how.

Claud. She did indeed.

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

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

Bene. I should think this a gull, but that the white-bearded fellow speaks it; knavery cannot sure hide himself in such reverence.

Claud. He hath ta'en th' infection, hold it up.

Pedro. Hath she made her affection known to Benedick?

Leon. No, and swears she never will, that's her torment.

Claud. 'Tis true indeed, so your daughter says: shall I, says she, that have so oft encounter'd him with scorn, write to him that I love him?

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

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

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

Claud. That——

Leon. O, she tore the letter into a thousand halfpence, rail'd at herself, that she should be so immodest, to write to one that she knew would flout her: I measure him, says she, by my own spirit, for I should flout him if he writ to me, yea tho' I love him, I should.

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

Leon. She doth indeed, my daughter says so, and the ecstasy hath so much overborne her, that my daughter is sometimes afraid she will do desperate outrage to herself; it is very true.
Pedro. It were good that Benedick knew of it by some other, if she will not discover it.

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

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

Claud. And she is exceeding wise.

Pedro. If he should, if were an alms to hang him; I would have doff all other respects, and made her half myself; I pray you tell Benedick of it, and hear what he will say.

Leon. Were it good, think you?

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

Pedro. She doth well; if she should make tender of her love, 'tis very possible he'll scorn it; for the man as you know all, hath a contemptible spirit.

Claud. He is a very proper man.

Pedro. He hath indeed a good outward happiness.

Claud. 'Fore God, and in my mind, very wise.

Pedro. He doth indeed shew some sparks that are like wit.

Leon. And I take him to be valiant.

Pedro. As Hector, I assure you; and in the managing of quarrels, you may see he is wise, for either he avoids them with great discretion, or undertakes them with a christian-like fear. Well, I am sorry for your niece: shall we go see Benedick, and tell him of her love?

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

Leon. Nay, that's impossible, she may wear her heart out first.
Fedro. Well, we will hear further of it by your daughter; let it cool the while. I love Benedick well, and I could wish he would modestly examine himself, to see how much he is unworthy to have so good a lady.

Leon. My lord, will you walk? dinner is ready.

Claud. If he do not do so on her upon this, I will never trust my expectation.

Fedro. Let there be the same net spread for her, and that must your daughter and that gentlewoman carry; the sport will be, when they hold an opinion of one another's dotage, and no such matter; that's the scene that I would see, which will be merely a dumb shew; let us send her to call him in to dinner. [Exeunt.

Bene. This can be no trick, the conference was sadly borne; they have the truth of this from Hero, they seem to pity the lady; it seems her affections have the full bent. Love me! why it must be requited: I hear how I am cenfured; they say I will bear myself proudly, if I perceive the love come from her; they say too, that she will rather die than give any sign of affection—I did never think to marry—I must not seem proud—happy are they that hear their detractions, and can put them to mending: they say the lady is fair; 'tis a truth, I can bear them witness: and virtuous; 'tis so, I cannot reprove it: and wife, but for loving me—by my troth it is no addition to her wit, nor no great argument of her folly; for I will be horribly in love with her,—I may chance to have some odd quirks and remnants of wit broken on me, because I have rail'd so long against marriage; but doth not the appetite alter? a man loves the meat in his youth, that he cannot endure in his age. Shall quipps and sentences, and these paper bullets of the brain, awe a man from the career of his humour? no: the world must be peopled. When I said I would die a bachelor, I did not think I should live 'till I were marry'd. Here comes Beatrice: by this day she's a fair lady, I do spy some marks of love in her.

Enter Beatrice.

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

Bene.
MUCH ADO ABOUT NOTHING

Bene: Fair Beatice, I thank you for your pains.

Beat. I took no more pains for those thanks, than you take pains to thank me; if it had been painful, I would not have come.

Bene. You take pleasure then in the message.

Beat. Yea, just so much as you may take upon a knife’s point, and choak a daw withal: you have no stomach, Signior; fare you well, [Exit.

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

ACT III. SCENE I.

Continues in the Garden.

Enter Hero, Margaret and Ursula.

GOOD Margaret, run thee into the parlour, There shalt thou find my cousin Beatrice, Proposing with the prince and Claudio; Whisper her ear, and tell her I and Ursula Walk in the orchard, and our whole discourse Is all of her; say that thou overheard’st us, And bid her steal into thepleached bower, Where honey suckles ripen’d by the sun Forbid the sun to enter; like to favourites Made proud by princes, that advance their pride Against that power that bred it: there will she hide her To listen to our purpose; this is thy office, Bear thee well in it, and leave us alone.

Marg. I’ll make her come, I warrant, presently. [Exit

Hero.
MUCH ADO ABOUT NOTHING.

Hero. Now, Ursula, when Beatrice doth come,
As we do trace this alley up and down,
Our talk must only be of Benedick;
When I do name him, let it be thy part
To praise him more than ever man did merit.
My talk to thee must be how Benedick
Is sick in love with Beatrice; of this matter
Is little Cupid's crafty arrow made,
That only wounds by hear-say: now begin.

Enter Beatrice.

For look where Beatrice like a lapwing runs
Close by the ground to hear our conference.

Urs. The pleasant'ft angling is to see the fish
Cut with her golden oars the silver stream,
And greedily devour the treacherous bait;
So angle we for Beatrice, who ev'n now
Is couched in the woodbine coverture;
Fear you not my part of the dialogue.

Hero. Then go we near her, that her ear lose nothing
Of the false sweet bait that we lay for it.
No truly, Ursula, she's too disdainful,
I know her spirits are as coy and wild,
As + haggers of the rock.

Urs. But are you sure
That Benedick loves Beatrice so intirely?

Hero. So says the prince, and my new trothed lord.

Urs. And did they bid you tell her of it, Madam?

Hero. They did intreat me to acquaint her of it;
But I persuaded them, if they lov'd Benedick,
To wish him wrestle with affection,
And never to let Beatrice know of it.

Urs. Why did you so? doth not the gentleman
Deferve as full, as fortunate a bed,
As ever Beatrice shall couch upon?

Hero. O God of love! I know he doth deserve
As much as may be yeilded to a man;
But nature never fram'd a woman's heart
Of prouder stuff than that of Beatrice.
Disdains and scorn ride sparkling in her eyes,
Mif-prizing what they look on, and her wit
Values itself so highly, that to her
All matter else seems weak; she cannot love.

† Wild hawks
MUCH ADO ABOUT NOTHING.

Nor take no shape nor project of affection,
She is so self-endeared.

_URS._ Sure I think so;
And therefore certainly it were not good
She knew is love, left she make sport at it.

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

_URS._ Sure, sure such carping is not commendable.

_HERO._ No, for to be so odd, and from all fashions,
As Beatrice is, cannot be commendable.
But who dare tell her so? if I should speak,
She’d mock me into air, O she would laugh me
Out of myself, press me to death with wit.
Therefore let _Benedick_, like covered fire,
Confume away in fighs, wafe inwardly;
It were a bitter death to die with mocks,
Which is as bad as ’tis to die with tickling.

_URS._ Yet tell her of it; hear what she will say.

_HERO._ No, rather I will go to _Benedick_,
And counsel him to fight against his passion.
And truly I’ll devile some honest flanders
To stain my cousin with; one doth not know
How much an ill word may impoision liking.

_URS._ O do not do your cousin such a wrong:
She cannot be so much without true judgment,
(Having so sweet and excellent a wit,
As she is priz’d to have) as to refuse
So rare a gentleman as _Benedick_.

_HERO._ He is the only man of _Italy_,
Always excepted my dear _Claudio_.

_URS._ I pray you be not angry with me, _Madam_,
Speaking my fancy; _Signior_ _Benedick_,

_B 5_
MUCH ADO ABOUT NOTHING.

For shape, for bearing, argument and valour,
Goes foremost in report through Italy.

_Hero._ Indeed he hath an excellent good name.
_Ursula._ His excellence did earn it ere he had it.

When are you married, Madam?

_Hero._ Why every day, to morrow; come, go in,
I'll shew thee some attires, and have thy counsel
Which is the best to furnish me to-morrow.

_Ursula._ She's ta'en, I warrant you; we have caught her,
Madam.

_Hero._ If it prove so, then loving goes by haps;
Some Cupids kill with arrows, some with traps. [*Exeunt.*

Beat._ What fire is in my ears? can this be true?
Stand I condemn'd for pride and scorn so much?

Contempt farewell, and maiden pride adieu!
No glory lives behind the back of such,
And, _Benedick_, love on, I will requite thee,
Taming my wild heart to thy loving hand;
If thou dost love, my kindness shall incite thee
To bind our loves up in an holy band.
For others say thou dost deserve, and I
Believe it better than reportingly.

[Exit.]

Enter Don Pedro, Claudio, Benedick and Leonato.

Pedro._ I do but flay 'till your marriage be consumate,
and then I go toward Arragon.

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

Pedro._ Nay, that would be as great a foil in the new
glos of your marriage, as to shew a child his new coat
and forbid him to wear it. I will only be bold with
_Benedick_ for his company, for from the crown of his
head to the soal of his foot he is all mirth; he hath
twice or thrice cut _Cupid's_ bow-string, and the little
hangman dare not shoot at him; he hath a heart as found
as a bell, and his tongue is the clapper; for what his
heart thinks, his tongue speaks.

Bene._ Gallants, I am not as I have been.

Leon._ So say I; methinks you are sadder.

Claud._ I hope he is in love.

Pedro._ Hang him truant, there's no true drop of blood
in him, to be truly touch'd with love; if he be sad, he
wants money.
MUCH ADO ABOUT NOTHING.

Bene. I have the tooth-ach.
Pedro. Draw it.
Bene. Hang it.
Claud. You must hang it first, and draw it afterwards.
Pedro. What! ' faith for the tooth-ach!
Leon. Which is but a humour, or a worm.
Bene. Well, every one can master a grief but he that has it.

Claud. Yet say I he is in love.
Pedro. There is no appearance of fancy in him, unless it be a fancy that he hath to strange disguises, as to be a Dutch man to day, a French man to-morrow. Or in the shape of two countries at once, a German from the wafer downward, all flops, and a Spaniard from the hip upward, no doublet: Unles he have a fancy to this foolery, as it appears he hath, he is no fool for fancy, as you would have it to appear he is.

Claud. If he be not in love with some woman, there is no believing old signs; he brushes his hat a mornings; what should that bode?
Pedro. Hath any man seen him at the barber's?
Claud. No, but the barber's man hath been seen with him, and the old ornament of his cheek hath already stub tennis balls.
Leon. Indeed he looks younger than he did by the loss of a beard.
Pedro. Nay, he rubs himself with civet; can you smell him out by that?
Claud. That's as much as to say, the sweet youth's in love.
Pedro. The greatest not of it is his melancholy.
Claud. And when was he wont to wash his face?
Pedro. Yea, or to paint himself? for the which I hear what they say of him.

Claud. Nay, but his jesting spirit, which is now crept into a lute string, and now govern'd by flops——
Pedro. Indeed that tells a heavy tale for him. Conclude he is in love.
Claud. Nay, but I know who loves him.
Pedro. That would I know too: I warrant one that knows him not.
MUCH ADO ABOUT NOTHING.

Claud. Yes, and his ill conditions, and in despight of all, dies for him.

Pedro. She shall be buried with her face upwards.

Bene. Yet is this no charm for the tooth agh. Old Signior, walk aside with me, I have studied eight or nine wise words to speak to you, which these hobby-horses must not hear.

Pedro. For my life, to break with him about Beatrice.

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

Enter Don John.

John. My lord and brother, God save you.

Pedro. Good den, brother.

John. If your leisure serv'd, I would speak with you.

Pedro. In private?

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

Pedro. What's the matter?

John. Means your lordship to be married to-morrow?

[To Claudio.

Pedro. You know he does.

John. I know not that, when he knows what I know.

Claud. If there be any impediment, I pray you, dis-cover it.

John. You may think I love you not, let that ap-pear hereafter, and aim better at me. by that I now will manifest; for my brother, I think, he holds you well, and in dearness of heart hath holp to effect your ensuing marriage; surely, suit ill spent, and labour ill bellow'd.

Pedro. Why, what's the matter?

John. I came hither to tell you, and circumstances shorten'd, (for she hath been too long a talking of) the lady is disloyal.

Claud. Who, Hero?

John. Even she, Leonato's Hero, your Hero, every man's Hero?

Claud. Disloyal?

John. The word is too good to paint out her wick-edness; I could say she were worse; think you of a worse
MUCH ADO ABOUT NOTHING. 37
worse title, and I will fit her to it: wonder not 'till further warrant; go but with me to-night, you shall see her chamber-window enter'd, even the night before her wedding day; if you love her, then to morrow wed her; but it would better fit your honour to change your mind.

Claud. May this be so?
Pedro. I will not think it.

John. If you dare not trust that you see, confess not that you know; if will you follow me, I will shew you enough; and when you have seen more and heard more, proceed accordingly.

Claud. If I see any thing to-night why I shou'd not marry her to-morrow, in the congregatian where I should wed, there will I shame her.

Pedro. And as I wooed for thee to obtain her, I will join with thee to disgrace her.

John. I will disparage her no farther, 'till you are my witneses; bear it coldly but 'till night, and let the issue shew itself.

Pedro. O day untowardly turned!
Claud. O mischief strangely thwarting!

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

[Exeunt.

SCENE, The Street.

Enter Dogberry and Verges, with the watch.

Dog. Are you good men and true?
Verg. Yea, or else it were pity but they should suffer salvation, body and soul.

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

Verg. Well, give them their charge, neighbour Dogberry.

Dogb. First, who think you the most disartless man to be constable?

1 Watch. Hugh Oatcake, Sir, or George Seacoal; for they can write and read.

Dogb. Come hither, neighbour Seacoal: God hath blest you with a good name; to be a well-favour'd man is
is the gift of fortune, but to write and read comes by nature.

2 Watch. Both which, master constable———

Dogb You have: I knew it would be your answer. Well, for your favour, Sir, why, give God thanks, and make no boast of it; and for your writing and reading, let that appear when there is no need of such vanity: you are thought here to be the most senseless and fit man for the constable of the watch, therefore bear you the lanthorn; this is your charge; you shall comprehend all vagrom men, you are to bid any man stand in the Prince’s name.

2 Watch. How, if he will not stand?

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

Verg. If he will not stand when he is bidden, he is none of the Prince’s subjects.

Dogb. True, and they are to meddle with none but the Prince’s subjects: you shall also make no noise in the streets; for, for the watch to babble and talk, is most intolerable, and not to be endur’d.

2 Watch. We will rather sleep than talk; we know what belongs to a watch.

Dogb. Why you speak like an ancient and most quiet watchman, for I cannot see how sleeping should offend; only have a care that your bills be not stolen: well, you are to call at all the alehouses, and bid them that are drunk get them to bed.

2 Watch. How if they will not?

Dogb. Why then let them alone ’till they are sober; if they make you not then the better answer, you may say they are not the men you took them for.

2 Watch. Well, Sir.

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

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

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

Verg. You have been always call'd a merciful man, partner.

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

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

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

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

Verg. 'Tis very true.

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

Verg. Nay bi'rlady, that I think he cannot.

Dogb. Five shillings to one on't with any man that knows the Statues, he may stay him; marry, not without the Prince be willing: for indeed the watch ought to offend no man; and it is an offence to stay a man against his will.

Verg. Bi'rlady, I think it be so.

Dogb. Ha, ha, ha! well masters, good night; an there be any matter of weight chances, call up me; keep your fellows' council and your own, and good night; come neighbour.

2 Watch. Well, masters, we hear our charge; let us go sit here upon the church-bench 'till two, and then all to bed.

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

[Exeunt Dogb. and Verg.

Enter Borachio and Conrade.

Bora. What, Conrade?

Watch. Peace, stir not.

Bora. Conrade, I say.

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

Bora.
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Bora. Mas and my elbow itch'd, I thought there would a scab follow.

Conr. I will owe thee an answer for that, and now forward with thy tale.

Bora. Stand thee close then under this pent-house, for it drizzles rain, and I will, like a true drunkard, utter all to thee.

Watch. Some treason, masters; yet stand close.

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

Conr. Is it possible that any villany should be so dear?

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

Conr. I wonder at it.

Bora. That shews thou art unconfirm'd; thou knowest that the fashion of a doublet, or a hat, or a cloak, is nothing to a man.

Conr. Yes, it is apparel.

Bora. I mean the fashion.

Conr. Yes, the fashion is the fashion.

Bora. Truth, I may as well say the fool's the fool; but see'st thou not what a deformed thief this fashion is?

Watch. I know that Deformed; he has been a vile thief this seven years; he goes up and down like a gentleman: I remember his name.

Bora. Didst thou not hear some body?

Conr. No, 'twas the vane on the house.

Bora. See'st thou not, I say, what a deformed thief this fashion is, how giddily he turns about all the hot bloods between fourteen and five and thirty, sometimes fashioning them like Pharaoh's soldiers in the * rechy painting, sometimes like the God Bell's priests in the old church-window, sometimes like the haven Hercules in the smirch'd worm eaten tapestry, where his codpiece seems as maffy as his club.

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

Bora. Not so neither; but know that I have to-night wooed Margaret, the lady Hero's gentlewoman, * rechy, valuable.
by the Name of Hero; she leans me out at her mistress's chamber-window, bids me a thousand times good night— I tell this tale vilely—I should first tell thee how the Prince, Claudio, and my master planted and placed, and possessed by my master Don John, saw far off in the orchard this amiable encounter.

Conr. And thought they, Margaret was Hero?

Bora. Two of them did, the Prince and Claudio, but the devil my master knew he was Margaret; and partly by his oaths which first possest them, partly by the dark night which did deceive them, but chiefly by my villainy, which did confirm any slander that Don John had made; away went Claudio enraged, swore he would meet her as he was appointed next morning at the temple, and there before the whole congregation blame her with what he saw o'er night, and send her home again without a husband.

1 Watch. We charge you in the Prince's name stand.

2 Watch. Call up the right master constable, we have here recovered the most dangerous piece of lechery that ever was known in the common-wealth.

1 Watch. And one Deformed is one of them; I know him, he wears a lock.

Conr. Masters, masters.

2 Watch. You'll be made bring Deformed forth, I warrant you.

Conr. Masters——

1 Watch. Never speak, we charge you, let us obey you to go with us,

Bora. We are like to prove a goodly commodity, being taken up of these mens bills.

Conr. A commodity in question, I warrant you: come, we'll obey you. [Exeunt.

SCENE, Leonato’s House.

Enter Hero, Margaret and Ursula.

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

Urs. I will, lady.

Hero. And bid her come hither.

Ursu. Well.

Marg. Troth I think your other rabato were better.

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

Marg. By my troth, it's not so good, and I warrant your cousin will say so.
MUCH ADO ABOUT NOTHING.

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

Marg. I like the new tire within excellently, if the hair were a thought browner; and your gown's a most rare fashion 'tis faith. I saw the Dukes of Milan's gown that they praise so.

Hero. O, that exceeds, they say.

Marg. By my troth, it's but a night-gown in respect of yours; cloth of gold and cuts, and lac'd with silver, set with pearls, down sleeves, side sleeves, and skirts, round, underborne with a bluish tinsel; but for a fine, quaint, graceful and excellent fashion, yours is worth ten on't.

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

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

Hero. Fie upon thee, art not ashamed?

Marg. Of what, lady? of speaking honourably! is not marriage honourable in a beggar? is not your lord honourable without marriage? I think you would have me say (saving your reverence) a husband. If bad thinking do not wrest true speaking, I'll offend no body; is there any harm in the heavier for a husband? none I think, if it be the right husband, and the right wife, otherwise 'tis light and not heavy; ask my lady Beatrice else, here she comes.

Enter Beatrice.

Hero. Good morrow, coz.

Beat. Good morrow, sweet Hero.

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

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

Marg. Clap us into Light o'love; that goes without a burden; do you sing it, and I'll dance it.

Beat. Yes, light o'love with your heels; then if your husband have stables enough, you'll look he shall lack no barns.

Marg. O illegitimate construction! I scorn that with my heels.

Beat. 'Tis almost five a clock, cousin; 'tis time you were ready; by my troth I am exceeding ill, hey ho!

Marg. For a hawk, a horse, or a husband?
Beat. For the letter that begins them all, H.
Marg. Well, if you be not turn'd Turk, there's no
more failing by the star.
Beat. What means the fool, trow?
Marg. Nothing I, but God fend every one their
heart's desire.
Hero. These gloves the Count sent me, they are an
excellent perfume.
Beat. I am fluft, cousin, I cannot smell.
Marg. A maid and ftuft! there's a goodly catching
of cold.
Beat. O God help me, God help me, how long have
you profeft apprehenfion?
Marg. Ever fince you left it; doth not my wit be-
come me rarely?
Beat. It is not feen enough, you should wear it in your
cap. By my troth, I am fick.
Marg. Get you some of this diffill'd Cardus Bene-
dictus, and lay it to your heart, it is the only thing for
a qualm.
Hero. There thou prick'ft her with a thiffle.
Beat. Benedictus? why Benedictus? you have fome
moral in this Benedictus.
Marg. Moral? no by my troth, I have no moral
meaning, I meant plain holy thiffle; you may think
perchance that I think you are in love, nay, bi'rlady,
I am not fuch a fool to think what I lift; nor I lift
not to think what I can, nor indeed I cannot think,
if I would think my heart out with thinking, that you
are in love, or that you will be in love, or that you
can be in love: yet Benedick was fuch another, and now
is he become a man; he fwores he would never marry,
and yet now in defpight of his heart he eats his meat
without grudging; and how you may be converted I
know not, but methinks you look with your eyes as
other women do.
Beat. What pace is this that thy tongue keeps?
Marg. Not a false gallop.
Urfu. Madam, withdraw, the prince, the Count
Signior Benedick, Don John, and all the gallants of
the town are come to fetch you to church.
Hero. Help to dress me, good coz, good Meg, good
Ursula.
[Exeunt.}
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Enter Leonato with Dogberry and Verges.

Leon. What would you with me, honest neighbour?

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

Leon. Brief I pray you, for you see 'tis a busy time with me.

Dogb. Marry, this it is, Sir.

Verg. Yes in truth it is, Sir.

Leon. What is it, my good friends?

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

Verg. Yes, I thank God, I am as honest as any man living, that is an old man and no honefter than I.

Dogb. Comparisons are odorous, palabras, neighbour Verges.

Leon. Neighbours, you are tedious.

Dogb. It pleases your worship to say so, but we are the poor Duke's officers; but truly for mine own part, if I were as tedious as a King, I could find in my heart to below it all to your worship.

Leon. All thy tediousness on me, ha?

Dogb. Yea, and twice a thousand times more than 'tis, for I hear as good exclamation on your worship as of any man in the city; and tho' I be put a poor man, I am glad to hear it.

Verg. And so am I.

Leon. I would fain know what you have to say.

Verg. Marry, Sir, our watch to night, excepting your worship's presence, hath ta'en a couple as arrant knaves as any in Messina.

Dogb. A good old man, Sir, he will be talking as they say; when the age is in, the wit is out, God help us, it is a world to see: well said i'faith, neighbour Verges, well, he's a good man; and two men ride an horse, one must ride behind; an honest soul, i'faith, Sir, by my truthe he is, as ever broke bread, but God is to be worshipp'd; all men are not alike, alas good neighbour!

Leon. Indeed, neighbour, he comes too short of you.

Dogb. Gifts that God gives.

Leon. I must leave you.
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Dogb. One word, Sir; our watch have indeed com-
prehended two auspicious persons, and we would have
them this morning examined before your worship.
Leon. Take their examination yourself, and bring it
me, I am now in great haste as may appear unto you.
Dogb. It shall be sufficient.
Leon. Drink some wine ere you go: fare you well.

Enter a Messenger,

Meij. My lord, they say for you to give your daugh-
ter to her husband.
Leon. I'll wait upon them. I am ready. [Ex. Leon.
Dogb. Go, good partner, go get you to Francis Sea-
coal, bid him bring his pen and inkmess to the jail;
we are now to examine those men.

Ver. And we must do it wisely.
Dogb. We will spare for no wit, I warrant; here's
that shall drive some of them to a non-come. Only get
the learned writer to set down our excommunication,
and meet me at the jail.

[Exeunt.

ACT IV. SCENE I.

A CHURCH.

Enter Don Pedro, Don John, Leonato, Friar, Claudio,
Benedick, Hero, and Beatrice.

LEONATO.

COME, friar Francis, be brief, only to the plain
form of marriage, and you shall recount their par-
ticular dutie afterwards.

Friar. You come hither, my lord, to marry this lady?

Claud. No.

Leon. To be marry'd to her, friar; you come to
marry her.

Friar. Lady, you come hither to be marry'd to this

Count.

Hero. I do.
Friar. If either of you know any inward impediment why you should not be conjoin'd, I charge you on your souls to utter it.

Claud. know you any, Hero?
Hero. None, my lord.
Friar. Know you any, Count?
Leon. I dare make his answer, none.
Claud. O what men dare do! what men may do! what men daily do!

Bene. How now! Interjections? why then some be of laughing, as ha, ha, he!

Claud. Stand thee by, friar: father, by your leave, Will you with free and unconstrained soul,
Give me this maid your daughter?
Leon. As freely, son, as God did give her me.
Claud. And what have I to give you back, whose worth
May counterpoise this rich and precious gift?

Pedro. Nothing, unless you render her again.

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

Leon. What do you mean, my Lord?

Claud. Not to be marry'd,
Not knit my soul to an approved wanton.

Leon. Dear my Lord, if you in your own proof
Have vanquish'd the resi stance of her youth,
And made defeat of her virginity

Claud. I know what you would say: if I have known her
You'll say, she did embrace me as a husband,
And to extenuate the forehead sin.

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MUCH ADO ABOUT NOTHING.

No, Leonato,
I never tempted her with word too large,
But as a brother to his sister, shew'd
Bashful sincerity, and comely love.

Her. And seem'd I ever otherwise to you?

Claud. Out on thy seeming, I will write against it;
You seem to me as Dian in her orb,
As chaste as is the bud ere it be blown:
But you are more intemperate in your blood
Than Venus, or those pamper'd animals

That rage in savage sensuality.

Her. Is my Lord well, that he doth speak so wide?

Leon. Sweet prince, why speak not you?

Pedro. What should I speak?

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

Leon. Are these things spoken, or do I but dream?

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

Bene. This looks not like a nuptial.

Her. True! O God!

Claud. Leonato, stand I here?
Is this the prince? Is this the prince's brother?

Is this face Hero's? Are our eyes our own?

Leon. All this is so; but what of this, my Lord.

Claud. 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.

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

Her. O God defend me, how am I beset!

What kind of catechizing call you this?

Leon. To make you answer truly to your name.

Her. Is it not Hero? who can blot that name

With any just reproach?

Claud. Marry, that can Hero;

Hero herself can blot out Hero's virtue.

What man was he talk'd with you yesternight
Out at your window betwixt twelve and one?

Now if you are a maid answer to this.

Her. I talk'd with no man at that hour, my Lord.

Pedro. Why then you are no maiden. Leonato,

I am sorry you must hear; upon mine honour,

Myself;
Myself, my brother, and this grieved Count
Did see her, hear her, at that hour last night
Talk with a ruffian at her chamber-window,
Who hath indeed, most like a liberal villain,
Confess'd the vile encounters they have had
A thousand times in secret.

John. Fie, fie, they are not to be nam'd, my lord.
Not to be spoken of;
There is not chastity enough in language,
Without offence, to utter them: thus, pretty lady,
I am sorry for thy much misgovernment.

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

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

Beat. Why how now, cousin, wherefore sink you down?

John. Come, let us go; these things come thus to light,
Smother her spirits up.


Bene. How doth the lady?

Beat. Dead I think; help, uncle.

Hero! why Hero! uncle! Signior Benedick! friar!

Leon. O fate! take not away thy heavy hand,

Death is the fairest cover for her shame
That may be wish'd for

Beat. How now, cousin Hero?

Friar. Have comfort, Lady.

Leon. Doft thou look up?

Friar. Yea, wherefore should she not?

Leon. Wherefore? why doth not every earthly thing
Cry shame upon her? could she here deny
The story that is printed in her blood?

Do not live, Hero, do not ope thine eyes:
For did I think thou wouldest not quickly die,
Thought I thy spirits were stronger than thy shame,
MUCH ADO ABOUT NOTHING. 49

Myself would on the reward of reproaches
Strike at thy life. Greiv'd I, I had but one?
Chid I for that at frugal nature's frame?
I've one too much by thee. Why had I one?
Why ever waft thou lovely in mine eyes?
Why had not I, with charitable hand,
Took up a beggar's issue at my gates?
Who smeered thus, and mir'd with infamy,
I might have said, no part of it is mine;
This shame derives itself from unknown loins:
But mine, and mine I lov'd, and mine I prais'd,
And mine that I was proud on, mine so much,
That I myself was to myself not mine,
Valuing of her: why, she, Oh! she is fall'n
Into a pit of ink, that the wide sea
Hath drops too few to wash her clean again,
And salt too little which may season give
To her foul tainted flesh.

Bene. Sir, Sir, be patient;
For my part, I am so attir'd in wonder,
I know not what to say.

Beat. O, on my soul, my cousin is bely'd.
Bene. Lady, were you her bedfellow last night?
Beat. No truly, not; altho' until last night
I have this twelvemonth been her bedfellow.

Leon. Confirm'd, confirm'd! O, that is stronger made,
Which was before barr'd up with ribs of iron.
Would the Prince lye? and Claudio would he lye,
Who lov'd her so, that speaking of her foulness,
Wash'd it with tears? Hence from her, let her die.

Friar. Hear me a little;
For I have only silent been so long,
And given way unto this course of fortune,
By noting of the lady. I have mark'd
A thousand blushing apparitions
To start into her face, a thousand innocent shames,
In angel whiteness bear away those blushing,
And in her eye there hath appear'd a fire
To burn the errors that these princes hold
Against her maiden truth. Call me a fool,
Trust not my reading, nor my observation,
Which with experimental seal doth warrant;
The tenour of my book; truth not my age,
My reverence, calling, nor divinity,
If this sweet lady lie not guildef here,
Under some biting error.

Leon. Friar, it cannot be:
Thou seest that all the grace that she hath left,
Is, that she will not add to her damnation
A sin of perjury; she not denies it:
Why seek'st thou then to cover with excuse,
That which appears in proper nakedness?

Friar. Lady, what man is he you are accus'd of?

Hero. They know that do accuse me, I know none:
If I know more of any man alive
Than that which maiden modesty doth warrant,
Let all my sins lack mercy! O my father,
Prove you that any man with me convers'd
At Hours unmeet, or that I yeasternight
Maintain'd the change of words with any creature,
Refuse me, hate me, torture me to death.

Friar. There is some strange misprision in the Princes.

Bene. Two of them have the very bent of honour,
And if their wisdoms be misl'd in this,
The practice of it lives in John the bastard,
Whose spirits toil in frame of villanies.

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

Friar. Pause a while,
And let my counsel sway you in this case.
Your Daughter here the Princes left for dead;
Let her a while be secretly kept in,
And publish it that she is dead indeed:
Maintain a mourning ostentation,
And on your family's old monument

Hang
Hang mournful epitaphs, and do all rites
That appertain unto a burial.

_Leon._ What shall become of this? what will this do?

_Friar._ Marry, this well carry'd shall on her behalf
Change slander to remorse; that is some good:
But not for that dream I on this strange course,
But on this travel look for greater birth:
She dying, as it must be so maintaine'd,
Upon the instant that she was accus'd,
Shall be lamented, pity'd, and excus'd,
Of ev'ry hearer: for it so falls out,
That what we have we prize not to the worth,
While we enjoy it; but being lack'd and lost,
Why then we rack the value, then we find
The virtue that possession would not shew us
Whilst it was ours; so will it fare with _Claudio;_
When he shall hear she dy'd upon his words,
Th' idea of her love shall sweetly creep
Into his study of imagination,
And every lovely organ of her life
Shall come apparel'd in more precious habit;
More moving, delicate, and full of life,
Into the eye and prospect of his soul,
Than when she liv'd indeed. Then shall he mourn,
If ever love had interest in his liver,
And with 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 levell'd, false,
The supposition of the lady's death
Will quench the wonder of her infamy.
And if it fort 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.

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

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

Friar. 'Tis well contented, presently away.

For to strange stores, strangely they strain the cure.
Come, Lady, die to live; this wedding-day

Perhaps is but prolong'd; have patience and endure.

[Exeunt.

Manent Benedick and Beatrice.

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

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

Bene. I will not desire that.

Beat. You have no reason, I do it freely.

Bene. Surely I do believe your fair cousin is wrong'd.

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

Bene. Is there any way to shew such friendship?

Beat. A very even way, but no such friend.

Bene. May a man do it?

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

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

Beat. As strange as the thing I know not; it were
as possible for me to say, I loved nothing so well as
you; but believe me not; and yet I lie not; I con-
tests nothing, nor I deny nothing. I am sorry for my
cousin.

Bene. By my sword, Beatrice, thou lovest me.

Beat. Do not swear by it, and eat it.

Bene. I will swear by it that you love me; and I
will make him eat it that says I love you not.

Beat. Will you not eat your word?

Bene. With no sauce that can be devis'd to it; I pro-
test I love thee.

Beat. Why then god forgive me.

Bene. What offence, sweet Beatrice?

Beat. You have stay'd me in a happy hour; I was
about to protest I lov'd you.

Bene. And do it with all thy heart.

Beat.
Much Ado About Nothing

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

Bene. Come, bid me do any thing for thee.

Beat. Kill Claudio.

Bene. Ha! not for the wide world.

Beat. You kill me to deny; farewell.

Bene. Tarry, sweet Beatrice.

Beat. I am gone, tho' I am here; there is no love in you; nay, I pray you, let me go.

Bene. Beatrice!

Beat. In faith, I will go.

Bene. We'll be friends first.

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

Bene. Is Claudio thine enemy?

Beat. Is he not approved in the height a villain? that hath flander'd, scorn'd, dishonour'd my kinswoman! O that I were a man! what bear her in hand, until they come to take hands, and then with public accusation, uncover'd flander, unmitigated rancour.

O God that I were a man. I would eat his heart in the market place.

Bene. Hear me, Beatrice.

Beat. Talk with a man out at a window? —— a proper saying!

Bene. Nay, but Beatrice.

Beat. Sweet Hero! she is wrong'd, she is flander'd, she is undone.

Bene. But——

Beat. Princes and counts! surely a princely testimony, a goodly count compekt, a sweet gallant surely! O that I were a man for his sake! Or that I had any friend would be a man for my sake! but manhood is melted into courteties, valour into compliment; and men are only turn'd into tongue, and trim ones too; he is now as valiant as Hercules, that only tells a lye, and swears it; I cannot be a man with wishing, therefore I will die a woman with grieving.

Bene. Tarry, good Beatrice; by this hand, I love thee.

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

MUCH ADO ABOUT NOTHING.

Bene. Think you in your soul the Count Claudio hath wrong'd Hero?

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

Bene. Enough, I am engag'd, I will challenge him. I will kiss your hand, and so leave you; by this hand, Claudio shall render me dear account; as you hear of me, so think of me; go, comfort your cousin; I must say she's dead, and so farewell. [Exeunt.

Enter Dogberry, Verges, Borachio, Conrade, the Town-Clerk and Sexton in Gowns.

To. Cl. Is our whole dissemble appear'd?

Dogb. O, a stool and cushion for the sexton!

Sexton. Which be the malefactors?

Verg. Marry, that am I and my partner.

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

Sexton. But which are the offenders that are to be examin'd? let them come before master constable.

To. Cl. Yea, marry, let them come before me; what is your name, friend?

Bora. Borachio.

To. Cl. Pray write down, Borachio. Your's, Sirrah?

Conr. I am a gentleman, Sir, and my name is Conrade.

To. Cl. Write down, master gentleman Conrade; masters, do you serve God?

Both. Yea, Sir, we hope.

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

Conr. Marry, Sir, we say we are none.

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

Bora. Sir, I say to you, we are none.

To. Cl. Well, stand aside; 'fore God they are both in a tale: have you writ down, that they are none?

Sexton. Master Town clerk, you go not the way to examine, you must call the watch that are their accusers.

To. Cl.
To Cl. Yea, marry, that's the easiest way, let the watch come forth; mailers, I charge you in the Prince's name accuse these men.

Enter Watchmen.

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

To Cl. Write down, Prince John a villain; why this is flat perjury, to call a Prince's brother villain.

Bora. Master Town-clerk.

To Cl. Pray thee, fellow, peace; I do not like thy look, I promise thee.

Sexton. What heard you him say else?

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

To Cl. Flat burglary as ever was committed.

Dogb. Yes, by th' Mass, that it is.

Sexton. What else, fellow?

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

To Cl. O villain! thou wilt be condemn'd into everlasting redemption for this.

Sexton. What else?

2 Watch. This is all.

Sexton. And this is more, masters, than you can deny. Prince John is this morning secretly stoll'n away: Hero was in this manner accus'd, and in this very manner refuse'd, and upon the grief of this suddenly dy'd. Master confable, let these men be bound and brought to Leonato; I will go before, and shew him their examination.

[Exit.

Dogb. Come, let them be opinion'd.

Verg. Let them be in the hands of Coxcomb.

Dogb. God's my Life, where's the sexton? let him write down the prince's officer Coxcomb: come, bind them, thou naughty varlet!

Court. Away, you are an afs, you are an afs.

Dog. Doth thou not suspect my place? doth thou not suspect my years? O that he were here to write me down an afs! but masters, remember that I am an afs, though

it
MUCH ADO ABOUT NOTHING.

It be not written down, yet forget not that I am an ass; no, thou villain, thou art full of piety, as shall be prov'd upon thee by good witness; I am a wise fellow, and which is more, an officer; and which is more, an householder; and which is more, as pretty a piece of flesh as any in Messina, and one that knows the law, go to; and a rich fellow enough, go to; and a fellow that hath had losses, and one that hath two gowns, and every thing handsome about him; bring him away; O that I had been writ down an ass!

[Exeunt.

ACT V. SCENE I.

Before Leonato's House.

Enter Leonato and Antonio.

ANTONIO.

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

Leon. I pray thee, cease thy counsel,
Which falls into mine ear as profitless
As water in a sieve; give not me counsel,
Nor let no comfort else delight mine ear,
But such a one whose wrongs doth fuit with mine.
Bring me a father that so lov'd his child,
Whose joy of her is overwhelm'd like mine,
And bid him speak to me of patience;
Measure his woe the length and breadth of mine,
And let it answer 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
MUCH ADO ABOUT NOTHING. 57

With candle-walters; bring him yet to me,
And I of him will gather patience.
But there is no such man; for, brother, men
Can counsel, and give comfort to that grief
Which they themselves not feel; but tainting it,
Their counsel turns to passion, which before
Would give preceptial medicine to rage,
Fetter strong madness in a silken thread,
Charm ach with air, and agony with words.
No, no, 'tis all men's office, to speak patience
To those that wring under the load of sorrow;
But no man's virtue nor sufficiency
To be so moral, when he shall endure
The like himself; therefore give me no counsel:
My Grieves cry louder than advertisement.

Ant. Therein do men from children nothing differ.
Leon. I pray thee, peace; I will be flesh and blood;
For there was never yet philosopher,
That could endure the tooth-ach patiently;
However they have writ the style of Gods,
And made a pish at chance and sufferance.
Ant. Yet bend not all the harm upon yourself,
Make those, that do offend you, suffer too.
Leon. There thou speakest 'st reason; nay, I will do so.
My soul doth tell me Hero is bely'd,
And that shall Claudio know, so shall the Prince,
And all of them that thus disfigure her.

Enter Don Pedro and Claudio.

Ant. Here come the prince and Claudio hastily.
Pedro. Good den, good den.
Claud. Good day to both of you.
Leon. Hear you, my Lords?
Pedro. We have some haste, Leonato.
Leon. Some haste, my lord! well, fare you well, my lord.
Are you so hasty now? Well, all is one.
Pedro. Nay, do not quarrel with us, good old man.
Ant. If he could right himself with quarrelling,
Some of us would lie low.
Much Ado About Nothing.

Claud. Who wrongs him?
Leon. Marry, thou dost wrong me, thou dissembler, thou!
Nay, never lay thy hand upon thy sword,
I fear thee not.
Claud. Marry, bestride my hand,
If it should give your age such cause of fear;
In faith my hand meant nothing to my sword.
Leon. Tush, tush, man, never fear and fret at me;
I speak not like a dotard nor a fool,
As under privilege of age to brag.
What I have done being young, or what would do,
Were I not old: know, Claudio, to thy head,
Thou hast so wrong'd my innocent child and me,
That I am forc'd to lay my reverence by,
And with grey hairs and bruis'd of many days
Do challenge thee to trial of a man;
I say, thou hast belied my innocent child,
Thy slander hath gone through and through her heart,
And she lies bury'd with her ancestors;
O, in a tomb where never scandal slept,
Save this of hers, fram'd by thy villany!
Claud. My villany?
Leon. Thine, Claudio; thine, I say.
Pedro. You say not right, old man.
Leon. My lord, my lord,
I'll prove it on his body, if he dare;
Displease his nice fence, and his active practice,
His may of youth, and bloom of lustrehood.
Claud. Away, I will not have to do with you.
Leon. Canst thou so daff me? thou hast kill'd my child;
If thou kill'st me, boy, thou shalt kill a man.
Ant. He shall kill two of us, and men indeed;
But that's no matter, let him kill one first;
Win me and wear me, let him answer me;
Come, follow me, boy, come boy, follow me,
Sir boy, I'll whip you from your foaming fence;
Nay, as I am a gentleman, I will.
Leon. Brother.
Ant. Content yourself; God knows I lov'd my niece, And she is dead, slander'd to death by villains, That dare as well answer a man, indeed, As I dare take a serpent by the tongue! Boys, apes, braggarts, jacks, milkfops!

Leon. Brother Anthony!

Ant. Hold your content: what, man? I know them, yea, And what they weigh, even to the utmost scruple: Scrambling, out-facing, fashion-mongering boys, That lye, and cog, and flout, deprave and slander, Go anticly, and show an outward hideousness, And speak off half a dozen dangerous words, How they might hurt their enemies, if they durst; And this is all.

Leon. But, brother Anthony?

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

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

Leon. My lord, my lord—

Pedro. I will not hear you.

Leon. No! come, brother, away; I will be heard.

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

[Exeunt both.]

Enter Benedick.

Pedro. See, fee, here comes the man we went to seek.

Claud. Now, Signior, what news?

Bene. Good day, my Lord.

Pedro. Welcome, Signior; you are almost come to part almost a fray.

Claud. We had like to have had our two noes snapt off by two old men without teeth.

Pedro. Leonato and his brother; what think'st thou? Had we fought, I doubt we should have been too young for them.
MUCH ADO ABOUT NOTHING.

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

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

Bene. It is in my scabbard; shall I draw it?

Pedro. Dost thou wear thy wit by thy side?

Claud. 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.

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


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

Claud. Nay, then give him another staff, this last was broke crofs.

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

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

Bene. Shall I speak a word in your ear?

Claud. God bless me from a challenge!

Bene. You are a villain; I jest not. I will make it good how you dare, with what you dare, and when you dare. Do me right, or I will protest your cowardice. You have kill'd a sweet lady, and her death shall fall heavy on you. Let me hear from you.

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

Pedro. What, a feast?

Claud. Praise, I thank him, he hath bid me to a calveshead and a cap-on, the which if I do not carve most curiously, say my knife's naught. Shall I not find a woodcock too?

Bene. Sir, your wit ambles well, it goes easly.

Pedro. I'll tell thee how Beatrice prais'd thy wit the other day: I said, thou hadst a fine wit; right, says she, a fine little one; no, said I, a great wit; just, said she, a great grofs one; nay, said I, a good wit; just, said she, it hurts no body; nay, said I, the gentleman is wife; certain, said she, a wife gentleman; nay,
MUCH ADO ABOUT NOTHING. 6

nay, said I, he hath the tongues; that, I believe, said she, for he swore a thing to me on Monday night, which he forswore on Tuesday morning; there's a double tongue, there's two tongues. Thus did she an hour together trans-shape thy particular virtues; yet, at last, she concluded with a sigh, thou wait the propereft man in Italy.

Claud. For the which, she wept heartily, and said, she car'd not.

Pedro. Yea, that she did; but yet, for all that, and, if she did not hate him deadly, she would love him dearly; the old man's daughter told us all.

Claud. All, all: and moreover, God saw him, when he was hid in the garden!

Pedro. But when shall we set the savage bull's horns on the sensible Benedick's head?

Claud. Yea, and text underneath, here dwells Benedick the married man.

Bene. Fare you well, boy, you know my mind; I will leave you now to your gossip-like humour; you break jests, as braggarts do their blades, which, God be thank'd, hurt not. My lord, for your many courtesies I thank you; I must discontinue your company; your brother the bastard is fled from Messina; you have among you kill'd a sweet and innocent lady. For my lord lack-beard there, he and I shall meet, and 'till then, peace be with him! [Exit Benedick.

Pedro. He is in earnest.

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

Pedro. And hath challeng'd thee?

Claud. Most sincerely.

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

Enter Dogberry, Verges, Conrade, and Borachio guarded.

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

Pedro. But so fit you, let me see, pluck up my heart, and be sad, did he not say, my brother was fled?

Dogb.
MUCH ADO ABOUT NOTHING.

Dogb. Come you, Sir, if justice cannot tame you, she shall ne'er weigh more reasons in her balance; nay, if you be a cursing hypocrite once, you must be look'd to.

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

Claud. Hearken after their offence, my lord.

Pedro. Officers, what offence have these men done?

Dogb. Marry, Sir, they have committed false report, moreover they have spoken unwruths; secondarily, they are fanlers; sixthly and lastly, they have bely'd a lady; thirdly, they have verify'd unjust things; and to conclude, they are lying knaves.

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

Claud. Rightly reason'd, and in his own division; and, by my troth, there's one meaning well suited.

Pedro. Whom have you offended, masters, that you are thus bound to your answer? This learned constable is too cunning to be understood. What's your offence?

Bora. Sweet Prince, let me go no further to mine answer; do you hear me, and let this Count kill me: I have deceived, even your very eyes; what your wisdoms could not discover, these shallow fools have brought to light, who, in the night, overheard me confessing to this man, how Don John your brother incens'd me to slander the lady Hero; how you were brought into the orchard, and saw me court Margaret in Hero's garment; how you disgrac'd her when you should marry her; my villany they have upon record, which I had rather seal with my death, than repeat over to my shame; the Lady is dead upon mine and my master's false accusation; and briefly, I desire nothing but the reward of a villain.

Pedro. Runs not this speech like iron through your blood?

Claud. I have drank poison, while he utter'd it.

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

Bora. Yea, paid me richly, for the practice of it.
Pedro. He is compos'd and fram'd of treachery.  
And fled he is upon this villany.  
Claud. Sweet Hero! now thy image doth appear, 
In the rare semblance that I lov'd it first.  
Dogb. Come, bring away the plaintiffs. By this time our sexton hath reform'd Signior Leonato of the matter; and masters, do not forget to specify, when time and place shall serve, that I am an afs.  
Verg. Here, here comes master Signior Leonato, and the sexton too.  

Enter Leonato.  
Leon. Which is the villain? Let me see his eyes,  
That when I note another man like him,  
I may avoid him; which of these is he?  
Bora. If you would know your wronger, look on me.  
Leon. Art thou, art thou the slave that with thy breath  
Has kill'd mine innocent child?  
Bora. Yea, even I alone.  
Leon. No, not so, villain, thou bely'ft thyself;  
Here stand a pair of Honourable men,  
A third is fled, that had a hand in it:  
I thank you, princes, for my daughter's death;  
Record it with your high and worthy deeds.  
'Twas bravely done, if you bethink you of it.  
Claud. I know not how to pray your patience,  
Yet I may speak; chuse your revenge yourself,  
Impose me to what penance your invention  
Can lay upon my sin; yet, sin'n'd I not,  
But in mistaking.  
Pedro. By my soul, nor I;  
And yet to satisfy this good old man,  
I would bend under any heavy weight,  
That he'll enjoin me to.  
Leon. You cannot bid my daughter live again,  
That were impossible; but I pray you both  
Poffes the people in Messina here  
How innocent she dy'd; and if your love  
Can labour ought in sad invention,  
Hang her an epitaph upon her tomb,  
And sing it to her bones, sing it to-night:  

To
To-morrow morning come you to my house,
And since you could not be my son-in-law,
Be yet my nephew; my brother hath a daughter,
Almost a 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.

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

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

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

Dogb. Moreover, Sir, which indeed is not under
white and black, this plaintiff here, the offender, did
call me afs; I beseech you, let it be remembered in his
punishment; and also the watch heard them talk of
one Deformed: they say he wears a key in his ear,
and a lock hanging by it, and borrows money, in God's
name, the which he hath us'd 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.

Leon. I thank thee for thy care and honest pains.

Dogb. Your worship speaks like a moft thankful and re-
verend youth; and I praife God for you.

Leon. There's for thy pains.

Dogb. God save the foundation!

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

Dogb. I leave an errant knave with your worship,
which I beseech your worship to correct yourfelf, for
the example of others. God keep your worship; I wish
your worship well: God restore you to health; I humbly
give
give you leave to depart; and if a merry meeting may be wish'd, God prohibit it. Come, neighbour.

[Exeunt.

Leon. Until to-morrow morning, Lords, farewell.

Ant. Farewel, my lords, we look for you to-morrow.

Pedro. We will not fail.

Claud. To night I'll mourn with Hero.

Leon. Bring you these fellows on, we'll talk with Margaret,

How her acquaintance grew with this lewd fellow.

[Exeunt.

SCENE, Leonato's House.

Enter Benedick and Margaret.

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

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

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

Marg. To have no man come over me? why, shall I always keep above stairs?

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

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

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

Marg. Give us the swords, we have bucklers of our own.

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

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

[Exit Margaret.

Bene. And therefore will come. [Sings.] The God of love that fits above, and knows me, and knows me, how pitiful I deserve. I mean in singing; but in loving,

Leander
Leander the good swimmer, Troilus the first employer of pandars, and a whole book full of these quondam carpet-mongers, whose names yet run smoothly in the even road of a blank verse, why, they never were so truly turn'd over and over, as my poor self in love; marry, I cannot shew it in rhyme; I have try'd, I can find out no rhyme to lady but lady, an innocent rhyme; for scorn, born, a hard rhyme; for school, fool, a babbling rhyme; very ominous endings; no, I was not born under a rhiming planet, for I cannot woo in festival terms.

Enter Beatrice.

Sweet Beatrice, wilt thou come, when I call thee?
Beat. Yea, Signior, and depart, when you bid me.
Bene. O, stay but till then.
Beat. Then is spoken; fare you well now; and yet ere I go, let me go with that I came for, which is, with knowing what hath past between you and Claudio.
Bene. Only foul words, and thereupon I will kiss thee.
Beat. Foul words are but foul wind, and foul wind is but foul breath, and foul breath is noisome; therefore I will depart unkiss'd.
Bene. Thou hast frighted the word out of its right sense, so forcible is thy wit; but I must tell thee plainly, Claudio undergoes my challenge, and either I must shortly hear from him, or I will subscribe him a coward: and I pray thee now tell me for which of my bad parts didst thou first fall in love with me?
Beat. For them all together, which maintain'd 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?
Bene. Suffer love! a good epithet; I do suffer love indeed, for I love thee against my will.
Beat. In spite of your heart, I think; alas! poor heart! if you spight it for my sake, I will spight it for yours; for I will never love that which my friend hates.
Bene. Thou and I are too wise to woo peaceably.

Beat.
MUCH ADO ABOUT NOTHING. 67

Beat. It appears not in this confession; there's not one
wife man among twenty that will praise himself.

Bene. An old, an old instance, Beatrice, that liv'd
in the time of good neighbours; if a man do not erec't
in this age his own tomb ere he dies, he shall live no
longer in monuments, than the bells ring and the widow
weeps.

Beat. And how long is that, think you?

Bene. Question? why an hour in clamour, and a quarter
in rheum; therefore, it is most expedient for the wife, if
Don worm (his conscience) find no impediment to the
contrary, to be the trumpet of his own virtues, as I am
to myself; so much for praising myself; who, I myself
will bear witness, is praise worthy; and now tell me how
doth your cousin?

Beat. Very ill.

Bene. And how do you?

Beat. Very ill too.

Enter Ursula.

Bene. Serve God, love me, and mend; there will leave
you too, for here comes one in haste.

Ursu. Madam, you must come to your uncle; yonder's
old coil at home; it is proved my lady Hero hath been
falsly accus'd, the Prince and Claudio mightily abus'd, and
Don John is the author of all, who is fled and gone: will
you come presently?

Beat. Will you go hear this news, Signior?

Bene. I will live in thy heart, die in thy lap, and be
bury'd in thine eyes; and moreover I will go with thee to
thy uncle.

[Exeunt.

SCENE a CHURCH.

Enter Don Pedro, Claudio, and Attendants with
tapers.

Claud. Is this the monument of Leonato?
Attend. It is, my lord.
MUCH ADO ABOUT NOTHING.

EPI T A P H.

Done to death by fland'rous tongues,
Was the Hero that here lies:
Death, in guerdon of her wrongs,
Gives her fame which never dies.
So the life that dy'd with shame,
Lives in death with glorious fame.
Hang thou there upon the tomb,
Praising her, when I am dumb.

Claud. Now musick found, and sing your solemne hymn.

The S O N G.

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

Claud. Now unto thy bones good night;
Yearly will I do this rite.

Pedro. Good-morrow, masters, put your torches out.
The wolves have prey'd; and look, the gentle day
Before the wheels of Phæbus, round about
Dapples the drowsy east with spots of grey.
Thanks to you all, and leave us; fare you well.

Claud. Good-morrow, masters; each his several way.

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

Claud. And Hymen now with luckier issue speeds
Than this, for whom we render'd up this woe.

[Exeunt:

SCENE,
SCENE, Leonato's House.

Enter Leonato, Benedick, Margaret, Ursula, Antonio, Friar, and Hero.

Friar. Did not I tell you she was innocent?
Leon. So are the Prince and Claudio who accus'd her.

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

Ant. Well, I am glad that all things fort so well.
Bene. And so am I, being else by faith enforce'd
To call young Claudio to a reckoning for it.

Leon. Well, daughter, and you gentlewomen all,
Withdraw into a chamber by yourselves,
And when I send for you come hither mask'd:
The Prince and Claudio promis'd by this hour
To visit me; you know your office, brother,
You must be father to your brother's daughter,
And give her to young Claudio.

Enter Ladies:

Ant. Which I will do with confirm'd countenance.
Bene. Friar, I must intreat your pains, I think.
Friar. To do what, Signior?
Bene. To bind me or undo me, one of them:

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

Leon. That eye my daughter lent her, 'tis most true.
Bene. And I do with an eye of Love requite her.
Leon. The sight whereof, I think, you had from me,
From Claudio and the Prince; but what's your will?
Bene. Your answer, Sir, is enigmatical;
But for my will, my will is, your good will
May stand with ours, this day to be conjoin'd
T'is flate of honourable marriage,
In which, good Friar, I shall desire your help.
Leon. My heart is with your liking.
Friar. And my help.
Enter Don Pedro and Claudio, with Attendants.

Pedro. Good-morrow to this fair assembly.

Leon. Good-morrow, Prince, good morrow, Claudio. We here attend you; are you yet determin'd To-day, to marry with my brother's daughter?

Claud. I'll hold my mind, were she an Ethiop.

Leon. Call her forth, brother, here's the Friar ready.

Pedro. Good-morrow, Benedick; why, what's the matter,
That you have such a February face,
So full of frost, of storm and cloudiness?

Claud. I think he thinks upon the savage bull:
Thou, fear not, man, we'll tip thy horns with gold,
And so all Europe shall rejoice at thee,
As once Europa did at lusty Jove,
When he would play the noble beast in love.

Bene. Bull Jove, Sir, had an amiable low,
And some such strange bull leap'd your father's cow,
And got a calf in that same noble feat,
Much like to you, for you have just his beat.

Enter Hero, Beatrice, Margaret, and Ursula.

Claud. For this I owe you; here come other reckonings.

Which is the lady I must seize upon?

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

Claud. Why then she's mine; sweet, let me see your face.

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

Claud. Give me your hand; before this holy Friar,
I am your husband, if you like of me.

Hero. And when I liv'd, I was your other wife,

And when you lov'd, you were my other husband.

Claud. Another Hero?

Hero. Nothing certainer.

One Hero dy'd defil'd, but I do live;
And surely, as I live, I am a maid.

Pedro. The former Hero! Hero, that is dead!

Leon.
Leon. She dy’d, my lord, but whiles her slander liv’d.

Friar. All this amazement can I qualify.

When after that the holy rites are ended,
I’ll thee largely of fair Hero’s death:
Mean time let wonder seem familiar,
And to the chapel let us presently.

Bene. Soft and fair, friar. Which is Beatrice?
Beat. I answer to that name; what is your will?
Bene. Do not you love me?
Beat. Why, no; no more than reason.
Bene. Why then your uncle, and the prince, and Claudio,
have been deceived; they swore you did.
Beat. Do not you love me?
Bene. Troth, no; no more than reason.
Beat. Why, then my cousin, Margaret, and Ursula
Are much deceiv’d; for they did swear you did.
Bene. They swore you were almost sick for me.
Beat. They swore you were well-nigh dead for me.
Bene. ’Tis no matter, then you do not love me?
Beat. No, truly, but in friendly recompence.
Leon. Come, cousin, I am sure you love the gentleman.
Claud. And I’ll be sworn upon it that he loves her;
For here’s a paper written in his hand,
A halting sonnet of his own pure brain,
Fashion’d to Beatrice.

Here. And here’s another,
Writ in my cousin’s hand, stolen from her pocket.
Containing her affection unto Benedick.

Bene. A miracle! here’s our own hands against our hearts;
come, I will have thee; but, by this light, I take thee for pity.

Beat. I would now deny you, but, by this good day, I
yield upon great persuasion, and partly to save your life; for
as I was told, you were in a consumption.
Bene. Peace, I will stop your mouth.

Pedro. How dost thou, Benedick, the married man?
Bene. I’ll tell thee what, Prince; a college of wit-crackers
cannot flout me out of my humour: dost thou think I care
for a satire, or an epigram? no: if a man will be beaten
with brains, he shall wear nothing handsome about him. In
brief, since I do purpose to marry, I will think nothing to
any purpose that the world can say against it; and therefore
never
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.

Claud. I had well hoped thou wouldst have denied Beatrice, that I might have cudgell'd thee out of thy single life, to make thee a double dealer, which out of question thou wilt be, if my cousin do not look exceeding narrowly to thee.

Bene. Come, come, we are friends; let's have a dance, e'er we are marry'd, that we may lighten our own hearts, and our wives heels.

Leon. We'll have dancing afterwards.

Bene. First, o' my word; therefore play musick. Prince, thou art fad, get thee a wife, get thee a wife; there is no staff more reverend than one tipt with horn.

Enter Messenger.

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

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

FINIS.