

BEATRICE & BENEDICT

Dialogues from Shakespeare's *Much Ado About Nothing* adapted for Seattle Opera's 2018 Performances of the Berlioz opera

In Seattle Opera's production of *Beatrice and Benedict*, supertitles will help audiences understand the words of the arias and ensembles. However, we will not project titles during the spoken dialogues; instead, the voices of the singers and actors will be amplified. Read this script to familiarize yourself with Shakespeare's rich text before you attend a performance!

The dialogues have been adapted from Shakespeare's *Much Ado About Nothing*. (Berlioz translated them into French for the original version of *Béatrice et Bénédict*, but we'll be performing them in the original English.) In this script, the numbers before arias and ensembles refer to the original order of musical numbers, printed in the score and in most recordings. The English singing translation used for Seattle Opera's production is by Amanda Holden, with text adapted from Shakespeare for the added musical numbers.

CAST (in order of vocal appearance)

LEONATO	actor
MESSENGER	actor
BEATRICE	mezzo soprano
HERO	soprano
DON PEDRO	bass
BENEDICT	tenor
DON JOHN	actor
CLAUDIO	baritone
BORACHIO	actor
SOMARONE	bass
MARGARET	actor
URSULA	contralto
FRIAR FRANCIS	actor

ACT I

OVERTURE

[Enter LEONATO, a MESSENGER, HERO, BEATRICE, SOMARONE, URSULA, MARGARET, and CITIZENS OF MESSINA.]

LEONATO

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

MESSENGER

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

LEONATO

How many gentlemen have you lost in this action?

MESSENGER

But few of any sort, and none of name.

LEONATO

I find here that Don Pedro hath bestowed much honor on a young Florentine called Claudio.

MESSENGER

He hath borne himself beyond the promise of his age, doing in the figure of a lamb the feats of a lion.

BEATRICE

I pray you, is Signor Mountanto returned from the wars or no?

MESSENGER

I know none of that name.

HERO

My cousin means Signor Benedict of Padua.

MESSENGER

O, he's returned, and as pleasant as ever he was.

BEATRICE

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.

LEONATO

You must not, sir, mistake my niece; there is a kind of merry war betwixt Signor Benedict and her. They never meet but there's a skirmish of wit between them.

MESSENGER

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

BEATRICE

No; an he were, I would burn my study. But I pray you, who is his companion? Is there no young soldier now that will make a voyage with him to the devil?

MESSENGER

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

BEATRICE

Claudio? O Lord, he will hang upon him like a disease! God help the noble Claudio! If he have caught the Benedict, it will cost him a thousand pound ere 'a be cured.

MESSENGER

Don Pedro is approached.

#1: Chorus

The citizens of Messina celebrate the victorious return of Don Pedro's army.

[Enter DON PEDRO, CLAUDIO, BENEDICT, other SOLDIERS, BORACHIO, and DON JOHN.]

DON PEDRO

Good Signor Leonato, are you come to meet your trouble?

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.

BENEDICT

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

LEONATO

Signor Benedict, no, for then were you a child.

BENEDICT

If Signor 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, Signor Benedict; nobody marks you.

BENEDICT

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

#4: Duet

Beatrice and Benedict playfully insult each other, and the institution of marriage, to the amusement of the others onstage. Both pray that they be allowed to remain blissfully single.

BEATRICE

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

DON PEDRO

That is the sum of all, Leonato.

[Addresses the company.]

Signor Claudio and Signor Benedict, my dear friend Leonato hath invited you all. I tell him we shall stay here at the least a month.

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 *[to DON PEDRO]*

Please it your grace lead on?

DON PEDRO

Your hand, Leonato; we will go together.

[Exeunt all save HERO.]

#3: Aria

Hero sings of her love for Claudio, and her desire to wed him.

[Enter CLAUDIO and BENEDICT.]

CLAUDIO

Benedict, didst thou note the daughter of Signor Leonato?

BENEDICT

I noted her not, but I looked on her.

CLAUDIO

Is she not a modest young lady?

BENEDICT

I do not like her.

CLAUDIO

Thou thinkest I am in sport. I pray thee tell me truly how thou lik'st her.

BENEDICT

Would you buy her that you inquire after her?

CLAUDIO

Can the world buy such a jewel?

BENEDICT

Yea, and a case to put it into. But I hope you have no intent to turn husband — have you?

CLAUDIO

If Hero would be my wife.

BENEDICT

Look, Don Pedro is returned to seek you.

[Enter DON PEDRO.]

DON PEDRO

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

BENEDICT

He is in love. With who? Mark how short his answer is: with Hero, Leonato's short daughter.

CLAUDIO

That I love her, I feel.

DON PEDRO

That she is worthy, I know.

BENEDICT

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. Benedict, I will see thee married yet.

#5: Trio

Benedict rails, playfully, against the female gender and the institution of marriage, while Claudio and Don Pedro criticize his bad attitude.

[Exit BENEDICT.]

CLAUDIO

My liege, your highness now may do me good.

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.

DON PEDRO

I know we shall have revelling tonight;
I will assume thy part in some disguise
And tell fair Hero I am Claudio;
And in her bosom unclasp my heart
And take her hearing prisoner with 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. Enter DON JOHN and BORACHIO.]

BORACHIO

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.

BORACHIO

You should hear reason.

DON JOHN

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

BORACHIO

If not a present remedy at least a patient suffering. 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 my brother's grace. It must not be denied but I am a plain-dealing villain. Let me be that I am, and seek not to alter me.

BORACHIO

Can you make no use of your discontent?

DON JOHN

What news, Borachio?

BORACHIO

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?

BORACHIO

Marry, it is your brother's right hand.

DON JOHN

Who, the most exquisite Claudio?

BORACHIO

Even he.

DON JOHN

A proper squire! And who, and who? Which way looks he?

BORACHIO

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

DON JOHN

How came you to this?

BORACHIO

I hid 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.

DON JOHN

Come, come, let us thither. That young start-up hath all the glory of my overthrow. If I can cross him any way, I bless myself every way. You will assist me?

BORACHIO

To the death, my lord.

DON JOHN

Let us to the great supper.

[Exeunt.]

[Enter DON PEDRO, CLAUDIO, BENEDICT, SOMARONE, URSULA, HERO, BEATRICE, DON JOHN, BORACHIO and OTHERS. Music and dancing, to Berlioz's Sicilienne.]

DON PEDRO *[to Hero]*

Lady, will you walk a bout 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.

DON PEDRO

With me in your company?

HERO

I may say so, when I please.

DON PEDRO

And when please you to say so?

HERO

When I like your favor.

DON PEDRO

Speak low if you speak love.

[They move aside; Benedict and Beatrice come forward.]

BEATRICE

Will you not tell me who told you so?

BENEDICT

No, you shall pardon me.

BEATRICE

Well, this was Signor Benedict that said so.

BENEDICT

What's he?

BEATRICE

I am sure you know him well enough.

BENEDICT

Not I, believe me. 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 idiots delight in him. I am sure he is in the fleet; I would he had boarded me.

BENEDICT

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

BEATRICE

We must follow the leaders.

BENEDICT

In every good thing.

BEATRICE

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

[They move aside.]

DON JOHN *[aside to BORACHIO]*

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.

BORACHIO *[aside to DON JOHN]*

And that is Claudio; I know him by his bearing.

DON JOHN

Are not you Signor Benedict?

CLAUDIO

You know me well. I am he.

DON JOHN

Signor, you are very near my brother in his love. He is enamoured on Hero. I pray you, dissuade him from her; she is no equal for his birth.

CLAUDIO

How know you he loves her?

DON JOHN

I heard him swear his affection.

BORACHIO

So did I too, and he swore he would marry her tonight.

DON JOHN

Come, let us to the banquet.

[Exit DON JOHN and BORACHIO.]

CLAUDIO *[to himself]*

Thus answer I in the name of Benedict,
But hear these 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.

DON PEDRO *[to CLAUDIO]*

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; 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!

LEONATO

Count, take of me my daughter, and with her my fortunes. His grace hath made the match, and all grace say amen to it.

[indicates SOMARONE]

See, our township's music-master is at hand, provided with all his singers, to cheer the sweet announcement of this match.

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. Lady, I am yours.

BEATRICE

Speak, cousin, or, if you cannot, stop his mouth with a kiss.

#6: Épithalame grotesque

Somarone leads his singers in a four-part motet whose name means "Strange Wedding Processional," shouting musical instructions at the musicians during the performance.

DON PEDRO

Count Claudio, when mean you to go to church?

CLAUDIO

Tomorrow, my lord. Time goes on crutches till Love have all his rites.

LEONATO

Not till Monday, my dear son, which is hence a just sennight — and a time too brief, too, to have all things answer my mind.

DON PEDRO

I warrant thee, Claudio, the time shall not go dully by us. I will, in the interim, undertake one of Hercules' labors, which is to bring Signor Benedict and the Lady Beatrice into a mountain of affection th'one with th'other. I would fain have it a match, and I doubt not but to fashion it, if you three will but minister such assistance as I shall give you direction.

LEONATO

My lord, I am for you.

CLAUDIO

And I, my lord.

DON PEDRO

And you too, gentle Hero?

HERO

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

DON PEDRO

And Benedict is not the unhopefullest husband that I know. Thus far can I praise him: he is of a noble strain, of approved valor and confirmed honesty.

[to HERO]

I will teach you how to humor your cousin that she shall fall in love with Benedict;

[to CLAUDIO and LEONATO]

and I, with your two helps, will so practice on Benedict 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.]

DON JOHN

It is so; the Count Claudio shall marry the daughter of Leonato.

BORACHIO

Yea, my lord, but I can cross it.

DON JOHN

Any bar, any cross, any impediment will be medicinal to me. I am sick in displeasure to him. How canst thou cross this marriage?

BORACHIO

Not honestly, my lord.

DON JOHN

Show me briefly how.

BORACHIO

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.

BORACHIO

I can, at any unseasonable instant of the night, appoint her to look out at her lady's chamber window.

DON JOHN

What life is in that to be the death of this marriage?

BORACHIO

The poison of that lies in you to temper. Go you to the prince your brother; spare not to tell him that he hath wronged his honor in marrying the renowned Claudio — whose estimation do you mightily hold up — to a contaminated stale, such a one as Hero.

DON JOHN

What proof shall I make of that?

BORACHIO

Proof enough to misuse the prince, to vex Claudio, to undo Hero and kill Leonato. Look you for any other issue?

DON JOHN

I will endeavor anything.

BORACHIO

Go, then. Find you the hour to draw Don Pedro and the Count Claudio alone. Tell them that you

know that Hero loves me. Intend a kind of zeal both to the prince and Claudio — as in love of your brother's honor, who hath made this match, and his friend's reputation — that you have discovered thus. They will scarcely believe this without trial; 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 meantime I will so fashion the matter that Hero shall be absent), and there shall appear such seeming truth of Hero's disloyalty that jealousy shall be called assurance.

DON JOHN

I will put it in practice. Be cunning in the working of this and thy fee is a thousand ducats.

BORACHIO

Be you constant in the accusation and my cunning shall not shame me.

DON JOHN

I will presently go learn their day of marriage.

[Exeunt. Enter BENEDICT.]

BENEDICT

I do much wonder that one man, seeing how much another man is a fool when he dedicates his behaviors to love, will, after he hath laughed at such shallow follies in others, become the argument of his own scorn by failing in love: and such a man is Claudio. 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. Ha! the prince and Monsieur Love! I will hide me in that monument.

[He hides. Enter DON PEDRO, CLAUDIO, LEONATO, and SOMARONE.]

DON PEDRO

Come, shall we hear this music?

CLAUDIO

Yea, my good lord. How still the evening is, as hush'd on purpose to grace harmony!

DON PEDRO

See you where Benedict hath hid himself?

CLAUDIO

O, very well, my lord.

DON PEDRO

Come, Somarone, we'll hear that song again.

BENEDICT

Now, divine air! Now is his soul ravished! Is it not strange that sheep's guts should hale souls out of men's bodies?

SOMARONE sings the Shakespeare lyrics "Sigh no more, ladies" to the aria "Voici des roses" from La damnation de Faust by Berlioz.

DON PEDRO

By my troth, a good song.

SOMARONE

And an ill singer, my lord.

BENEDICT

An he had been a dog that should have howled thus, they would have hanged him.

DON PEDRO

Yea, marry, dost thou hear, Somarone? I pray thee, get us some excellent music; for tomorrow night we would have it at the Lady Hero's chamber-window.

SOMARONE

The best I can, my lord.

DON PEDRO

Do so: farewell.

[Exit SOMARONE.]

Come hither, Leonato. What was it you told me of today, that your niece Beatrice was in love with Signor Benedict?

CLAUDIO

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

LEONATO

No, nor I neither; but most wonderful that she should so dote on Signor Benedict, whom she hath in all outward behaviors seemed ever to abhor.

BENEDICT

Is't possible?

LEONATO

By my troth, my lord, I cannot tell what to think of it but that she loves him with an enraged affection.

CLAUDIO

Bait the hook well; this fish will bite.

DON PEDRO

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

LEONATO

My lord; especially against Benedict.

BENEDICT

I should think this a gull, but that the white-bearded fellow speaks it.

DON PEDRO

Hath she made her affection known to Benedict?

LEONATO

No; and swears she never will: that's her torment.

CLAUDIO

'Tis true, indeed; so your daughter says: 'Shall I,' says she, 'that have so oft encountered him with scorn, write to him that I love him?' Then down upon her knees she falls, weeps, sobs, beats her heart, tears her hair, prays, curses; 'O sweet Benedict! God give me patience!'

DON PEDRO

It were good that Benedict knew of it by some other, if she will not discover it.

CLAUDIO

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

DON PEDRO

She's an excellent sweet lady; and, out of all suspicion, she is virtuous.

CLAUDIO

And she is exceeding wise.

DON PEDRO

In every thing but in loving Benedict. I pray you, tell Benedict of it, and hear what a' will say.

LEONATO

Were it good, think you?

CLAUDIO

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.

DON PEDRO

She doth well: if she should make tender of her love, 'tis very possible he'll scorn it; for the man 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

I love Benedict well; and I could wish he would modestly examine himself, to see how much he is unworthy so good a lady.

LEONATO

My lord, will you walk? dinner is ready.

CLAUDIO

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

[Exeunt DON PEDRO, CLAUDIO, and LEONATO.]

BENEDICT

This can be no trick: the conference was sadly borne. They have the truth of this from Hero. Love me! why, it must be requited.

#7: Rondo

Benedict explodes in an aria delighting in his love for Beatrice.

BENEDICT

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

[Enter BEATRICE.]

BEATRICE

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

BENEDICT

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.

BENEDICT

You take pleasure then in the message?

BEATRICE

Yea, just so much as you may take upon a knife's point and choke a daw withal. Farewell.

[Exit.]

BENEDICT

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

#7: Rondo - Reprise

Benedict reprises the repeating section of his aria, changing the pronouns to describe Beatrice's love for him.

[Exit. Enter HERO, URSULA, and MARGARET.]

HERO

Now, ladies, when Beatrice doth come,
Our talk must only be of Benedict.

Let it be thy part

To praise him more than ever man did merit:

My talk to thee must be how Benedict

Is sick in love with Beatrice. Of this matter

Is little Cupid's crafty arrow made.

[Enter BEATRICE.]

Now begin.

MARGARET

But are you sure

That Benedict loves Beatrice so entirely?

HERO

So says the prince and my new-trothed lord.

URSULA

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

HERO

They did entreat me to acquaint her of it;

But I persuaded them, if they loved Benedict,

To wish him wrestle with affection,
And never to let Beatrice know of it.

MARGARET

Certainly it were not good she knew his love.

HERO

If I should speak,
She would mock me into air; O, she would laugh me
Out of myself, press me to death with wit.
Therefore let Benedict, like cover'd fire,
Consume away in sighs, waste inwardly:
It were a better death than die with mocks.

URSULA

Yet tell her of it: hear what she will say.

HERO

No; rather I will go to Benedict
And counsel him to fight against his passion.

MARGARET

O, do not do your cousin such a wrong.
She cannot be so much without true judgment as to refuse
So rare a gentleman as Signor Benedict.

HERO

He is the only man of Italy.
Always excepted my dear Claudio.

MARGARET

Signor Benedict,
For shape, for bearing, argument and valor,
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 show thee some attires, and have thy counsel
Which is the best to furnish me tomorrow.

MARGARET

She's limed, I warrant you: we have caught her, madam.

HERO

Some Cupid kills with arrows, some with traps.

[Exeunt HERO, URSULA, MARGARET.]

#10: Beatrice Aria

Beatrice remembers how distressed she felt when Benedict went off to war and the nightmares she had about losing him. She finally admits to herself that she loves him.

[Exit. Enter DON PEDRO, CLAUDIO, and DON JOHN.]

DON JOHN

My lord and brother, God save you!

DON PEDRO

Good e'en, 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 tomorrow?

DON PEDRO

You know he does.

DON JOHN

I know not that when he knows what I know.

CLAUDIO

If there be any impediment, pray you discover it.

DON JOHN

You may think I love you not. Let that appear hereafter, and aim better at me by that I now will manifest.

DON PEDRO

Why, what's the matter?

DON JOHN

I came hither to tell you; and, circumstances shortened — for she has been too long a-talking of—the lady is disloyal.

CLAUDIO

Who, Hero? Disloyal?

DON JOHN

The word is too good to paint out her wickedness. Wonder not till further warrant. Go but with me, tonight you shall see her chamber window entered, even the night before her wedding day. If you love her then, tomorrow wed her. But it would better fit your honor to change your mind.

CLAUDIO

May this be so?

DON PEDRO

I will not think it.

DON JOHN

If you dare not trust that you see, confess not that you know. If you will follow me I will show you enough. I will disparage her no farther till you are my witnesses. Bear it coldly but till midnight, and let the issue show itself.

DON PEDRO

O day untowardly turned!

CLAUDIO

O mischief strangely thwarting!

DON JOHN

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

[Exeunt.]

#8: Duet – Nocturne

HERO and URSULA walk in the garden, singing about the delights of the dusk. Meanwhile, DON JOHN brings CLAUDIO and DON PEDRO to where they observe MARGARET's amorous rendez-vous with BORACHIO. CLAUDIO is devastated. Curtain.

ACT 2

CLAUDIO sings an aria, adapted from “Ah! Qui pourrait me résister?” from Berlioz’s *Benvenuto Cellini*, expressing his betrayal, fury, disgust, and thwarted love.

[Exit. Enter BORACHIO, and, separately, SOMARONE and his men.]

BORACHIO

Is it possible that any villainy should be so rich? I have tonight wooed Margaret, the Lady hero's gentlewoman, by the name of Hero; she leans me out at her lady's chamber window, bids me a thousand times good night — I tell this tale vilely. I should first tell thee how the prince and Claudio, planted and placed and possessed by my master Don John, saw afar off in the orchard this amiable encounter. The prince and Claudio thought she was Hero, but the devil my master Don John knew she was Margaret. And partly by his oaths, which first possessed 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. And now he will meet her this morning at the temple, and there, before the whole congregation, shame her with what he saw o'ernight, and send her home again without a husband.

SOMARONE *[starts out upon him]*

We charge you in the prince's name, stand!

BORACHIO

Somarone?

SOMARONE

Aye!

BORACHIO

The Choirmaster?

SOMARONE

And Gardener!

BORACHIO

And Postmaster General.

SOMARONE

And the Nightwatch Constable, who has here recovered the most dangerous piece of lechery that ever was known in the commonwealth!

BORACHIO

Master, master—

SOMARONE

Never speak, I charge you! Let us obey you to go with us.

BORACHIO

Come, I'll obey you.

[Exeunt. Enter HERO, BEATRICE, and URSULA.]

#11: Trio

Ursula is preparing Hero for the wedding; both are surprised when Beatrice joins them, singing of the joys and delights of married life. Although Beatrice still resists the idea of getting married herself, her attitude has changed dramatically.

#12: Chorus

Somaroné's musical forces sing as all take their places for the wedding of Hero and Claudio.

[Enter FRIAR, CLAUDIO, DON PEDRO, DON JOHN, BENEDICT, LEONATO, HERO, BEATRICE, and others.]

FRIAR

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

CLAUDIO

No.

LEONATO

To be married to her, Friar; you come to marry her.

FRIAR

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

HERO

I do.

FRIAR

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

CLAUDIO

Know you any, Hero?

HERO

None, my lord.

FRIAR

Know you any, Count?

CLAUDIO *[to Leonato]*

Father, by your leave:

Will you with free and unconstrained hand
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

There, Leonato, take her back again.
Give not this rotten orange to your friend.

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—

CLAUDIO

I never tempted her with word too large,
But bashful sincerity and comely love.

HERO

And seemed I ever otherwise to you?
Is my lord well, that he doth speak so wide?

LEONATO *[to DON PEDRO]*

Sweet prince, why speak not you?

DON PEDRO

What should I speak?

I stand dishonored that have gone about
To link my dear friend to a common stale.

LEONATO

Are these things spoken, or do I but dream?

DON JOHN

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

BENEDICT

This looks not like a nuptial.

CLAUDIO

Let me but move one question to your daughter.

LEONATO

I charge thee, do so.

HERO

O, God defend me, how am I beset!

CLAUDIO

What man was he talked with you yesternight
Out at your window betwixt twelve and one?
Now, if you are a maid, answer to this.

HERO

I talked with no man at that hour, my lord.

DON PEDRO

Why, then are you no maiden. Leonato,
I am sorry you must hear, upon mine honor.

CLAUDIO

O Hero! Farewell.

LEONATO

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

[HERO falls.]

BEATRICE

Why, how now, cousin! Wherefore sink you down?

DON JOHN

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

[Exeunt DON PEDRO, CLAUDIO, and DON JOHN.]

BENEDICT

How doth the lady?

BEATRICE

How now, cousin Hero!

[HERO stirs.]

FRIAR

Have comfort, lady.

LEONATO

Dost thou look up?

FRIAR

Yea, wherefore should she not?

LEONATO

Wherefore? Cry shame upon her! Could she here deny the story that is printed in her blood?

BEATRICE

O, on my soul, my cousin is belied!

HERO

O my father,

Prove you that any man was with me, or that I yesternight

Maintained the change of words with any creature,

Refuse me, hate me, torture me to death!

FRIAR

There is some strange misprision in the princes.

BENEDICT

Two of them have the very bent of honor.

And if their wisdoms be misled in this,

The practice of it lives in John the bastard,

Whose spirits toil in frame of villainies.

LEONATO

I know not. If they speak truth of her,

These hands shall tear her; if they wrong her honor,

The proudest of them shall well hear of it.

FRIAR

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.

Maintain a mourning ostentation,
And on your family's old monument
Hang mournful epitaphs, and do all rites
That appertain unto a burial.

LEONATO

What shall become of this? What will this do?

FRIAR

Marry, this well carried shall on her behalf
Change slander to remorse; that is some good.
She, dying, as it must so be maintained,
Upon the instant that she was accused,
Shall be lamented, pitied, and excused
Of every hearer. So will it fare with Claudio.
Then shall he mourn—
If ever love had interest in his liver—
And wish 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 levelled false,
The supposition of the lady's death
Will quench the wonder of her infamy.

BENEDICT

Signor 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 honor, I will deal in this
As secretly and justly as your soul
Should with your body.

LEONATO

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

FRIAR

'Tis well consented. Presently away.

[Exeunt all but BEATRICE and BENEDICT.]

BENEDICT

Lady Beatrice, have you wept all this while?

BEATRICE

Yea, and I will weep awhile longer.

BENEDICT

I will not desire that.

BEATRICE

You have no reason; I do it freely.

BENEDICT

Surely I do believe your fair cousin is wronged.

BEATRICE

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

BENEDICT

Is there any way to show such friendship?

BEATRICE

A very even way, but no such friend.

BENEDICT

May a man do it?

BEATRICE

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

BENEDICT

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. I am sorry for my cousin.

BENEDICT

By my sword, Beatrice, thou lovest me.

BEATRICE

Do not swear and eat it.

BENEDICT

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?

BENEDICT

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

BEATRICE

Why then, God forgive me.

BENEDICT

What offence, sweet Beatrice?

BEATRICE

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

BENEDICT

And do it, with all thy heart.

BEATRICE

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

BENEDICT

Come, bid me do any thing for thee.

BEATRICE

Kill Claudio.

BENEDICT

Ha, not for the wide world.

BEATRICE

You kill me to deny it. Farewell.

BENEDICT

Tarry, sweet Beatrice.

BEATRICE

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

BENEDICT

Beatrice—

BEATRICE

In faith, I will go.

BENEDICT

We'll be friends first.

BEATRICE

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

BENEDICT

Is Claudio thine enemy?

BEATRICE

Is 'a not approved in the height a villain, that hath slandered, scorned, dishonored my kinswoman? O God, that I were a man! I would eat his heart in the marketplace.

BENEDICT

Hear me, Beatrice—

BEATRICE

Talk with a man out at a window! A proper saying!

BENEDICT

Nay, but Beatrice —

BEATRICE

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

BENEDICT

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

BEATRICE

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

BENEDICT

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

BEATRICE

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

BENEDICT

Enough, I am engaged. I will challenge him. I will kiss your hand.

BEATRICE

And so I leave you.

BENEDICT

By this hand, Claudio shall render me a dear account.

[Exit BEATRICE. Enter DON PEDRO and CLAUDIO.]

DON PEDRO

See, see: here comes the man we went to seek.

CLAUDIO

Now, Signor, what news?

BENEDICT

Good day, my lord. Shall I speak a word in your ear?

CLAUDIO

God bless me from a challenge.

BENEDICT *[to CLAUDIO]*

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 killed a sweet lady, and her death shall fall heavy on you.

[to DON PEDRO]

My lord, for your many courtesies, I thank you. I must discontinue your company. You have among you killed a sweet and innocent lady. For my Lord Lack-beard there, he and I shall meet, and till then peace be with him.

[Exit.]

DON PEDRO

He is in earnest.

CLAUDIO

In most profound earnest.

DON PEDRO

But soft you, let me be. Pluck up, my heart, and be sad.

[Enter SOMARONE, with the Watch, and BORACHIO.]

SOMARONE

Come you, sir.

DON PEDRO

How now? My brother's man bound? Officers, what offence has this man done?

SOMARONE

Marry, sir, he has committed false report. Moreover he has spoken untruths, secondarily he is a slander, sixth and lastly, he has belied a lady.

DON PEDRO

I ask thee what he has done. What do you lay to his charge?

BORACHIO

Sweet Prince, let me go no farther to mine answer. Do you hear me, and let this Count kill me. I have deceived even your very eyes. In the night he overheard me confessing 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. My

villainy 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.

DON PEDRO

Runs not this speech like iron through your blood?

CLAUDIO

I have drunk poison whiles he uttered it.

DON PEDRO

But did my brother set thee on to this?

BORACHIO

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

CLAUDIO

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

[Enter LEONATO.]

LEONATO

Which is the villain? Let me see his eyes.

BORACHIO

If you would know your wronger, look on me.

LEONATO

Art thou the slave that with thy breath hast killed
Mine innocent child?

BORACHIO

Yea, even I alone.

LEONATO

No, not so, villain, thou beliest thyself.
Here stand a pair of honorable 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.

CLAUDIO

I know not how to pray your patience.
Choose your revenge yourself.

LEONATO

I cannot bid you bid my daughter live—
That were impossible. But I pray you both,
Possess the people in Messina here
How innocent she died.

[to CLAUDIO]

And if your love
Can labour aught in sad invention,
Hang her an epitaph upon her tomb
And sing it to her bones. Sing it tonight.
Tomorrow 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 the 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.

CLAUDIO

O noble sir! I do embrace your offer.

LEONATO

Tomorrow, then, I will expect your coming;
Tonight I take my leave.

[Gives SOMARONE money.]

There's for thy pains.

[to the Watch]

Bring you this fellow on.

[Exeunt.]

[At LEONATO's family tomb, enter CLAUDIO, DON PEDRO, and MUSICIANS, with tapers.]

The musicians and Claudio sing the "Adieux des Bergers" from L'enfance du Christ by Berlioz to words from Act 5 Scene 3 of Much Ado About Nothing.

[Enter LEONATO, BENEDICT, URSULA, FRIAR, HERO, and BEATRICE.]

FRIAR

Did I not tell you she was innocent?

LEONATO

So are the prince and Claudio who accused her
Upon the error that you heard debated.

SOMARONE

Well, I am glad that all things sorts so well.

BENEDICT

And so am I, being else by faith enforced
To call young Claudio to a reckoning for it.

LEONATO

Well, daughter, and you gentlewomen all,
Withdraw into a chamber by yourselves,
And when I send for you, come hither masked.
The prince and Claudio promised by this hour
To visit me. You know your office, Somarone:
You must be father to my brother's daughter
And give her to young Claudio.

[Exeunt Ladies.]

SOMARONE

Which I will do with confirmed countenance.

[Exit.]

BENEDICT

Friar, I must entreat your pains, I think.

FRIAR

To do what, Signor?

BENEDICT

To bind me, or undo me, one of them.
Signor Leonato — truth it is, good Signor,
Your niece regards me with an eye of favor.

LEONATO

That eye my daughter lent her? 'Tis most true.

BENEDICT

And I do with an eye of love requite her.

LEONATO

The sight whereof think you had from me.

BENEDICT

Your answer, sir, is enigmatical.
But for my will, my will is your good will

May stand with ours this day to be conjoined
In the state of honorable marriage;
In which, good Friar, I shall desire your help.

LEONATO

My heart is with your liking.

FRIAR

And my help.

Here comes the prince and Claudio.

[Enter DON PEDRO, CLAUDIO, and OTHERS.]

DON PEDRO

Good morrow to this fair assembly.

LEONATO

Good morrow, Prince, good morrow, Claudio. We here attend you. Are you yet determined today to marry with my brother's daughter?

CLAUDIO

I'll hold my mind for love of dear Hero.

LEONATO

Call her forth. Here's the friar ready.

[Enter SOMARONE, HERO, BEATRICE, and URSULA, the women masked.]

CLAUDIO

For this I owe you. Here comes other reckonings.
Which is the lady I must seize upon?

[SOMARONE leads HERO forward.]

SOMARONE

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

CLAUDIO

Why then she's mine.

[to HERO]

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

I am your husband, if you like of me.

HERO [*Unmasks.*]

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.

Reprise of #3: Hero's Aria

FRIAR

All this amazement can I qualify

When after that the holy rites are ended.

#13: Nuptial March

All join their voices in a hymn of thanksgiving and prayer, which is interrupted by Benedict.

BENEDICT

Soft and fair, Friar. Which is Beatrice?

BEATRICE [*Unmasks.*]

I answer to that name. What is your will?

BENEDICT

Do not you love me?

BEATRICE

Why no, no more than reason.

BENEDICT

Why then your uncle and the prince and Claudio

Have been deceived—they swore you did.

BEATRICE

Do not you love me?

BENEDICT

Troth no, no more than reason.

BEATRICE

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

BENEDICT

They swore that you were almost sick for me.

BEATRICE

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

BENEDICT

'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 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
Fashioned to Beatrice.

HERO

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

BENEDICT

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—and partly to save
your life, for I was told you were in a consumption.

BENEDICT

Peace! I will stop your mouth.

[kisses her]

DON PEDRO

How dost thou, Benedict, the married man?

#14: Enseigne

Everyone reminds Benedict of the bad attitude he used to assert towards marriage.

SOMARONE *[entering]*

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

DON PEDRO

Think not on him till tomorrow.
I'll devise brave punishments for him.

BENEDICT

Prince, thou art sad—get thee a wife, get thee a wife!

#15: Scherzo Duettino

Beatrice and Benedict try to describe the elusive nature of love. They agree to a brief truce in their war of words—but tomorrow, war will begin again!
