

## 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 conversed with me  
At hours unmeet, or that I yesternight  
Maintained the change of words with any creature,  
Refuse me, hate me, torture me to death!

Side for Friar

Hear me a little.

For I have only been silent so long,

And given way unto this course of fortune

By noting of the lady. I have marked

A thousand blushing apparitions

To start into her face, a thousand innocent shames

In angel whiteness beat away those blushes.

And in her eye there hath appeared a fire

To burn the errors that these princes hold a

Against her maiden truth. Call me a fool,

Trust not my reading, nor my observations

...if this sweet lady lie not guiltless here

Under some biting error.

Side for Hero and Ursula

Ursula: But are you sure that Benedick loves Beatrice so entirely?

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

Ursula: And did they bid you tell her of it, Madame?

Hero: They did entreat me to acquaint her of it, But I persuaded them, if they loved Benedick,  
To wish him wrestle with affection, And never to let Beatrice know of it.

Ursula: Why did you so? Doth not the gentleman deserve 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 yielded to a man; But nature  
never framed woman's heart of prouder stuff than that of Beatrice. Disdain and scorn ride  
sparkling in her eyes misprising what they look on and her wit values itself so highly that to her  
all matter else seems weak. She cannot love...She is so self endeared.

Ursula: Sure I think so. And therefore certainly it were not good she knew his love, lest she'll  
make sport at it.

Hero: why you speak truth. I never yet saw man,  
How wise, how noble, how rarely featured,  
But she would spell him backward. If fair-faced,  
She would swear the gentleman should be her sister.  
If speaking, why, a vane blown with all winds.  
If silent, why, a block moved with none.

Ursula: Sure, sure. Such carping is not commendable.

## Side for 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 would rather die than give any sign of her 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 wise, but for loving me. By my troth it is no addition to her wisdom 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 upon me because I have railed so long against marriage: but does not the appetite alter? A man loves the meat in his youth that he cannot endure in his age. Shall quips and sentences and these paper bullets of the brain awe a man from the career of his humor? No, the world must be peopled. When I said that I would die a bachelor, I did not think I would live until I were married. Here comes Beatrice. By this day, she's a fair lady. I do spy some marks of love in her.

Side for Beatrice and Benedick

Beatrice: Surely a princely testimony, a goodly count, 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 courtesies, valor into compliment, and men are only turned into tongue, and trim ones too. He is now as valiant as Hercules that only tells a lie and swears it. I cannot be a man with wishing, therefore I will die a woman with grieving.

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

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

Side for Beatrice and Benedick

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 has 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 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 scratched 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 and so good a continuer. But keep your way, in God's name, I have done.

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

### Side for 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 everything handsome about him.

### Side for Dogberry and the Watch

Dogberry: Are you good men and true?

Watch 3: Yea, or else it were pity but they should suffer salvation, body and soul.

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

Watch 3: Well, give them their charge, neighbor Dogberry.

Dogberry: First, who think you the most desert-less man to be constable?

Watch 1: Hugh Oatcake, sir, or George Seacole, for they can write and read.

Dogberry: Come hither, neighbor Seacole. God hath blessed you with a good name. To be a well-favored man is the gift of fortune, but to write and read comes by nature.

Watch2: Both of which Master Constable —

Dogberry: You have: I knew it would be your answer, 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 lantern. This is your charge: you shall comprehend all vagrant men; you are to bid any man stand, in the Prince's name.

Watch 2: How if he will not stand?

Dogberry: 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.

Watch 3: 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 talk is most tolerable, and not to be endured.

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



Side for Claudio, Don Pedro, Leonato

Claudio: And what have it to give you back whose worth

May counterpoise this rich and precious gift?

Don Pedro: Nothing, unless you render her again.

Claudio: Sweet prince, you learn me noble thankfulness./ There, Leonato, take her back again./  
Give not this rotten orange to your friend,/ She's but the sign and semblance of her honor./  
Behold how like a maid she blushes there!/ O, what authority and show of truth/ Can cunning  
sin cover itself withal!/ ...Would you not swear/ All you that see her, that she were a maid,/ By  
these exterior shows? But she is none:/ She knows the heat of a luxurious bed;/ Her blush is  
guiltiness, not modesty.

Leonato: What do you mean, my lord?

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

Leonato: Dear my lord, if you in your own proof,  
Have vanquished the resistance of her youth,  
And made defeat of her virginity —

Claudio: I know what you would say. If I have known her,  
You will say, she did embrace me as a husband,  
And so extenuate the sin.  
No, Leonato, I never tempted her with word too large,  
But as a brother to his sister, showed  
Bashful sincerity and comely love.

Side for Leonato

I know not. If they speak but truth of her,  
These hands shall tear her; if they wrong her honor,  
The proudest of them shall well hear of it.  
Time hath not yet so dried this blood of mine,  
Nor age so eat up my invention,  
Nor fortune made such havoc of my means,  
But they shall find, awaked in such a kind  
Both strength of limb, and policy of mind,  
Ability in means and choice of friends,  
To quit me of them thoroughly.

Side for Claudio, Don Pedro, Leonato

Don Pedro: It were good that Benedick knew of it by some other, if she will not discover it.

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

Don Pedro: if he should it were an alms to hang him. She is an excellent sweet lady, and (out of all suspicion) she is virtuous.

Claudio: And she is exceeding wise.

Don Pedro: In everything but in loving Benedick.

Leonato: O my lord, wisdom and blood combatting in so tender a body, we have ten proofs to one that blood hath the victory. I am sorry for her.

Don Pedro: I would she had bestowed this dotage on me. I would have doffed all other respects and made her half myself.

Claudio: Hero thinks she will surely 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 accustom'd crossness.

Don 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.

Claudio: He is a very proper man.

Don Pedro: He hath indeed a good outward happiness.

Claudio: Before God and in my mind, very wise.

Don Pedro: He doth indeed show some sparks that are like wit.

Claudio: And I take him to be valiant.

Don Pedro: As Hector, I assure you, and in the managing of quarrels you may say he is wise, for either he avoids them with great discretion, or undertakes them with a most Christian-like fear.

Leonato: If he do fear God, he must necessarily keep the peace; if he break the peace, he ought to enter into a quarrel with fear and trembling.

Side for Don John and Conrade

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; laugh when I am merry and claw no man in his humor.

Conrade: 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 taken you newly into his grace, where it is impossible you should take root but by the fair weather you make for 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 (though I cannot be said to be a flattering honest man) it must not be denied that I am a plain-dealing villain. I am trusted with a muzzle and enfranchised with a clog, therefore I have decreed not to sing in my cage.

