

SHAKESPEARIENCE!

Much Ado About Nothing

Beatrice/Benedick, Act I Scene 1

BENEDICK

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

BEATRICE

I wonder that you will still be talking, Signior Benedick: nobody marks you.

BENEDICK

What, my dear Lady Disdain! are you yet living?

BEATRICE

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

BENEDICK

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

BEATRICE

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

BENEDICK

God keep your ladyship still in that mind! so some gentleman or other shall 'scape a predestinate scratched face.

BEATRICE

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

BENEDICK

Well, you are a rare parrot-teacher.

BEATRICE

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

BENEDICK

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

BEATRICE

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

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Much Ado About Nothing

Benedick, Claudio, Don Pedro; Act I Scene 2

DON PEDRO

What secret hath held you here, that you followed not to Leonato's?

BENEDICK

I would your grace would constrain me to tell.

DON PEDRO

I charge thee on thy allegiance.

BENEDICK

He is in love. With who? now that is your grace's part. Mark how short his answer is;--With Hero, Leonato's short daughter.

CLAUDIO

If this were so, so were it uttered.

BENEDICK

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

DON PEDRO

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

CLAUDIO

You speak this to fetch me in, my lord.

DON PEDRO

By my troth, I speak my thought.

CLAUDIO

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

BENEDICK

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

CLAUDIO

That I love her, I feel.

DON PEDRO

That she is worthy, I know.

BENEDICK

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

DON PEDRO

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

CLAUDIO

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

BENEDICK

That a woman conceived me, I thank her; that she brought me up, I likewise give her most humble thanks: but 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, I will live a bachelor.

DON PEDRO

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

BENEDICK

With anger, with sickness, or with hunger, my lord,

not with love.

DON PEDRO

Well, as time shall try: 'In time the savage bull
doth bear the yoke.'

BENEDICK

The savage bull may; but if ever the sensible
Benedick bear it, pluck off the bull's horns and set
them in my forehead: and let me be vilely painted,
'Here you may see Benedick the married man.'

CLAUDIO

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

BENEDICK

Ere you flout old ends any further, examine your
conscience: and so I leave you.

CLAUDIO

My liege, your highness now may do me good.

DON PEDRO

Dost thou affect fair Hero, Claudio?

CLAUDIO

O, my lord....

DON PEDRO

If thou dost love fair Hero, cherish it,
And I will break with her and with her father,
And thou shalt have her.

CLAUDIO

How sweetly you do minister to love,
That know love's grief by his complexion!

DON PEDRO

I know we shall have revelling to-night:
And the conclusion is, she shall be thine.
In practise let us put it presently.

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Don John, Conrade; Act 1, scene 3

CONRADE

What the good-year, my lord! why are you thus out of measure sad?

DON JOHN

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

CONRADE

You should hear reason.

DON JOHN

And when I have heard it, what blessing brings it?

CONRADE

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

DON JOHN

I cannot hide what I am: I must be sad when I have cause and smile at no man's jests, eat when I have stomach and wait for no man's leisure, sleep when I am drowsy and tend on no man's business, laugh when I am merry and claw no man in his humour.

CONRADE

Yea, but you have of late stood out against your brother, and he hath ta'en you newly into his grace.

DON JOHN

I had rather be a canker in a hedge than a rose in his grace, and it better fits my blood to be disdained of all than to fashion a carriage to rob love from any: it must not be denied but I am a plain-dealing villain. If I had my mouth, I would bite; if I had my liberty, I would do my liking: in the meantime let me be that I am and

seek not to alter me.

CONRADE

I came yonder from a great supper: the prince your brother is royally entertained by Leonato: and I can give you intelligence of an intended marriage.

DON JOHN

Will it serve for any model to build mischief on? What is he for a fool that betroths himself to unquietness?

CONRADE

Marry, it is your brother's right hand.

DON JOHN

Who? the most exquisite Claudio?
And who, and who? which way looks he?

CONRADE

Marry, on Hero, the daughter and heir of Leonato.

DON JOHN

Come, come, let us thither: this may prove food to my displeasure. If I can cross him any way, I bless myself every way.

CONRADE

To the death, my lord.

DON JOHN

Let us to the great supper: Shall we go prove what's to be done?

CONRADE

We'll wait upon your lordship.

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Beatrice/Benedick, Act II Scene 1

BEATRICE

Will you not tell me who told you so?

BENEDICK

No, you shall pardon me.

BEATRICE

Nor will you not tell me who you are?

BENEDICK

Not now.

BEATRICE

That I was disdainful, and that I had my good wit out of the 'Hundred Merry Tales:'--well this was Signior Benedick that said so.

BENEDICK

What's he?

BEATRICE

I am sure you know him well enough.

BENEDICK

Not I, believe me.

BEATRICE

Did he never make you laugh?

BENEDICK

I pray you, what is he?

BEATRICE

Why, he is the prince's jester: a very dull fool;
only his gift is in devising impossible slanders:
none but libertines delight in him; and the
commendation is not in his wit, but in his villany;
for he both pleases men and angers them, and then
they laugh at him and beat him.

BENEDICK

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

BEATRICE

Do, do: he'll but break a comparison or two on me;
which, peradventure not marked or not laughed at,
strikes him into melancholy.
We must follow the leaders.

BENEDICK

In every good thing.

BEATRICE

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

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Beatrice, Don Pedro, Claudio; Act II Scene 1

DON PEDRO

Come, lady, come; you have lost the heart of Signior Benedick.

BEATRICE

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

DON PEDRO

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

BEATRICE

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

DON PEDRO

Why, how now, count! wherefore are you sad?

CLAUDIO

Not sad, my lord.

DON PEDRO

How then? sick?

CLAUDIO

Neither, my lord.

BEATRICE

The count is neither sad, nor sick, nor merry, nor well; but civil count, civil as an orange, and something of that jealous complexion.

DON PEDRO

I' faith, lady, I think your blazon to be true;

Here, Claudio, I have wooed in thy name, and
fair Hero is won: name the day of
marriage, and God give thee joy!

BEATRICE

Speak, count, 'tis your cue.

CLAUDIO

Silence is the perfectest herald of joy: I were
but little happy, if I could say how much.

DON PEDRO

In faith, lady, you have a merry heart.

BEATRICE

Yea, my lord; I thank it, poor fool, it keeps on
the windy side of care.
Good Lord, for alliance! Thus goes every one to the
world but I, and I may sit in a
corner and cry heigh-ho for a husband!

DON PEDRO

Lady Beatrice, I will get you one.

BEATRICE

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

DON PEDRO

Will you have me, lady?

BEATRICE

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

DON PEDRO

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

BEATRICE

No, sure, my lord, my mother cried; but then there
was a star danced, and under that was I born.
Cousins, God give you joy!

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Beatrice/Benedick, Act IV, Scene 1

BENEDICK

Lady Beatrice, have you wept all this while?

BEATRICE

Yea, and I will weep a while longer.

BENEDICK

I will not desire that.

BEATRICE

You have no reason; I do it freely.

BENEDICK

Surely I do believe your fair cousin is wronged.

BEATRICE

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

BENEDICK

Is there any way to show such friendship?

BEATRICE

A very even way, but no such friend.

BENEDICK

May a man do it?

BEATRICE

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

BENEDICK

I do love nothing in the world so well as you: is

not that strange?

BEATRICE

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

BENEDICK

By my sword, Beatrice, thou lovest me.

BEATRICE

Do not swear, and eat it.

BENEDICK

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

BEATRICE

Will you not eat your word?

BENEDICK

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

BEATRICE

Why, then, God forgive me!

BENEDICK

What offence, sweet Beatrice?

BEATRICE

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

BENEDICK

And do it with all thy heart.

BEATRICE

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

BENEDICK

Come, bid me do any thing for thee.

BEATRICE

Kill Claudio.

BENEDICK

Ha! not for the wide world.

BEATRICE

You kill me to deny it. Farewell.

BENEDICK

Tarry, sweet Beatrice.

BEATRICE

I am gone, though I am here: there is no love in you: nay, I pray you, let me go.

BENEDICK

Beatrice,--

BEATRICE

In faith, I will go.

BENEDICK

We'll be friends first.

BEATRICE

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

BENEDICK

Is Claudio thine enemy?

BEATRICE

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

BENEDICK

Hear me, Beatrice,--

BEATRICE

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

BENEDICK

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

BEATRICE

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

BENEDICK

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

BEATRICE

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

BENEDICK

Enough, I am engaged; I will challenge him. I will kiss your hand, and so I leave you. By this hand, Claudio shall render me a dear account. As you hear of me, so think of me. Go, comfort your cousin: I must say she is dead: and so, farewell.