



SHAKESPEARERIENCE!

MUCH ADO ABOUT NOTHING

Original Edit by Trish Tillman, 2013

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CHARACTER LIST

1. BEATRICE
2. HERO
3. MARGARET (double with Borachio)
4. BENEDICK
5. CLAUDIO
6. DON PEDRO
7. LEONATO
8. FRIAR FRANCIS (double with Dogberry)
9. DON JOHN
10. BORACHIO
11. CONRADE
12. DOGBERRY
13. VERGES

SCENE LIST

1. *BATTLE - Arrival at Messina; B&B meet again
2. Claudio tells Benedick and Don Pedro of his love for Hero
3. Don John plot against Claudio
4. Don Pedro plot to get B&B in love
5. Benedick gulled
6. Beatrice gulled
7. Don John tells of Hero's disgrace
8. Dogberry gives instructions and hears of DJ plot
9. Non-wedding - Hero's disgrace
10. Dogberry interrogation of Borachio and Conrade
11. B&B confess love
12. Dogberry brings prisoners to confess plot to Leonato
13. Two weddings

SCENE 1

***BROADSWORD BATTLE**

Champions of the final segment of fights call out "To Messina!", "To the house of Signior Leonato!"

[Messina, Leonato's house: Enter F.FRANCIS, LEONATO, HERO, MARGARET, and BEATRICE.]

LEONATO

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

BEATRICE

I pray you, is Signior Mountanto return'd from the wars, or no?

FRIAR FRANCIS

I know none of that name, Lady.

LEONATO

What is he that you ask for, niece?

HERO

My cousin means Signior Benedick of Padua

FRIAR FRANCIS

He hath done good service, Lady, in these wars.

LEONATO

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.

BEATRICE

Who is his companion now? He hath every month a new sworn brother.

FRIAR FRANCIS

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

BEATRICE

O Lord, he will hang upon him like a disease: if he have caught the Benedick, it will cost him a thousand pound ere a' be cured.

[Enter DON PEDRO, DON JOHN, BORACHIO, CLAUDIO, BENEDICK.]

DON PEDRO

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

LEONATO.

Never came trouble to my house in the likeness of your Grace.

DON PEDRO

I think this is your daughter.

LEONATO.

Her mother hath many times told me so.

BENEDICK

Were you in doubt that you ask'd her?

BEATRICE

I wonder that you will 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?

BENEDICK

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, I thank God and my cold blood, I am of your humor 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 scratch'd face.

BEATRICE

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

BENEDICK

I would my horse had the speed of your tongue. 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.

DON 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.

LEONATO.

[*To Don John.*] Let me bid you welcome, my Lord, being reconciled to the Prince your brother: I owe you all duty.

DON JOHN.

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

LEONATO

Please it your grace lead on?

DON PEDRO

Your hand, Leonato, we will go together.

[Exeunt all but BENEDICK and CLAUDIO.]

Scene 2

CLAUDIO

Benedick, didst thou note the daughter of Signior Leonato?
In mine eye, she is the sweetest Lady that ever I look'd on.

BENEDICK

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

CLAUDIO

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

BENEDICK

Is't come to this? Shall I never see a bachelor of three score again? Go to, i'faith,

[Re-enter DON PEDRO]

DON PEDRO

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

BENEDICK

He is in love. With who? With Hero, Leonato's short daughter.

DON PEDRO

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

BENEDICK

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

[Exeunt.]

DON PEDRO

If thou dost love fair Hero, cherish it,
And I will break with her and with her father,
And the conclusion is, she shall be thine.

[Exeunt]

Scene 3

[DON JOHN, CONRAD then BORACHIO.]

CONRAD

Why are you thus out of measure sad?
You should hear reason.

DON JOHN

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

CONRAD

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, laugh when I am merry and
claw no man in his humour.

CONRAD

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

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. In this, 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.

CONRAD

Can you make no use of your discontent?

DON JOHN

Who comes here? *(enter Borachio)*
What news Borachio?

BORACHIO

I came yonder from a great supper: and I can give you intelligence of an intended marriage.

DON JOHN

Will it serve for any model to build mischief on?

BORACHIO

Marry, it is your brother's right hand.

DON JOHN

Who? the most exquisite Claudio?

BORACHIO

Even he.

DON JOHN

And who, and who? which way looks he?

BORACHIO

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

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

DON JOHN

I remember. What life is in that, to be the death of this marriage?

BORACHIO

Find me a meet hour to draw Don Pedro and the Count Claudio alone: tell them that you know that Hero loves me. Offer them instances; which shall bear no less likelihood than to see me at her chamber-window; and bring them to see this the very night before the intended wedding.

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. You are both sure, and will assist me?

CONRAD

To the death, my lord.

DON JOHN

Let us to the great supper: *(exit Conrad)*

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.

SCENE 4

[Enter DON PEDRO, LEONATO, CLAUDIO, BEATRICE, AND HERO]

DON PEDRO

Name the day of marriage, and God give thee joy!

LEONATO

Count, take of me my daughter, and with her my fortunes.

CLAUDIO

Lady, as you are mine, I am yours.

BEATRICE

Speak, cousin, or if you cannot, stop his mouth with a kiss, and let not him speak neither.
Cousins, God give you joy!

DON PEDRO

In faith, lady, you have a merry heart.

BEATRICE

Yea, my lord; 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...
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!

(Exit)

DON PEDRO

By my troth, a pleasant-spirited lady.
She were an excellent wife for Benedick.

LEONATO

O Lord, my lord, if they were but a week married, they would talk themselves mad.

DON PEDRO

I will undertake to bring Signior Benedick and the Lady Beatrice into a mountain of affection, if you will but minister such assistance as I shall give you direction.

LEONATO

My lord, I am for you.

CLAUDIO

And I, my lord.

HERO

I will do any office to help my cousin to a good husband.

[Exeunt]

SCENE 5

[Leonato's orchard.]

[Enter BENEDICK alone.]

[Enter DON PEDRO, CLAUDIO, LEONATO.]

DON PEDRO

Come thither, Leonato. What was it you told me of to-day, that your niece Beatrice was in love with Signior Benedick?

CLAUDIO

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

LEONATO

No, nor I neither.

BENEDICK

Is't possible? Sits the wind in that corner?

DON PEDRO

Why, what effects of passion shows she?

CLAUDIO

Down upon her knees she falls, weeps, sobs, beats her heart, tears her hair, prays, curses; "O sweet Benedick! God give me patience!"

LEONATO

She doth indeed; my daughter says so.

DON PEDRO

It were good that Benedick knew of it.

CLAUDIO

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

DON PEDRO

Well, we will hear further of it by you daughter: let it cool the while.

LEONATO

My lord, will you walk? Dinner is ready.

[Exeunt]

BENEDICK

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 their full bent.

Love me! Why, it must be requited.

I hear how I am censured: they say I will bear myself proudly, if I perceive the love come from her; they say too that she will rather die than give any sign of affection.

I did never think to marry: I must not seem proud:

They say the lady is fair; 'tis a truth, I can bear them witness;

and virtuous; 'tis so, I cannot reprove it;

and wise, but for loving me; by my troth, it is no addition to her wit, nor no great argument of her folly, for I will be horribly in love with her!

I may chance have some odd quirks and remnants of wit broken on me, because I have railed so long against marriage: but doth not the appetite alter?

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

[Enter BEATRICE.]

Here comes Beatrice. By this day! She's a fair lady. I do spy some marks of love in her.

BEATRICE

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

BENEDICK

Fair Beatrice, I thank you for your pains.

BEATRICE

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

[Exit BEATRICE.]

BENEDICK

Ha! "Against my will I am sent to bid you come in to dinner,"- there's a double meaning in that.

[Exit.]

SCENE 6

[Messina. Leonato's orchard.]

[Enter HERO, MARGARET.]

HERO

Now, Margaret, when Beatrice doth come,
Our talk must only be of Benedick.
To praise him more than ever man did merit.

[Enter BEATRICE behind.]

MARGARET

But are you sure that Benedick loves Beatrice so entirely?

HERO

So says the prince and my new-trothed lord.

MARGARET

And did they bid you tell her of it, madam?

HERO

O god of love!
Nature never framed a woman's heart
Of prouder stuff than that of Beatrice.

MARGARET

Sure, I think so;
And therefore certainly it were not good
She knew his love, lest she make sport at it.

HERO

Why, you speak truth. I never yet saw man,
How wise, how noble, but she would spell him backward.

MARGARET

She cannot be so much without true judgment
As to refuse so rare a gentleman as Signior Benedick.

HERO

Come, go in:
I'll show thee some attires; and have thy counsel
Which is the best to furnish me to-morrow.

MARGARET

I warrant you: we have caught her, madam.

[EXIT HERO, MARGARET]

BEATRICE

What fire is in mine 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 a holy band;
For others say thou dost deserve, and I
Believe it better than reportingly.

[Exit.]

SCENE 7

[A room in Leonato's house.]

[Enter DON PEDRO, CLAUDIO, BENEDICK.]

BENEDICK
Gallants, I am not as I have been.

LEONATO
So say I methinks you are sadder.

BENEDICK
I have the toothache.

[Exit]

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

[Enter DON JOHN]

DON JOHN
My lord and brother, God save you!

DON PEDRO
Good den, brother.

DON JOHN
If your leisure served, I would speak with you.

DON PEDRO
In private?

DON JOHN
If it please you: yet Count Claudio may hear: for what I would speak of concerns him.

DON PEDRO
What's the matter?

DON JOHN
[To Claudio.] Means your lordship to be married to-morrow?

DON PEDRO
You know he does.

DON JOHN
I know not that, when he knows what I know.

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

DON JOHN
I came hither to tell you; and, circumstances shorten'd, the lady is disloyal.

CLAUDIO
Who, Hero?

DON JOHN
Even she.

CLAUDIO
Disloyal!

DON JOHN
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.

CLAUDIO
May this be so?

DON PEDRO
I will not think it.

CLAUDIO
If I see anything to-night why I should not marry her to-morrow, in the congregation, where I should wed her, there will I shame her.

DON JOHN
I will disparage her no further till you are my witnesses: bear it coldly but till midnight, and let the issue show itself

[*Exeunt.*]

SCENE 8

[Enter DOGBERRY and VERGES.]

DOGBERRY

You are thought here to be the most senseless and fit men for the constable of the watch. This is your charge: you are to bid any man stand, in the prince's name.

VERGES

How if a' will not stand?

DOGBERRY

Why, then, take no note of him, but let him go; and thank God you are rid of a knave.

VERGES

If he will not stand when he is bidden, he is none of the prince's subjects.

DOGBERRY

True, and they are to meddle with none but the prince's subjects. You shall also make no noise in the streets; for, for the watch to babble and to talk is most tolerable and not to be endured.

VERGES

We will rather sleep than talk: we know what belongs to a watch.

DOGBERRY

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 ale-houses, and bid those that are drunk get them to bed.

VERGES

How if they will not?

DOGBERRY

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.

VERGES

Well, sir.

DOGBERRY

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.

VERGES

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

DOGBERRY

Truly, by your office, you may; but I think they that touch pitch will be defiled: the most peaceable way for you is to let him steal out of your company.

VERGES

You have been always called a merciful man, partner.

DOGBERRY

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

[Enter BORACHIO and CONRAD]

BORACHIO

What, Conrad?

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

VERGES.

[To Dogberry.] Some treason, yet stand close.

BORACHIO

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

CONRAD

Is it possible that any villany should be so dear?

DOGBERRY

I know that deformed, a has bin a vile thief, this seven years, a goes up and down like a gentleman: I remember his name.

BORACHIO

Did'st thou not hear somebody?

CONRAD

No, 'twas the vane on the house.

BORACHIO

Know that I have tonight wooed Margaret the Lady Hero's gentle-woman, by the name of Hero.

CONRAD

And thought they Margaret was Hero?

BORACHIO

Two of them did, the Prince and Claudio, but the devil my Master knew she was Margaret and away went Claudio enraged, swore he would meet her as he was appointed next morning at the Temple, and there, before the whole congregation shame her with what he saw o'er night, and send her home again without a husband.

VERGES

We charge you in the Prince's name, stand.

DOGBERRY

We have here recovered the most dangerous piece of lechery that ever was known in the commonwealth.

CONRAD

Masters, masters,--

DOGBERRY

Never speak: we charge you let us obey you to go with us.

CONRAD

Come, we'll obey you.

[*Exeunt.*]

SCENE 9

[Messina. A church.]

[Enter DON PEDRO, DON JOHN, LEONATO, FRIAR FRANCIS, CLAUDIO, BENEDICK, HERO, BEATRICE.]

LEONATO

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

FRIAR FRANCIS

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

CLAUDIO

No.

LEONATO

To be married to her: friar, you come to marry her.

FRIAR FRANCIS

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

HERO

I do.

FRIAR FRANCIS

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

CLAUDIO

Stand thee by, friar. Father, by your leave. *[To LEONATO]* Will you with free and unconstrained soul, give me this maid, your daughter?

LEONATO

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

CLAUDIO

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

DON PEDRO

Nothing, unless you render her again.

CLAUDIO

Sweet prince, you learn me noble thankfulness.-
There, Leonato, take her back again:
Give not this rotten orange to your friend;
She's but the sign and semblance of her honour.

LEONATO

What do you mean, my lord?

CLAUDIO

Not to be married,
Not to knit my soul to an approved wanton.

HERO

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

CLAUDIO

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

HERO

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

DON PEDRO

Leonato,
I am sorry you must hear: upon mine honour,
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, confess'd the vile encounters they have had
A thousand times in secret.

CLAUDIO

O Hero! what a Hero hadst thou been!
But fare thee well, most foul, most fair! Farewell.

[Hero faints.]

DON JOHN

Come, let us go.

[Exeunt DON PEDRO, DON JOHN, CLAUDIO.]

BENEDICK

How doth the lady?

BEATRICE

Dead, I think: help, uncle -
Hero! Why, Hero! Uncle! Signior Benedick! Friar!
How now, cousin Hero!

FRIAR FRANCIS

There is some strange misprision in the princes.

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

LEONATO

What shall become of this? What will this do?

FRIAR FRANCIS

Marry, this, well carried, shall on her behalf
Change slander to remorse.

BENEDICK

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.

FRIAR FRANCIS

'Tis well consented: presently away;
Come, lady, die to live: this wedding-day
Perhaps is but prolong'd: have patience and endure.

[Exeunt]

SCENE 10

[A prison.]

[Enter DOGBERRY, VERGES, with CONRADE and BORACHIO]

DOGBERRY

Is our whole dissembly appeared? *[To BORACHIO]* What is your name, friend?

BORACHIO

Borachio.

DOGBERRY

[To VERGES] Pray, write down, Borachio. *[To CONRAD]* Yours, sirrah?

CONRAD

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

DOGBERRY

Write down, master gentleman Conrad. Master, I charge you, in the prince's name, accuse these men.

VERGES

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

DOGBERRY

Write down Prince John a villain. Why, this is flat perjury, to call a prince's brother villain. What heard you him say else?

VERGES

Marry, that he had received a thousand ducats of Don John for accusing the Lady Hero wrongfully. And that Count Claudio did mean, upon his words, to disgrace Hero before the whole assembly, and not marry her.

DOGBERRY

O villain! thou wilt be condemned into everlasting redemption for this.

BORACHIO

Master constable,--

DOGBERRY

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

VERGES

And this is more, master, than you can deny. Prince John is this morning secretly stolen away; Hero was in this manner accused, and upon the grief of this suddenly died. Let these men be bound, and brought to Leonato's: I will go before and show him their examination.

[Exit]

DOGBERRY

Come, let them be opinioned.

CONRAD

Off, coxcomb!

DOGBERRY

Write down the prince's officer coxcomb. Come, bind them.
Thou naughty varlet!

BORACHIO

Away! You are an ass.

DOGBERRY

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

[Exeunt]

SCENE 11

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 wrong'd.

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

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 lov'st me.

BEATRICE

Do not swear by it 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

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, 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

Nay, but Beatrice.

BEATRICE

Sweet Hero, she is wrong'd, she is slandered, she is undone.

BENEDICK

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

BEATRICE

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

BENEDICK

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 a dear account: as you hear of me, so think of me.

[*Exeunt.*]

SCENE 12

[Enter DON PEDRO and CLAUDIO, DOGBERRY, LEONATO, VERGES, Watchman, CONRAD, and BORACHIO.]

DOGBERRY

Come, you, sir: if justice cannot tame you, she shall ne'er weigh more reasons in her balance.

DON PEDRO

How now! two of my brother's men bound! Borachio! Officers, what offences have these men done?

DOGBERRY

Marry sir, they have committed false report, moreover they have spoken untruths, secondarily they are slanders, sixth and lastly, they have belied a Lady, thirdly, they have verified unjust things, and to conclude they are lying knaves.

DON PEDRO

Who 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?

BORACHIO

Sweet prince, I have deceived even your very eyes. This shallow fool has, in the night, overheard me confessing to him, how Don John your brother incensed me to slander the Lady Hero; how you were brought into the orchard, and saw me court Margaret in Hero's garments; how you disgraced her, when you should marry her. I desire nothing but the reward of a villain.

DON PEDRO

But did my brother set thee on to this?

CONRAD

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

CLAUDIO

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

(to LEONATO)

I know not how to pray your patience,
Impose me to what penance your invention
Can lay upon my sin: yet sinn'd I not
But in mistaking.

LEONATO

I cannot bid you bid my daughter live,
That were impossible; but, I pray you both,
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,

Give her the right you should have given her cousin,
And so dies my revenge.

CLAUDIO
O noble sir,
Your over-kindness doth wring tears from me!
I do embrace your offer.

DOGBERRY
Moreover, sir, this offender here, did call me ass: I beseech you, let it be remembered in his punishment.

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

DOGBERRY
I leave an arrant knave with your worship. I wish your worship well; God restore you to health! I humbly give you leave to depart; and if a merry meeting may be wished, God prohibit it! Come, neighbours.

[Exeunt DOGBERRY, Watchman, and VERGES]

LEONATO
Until to-morrow morning, lords, farewell.

DON PEDRO.
We will not fail.

[Exit]

SCENE 13

[A room in Leonato's house.]

[Enter LEONATO, BENEDICK, and FRIAR FRANCIS, BEATRICE, MARGARET, and HERO wearing masks.]

FRIAR FRANCIS

Did I not tell you she was innocent?

LEONATO

So are the Prince and Claudio, who accus'd her.

[Enter DON PEDRO, and CLAUDIO.]

DON PEDRO

Good morrow to this fair assembly.

LEONATO

Good morrow, prince; good morrow, Claudio:

We here attend you. Are you yet determined

To-day to marry with my brother's daughter?

CLAUDIO

I'll hold my mind. Which is the lady I must seize upon?

LEONATO

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

CLAUDIO

Why, then she's mine. Sweet, let me see your face.

LEONATO

No, that you shall not, till you take her hand

Before this friar, and swear to marry her.

CLAUDIO

Give me your hand before this holy friar:

I am your husband, if you like of me.

HERO

[Unmasking.] And when I lived, I was your other wife:

And when you loved, you were my other husband.

CLAUDIO

Another Hero!

HERO

Nothing certainer:

One Hero died defiled; but I do live,
And surely as I live, I am a maid.

LEONATO

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

FRIAR

All this amazement can I qualify,
When after that the holy rites are ended,
I'll tell you largely of fair Hero's death.

BENEDICK

Soft and fair Friar, which is Beatrice?

BEATRICE

[*Unmasking.*] I answer to that name, what is your will?

BENEDICK

Do not you love me?

BEATRICE

Why no, no more then reason.

BENEDICK

Why then your Uncle, and the Prince, & Claudio, have been deceived, they swore you did.

BEATRICE

Do not you love me?

BENEDICK

Troth no, no more then reason.

BEATRICE

Why then my cousin, Margaret, and Ursula
Are much deceiv'd, for they did swear you did.

BENEDICK

They swore you were almost sick for me.

BEATRICE

They swore you were well-nigh dead for me.

BENEDICK

'Tis no such matter. Then you do not love me?

BEATRICE

No, truly, but in friendly recompense.

LEONATO

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

CLAUDIO

And I'll be sworn upon't that he loves her;
For here's a paper written in his hand,
A halting sonnet of his own pure brain,
Fashion'd to Beatrice.

HERO

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

BENEDICK

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

BEATRICE

I would not deny you, but by this good day, I yield upon great persuasion, & partly to save your life, for I was told, you were in a consumption.

BENEDICK

Come, come, we are friends, let's have a dance ere we are married. Prince, thou art sad, get thee a wife, get thee a wife!

ENSEMBLE EPILOGUE SOLILOQUY

Sigh no more ladies, sigh no more,
Men were deceivers ever,
One foot in sea and one on shore,
To one thing constant never.
Then sigh not so, but let them go,
And be you blithe and bonny,
Converting all your sound of woe

Into HEY, NONNY NONNY!

HUZZAH!!!!