

VI.
MUCH ADO ABOUT NOTHING.

PERSONS REPRESENTED.

<p>DON PEDRO, <i>Prince of Arragon.</i> DON JOHN, <i>his bastard Brother.</i> CLAUDIO, <i>a young Lord of Florence, Favourite to Don Pedro.</i> BENEDICK, <i>a young Lord of Padua, Favourite likewise of Don Pedro.</i> LEONATO, <i>Governor of Messina.</i> ANTONIO, <i>his Brother.</i> BALTHAZAR, <i>Servant to Don Pedro.</i> BORACHIO, } <i>Followers of Don John.</i> CONRADE, }</p>	<p>DOGBERRY, } <i>two foolish Officers.</i> VERGES, } A Sexton. A Friar. A Boy. HERO, <i>Daughter to Leonato.</i> BEATRICE, <i>Niece to Leonato.</i> MARGARET, } <i>Gentlewomen attending on Hero.</i> URSULA, } Messengers, Watch, and Attendants.</p>
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SCENE — Messina.

ACT I.

SCENE I. *Before Leonato's House.*

Enter LEONATO, HERO, BEATRICE, and others, 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 achiever brings home full numbers. I find here, that Don Pedro hath bestowed much honour on a young Florentine, called Claudio.

Mess. Much deserved on his part, and equally remembered 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 bettered 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.

Mess. I have already delivered him letters, and there appears much joy in him; even so much, that joy could not show 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 washed. 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? ¹⁾

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 is returned, and as pleasant as ever he was.

Beat. He set up his bills here in Messina, ²⁾ and challenged Cupid at the flight: ³⁾ and my uncle's fool, reading the challenge, subscribed for Cupid, and challenged him at the bird-bolt. ⁴⁾ — I pray you, how many hath he killed and eaten in these wars? But how many hath he killed? for, indeed, I promised to eat all of his killing.

Leon. Faith, niece, you tax signior Benedick too much; but he'll be meet with you, ⁵⁾ I doubt it not.

Mess. He hath done good service, lady, in these wars.

Beat. You had musty victual, and he hath help to eat it: he is 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; stuffed with all honourable virtues.

Beat. It is so, indeed: he is no less than a stuffed man: but for the stuffing, — 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 is a skirmish of wit between them.

Beat. Alas, he gets nothing by that. In our last conflict, four of his five wits went halting off, and now is the whole man governed 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.

Mess. 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.

Mess. I see, lady, the gentleman is not in your books.

Beat. No, an he were, I would burn my study. But, I pray you, who is his companion? Is there

no young squarer ⁶⁾ now, that will make a voyage with him to the devil?

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

Beat. O Lord! he will 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 he be cured.

Mess. I will hold friends with you, lady.

Beat. Do, good friend.

Leon. You will never run mad, niece.

Beat. No, not till a hot January.

Mess. Don Pedro is approached.

Enter DON PEDRO, attended by BALTHAZAR and others, DON JOHN, CLAUDIO, and BENEDICK.

D. Pedro. Good signior Leonato, you are come to meet your trouble: the fashion of the world is to avoid cost, 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.

D. Pedro. You embrace your charge too willingly. — I think, this is your daughter.

Leon. Her mother hath many times told me so.

Bene. Were you in doubt, sir, that you asked her?

Leon. Signior Benedick, no; for then were you a child.

D. Pedro. You have it full, Benedick: we may guess by this what you are, being a man. Truly, the lady fathers herself: — ⁷⁾ Be happy, lady! for you are 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 she hath such meet food to feed it, as signior Benedick? Courtesy itself must convert to disdain, if you come in her presence.

Bene. Then is courtesy a turn-coat: — 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.

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 scratched face.

Beat. Scratching could not make it worse, an '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 o' God's name! I have done.

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

D. 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.

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.

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

Leon. Please it your grace lead on?

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

[Exeunt all but BENEDICK and CLAUDIO.]
Claud. Benedick, didst thou note the daughter of signior Leonato?

Bene. I noted her not; But I looked 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 pray thee, speak in sober judgment.

Bene. Why, i'faith methinks she is too low for a high praise, too brown for a fair praise, and too 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 thinkest, I am in sport; I pray thee, tell me truly how thou likest her.

Bene. Would you buy her, that you inquire 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; ⁸⁾ to tell us Cupid is a good harefinder, 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 ever I looked on.

Bene. I can see yet without spectacles, and I see no such matter: there's her cousin, an she were not possessed 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?

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

Bene. Is it come to this, i'faith? Hath not the world one man, but he will wear his cap with suspicion? ⁹⁾ Shall I never see a bachelor of three-score again? Go to, i'faith; and thou wilt needs thrust thy neck into a yoke, wear the print of it, and sigh away Sundays. Look, Don Pedro is returned to seek you.

Re-enter DON PEDRO.

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

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

D. 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 who? — 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. ¹⁰⁾

Bene. Like the old tale, my lord: "it is not so, nor 'twas not so; but, indeed, God forbid it should be so." ¹¹⁾

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

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

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

D. 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 spoke mine.
Claud. That I love her, I feel.
D. 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.
D. Pedro. Thou wast ever an obstinate heretic in the despite 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 recheat winded in my forehead,¹²⁾ or hang my bugle in an invisible baldrick, 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 fine¹³⁾ is, (for the which I may go the finer,) I will live a bachelor.
D. 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 mine eyes with a ballad-maker's pen, and hang me up at the door of a brothel-house, for the sign of blind Cupid.
D. 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,¹⁴⁾ and shoot at me; and he that hits me, let him be clapped on the shoulder, and called Adam.¹⁵⁾
D. Pedro. Well, as time shall try:
*In time the savage bull doth bear the yoke.*¹⁶⁾
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 a good horse to hire*, let them signify under my sign, — *Here you may see Benedick the married man*.
Claud. If this should ever happen, thou would'st be horn-mad.
D. Pedro. Nay, if Cupid have not spent all his quiver in Venice, thou wilt quake for this shortly.
Bene. I look for an earthquake too then.
D. 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 embassage; and so I commit you. —
Claud. To the tuition of God: From my house, (if I had it) —
D. Pedro. The sixth of July: Your loving friend, Benedick.
Bene. Nay, mock not, mock not: The body of your discourse is sometime guarded with fragments,¹⁷⁾ and the guards are but slightly basted on neither: ere you flout old ends any further,¹⁸⁾ examine your conscience; and so I leave you. [Exit.]
Claud. My liege, your highness now may do me good.
D. 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?
D. Pedro. No child but Hero, she's his only heir: Dost 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 task 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.
D. 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 will break with her, and with her father,
 And thou shalt have 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 lest my liking might too sudden seem,
 I would have sav'd it with a longer treatise.
D. 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 lov'st;¹⁹⁾
 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. [Exit.]

SCENE II.

A Room in Leonato's House.

Enter LEONATO and ANTONIO.

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 strange news that you yet dreamed 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-pleached
 alley²⁰⁾ in my orchard, were thus much overheard
 by a man of mine: The prince discovered to Clau-
 dio, that he lov'd my niece your daughter, and
 meant to acknowledge it this night in a dance; and,
 if he found her accordant, he 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
 withal, that she may be the better prepared for an
 answer, if peradventure this be true. Go you, and
 tell her of it. [Several persons cross the stage.] Cousins,
 you know, what you have to do. — O, I cry
 you mercy, friend: you go with me, and I will use
 your skill: — Good cousins,²¹⁾ have a care this
 busy time. [Exit.]

SCENE III.

Another Room in Leonato's House

Enter DON JOHN and CONRADE.

Con. What the goujere,²²⁾ my lord! why are you
 thus out of measure sad?

VI.

ACT II.

SCENE I. A Hall in Leonato's House.

Enter LEONATO, ANTONIO, HERO, BEATRICE, and others.

Leon. Was not count John here at supper?
Ant. I saw him not.
Beat. How tartly that gentleman looks! I never
 can see him, but I am heart-burned 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 get
 her good will.
Leon. By my troth, niece, thou wilt never get thee
 a husband, if thou be so shrewd of thy tongue.
Ant. In faith, she is too curst.
Beat. Too curst is more than curst: I shall lessen
 God's sending that way: for it is said, *God sends
 a curst cow short horns*; but to a cow too curst
 he sends none.
Leon. So, by being too curst, God will send you
 no horns.
Beat. 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 lie
 in the woollen.¹⁾
Leon. You may light upon a husband, that hath
 no beard.

Enter BORACHIO.

Bora. I came yonder from a great supper; the
 prince, your brother, is royally entertained by Leo-
 nato; and I can give you intelligence of an intend-
 ed marriage.
D. John. Will it serve for any model to build
 mischief on? What is he for a fool, that betroths
 himself to unquietness?
Bora. Marry, it is your brother's right hand.
D. John. Who? the most exquisite Claudio?
Bora. Even he.
D. John. A proper squire! And who, and who?
 which way looks he?
Bora. Marry, on Hero, the daughter and heir of
 Leonato.
D. John. A very forward March-chick! How came
 you to this?
Bora. Being entertained for a perfumer, as I was
 smoking a musty room,²⁴⁾ comes me the prince and
 Claudio, hand in hand, in sad conference:²⁵⁾ I
 whipt me behind the arras; and there heard it
 agreed upon, that the prince should woo Hero for
 himself, and having obtained her, give her to count
 Claudio.
D. 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 bless myself every way: You are
 both sure, and will assist me?
Con. To the death, my lord.
D. 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. [Exit.]

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D. 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 rendered up this woe!

[*Exeunt.*]

SCENE IV.

A Room in Leonato's House.

Enter LEONATO, ANTONIO, BENEDICK, BEATRICE,
URSULA, Friar, and HERO.

Friar. Did I not tell you she was innocent?

Leon. So are the prince and Claudio, who accused her,

Upon the terror 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 sort so well.

Bene. And so am I, being else by faith enforc'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. [*Exeunt Ladies.*]

Ant. Which I will do with confirm'd countenance.

Bene. Friar, I must entreat 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
In the estate of honourable marriage; —
In which, good friar, I shall desire your help.

Leon. My heart is with your liking.

Friar. And my help.
Here comes the prince, and Claudio.

Enter Don PEDRO and CLAUDIO, with Attendants.

D. Pedro. Good morrow to this fair assembly.

Leon. Good morrow, prince; good morrow, Claudio;

We here attend you; Are you yet determined
To-day to marry with my brother's daughter?

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

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

[*Exit ANTONIO.*]

D. 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: —
Tush, fear not, man, we'll tip thy horns with gold,
And all Europa 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 bleat.

Re-enter ANTONIO, with the Ladies masked.

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

Which is the lady I must seize upon?

Ant. 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:

[*Unmasking.*]

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

Claud. Another Hero?

Hero. Nothing certainer:

One Hero died defil'd; but I do live,

And, surely, as I live, I am a maid.

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

Leon. 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:

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; [*unmasking*] What is your will?

Bene. Do not you love me?

Beat. ²⁴⁾ No, no more than reason.

Bene. Why, then your uncle, and the prince, and Claudio,

Have been deceived; for they swore you did.

Beat. Do not you love me?

Bene. No, no more than reason. ²⁵⁾

Beat. Why, then my cousin, Margaret, and Ursula,

Are much deceived; for they did swear, you did.

Bene. They swore that you were almost sick for me.

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

Bene. 'Tis no such matter: — Then, you do not love me?

Beat. No, truly, but in friendly recompense.

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

Claud. 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.

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

Bene. Peace, I will stop your mouth.

[*Kissing her.*]

D. 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 propose to marry, I will think nothing to any purpose that the world can say against it; and therefore never flout at me for what I have said against it; for man is a giddy thing, and this is my conclusion. — For thy part, Claudio, I did think to have beaten thee; but in that thou art like to be my kinsman, live unbruised, and love my cousin.

Claud. I had well hoped, thou wouldest have denied Beatrice, that I might have cudgelled 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 ere we are married, that we may lighten our own hearts, and our wives' heels.

Leon. We'll have dancing afterwards.

Bene. First, o' my word; therefore play, music. — Prince, thou art sad; get thee a wife, get thee a wife: there is no staff more reverend than one tipped with horn.

Enter a Messenger.

Mess. 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.*]