Much adoe about Nothing.

Actus Primus. Scena Prima.

Enter Leonato Governour of Messina, Innogen his wife, Hero his Daughter, and Beatrice his Neece, with a messenger.

Leonato.

I Learne in this Letter, that *Don Peter* 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 victorie is twice it selfe, when the atchiever brings home full numbers: I finde heere that *Don Peter* hath bestowed much honour on a young *Florentine,*called *Claudio.*

Mess. Much desererv'd on his part, and equally remembred by *Don Pedro,* he hath borne himselfe beyond the promise of his age, doing in the figure of a Lambe, the feats of a Lion, he hath indeede better bettred expectation, then you must expect of me to tell you how.

Leo. He hath an Uncle here in *Messina,* will be very much glad of it.

Mess. I have alreadie delivered him letters, and there appeares much joy in him, even so much, that joy could not shew it self modest enough, without a badg of bitternesse.

Leo. Did he break out into teares?

Mess. In great measure.

Leo. A kinde overflow of kindnesse : there are no faces truer, then those that are so wash'd, how much better is it to weep at joy, then to joy at weeping?

Bea. I pray you, is Signior *Mountanto* return'd from the warres, or no?

Mess. I know none of that name,Lady,there was none such in the armie of any sort.

Leon. What is he that you ask for Neece?

Hero. My cousin meanes Signior Benedick of *Padua.*

Mess. O he's return'd, and as pleasant as ever he was.

Beat. He set up his bils here in *Messina,* & challeng'd Cupid at the Flight : and my Unckles foole reading the Challenge, subscrib'd for Cupid, and challeng'd him at the Burbolt. I pray you, how many hath hee kil'd and eaten in these warres? But how many hath he kil'd? for indeed, I promis'd to eate all of his killing.

Leon. 'Faith Neece, you taxe Signior Benedicke too much, but hee'l meet with you, I doubt it not.

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

Beat. You had musty victuall, and he hath holpe to ease it : he's a very valiant Trencher-man, hee hath an excellent stomacke.

Mess. And a good souldier too Lady.

Beat. And a good souldier to a Lady. But what is he to a Lord?

Mess. A Lord to a Lord, a man to a man, stuft with all honourable vertues.

Beat. It is so indeed, he is no lesse then a stuft man: but for the stuffing well, we are all mortall.

Leon. You must not (sir) mistake my Neece, there is a kind of merry war betwixt Signior Benedick & her : they never meet, but there is a skirmish of wit between them.

Bea. Alas, he gets nothing by that. In our last conflict, foure of his five wits went halting off, and now is the whole man govern'd with one : so that if hee 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 sworne brother,

Mess. Is't possible?

Beat. Very easily possible : he wears his faith but as the fashion of his hat, it ever changes with [ye] next block.

Mess. I see (Lady) the Gentleman is not in your bookes.

Bea. No, and he were, I would burn my study: But I pray you who is his companion ? Is there no young squarer now, that will make a voyage with him to the divell?

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 then the pestilence, and the taker runs presently mad. God help the noble *Claudio,* if hee have caught the Benedickt, it will cost him a thousand pound ere he be cur'd.

Mess. I will hold friends with you Lady.

Bea. Do good friend.

Leo. You'l ne're run mad Neece.

Bea. No, not till a hot January.

Mess. Don Pedro is approach'd.

Enter Don Pedro, Claudio, Benedicke, Balthazar, and John the bastard.

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 likenes of your Grace : for, trouble being gone, comfort should remaine : but when you depart from me, sorrow abides, and happinesse takes his leave.

Pedro. You embrace your charge too willingly : I think this is your daughter.

Leonato. Her mother hath many times told me so.

Bened. Were you in doubt, that you askt her?

Leo. Signior Benedicke, no, for then were you a Childe.

Pedro. You have it full Benedicke, we may guesse by this, what you are, being a man, truely the Lady fathers her self : be happie, Lady, for you are like an honourable father.

Ben. Is Signior *Leonato* be her Father, she would not have his head on her shoulders for al Messina, as like him as she is.

Beat. I wonder that you will still be talking, Signior Benedicke, no body markes you.

Ben. What my deere Lady Disdaine ! are you yet living?

Beat. Is it possible Disdaine should die, while she hath such meet food to feed it, as Signior Benedicke? Curtesie it selfe must convert to Disdaine, if you come in her presence.

Bene, Then is Courtesie a turn-coate, but it is certain I am loved of all Ladies, onely you excepted : and I would I could find in my heart that I had not an hard heart, for truly I love none.

Beat. A deere happinesse to women, they would else have beene troubled with a pernitious Suter, I thanke God and my cold blood, I am of your humour for that, I had rather hear my Dog barke at a Crow, then a man swear he loves me.

Bene. God keep your Ladiship still in that mind, so some Gentleman or other shall scape a predestinate scracht face.

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

Bene. Well you are a rare Parrat teacher.

Beat. A Bird of my tongue, is better than a beast of your.

Ben, I would my horse had the speed of your tongue, and so good a continuer : but keepe your way a God’s name, I have done.

Beat. You alwaies end with a Jade’s trick, I know you of old.

Pedro. This is the summe of all : *Leonato,* Signior *Claudio,* and Sigior *Benedicke;* my dear friend *Leonato,* hath invited you all , I tell him we shall stay here, at the least a moneth, and he heartily praies some occasion may detaine us longer : I dare swear hee is no hypocrite, but praies from his heart.

Leon. If you sweare, my Lord, you shall not be forsworne, let mee bid you welcome, my Lord, being reconciled to the Prince your brother ; I owe you all duetie.

John. I thanke you, I am not of many words, but I thanke you.

Leon. Please it your Grace leade on?

Pedro. Your hand *Leonato,* we will goe together.

Exeunt. Manet Benedike and Claudio.

Clau. Benedicke, didst thou note the daughter of signior *Leonato?*

Bene. I noted her not, but I lookt on her.

Clau. Is she not a modest yong Ladie?

Ben. Doe you question me as an honest man should doe, for my simple true judgement? or would you have me speake after my custome, as being a professed tyrant to their sex?

Clau. No, I pray thee speak in sober judgement.

Bene. Why yfaith me thinks shee's too low for a hie praise, too browne for a faire praise, and too little for a great praise, onely this commendation I can afford her, that were shee other then she is, she were unhandsome, and being no other but as she is, I doe not like her.

Clau. Thou think'st I am in sport, I pray thee tell me truely how thou lik'st her.

Bene. Would you buie her that you enquier after her?

Clau. Can the world buie such a jewell?

Ben. Yea, and a case to put it into, but speake you this with a sad brow? Or doe you play the flouting jacke, to tell us Cupid is a good Hare-finder, and Vulcan a rare Carpenter : Come, in what Key shall a man take you to goe in the song.

Clau. In mine eye, she is the sweetest Lady that ever I lookt on.

Bene. I can see yet without spectacles, and I see no such matter : there's her cosin, and she were not possest with a furie, exceeds her as much in beautie, as the first of Maie doth the last of December : but I hope you have no intent to turn husband, have you ?

Clau. I would scarce trust my selfe, though I had sworne the contrarie, if *Hero* would be my wife.

Bene. Is't come to this ? in faith hath not the world one man, but he will weare his cap with suspition? shall I never see a batchellor of three score againe? goe to yfaith, and thou wilt needes thrust thy necke into a yoke, weare the print of it, and sigh away sundaies : looke, *don Pedro* is returned to seeke you.

Enter don Pedro, John the bastard.

Pedr. What secret hath held you here, that you followed not to *Leonatoes ?*

Bened. I would your Grace would constraine mee to tell.

Pedro. I charge thee on thy allegiance.

Ben. You heare, Count *Claudio,* I can be secret as a dumbe man, I would have you thinke so (but on my allegiance, marke you this, on my allegiance) hee is in love, With whom? now that is your Graces part : marke how short his answere is, with *Hero*, *Leonatoes* short daughter.

Clau. If this were so, so were it uttered.

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

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

Pedro. Amen, if you love her , for the Ladie is verie well worthie.

Clau. You speake this to fetch me in, my Lord.

Pedr. By my troth I speake my thought.

Clau. And in faith, my Lord, I spoke mine.

Bened. And by my two faiths and troths, my Lord, I speake mine.

Clau. That I love her, I feele.

Pedr. That she is worthie, I know.

Bened. That I neither feele how shee should be loved , nor know how shee should be worthie, is the opinion that fire cannot melt out of me, I will die in it at the stake.

Ped. Thou was ever an obstinate Heretick in the despight of beauty.

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

Ben. That a woman conceived me, I thanke her : that she brought me up, I likewise give her most humble thankes : but that I will have a rechate winded in my forehead , or hang my bugle in an invisible baldricke, all women shall pardon me : because I will not do them the wrong to mistrust any, I will doe my self the right to trust none : and the fine is, (for the which I may goe the finer) I will live a Batchellor.

Pedro. I shall see thee ere I die, looke pale with love.

Bene. With anger, with sicknesse, or with hunger , my Lord, not with love : prove that ever I loose more blood with love, then I will get againe with drinking, picke out mine eyes with a Ballet-makers penne, and hang me up at the doore of a brothel-house for the signe of blinde Cupid.

Pedro. Well, if ever thou do'st fall from this faith, thou wilt prove a notable argument.

Bene. If I do, hang me in a bottle like a Cat, & shoot at me, and he that hit's me, let him be clapt on the shoulder, and call'd *Adam.*

Pedro. Well, as the time shall trie : in time the savege Bull doth beare the yoake.

Bene. The savage bull may, but if ever the sensible *Benedicke* beare it , pluck off the bulles hornes, and set them in my forehead, and let me be vildely painted, and in such great Letters as they write, heere is good horse to hire : let them signifie under my signe, here you may *see Benedicke* the married man.

Clau. If this should ever happen, thou wouldst be horne mad.

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.

Pedro. Well , you will temporize with the houres, in the meane time , good Signior *Benedicke,* repaire to *Leonatoes,* commend me to him , and tell him I will not faile him at supper , for indeede he hath made great prapara-tion.

Bene. I have almost matter enough in me for such an Embassage, and so I commit you.

Clau. To the tuition of God. From my house, if I had it.

Pedro. The sixt of July. Your loving friend, *Benedick.*

Bene. Nay mocke not. mocek not ; the body of your discourse is sometime guarded with fragments, and the guards are but slightly basted on neither : e're you flout old ends any further , examine your conscience, and so I leave you. *Exit.*

Clau. My Liege, your Highnesse now may doe mee good.

Pedro. My love is thine to teach, teach it but how,
And thou shalt see how apt it is to learne
Any hard Lesson, that may do thee good.

Clau. Hath *Leonato* any sonne my Lord?

Pedro. No childe but *Hero,* she's his onely heire.
Dost thou affect her, *Claudio?*

Clau. O my Lord,
When you went onward on this ended action,
I look'd upon her with a souldiers eie,
That lik'd, but had a rougher taske in hand,
Than to drive liking to the name of love:
But now I am return'd, and that warre-thoughts
Have left their places vacant : in their roomes
Come thronging soft and delicate desires,
All prompting mee how faire young *Hero* is,
Saying I lik'd her ere I went to warres.

Pedro. Thou wilt be like a lover presently,
And tire the hearer with a booke of words:
If thou dost love faire *Hero,* cherish it,
And I will breake with her : wast not to this end,
That thou beganst to twist so fine a story?
Clau. How sweetly doe you minister to love,
That know loves griefe by his complexion !
But lest my liking might too sodaine seeme,
I would have salv'd it with a longer treatise.
Ped. What need [ye] bridge much broder then the flood?
The fairest graunt is the necessitie:
Looke what will serve, is fit : 'tis once, thou lovest,
And I will fit thee with the remedie,
I know we shall have revelling to night,
I will assume thy part in some disguise,
And tell faire *Hero* I am *Claudio,*
And in her bosome Ile unclaspe my heart,
And take her hearing prisoner with the force
And strong incounter of my amorous tale :
Then after , to her father will I breake,
And the conclusion is, shee shall be thine,
In practise let us put it presently. *Exeunt.*

Enter Lonato and an old man, brother to Leonato.

Leo. How now brother, where is my cosen your son : hath he provided this musicke?

Old. He is very busie about it, but brother, I can tell you newes that you yet dreamt not of.

Leo. Are they good?

Old. As the event stamps them, but they have a good cover : they shew well outward : the Prince and Count *Claudio* walking in a thick pleached alley in my orchard, werre thus over-heard by a man of mine : the Prince discovered to *Claudio* that he loved my neece your daughter, and meant to acknowledge it this night in a dance, and hee found her accordant . hee meant to take the present time by the top , and instantly breake with you of it.

Leo. Hath the fellow any wit that told you this?

Old. A good sharpe fellow , I will send for him, and question him your selfe.

Leo. No, no: we will hold it as a dream, till it appear it self : but I will acquaint my daughter withall, that she may be the better prepared for answer , if peradventure this bee true : go you and tell her of it : coosins, you know what you have to doe, O I crie you mercie friend, goe you with mee and I will use your skill, good cosin have a care this busie time. *Exeunt.*

Exeunt.

Enter Sir John the Bastard, and Conrade his companion.

Con. What the good yeere my Lord, why are you thus out of measure sad?

Joh. There is no measure in the occasion that breeds, therefore the sadnesse is without limit.

Con. You should heare reason.

John, And when I have heard it, what blessing bringeth it?

Con. If not a present remedy, yet a patient sufferance.

John. I wonder that thou (being,as thou saist thou art, born under *Saturne*) goest about to apply a mortall medicine to a mortifying mischiefe : I cannot hide what I am : I must bee sad when I have cause, and smile at no mans jests ; eat when I have stomacke, and wait for no mans leisure : sleepe when I am drowsie, and tend on no mans businesse, laugh when I am merry, and claw no man in his humor.

Con. Yea, but you must not make the ful show of this till you may doe it without eontrollment , you have of

late

late stood out against your brother, and hee hath tane you newly into his grace, where it is impossible you should take root, but by the faire weather that you make your selfe, it is needfull that you frame the season for your owne harvest.

John. I had rather be a canker in a hedge,then a rose in his grace, and it better fits my bloud to be disdain'd of all,then 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 but I am a plaine dealing villaine, I am trusted with a mussell, and enfranchisde with a clog, therefore I have decreed, not to sing in my cage : if I had my mouth, I would bite : if I had my liberty,I would do my liking : in the meane time, let me be that I am, and seeke not to alter me.

Conr. Can you make no use of your discontent?

John. I will make all use of it, for I use it onely. Who comes here ? what newes *Borachio.*

Enter Borachio.

Bor. 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.

John. Will it serve for any Modell to build mischiefe on? What is hee for a foole that betrothes himself to unquietness?

Bor. Mary it is your brothers right hand.

John. Who, the most exquisite *Claudio?*

Bor. Even he.

John. A proper squier,and who,and who, which way lookes he?

Bor. Mary on *Hero*, the daughter and Heir of *Leonato.*

John. A very forward March-chicke, how came you to this?

Bor. Being entertain'd for a performer, as I was smoaking a musty room , comes me the Prince and *Claudio,* hand in hand in sad conference : I whipt behind the Arras, and there heard it agreed upon,that the Prince should wooe *Hero* for himselfe, and having obtain'd her , give her to Count *Claudio.*

John, Come, come, let us thither, this may prove food to my displeasure , that young start-up hath all the glorie of my overthrow : if I can crosse him any way, I blesse my selfe every way ; you are both sure , and will assist mee?

Conr. To the death my Lord.

John. Let us to the great supper , their cheere is the greater that I subdued, would the Cooke were of my minde: shall we go prove what's to be done?

Bor. Wee'll wait upon your Lordship.

Exeunt.

Actus Secundus.

Enter Leonato, his brother, his wife, Hero his daughter, and Beatrice his neece, and a kinsman.

Leonato. Was not Count *John* here at supper?

Brother. I saw him not.

Beatrice. How tartly that Gentleman lookes, I never can see him, but I am heart-burn'd an howre after.

Hero. He is of a very melancholy disposition.

Beatrice. Hee were an excellent man that were made just in the mid-way betweene him and *Benedicke,* the one is too like an image and saies nothing, and the other too like my Ladies eldest sonne, evermore tatling.

Leon. Then halfe signior *Benedicks* tongue in Count *Johns* mouth, and halfe Count *Johns* melancholy in Signior *Benedicks* face.

Beat. With a good legge, and a good foot unckle, and money enough in his purse, such a man would winne any woman in the world, if he could get her good will.

Leon. By my troth Neece, thou wilt never get thee a husband, if thou be so shrewd of thy tongue.

Brother. Infaith shee's too curst.

Beat. Too curst is more then curst, I shall lessen Gods sending that way: for it is said, God sends a curst Cow short hornes,but to a Cow too curst he sends none.

Leon. So, by being too curst, God will send you no hornes.

Beat. Just, if he sends 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.

Leonato. You may light upon a husband that hath no beard.

[*Batrice*]. What should I doe with him? dresse him in my apparell,and make him my waiting gentlewoman?he that hath a beard,is more then a youth: and he that hath no beard, is lesse then a man : and hee that is more then a youth, is not for mee: and he that is lesse then a man, I am not for him : therefore I will even take sixepence in earnest of the Berrord, and leade his Apes into hell.

Leon. Well then,go you into hell.

Beat. No, but to the gate, and there will the Devill meete mee like an old Cuckold with hornes on his head, and say,get you to heaven *Beatrice,* get you to heaven, heere's no place for you maids, so deliver I up my Apes, and away to S.*Peter :* for the heavens, hee shewes mee where the Batchellers sit , and there live wee as merry as the day is long.

Brother. Well neece, I trust you will be rul'd by your father.

Beatrice. Yes faith, it is my cosens dutie to make curtsie,and say, as it please you : but yet for all that cosin, let him be a handsome fellow, or else make an other curtsie, and say, father, as it please me.

Leonato. Well neece, I hope to see you one day fitted with a husband.

Beatrice. Not till God make men of some other mettall then earth, would it not grieve a woman to be overmastred with a peece of valiant dust? to make account of her life to a clod of waiward marle? no unckle, ile none : *Adams* sonnes are my brethren,and truly I hold it a sinne to match in my kinred.

Leon. Daughter, remember what I told you . If the Prince doe solicit you in that kinde, you know your answere.

Beatrice. The fault will be in the musicke cosin, if you be not woed in good time : if the Prince bee too important, tell him there is measure in every thing, & so dance out the answere, for heare me *Hero,* wooing, wedding, & repenting, is as a Scotch [ijgge], a measure, and a cinquepace : the first suite is hot and hasty like a Scotch ijgge (and full as fantasticall) the wedding manerly modest , (as a measure) full of state & aunchentry,and then comes repentance, and with his bad legs falls into the cinque pace faster and faster, till he sinkes into his grave.

Leonato

Leonato. Cosin you apprehend passing shrewdly.
Beatrice. I have a good eye unckle, I can see a Church by daylight.
Leon. The revellers are entring brother, make good roome.

Enter Prince, Pedro, Claudio, and Benedicke, and Balthasar, or dumbe John, Maskers with a drum.

Pedro. Lady, will you walke about with your friend?
Hero. So you walke softly,and looke sweetly, and say nothing, I am yours for the walke, and especially when I walke away.
Pedro. With me in your company?
Hero. I may say so when I please.
Pedro. And when please you to say so?
Hero. When I like your favour, for God defend the Lute should be like the case.
Pedro. My visor is *Philemons* roofe, within the house is Love.
Hero. Why then your visor should be thatcht.
Pedro. Speake low if you speake Love.
Bene. Well,I would you did like me.
Mar. So would not I for your owne sake, for I have manie ill qualities.
Bene. Which is one?
Mar. I say my prayers alowd.
Ben. I love you the better, the hearers may cry Amen.
Mar. God match me with a good dauncer.
Balt. Amen.
Mar. And God keepe him out of my sight when the daunce is done : answer Clarke.
Balt. No more words the Clarke is answered.
Ursula. I know you well enough, you are Signior *Anthonio.*
Anth. At a word, I am not.
Ursula. I know you by the wagling of your head.
Anth To tell you true, I counterfet him.
Ursu. You could never doe him so ill well, unlesse you were the very man : here's his dry hand up & down, you are he, you are he.
Anth. At a word I am not.
Ursula. Come, come, doe you thinke I doe not know you by your excellent wit? can vertue hide it selfe ? goe to, mumme,you are he, graces will appeare, and there's an end.
Beat. Will you not tell me who told you so?
Bene. No, you shall pardon me.
Beat. Nor will you not tell me who you are?
Bened. Not now.
Beat. That I was disdainfull, and that I had my good wit out of the hundred merry tales : well, this was Signior *Benedicke* that said so.
Bene. What's he?
Beat. I am sure you know him well enough.
Bene, Not I, beleeve me.
Beat. Did he never make you laugh?
Bene. I pray you what is he?
Beat. Why he is the Princes jeaster, a very dull foole, onely his gift is , in devising impossible slanders , none but Libertines delight in him, and the commendation is not in his witte, but in his villanie, for hee both pleaseth men and angers them , and then they laugh at him , and beat him : I am sure he is in the Fleet , I would he had boorded me.
Bene. When I know the Gentleman, Ile tell him what you say.

Beat. Do, do, hee'l but breake a comparison or two on me, which peradventure (not markt, or not laugh'd at) strikes him into melancholly, and then there's a Partridge wing saved, for the foole will eate no supper that night. We must follow the Leaders.

Ben. In every good thing.

Bea. Nay, if they leade to any ill, I will leave them at the next turning. *Exeunt.*

Musicke for the dance.

John. Sure my beother is amorous on *Hero,* and hath withdrawne her father to breake with him about it: the Ladies follow her, and but one visor remaines.

Borachio. And that is *Claudio,* I know him by his bearing.

John. Are not you signior *Benedicke?*

Clau. You know me well, I am hee.

John. Signior, you are verie neere my Brother in his love, he is enamor'd on *Hero,* I pray you disswade him from her, she is no equall for his birth : you may do the part of an honest man in it.

Claudio. How know you he loves her?

John. I heard him sweare his affection,

Bor. So did I too, and he swore he would marry her to night.

John. Come, let us to the banquet. *Ex.manet. Clau.*

Clau. Thus answer I in name of *Benedicke*,
But heare these ill newes with the eares of *Claudio:*
'Tis certaine so, the Prince woes for himselfe :
Friendship is constant in all other things,
Save in the Office and affaires of love:
Therefore all hearts in love use their owne tongues,
Let everie eye negotiate for it selfe,
And trust no Agent : for beautie is a witch,
Against whose charmes, faith melteth into blood :
This is an accident of hourely proofe,
Which I mistrusted not. Farewell therefore *Hero.*

Enter Benedicke.

Ben. Count *Claudio.*

Clau. Yea, the same.

Ben. Come, will you go with me?

Clau. Whither?

Ben. Even to the next Willow, about your own businesse, Count. What fashion will you weare the Garland off? About your necke, like an Usurers chaine ? Or under your arme, like a Lieutenants scarfe ? You must weare it one way, for the Prince hath got your *Hero.*

Clau. I wish him joy of her.

Ben. Why that's spoken like an honest Drovier, so they sel Bullockes : but did you thinke the Prince wold have served you thus?

Clau. I pray you leave me.

Ben. Ho now you strike like the blindman, 'twas the boy that stole your meate, and you'l beat the post.

Clau. If it will not be, Ile leave you. *Exit.*

Ben. Alas poore hurt fowle, now will he creepe into sedges : But that my Ladie *Beatrice* should know me, & not know me : the Princes foole! Hah? It may be I goe under that title, because I am merrie : yea but so I am apt to do my selfe wrong : I am not sp reputed, it is the base (though bitter) disposition of *Beatrice,* that putt's the world into her person, and so gives me out: well, Ile be revenged as I may.

Enter the Prince.

Pedro. Now Signior, where's the Count, did you see him?

Ben

Bene. Troth my Lord, I have played the part of Lady Fame, I found him heere as melancholy as a Lodge in a Warren, I told him, and I thinke, told him true, that your grace had got the will of this young Lady, and I offered him my company to a willow tree, either to make him a garland, as being forsaken, or to binde him a rod, as being worthy to be whipt.

Pedro. To be whipt, what's his fault?

Bene. The flat transgression of a Schoole-boy, who being over-joyed with finding a birds nest. shewes it his companion, and he steales it.

Pedro. Wilt thou make a trust, a transgression ? the transgression is in the stealer.

Ben. Yet it had not beene amisse the rod had beene made, and the garland too, for the garland he might have worne himselfe, and the rod he might have bestowed on you, who (as I take it) have stolne his birds nest.

Pedro. I will but teach them to sing, and restore them to the owner.

Bene. If their singing answer your saying, by my faith you say honestly.

Pedro. The Lady *Beatrice* hath a quarrell to you, the Gentleman that daunct with her, told her shee is much wrong'd by you.

Bene. O she misusde me past the indurance of a block: an oake but with one greene leafe on it, would have answered her : my very visor began to assume life, and scold with her : shee told mee, not thinking I had beene my selfe, that I was the Princes Jester, and that I was duller then a great thaw, hudling jest upon jest, with such impossible conveiance upon me, that I stood like a man at a marke with a whole army shooting at me :shee speakes poynyards, and every word stabbes : if her breath were as terrible as terminations , there were no living neere her, she would infect to the north starre : I would not marry her, though she were indowed with all that *Adam* had left him before he transgrest, she would have made *Hercules* have turnd spit, yea, and have cleft his club to make the fire too : come, talke not of her, you shall finde her the infernall Ate in good apparell. I would to God some scholler would conjure her, for certainly while she is heere, a man may live as quiet in hell, as in a sanctuary, and people sinne upon purpose, because they would goe thither, so indeed all disquiet, horror , and perturbation followes her.

Enter Claudio and Beatrice, Leonato, Hero.

Pedro. Looke heere she comes.

Bene. Will your Grace command mee any service to the worlds end? I will go on the slightest arrand now toe the Antipodes that you can devise to send me on: I will fetch you a tooth-picker now from the furthest inch of Asia : bring you the length of *Prester Johns* foot:fetch you a hayre off the great *Chams* beard : doe you any embassage to the Pigmies, rather then hould three words conference, with this Harpy : you have no employment for me?

Pedro. None, but to desire your good company.

Bene, O God sir, heeres a dish I love not, I cannot indure this Lady tongue. *Exit.*

Pedr. Come Lady, come, you have lost the heart of Signior *Benedicke.*

Beatr. Indeed my Lord, hee lent it me a while, and I gave him use for it, a double heart for a single one, marry once before he wonne it of mee, with false dice, therefore your Grace may well say I have lost it.

Pedro. You have put him downe Lady, you have put him downe.

Beat. So I would not he should do me, my Lord, lest I should proove the mother of fooles : I have brought Count *Claudio,* whom you sent me to seeke.

Pedro. Why how now Count, wherefore are you sad?

Claud. Not sad my Lord.

Pedro. How then? sicke?

Claud. Neither, my Lord.

Beat. The Count is neither sad, nor sicke, nor merry, nor well: but civill Count, civill as an Orange, and something of a jealous complexion.

Pedro. Ifaith Lady, I thinke your blazon to be true, though I be sworne, if he bee so, his conceit is false: heere *Claudio,* I have wooed in thy name , and faire *Hero* is won , I have broke with her father, and his good will obtained , name the day of marriage, and God give thee joy.

Leona. Count, take of me my daughter, and with her my fortunes : his grace hath made the match, & all grace say, Amen to it.

Beatr. Speake Count, tis your Qu.

Claud. Silence is the perfectest Herault of joy, I were but little happy if I could say, how much? Lady, as you are mine, I am yours, I give away my selfe for you, and doat upon the exchange.

Beat. Speake cosin, or (if you cannot) stop his mouth with a kisse, and let not him speake neither.

*Pedro.*Infaith Lady you have a merry heart.

Beatr. Yea my Lord I thanke it, poore foole it keepes on the windy side of Care, my coosin tells him in his eare that he is in my heart.

Clau. And so she doth coosin.

Beat. Good Lord for alliance : thus goes every one to the world but I, and I am sun-burn'd, I may sit in a corner and cry, heigh ho for a husband.

Pedro. Lady *Beatrice,* I will get you one.

Beat. I would rather have one of your fathers getting: hath your Grace ne're a brother like you? your father got excellent husbands, if a maid could come by them.

Prince. Will you have me? Lady.

Beat. No, my Lord, unless I might have another for working-dayes, your Grace is too costly to weare every day: but I beseech your Grace pardon me, I was borne to speak all mirth, and no matter.

Prince. Your silence most offends me, and to be merry, best becomes you, for out of question, you were borne in a merry houre.

Beat. No sure my Lord, my mother cryed, but then there was a starre danst, and under that was I borne: cosins God give you joy.

Leona. Neece, will you looke to those things I told you of?

Beat. I cry you mercy Uncle, by your Graces pardon.

Exit Beatrice.

Prince. By my troth a pleasant spirited Lady.

Leon. There's little of the melancholy element in her my Lord, she is never sad, but when she sleepes, and not ever sad then:for I have heard my daughter say, she had often dreamt of unhappinesse, and wakt her selfe with laughing.

Pedro Shee cannot indure to heare tell of a husband.

Leonato. O, by no meanes, she mockes all her wooers out of suite.

Prince. She were an excellent wife for *Benedick,*

Leonato. O Lord, my Lord, if they were but a weeke married,

married, they would talke themselves madde.

Prince. Counte *Claudio,* when meane you to goe to Church?

Clau. To morrow my Lord, Time goes on crutches, till Love have all his rites.

Leonata. Not till monday, my deare sonne, which is hence a just seven night, and a time too briefe too, to have all things answer minde.

Prince. Come, you shake the head at so long a breathing, but I warrant thee *Claudio,* the time shall not goe dully by us, I will in the *interim,* undertake one of *Hercules* labors, which is, to bring Signior *Benedicke* and the Lady *Beatrice* into a mountaine of affection, th'one with th'other, I would faine 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.

Leonata. My Lord, I am for you, though it cost mee ten nights watchings.

Claud. And I my Lord.

Prin. And you to gentle *Hero?*

Hero. I will doe any modest office,my Lord, to helpe my cosin to a good husband.

Prin. And *Benedick* is not the unhopefullest husband that I know : thus farre can I praise him, hee is of a noble straine, of approved valour, and confirm'd honesty, I will teach you how to humour your cosin, that shee shall fall in love with *Benedicke,* and I, with your two helpes, will so practice on *Benedicke ,* that in despight of his quicke wit, and his queasie stomacke, hee shall fall in love with *Beatrice :* if wee can doe this, *Cupid* is no longer an Archer, his glory shall be ours, for wee are the onely lovegods, goe in with me, and I will tell you my drift : *Exit.*

Enter John and Borachio.

Joh. It is so, the Count *Claudio* shal marry the daughter of *Leonato.*

Bora. Yea my Lord, but I can crosse it.

John. Any barre, any crosse, any impediment, will be medicinable to me, I am sicke in displeasure to him, and whatsoever comes athwart his affection, ranges evenly with mine, how canst thou crosse this marriage?

Bar. Not honestly my Lord, bot so covertly, that no dishonesty shall appeare in me.

John. Show me breefely how.

Bor. I thinke I told your Lordship a yeere since, how much I am in the favour of *Margaret,* the waiting gentlewoman to *Hero.*

John. I remember.

Bor. I can at any unseasonable instant of the night, appoint her to look out at her Ladies chamber window.

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

Bor. The poyson of that lies in you to temper , goe you to the Prince your brother,spare not to tell him, that hee 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.*

John. What proofe shall I make of that?

Bar. Proofe enough, to misuse the Prince , to vexe *Claudio,* to undoe *Hero,* and kill *Leonato,* looke you for any other issue?

John. Onely to despight them, I will endeavour any thing.

Bor. Goe then, find me a meete houre, to draw on *Pedro* and the Count *Claudio* alone, tell them that you know that *Hero* loves me, intend a kind of zeale both to the Prince and *Claudio* (as in a love of your brothers

honor who hath made this match) and his friends reputation, who is thus like to be cosen'd with the semblance of a maid, that you have discover'd thus: they will scarcely beleeve this without triall:offer them instances which shall beare no lesse likelihood, than to see mee at her chamber window, heare me call *Margaret, Hero;* heare *Margaret* terme me *Claudio,* and bring them to see this the very night before the intended wedding, for in the meane time, I will so fashion the matter, that *Hero* shall be absent, and there shall appeare such seeming truths of *Heroes* disloyaltie, that jealousie shall be cal'd assurance , and all the preparation overthrowne.

John. 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 ducates.

Bor. Be thou constant in the accusation, and my cunning shall not shame me.

John. I will presentlie goe learne their day of marriage. *Exit.*

Enter Benedicke alone.

*Bene.*Boy.

Boy. Signior.

Bene. In my chamber window lies a booke, bring it hither to me in the orchard.

Boy. I am heere already sir. *Exit.*

Bene. I know that, but I would have thee hence, and heere againe. I doe much wonder, that one man seeing how much another man is a foole, when he dedicates his behaviours to love , will after hee hath laught at such shallow follies in others, become the argument of his owne scorne, by falling in love, & such a man is *Claudio,* I have known when there was no musicke with him but the drum and the fife , and now had hee rather heare the taber and the pipe : I have knowne when he would have walkt ten mile afoot, to see a good armor, and now will he lie ten nights awake carving the fashion of a new dublet: he was wont to speake plaine, & to the purpose (like an honest man & a souldier) and now is he turn'd orthography, his words are a very fantasticall banquet, just so many strange dishes : may I be so converted, & see with these eyes? I cannot tell, I thinke not : I will not bee sworne, but love may transforme me to an oyster, but Ile take my oath on it, till he have made an oyster of me, he shall never make me such a foole: one woman is faire, yet I am well : another is wise, yet I am well : another vertuous, yet I am well : but till all graces be in one woman, one woman shall not come in my grace : rich shee shall be, that's certaine : wise, or Ile none: vertuous, or Ile never cheapen her : faire, or Ile never looke on her : milde, or come not neere me : Noble, or not for an Angell: of good discourse : an excellent Musitian, and her haire shal be of what colour it please God, hah! the Prince and Monsieur Love, I will hide me in the Arbor.

Enter Prince,Leonato,Claudio, and Jacke Wilson.

Prin. Come, shall we heare this musicke?

Claud. Yea my good Lord: how still the evening is,
As husht on purpose to grace harmonie.

Prin. See you where *Benedicke* hath hid himselfe?

Clau. O very well my Lord:the musicke ended,
Wee'll fit the kid-foxe with a penny worth.

Prince. Come *Balthasar,* wee'll heare that song again.

Balth. O good my Lord, taxe not so bad a voyce,
to slander musicke any more then once.

Prin. It is the witnesse still of excellency,

To

To slander Musicke any more then once.

Prince. It is the witnesse still of excellencie,
To put a strange face on his owne perfection,
I pray thee sing, and let me woe no more.

*Balth.*Because you talk of wooing, I will sing,
Since many a wooer doth commence his suit,
To her he thinkes not worthy, yet he wooes,
Yet will he sweare he loves.

Prince. Nay pray thee come,
Or if thou wilt hold longer argument,
Doe it in notes.

Balth. Note this before my notes,
Theres not a note of mine that's worth the noting.

Prince. Why there are very crotchets that he speaks,
Note notes forsooth, and nothing.

Bene. Now divine aire, now is his soule ravisht, is it not strange that sheepes guts should hale soules out of mens bodies ? well , a horne for my money when all's done.

The Song.

Sigh no more Ladies, sigh no more,
Men were deceivers ever,
One foot in Sea, and on on shore,
To one thing constant never,
Then sigh not so, but let them goe,
And be you blithe and bonnie,
Converting all your sounds of woe,
Into hey, nony, nony.

Sing no more ditties, sing no moe,
Of dumps so dull and heavy,
The fraud of men were ever so,
Since summer first was leavy,
Then sigh not so, &c.

Prince, By my troth a good song.

Balth. And an ill singer, my Lord.

Prince. Ha,no, no faith, thou singst well enough for a shift.

Ben. And he had been a dog that should have howld thus, they would have hang'd him, and I pray God his bad voyce bode no mischiefe , I had as liefe have heard the night-raven, come what plague could have come after it.

Prince. Yea marry, dost thou hear *Balthasar?* I pray thee get us some excellent musick: for to morrow night we would have it at the Lady *Heroes* chamber window.

Balth. The best I can, my Lord. *Exit Balthasar.*

Prince. Do so, farewell. Come hither *Leonato,* what was it you told me of today , that your Niece *Beatrice* was in love with signior *Benedicke?*

Cla. O I, stalke on, stalke on, the f*[s]*oule sits. I did never thinke that Lady would have loved any man.

Leon. No, nor I neither, but most wonderful, that she should so dote on Signior *Benedicke,* whom shee hath in all outward behaviours seemed ever to abhorre.

Bene. Is't possible? sits the winde in that corner?

Leo. By my troth my Lord, I cannot tell what to thinke of it, but that she loves him with an inraged affection, it is past the infinite of thought.

Prince. May be she doth but counterfeit.

Claud. Faith like enough.

Leon. O God! counterfeit ? there was never counterfeit of passion, come so neer the life of passion as she discovers it.

Prince. Why what effects of passion shewes she?

Claud. Baite the hooke well, this fish will bite.

Leon. What effects my Lord? shee will fit*[sit]* you, you heard my daughter tell you how.

Clau. She did indeed.

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

Leo. I would have sworne it had, my Lord, especially against *Benedicke.*

Bene. I should thinke this a gull, but that the white-bearded fellow speakes it : knavery cannot sure hide himselfe in such reverence.

Claud. He hath tane th'infection,hold it up.

Prince. Hath shee made her affection known to *Benedicke?*

Leonato. No, and sweares she never will, that's her torment.

Claud. 'Tis true indeed, so your daughter saies : shall I, saies she, that have so oft encountred him with scorne, write to him that I love him?

Leo. This saies shee now when shee is beginning to write to him, for shee'll be up twenty times a night, and there will she sit in her smocke, till she have writ a sheet of paper : my daughter tells us all.

Clau. Now you talke of a sheet of paper, I remember a pretty jest your daughter told us of.

Leon. O when whe had writ it, & was reading it over, she found *Benedicke* and *Beatrice* betweene the sheete.

Clau. That.

Leon. O she tore the letter into a thousand halfpence, raild at her self, that she should be so immodest to write, to one that shee knew would flout her : I measure him, saies she, by my owne spirit, for I should flout him if hee writ to mee, yea though I love him, I should.

Clau. Then downe upon her knees she falls, weepes, sobs, beates her heart, teares her hayre, praies, curses, O sweet *Benedicke,* God give me patience.

Leon. She doth indeed, my daughter saies so, and the extasie hath so much overborne her, that my daughter is somtime afeard she will doe a desperate out-rage to her selfe, it is vey true.

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

Clau. To what end? he would but make a sport of it, and torment the poore Lady worse.

Prin. And he should, it were an almes to hang him, shee's an excellent sweet Lady, and (out of all suspition,) she is vertuous.

Claudio, And she is exceeding wise.

Prince. In every thing, but in loving *Benedicke.*

Leon. O my Lord, wisedome and blood combating in so tender a body, we have ten proofes to one, that bloud hath the victory, I am sorry for her, as I have just cause , being her Uncle, and her Guardian.

Prince. I would shee had bestowed this dotage on mee, I would have dast all other respects, and made her halfe my selfe : I pray you tell *Benedicke* of it, and heare what he will say.

Leon. Were it good thinke you?

Clau. Hero thinkes surely she will die, for she saies she will die, if hee love her not , and shee will die ere shee make her love knowne, and she will die if hee wooe her, rather than shee will bate one breath of her accustomed crossenesse.

Prin. She doth well, if she should make tender of her love,

love, 'tis very possible hee'l scorne it, for the man Ias you know all) hath a contemptible spirit.

Clau, He is a very proper man.

Prin. He hath indeed a good outward happines.

Clau. 'Fore God, and in my minde very wise.

Prin. He doth indeed shew some sparkes that are like wit.

Leon. And I take him to be valiant.

Prin. As *Hector,* I assure you, and in the managing of quarrels you may see hee is wise, for either hee avoydes them with great discretion, or undertakes them with a Christian-like feare.

Leon. If hee doe feare God, a must necessarilie keepe peace, if hee breake the peace, hee ought to enter into a quarrell with feare and trembling.

Prin, And so will he doe, for the man doth fear God, howsoever it seemes not in him, by some large jeasts hee will make : well, I am sorry for your niece, shall we goe see *Benedicke*, and tell him of her love?

Claud. Never tell him, my Lord, let her weare it out with good counsell.

Leon. Nay that's impossible, she may weare her heart out first.

Prin. Well, we will heare further of it by your daughter, let it coole the while, I love *Benedicke* well, and I could wish he would modestly examine himselfe, to see how much he is unworthy to have so good a Lady.

Leon. My Lord, will you walke? dinner is ready.

Clau. If he do not doat on her upon this, I wil never trust my expectation.

Prin. Let there be the same Net spread for her, and that must your daughter and her gentlewoman carry: the sport will be, when they hold one an opinion of anothers dotage, and no such matter, that's the Scene that I would see, which will be meerely a dumbe shew : let us send her to call him into dinner. *Exeunt.*

Bene. This can be no tricke, the conference was sadly borne, they have the truth of this from *Hero*, they seeme to pitie the Lady : it seemes her affections have the full bent : love me? why it must be requited : I heare how I am censur'd, they say I will beare my selfe proudly, if I perceive the love come from her : they say too, that she will rather die than give any signe of affection: I did never thinke to marry, I must not seeme proud, happy are they that heare their detractions , and can put them to mending : they say the Lady is faire, 'tis a truth, I can beare them witnesse : and vertuous, tis so , I cannot reproove it, and wise, but for loving me, by my troth it is no addition to her witte, nor no great argument of her folly; for I wil be horribly in love with her, I may chance have some odde quirkes and remaines of witte broken on me, because I have rail'd so long against marriage: but doth not the appetite alter? a man loves the meat in his youth, that he cannot indure in his age. Shall quips and sentences, and these paper bullets of the braine awe a man from the careere of his humour ? No, the world must be peopled. When I said I would die a batcheler, I did not think I should live till I were maried: here comes *Beatrice* :by this day, shee's a faire Lady, I doe spie some markes of love in her.

Enter Beatrice.

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

Bene. Faire *Beatrice,* I thanke you for your paines.

Beat. I tooke no more paines for those thankes, then you take paines to thanke me, if it had been painefull; I would not have come.

Bene. You take pleasure then in the message.

Beat. Yea just so much as you may take upon a knives point, and choake a daw withall: you have no stomacke signior, fare you well. *Exit.*

Bene. Ha, against my will I am sent to bid you come in to dinner : there's a double meaning in that : I tooke no more paines for those thankes then you tooke paines to thanke me, that's as much as to say, any paines that I take for you is as easie as thankes : if I do not take pitty of her I am a villaine, if I doe not love her I am a Jew, I will goe get her picture. *Exit.*

Actus Tertius.

Enter Hero and two Gentlemen, Margaret, and Ursula.

Hero.. Good *Margaret* runne thee to the parlour,
There shalt thou finde my Cosin *Beatrice,*
Proposing with the Prince and *Claudio*,
Whisper her eare, and tell her I and *Ursula*,
Walke in the Orchard, and our whole discourse
Is all of her, say that thou over-heardst us,
And bid her steale into the pleached bower,
Where hony-suckles ripened by the sunne,
Forbid the sunne to enter: like favourites,
Made proud by Princes, that advance their pride,
Against that power that bred it, there will she hide her,
To listen our purpose, this is thy office,
Beare thee well in it, and leave us alone.

Marg. Ile make her come I warrant you presently.

Hero. Now *Ursula,* when *Beatrice* doth come,
As we do trace this alley up and downe,
Our talke must onely be of *Benedicke,*
When I doe name him, let it be thy part,
To praise him more then ever man did merit,
My talke to thee must be how *Benedicke*
Is sicke in love with *Beatrice :* of this matter,
Is little *Cupids* crafty arrow made,
That onely wounds by heare-say: now begin,
Enter Beatrice.
For looke where *Beatrice* like a Lapwing runs
Close by the ground, to heare our conference.

Urs. The pleasant'st angling is to see the fish
Cut with her golden ores the silver streame,
And greedily devoure the treacherous baite :
So angle we for *Beatrice,* who even now
Is couched in the wood-bine coverture,
Feare you not my part of the Dialogue.

Her. Then go we neare her that her eare loose nothing,
Of the false sweete baite that we lay for it:
No truely *Ursula,* she is too disdainfull,
I know her spirits are as coy and wilde,
As Haggerds of the rocke.

Ursula. But are you sure,
That *Benedicke* loves *Beatrice* so intirely?

Her. So saies the Prince, and my new trothed Lord.

Urs. And did they bid you tell her of it, Madam?

Her. They did intreate me to acquaint her of it,
But I perswaded them, if they lov'd *Benedicke,*

to wish him wrastle with affection,
And never to let *Beatrice* know if 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 yeelded to a man, :
But Nature never fram'd a womans heart,
Of prowder stuffe then that of *Beatrice :*
Disdaine and Scorne ride sparkling in her eyes,
Mis-prizing what they looke on, and her wit
Values it selfe so highly, that to her
All matter else seemes weake: she cannot love,
Nor take no shape nor project of affection,
Shee is so selfe indeared.
Ursula. Sure I think so,
And therefore certainely it were not good
She knew his love, lest she make sport at it.
Hero. Why you speake truth, I never yet saw man,
How wise, how noble, yong,how rarely featur'd.
But she would spell him backward : if faire fac'd,
She would sweare the gentleman should be her sister:
If blacke, why Nature drawing of an anticke,
Made a foule blot: if tall, a launce ill headed:
If low, an agot very vildlie cut:
If speaking, why a vane blowne with all windes:
If silent, why a blocke moved with none.
So turnes she every man the wrong side out,
And never gives to Truth and Vertue, that
Which simplenesse and merit purchaseth.
Ursu. Sure, sure, such carping is not commendable.
Hero. No, not to be so odde, and from all fashions,
As *Breatrice* is, cannot be commendable,
But who dare tell her so? if I should speake,
She would mocke me into ayre. O she would laugh me
Out of my selfe, presse me to death with wit,
Therefore let *Benedicke* like covered fire,
Consume away in sighes, waste inwardly:
It were a better death, to die with mockes,
Which is as bad as die with tickling.
Ursu. Yet tell her of it, heare what shee will say.
Hero. No, rather I will goe to *Benedicke,*
And counsaile him to fight against his passion,
And truly Ile devise fome honest slanders,
To staine my cosin with, one doth not know,
How much an ill word may impoison liking.
Ursu. O doe not doe your cosin such a wrong,
She cannot be so much without true judgement,
Having so swift and excellent a wit
As she is prisde to have, as to refuse
So rare a Gentleman as signior *Benedicke.*
Hero. He is the onely man of Italy,
Alwaies excepted, my deare *Claudio.*
Ursu. I pray you be not angry with me, Madame,
Speaking my fancy: Signior *Benedicke,*
For shape, for bearing argument and valour,
Goes formost in report through Italy.
Hero. Indeed he hath an excellent good name.
Ursu. His excellence did earne it ere he had it :
When are you married Madame?
Hero. Why everie day to morrow, come goe in,
Ile shew thee some attires, and have thy counsell,
Which is the best to furnish me to morrow.
Ursu. Shee's tane I warrant you,
We have caught her Madame?
Hero. If it prove so, then loving goes by haps,

Some *Cupid* kills with arrowes, some with traps. *Exit.*

Beat. What fire is in mine eares? can this be true?
Stand I condemn'd for pride and scorne so much?
Contempt,farewell,and maiden pride, adew,
No glory lives behinde the backe of such.
And *Benedicke,*love on, I will requite thee,
Taming my wilde heart to thy loving hand:
If thou dost love, my kindenesse shall incite thee
To binde our loves up in a holy band.
For others say thou dost deserve, and I
Beleeve it better then reportingly. *Exit.*

Enter Prince,Claudio,Benedicke,and Leonato.

Prince. I doe but stay till your marriage be consummate, and then I go toward Arragon.

Clau. Ile bring you thither my Lord, if you'l vouchsafe me.

Prin. Nay, that would be as great a foyle in the new glosse of your marriage,as to shew a childe his new coat and forbid him to weare it, I will onely bee bold with *Benedicke* for his companie, for from the crowne of his head, to the sole of his foot, he is all mirth, he hath twice or thrice cut *Cupids* bow-string, and the little hang-man dare not shoot at him, he hath a heart as sound as a bell, and his tongue is the clapper, for what his heart thinkes, his tongue speakes.

Bene. Gallants, I am not as I have bin.

Leo. So say I, methinkes you are sadder.

Claud. I hope he be in love.

Prin. Hang him truant, there's no true drop of bloud in him to be truly toucht with love, if he be sad, he wants money.

Bene. I have the tooth-ach.

Prin. Draw it.

Bene. Hang it.

Claud. You must hang it first, and draw it afterwards.

Prin. What? sigh for the tooth-ach.

Leon. Where is but a humour or a worme.

Bene. Well, every one cannot master a griefe, but hee that has it.

Clau. Yet say I, he is in love.

Prin. There is no appearance of fancie in him, unlesse it be a fancy that he hath to strange disguises, as to bee a Dutchman to day, a Frenchman to morrow: unlesse hee have a fancy to this foolery, as it appeares he hath, hee is no foole for fancy, as you would have it to appeare he is.

Clau. If he be not in love with some woman, there is no beleeving old signes, a brushes his hat a mornings, What should that bode?

Prin. Hath any man seene him at the Barbers?

Clau, No, but the Barbers man hath been seen with him, and the olde ornament of his cheeke hath alreadie stuft tennis balls.

Leon. Indeed he lookes yonger than hee did, by the losse of a beard.

Prin. Nay a rubs himselfe with Civit, can you smell him out by that?

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

Prin. The greatest note of it is his melancholy.

Clau. And when was he wont to wash his face?

Prin. Yea,or to paint himselfe? for the which I heare what they say of him.

Clau. Nay,but his jesting spirit, which is now crept into a lute-string,and now govern'd by stops.

Prince.

Prin. Indeed that tels a heavy tale for him: conclude, he is in love.

Clau. Nay, but I know who loves him.

Prince. That would I know too, I warrant one that knowes him not.

Cla. Yes, and his ill conditions, and in despight of all, dies for him.

Prin. Shee shall be buried with her face upwards.

Bene. Yet is this no charme for the tooth-ake,old signior, walke aside with mee,I have studied eight or nine wise words to speake to you, which these hobby-horses must not heare.

Prin, For my life to breake with him about *Beatrice.*

Clau. 'Tis even so , *Hero* and *Margaret* have by this played their parts with *Beatrice*, and then the two Beares will not bite one another when they meete.

Enter John the Bastard.

Bast. My Lord and brother, God save you.

Prin. Good den brother.

Bast. If your leisure serv'd, I would speake with you.

Prince. In private?

Bast. If it please you, yet Count *Claudio* may heare , for what I would speake of,concernes him.

Prin. What's the matter?

Basta. Meanes your Lordship to be married to morrow?

Prin. You know he does.

Bast. I know not that when he knowes what I know.

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

Bast. You may thinke I love you not,let that appeare hereafter, and ayme better at me by that I now will manifest, for my brother (I thinke,he holds you well, and in dearenesse of heart) hath holpe to effect your ensuing marriage : surely sute ill spent, and labour ill bestowed.

Prin. Why, what's the matter?

Bastard. I came hither to tell you, and circumstances shortned, (for she hath beene too long a talking of) the Lady is disloyall.

Clau. Who *Hero?*

Bast. even shee, *Leonatoes Hero,* your *Hero,* every mans *Hero.*

Clau. Disloyall?

Bast. The word is too good to paint out her wickednesse, I could say she were worse, thinke you of a worse title, and I will fit her to it : wonder not till further warrant: goe but with mee to night, you shal see her chamber window entred, even the night before her wedding day, if you love her, then to morrow wed her : But it would better fit your honour to change your minde.

Claud. May this be so?

Princ. I will not thinke it.

Bast. If you dare not trust that you see, confesse not that you know : if you will follow mee, I will shew you enough, and when you have seene more & heard more, proceed accordingly.

Clau. If I see any thing to night, why I should not marry her to morrow in the congregation, where I shold wedde, there will I shame her.

Prin. And as I wooed for thee to obtaine her, I will joyne with thee to disgrace her.

Bast. I will disparage her no farther, till you are my witnesses, beare it coldly but till night, and let the issue shew it selfe.

Prin. O day untowardly turned!

Claud. O mischiefe strangelie thwarting!

Bastard. O plague right well prevented! so will you say, when you have seene the sequele. *Exit.*

Enter Dogbery and his compartner with the watch.

Dog. Are you good men and true?

Verg. Yea, or else it were pitty but they should suffer salvation body and soule.

Dogb. Nay, that were a punishment too good for them, if they should have any allegiance in them , being chosen for the Princes watch.

Verges. Well, give them their charge , neighbour *Dogbery.*

Dog. First, who thinke you the most desartlesse man to be Constable?

Watch.1. Hugh Ote-cake sir. or *George Sea-coale,* for they can write and reade.

Dogb. Come hither neighbour Sea-coale , God hath blest you with a good name : to be a wel-favoured man, is the gift of Fortune, but to write and reade, comes by Nature.

Watch 2. Both which Master Constable

Dogb. You have: I knew it would be your answere: well, for your favour sir, why give God thankes, & make no boast of it, and for your writing and reading, let that appeare when there is no need of such vanity, you are thought heere to be the most senseless and fit man for the Constable of the watch : therefore beare you the lanthorne : this is your charge : You shall comprehend all vagrom men, you are to bid any man stand in the Princes name.

Watch 2. How if a will not stand?

Dogb. Why then take no note of him, but let him go, and presently call the rest of the Watch together, and thanke God you are ridde of a knave.

Verges. If he will not stand when he is bidden, hee is none of the Princes subjects.

Dogb. True, and they are to meddle with none but the Princes subjects : you shall also make no noise in the streetes : for,for the Watch to babble and talke, is most tollerable, and not to be indured.

Watch. We will rather sleepe than talke, wee know what belongs to a Watch.

Dog. Why you speake like an ancient and most quiet watchman,for I canot see how sleeping should offend: only have a care that your bills be not stolne : well, you are to call at all the Alehouses, and bid them that are drunke get them to bed.

Watch. How if they will not?

Dogb. Why then let them alone till they are sober,if they make you not then the better answere, you may say, they are not the men you tooke them for.

Watch. Well sir.

Dog. If you meet a theefe, you may suspect him, by vertue of your office, to be no true man : and for such kinde of men, the lesse you meddle or make with them, why the more is for your honesty.

Watch. If wee know him to be a thiefe, shall wee not lay hands on him.

Dog. Truly by your office you may, but I think they that touch pitch will be defil'd : the most peaceable way for you, if you doe take a theefe,is , to let him shew himselfe what he is, and steale out of your company.

Ver. You have bin alwaies cal'd a merciful mã partner.

Dog. Truely I would not hang a dog by my will, much more a man who hath anie honestie in him.

Verges. If you heare a child crie in the night you must call to the nurse, and bid her still it.

Watch. How if the nurse be asleepe and will not heare us?

Dog. Why then depart in peace, and let the childe wake her with crying, for the ewe that will not heare her Lambe when it baes, will never answere a calfe when he bleates.

Verges. 'Tis verie true.

Dog. This is the end of the charge : you constable are to present the Princes owne person, if you meete the Prince in the night, you may staie him.

Verges. Nay birladie that I thinke a cannot.

Dog. Five shillings to one on't with anie man that knowes the Statutes, he may staie him, marrie not without the prince be willing, for indeed the watch ought to offend no man, and it is an offence to stay a man against his will.

Verges. Birladie I thinke it be so.

Dog. Ha,ah ha, well masters good night; and there be anie matter of weight chances , call up me, keepe your fellowes counsailes, and your owne, and good night, come neighbour.

Watch. Well masters, we heare our charge, let us go sit here upon the Church bench till two, and then all to bed.

Dog. One word more, honest neighbors. I pray you watch about signior *Leonatoes* doore, for the wedding being there to morrow, there is a great coyle to night, adiew, be vigitant I beseech you. *Exeunt.*

Enter Borachio and Conrade.

*Bor.*What, *Conrade?*

Watch. Peace, stir not.

Bor. Conrade I say.

Con. Here man, I am at thy elbow.

Bor. Mas and my elbow icht, I thought there would a scabbe follow.

Con. I will owe thee an answere for that, and now forward with thy tale.

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

Watch. Some treason masters, yet stand close.

Bor. Therefore know, I have earned of *Don John* a thousand Ducates.

Con. Is it possible that anie villanie should be so deare?

Bor. Thou should'st rather aske if it were possible anie villanie should be so rich?for when rich villains have neede of poore ones, poore ones may make what price they will.

Con. I wonder at it.

Bor. That shewes thou art unconfirm'd,thou knowest that the fashion of a doublet, or a hat, or a cloake, is nothing to a man.

Con. Yes it is apparell.

Bor. I meane the fashion.

Con. Yes the fashion is the fashion.

Bor. Tush, I may as well say the foole's the foole, but seest thou not what a deformed theefe this fashion is?

Watch. I know that deformed, a has bin a vile theefe, this vii. yeares, a goes up and downe like a gentle man : I remember his name.

Bor. Did'st thou not heare some bodie?

Con. No, 'twas the vaine on the house.

Bor. Seest thou not (I say) what a deformed thiefe this fashion is, how giddily a turnes about all the Hot-

blouds, betweene foureteene & five & thirtie,sometimes fashioning them like *Pharaoes* souldiours in the rechie painting, sometime like god Bels priests in the old Church window, sometime like the shaven *Hercules* in the smircht worm eaten tapestrie, where his cod-peece seems as massie as his club.

Con, All this I see, and see that the fashion weares out more apparell then the man; but art not thou thy selfe giddie with the fashion too that thou hast shifted out of thy tale into telling me of the fashion?

Bor. Not so neither, but know that I have to night wooed *Margaret* the Lady *Heroes* gentle-woman, by the name of *Hero,* she leanes me out at her mistris chamber-window, bids me a thousand times good night: I tell this tale vildly. I should first tell thee how the Prince *Claudio* and my Master planted, and placed, and possessed by my Master *Don John,* saw a far off in the Orchard this amiable incounter.

Con. And thought thy *Margaret* was *Hero?*

Bor. Two of them did, the Prince and *Claudio*, but the divell my Master knew she was *Margaret* and partly by his oathes, which first possest them, but chiefely, by my villanie, which did confirme any slander that *Don John* had made, away went *Claudio* enraged, swore hee vvould meete her as he was apointed next morning at the Temple, and there, before the whole congregation shame her with vvhat he saw o're night, and send her home againe vvithout a husband.

Watch. I. We charge you in the Princes name stand.

Watch.2. Call up the right master Constable, we have here recovered the most dangerous peece of lechery,that ever was knowne in the Common-wealth.

Watch.1. And one Deformed is one of them, I know him, a weares a locke.

Conr. Masters,masters.

Watch.2. Youle be made bring deformed forth I warrant you,

Conr. Masters, never speake, we charge you, let us obey you to goe with us.

Bor. We are like to prove a goodly commoditie, being taken up of these mens bils.

Conr. A commoditie in question I warrant you come weele obey you. *Exeunt.*

Enter Hero, and Margaret, and Ursula.

Hero. Good *Ursula* wake my cosin *Beatrice,* and desire her to rise.

Ursu. I will Lady.

Her. And bid her come hither.

Urs. Well.

Mar. Troth I think your other rebato were better.

[*Bero.*] No pray thee good *Meg,* Ile weare this.

Marg. By my troth's not so good, and I warrant your cosin will say so.

Bero. My cosin's a foole, and thou art another, ile weare none but this.

Mar. I like the new tire within excellently, if the haire were a thought browner : and your gown's a most rare fashion yfaith, I saw the Dutchess of *Millaines* gowne that they praise so.

Bero. O that exceedes they say.

Mar. By my troth's but a night-gowne in respect of yours,cloth a gold and cuts, and lac'd with silver, set with pearles, downe sleeves,side sleeves, and skirts, round underborn with a blewish tinsel, but for a fine queint gracefull and excellent fashion, yours is worth ten on't.

Bero. God

Hero. God give me joy to weare it, for my heart is exceeding heavy.

Marga. 'Twill be heavier soone, by the waight of a man.

Hero. Fie upon thee, art not asham'd?

Marg. Of what Lady? of speaking honourably? is not marriage honourable in a beggar? is not your Lord honourable without marriage? I thinke you would have me say, saving your reverence a husband : and bad thinking doe not wrest true speaking,Ile offend no body, is there any harme in the heavier for a husband? none I thinke, and it be the right husband, and the right wife, otherwise 'tis light and not heavy,aske my Lady *Beatrice* else,here she comes.

Enter Beatrice.

Hero. Good morrow Coze.

Beat. Good morrow sweet *Hero.*

Hero. Why how now? do you speake in the sick tune?

Beat. I am out of all other tune, me thinkes.

Mar. Claps into Light a love , (that goes without a burden,) do you sing it and Ile dance it.

Beat. Ye Light alove with your heeles , then if your husband have stables enough, you'll looke he shall lacke no barnes.

Mar. O illegitimate construction! I scorne that with my heeles.

Beat. 'Tis almost five a clocke cosin, 'tis time you were ready,by my troth I am exceeding ill, hey ho.

Mar. For a hauke, a horse, or a husband?

Beat. For the letter that begins them all, *H.*

Mar. Well, and you be not turn'd Turke, there's no more sayling by the starre.

Beat. What meanes the foole trow?

Mar. Nothing I, but God send every one their harts desire.

Hero. These gloves the Count sent mee, they are an excellent perfume.

Beat. I am stuft cosin, I cannot smell.

Mar. A maid and stuft! there's goodly catching of colde.

Beat. O God helpe me, God help me, how long have you profest apprehension?

Mar. Ever since you left it, doth not my wit become me rarely?

Beat. It is not seene enough, you should weare it in your cap, by my troth I am sicke.

Mar. Get you some of this distill'd *carduus benedictus* and lay it to your heart, it is the onely thing for a qualm.

Hero. there thou prickst her with a thissell.

Beat. Benedictus, why *benedictus?* you have some morall in this *benedictus.*

Mar. Morall? no by my troth, I have no morall meaning, I meant plaine holy thissell , you may thinke perchance that I thinke you are in love, nay birlady I am not such a foole to thinke what I list, nor I list not to thinke what I can, nor indeed I cannot thinke, if I would thinke my hart out of thinking, that you are in love, or that you will be in love, or that you can be in love : yet *Benedicke* was such another, and now is he become a man, he swore hee would never marry , and yet now in despight of his heart he eates his meat without grudging, and how you may be converted I know not, but me thinkes you looke with your eies as other women doe.

Beat. What pace is this that thy tongue keepes.

Mar. Not a false gallop.

Enter Ursula.

Ursula. Madam, withdraw, the Prince, the Count,signior *Benedicke,* Don *John,* and all the gallants of the town are come to fetch you to Church.

Hero. Helpe to dresse mee good coze, good *Meg,* good *Ursula.*

Enter Leonato, and the Constable, and the Headborough.

Leonato. What would you do with mee, honest neighbour ?

Const.Dog. Mary sir I would have some confidence with you, that decernes you nearely.

Leon. Briefe I pray you, for you see it is a busie time with me.

Const. Dog. Mary this it is sir.

Headb. Yes in truth it is sir.

Leon. What is it my good friends?

Con.Do. Goodman Verges sir speakes a little of the matter, an old man sir, and his wits are not so blunt, as God helpe I would desire they were, but infaith honest as the skin between his browes.

Head. Yes I thank God, I am as honest as any man living,that is an old man, and no honester then I.

Cons.Dog. Comparisons are odorous,palabras, neighbour Verges.

Leon. Neighbours, you are tedious.

Con.Dog. It pleases your worship to say so, but we are the poore Dukes officers, but truely for mine owne part, if I were as tedious as a King I could finde in my heart to bestowe it all of your worship.

Leon. All thy tediousnesse on me,ah?

Const.Dog. Yea, and 'twere a thousand times more than 'tis, for I heare as good exclamation on your Worship as of any man in the Citie , and though I bee but a poore man, I am glad to heare it.

Head. And so am I.

Leon. I would faine know what you have to say.

Head. Marry sir our watch to night, excepting your worships presence, have tane a couple of as arrant knaves as any in Messina.

Con.Dog. A good old man sir , hee will be talking as they say, when the age is in the wit is out, God helpe us, it is a world to see : well said yfaith neighbour *Verges,* well, God's a good man, and two men ride of a horse, one must ride behinde, an honest soule yfaith sir, by my troth he is, as ever broke bread, but God is to bee worshipt, all men are not alike, alas good neighbour.

Leon. Indeed neighbour he comes too short of you.

Con.Do. Gifts that God gives.

Leon. I must leave you.

Con.Dog. One word sir, our watch sir have indeede comprehended two aspitious persons, & we would have them this morning examined before your worship.

Leon. Take their examination your selfe, and bring it me, I am now in great haste, as may appeare unto you.

Const, It shall be suffigance. (*Exit.*

Leon. Drinke some wine ere you goe : fare you well.

Messenger. My Lord, they stay for you to give your daughter to her husband.

Leon. Ile wait upon them, I am ready.

Dogb. Goe good partner, goe get you to *Francis Seacoale,* bit him bring his pen and inkhorne to the Gaole : we are now to examine those men.

Verges. And we must do it wisely.

Dogb. Wee will spare for no witte I warrent you :

heere's that shall drive some of them to a non-come, onley get the learned writer to set downe our excommunication, and meet me at the Jaile. *Exeunt.*

Actus Quartus.

Enter Prince, Bastard, Leonato, Frier, Claudio, Benedicke, Hero, and Beatrice.

Leonato. Come Frier *Francis,* be briefe, onely to the plaine forme of marriage, and you shal recount their particular duties afterwards.

Fran, You come hither, my Lord, to marry this Lady.

Clau. No.

Leo. To be married to her : Frier, you come to marrie her.

Frier. Lady, you come hither to be married to this Count.

Hero. I doe.

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

Claud, Know you anie, *Hero?*

Hero. None my Lord.

Frier. Know you anie, Count?

Leon. I dare make his answer, None.

Clau. O what men dare do! what men may do! what men daily do!

Bene. How now ! interjections? why then, some be of laughing, as ha, ha,he.

Clau. Stand thee by Frier, father, by your leave,
Will you with free and unconstrained soule
Give me this maid your daughter?

Leon. As freely sonne as God did give her me.

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

Prin, Nothing, unless you render her againe,

Clau. Sweet prince, you learn me noble thankfulnes :
There *Leonato,* take her backe againe,
Give not this rotten Orenge to your friend,
Shee's but the signe and semblance of her honour:
Behold how like a maid she blushes heere!
O what authoritie and shew of truth
Can cunning sinne cover it selfe withall!
Comes not that bloud, as modest evidence,
To witnesse simple Vertue? would you not sweare
All you that see her, that she were a maide,
By these exterior shewes? But she is none:
She knowes the heat of a luxurious bed:
Her blush is guiltinesse, not modestie.

Leonato. What do you meane, my Lord?

Clau. Not to be married,
Not to knit my soule to an approved wanton.

Leon. Deere my Lord, if you in your owne proofe,
Have vanquisht the resistance of her youth,
And made defeat of her virginitie, (her,

Clau. I know what you would say: if I have knowne
You will say, she did imbrace me as a husband,
And so extenuate the forehand sinne : No *Leonato,*
I never tempted her with word too large,
But as a brother to his sister, shewed
Bashfull sinceritie and comely love.

Hero. And seem'd I ever otherwise to you?

Clau. Out on thee seeming, I will write against it,
You seeme to me as *Diane* in her Orbe,
As chaste as is the budde ere it be blowne :
But you are more intemperate in your blood,
Then *Venus,* or those pampered animalls,
That rage in savage sensualitie.
Hero. Is my Lord well, that he doth speak so wide?
Leon. Sweete Prince, why speake not you?
Prin. What should I speake?
I stand dishonour'd that have gone about,
To linke my deare friend to a common stale.
Leon. Are these things spoken, or doe I but dreame?
Bast. Sir, they are spoken, and these things are true.
Bene. This lookes not like a nuptiall.
Hero. True, O God!
Clau. Leonato, stand I here?
Is this the Prince ? is this the Princes brother?
Is this face *Heroes?* are our eies our owne?
Leon. All this is so, but what of this my Lord?
Clau. Let me but move one question to your daugh-
And by that fatherly and kindly power, (ter,
That you have in her, bid her answer truly.
Leo. I charge thee doe, as thou art my childe.
Hero. O God defend me how am I beset ,
What kinde of catechizing call you this?
Clau. To make you answer truly to your name.
Hero. Is it not *Hero*? who can blot that name
With any just reproach?
Claud. Marry that can *Hero,*
Hero it selfe can blot out *Heroes* vertue.
What man was he, talkt with you yesternight,
Out at your window betwixt twelve and one?
Now if you are a maid, answer to this.
Hero. I talkt with no man at that howre my Lord.
Prince. Why then you are no maiden. *Leonato,*
I am sorry you must heare : upon mine honor,
My selfe, my brother, and this grieved Count
Did see her, heare her, at that howre last night,
Talke with a ruffian at her chamber window,
Who hath indeed most like a liberall villaine,
Confest the vile encounters they have had
A thousand times in secret.
John. Fie, fie, they are not to be named my Lord,
Not to be spoken of,
There is not chastitie enough in language,
Without offence to utter them: thus pretty Lady
I am sorry for thy much misgovernment.
Claud. O *Hero* ! what a *Hero* hadst thou beene
If halfe thy outward graces had beene placed
About thy thoughts and counsailes of they heart?
But fare thee well, most foule, most faire, farewell
Thou pure impiety, and impious puritie,
For thee Ile locke up all the gates of Love,
And on my eie-lids shall Conjecture hang,
To turne all beauty into thoughts of harme,
And never shall it more be gracious.
Leon. Hath no mans dagger here a point for me?
Beat. Why how now cosin, wherefore sink you down?
Bast. Come, let us go: these things come thus to light,
Smother her spirits up.
Bene. How doth the Lady?
Beat. Dead I thinke, helpe uncle,
Hero, why *Hero,* Uncle, Segnor *Benedicke,* Frier.
Leonato. O Fate ! take not away thy heavy hand,
Death is the fairest cover for her shame
That may be wisht for.

Beat. How

Beatr. How now cosin *Hero?*
Fri. Have comfort Ladie.
Leon. Dost thou looke up?
Frier. Yea, wherefore should she not?
Leon. Wherefore? Why doth not every earthly thing
Cry shame upon her? Could she heere denie
The storie that is printed in her blood?
Do not live *Hero,* do not ope thine eyes:
For did I thinke thou wouldst not quickly die,
Thought I thy spirits were stronger then thy shames,
My selfe would on the reward of reproaches
Strike at thy life. Griev'd I, I had but one?
Chid I, for that at frugal Natures frame ?
O one too much by thee : why had I one?
Why ever was't thou lovelie in my eies?
Why had I not with charitable hand
Tooke up a beggars issue at my gates,
Who smeered thus, and mir'd with infamie,
I might have said, no part of it is mine :
This shame derives it selfe from unknowne loines,
But mine, and mine I lov'd, and mine I prais'd,
And mine that I was proud on mine so much,
That I my selfe, was to my selfe not mine:
Valewing of her, why she, O she is falne
Into a pit of Inke, that the wide sea
Hath drops too few to wash her cleane againe,
And salt too little, which may season give
To her foule tainted flesh.
Ben. Sir, sir, be patient : for my part, I am so attired in wonder, I know not what to say.
Bea. O on my soule my cosin is belied.
Ben. Ladie, were you her bedfellow last night?
Bea. No truly: not although untill last night,
I have this twelvemonth bin her bedfellow.
Leon. Confirm'd, confirm'd, O that is stronger made
Which was before barr'd up with ribs of iron.
Would the Princes lie, and *Claudio* lie,
Who lov'd her so, that speaking of her foulnesse,
Wash'd it with teares? Hence from her, let her die.
Fri. Heare me a little, for I have onely bene silent so long, and given way unto this course of fortune, by noting of the Ladie, I have markt.
A thousand blushing apparitions,
To start into her face, a thousand innocent shames,
In Angel whitenesse, beare away those blushes,
And in her eie there hath appeare'd a fire
To burne the errors that these Princes hold
Against her maiden truth. Call me a foole,
Trust not my reading, nor my observations,
Which with experimental seale doth warrant
The tenure of my booke: trust not my age,
My reverence, calling, nor divinitie,
If this sweet Ladie lye not guiltlesse heere,
Under some biting error.
Leo. Friar, it cannot be:
Thou seest that all the Grace that she hath left
Is, that she wil not adde to her damnation,
A sinne of perjury, she not denies it:
Why seek'st thou then to cover with excuse,
That which appeares in proper nakednesse?
Fri. Ladie, what man is he you are accus'd of?
Hero. They know that do accuse me, I know none:
If I know more of any man alive
Then that which maiden modestie doth warrant,
Let all my sinnes lacke mercy. O my Father,
Prove you that any man with me converst,

At houres unmeete, or that I yesternight
Maintain'd the change of words with any creature,
Refuse me, hate me, torture me to death.
Fri. There is some strange misprision in the Princes.
Ben. Two of them have the verie bent of honor,
And if their wisedomes be misled in this:
The practise of it lives in *John* the bastard,
Whose spirits toile in frame of villanies.
Leo. I know not : if they speake but truth of her,
These hands shall teare her : If they wrong her honour,
The proudest of them shall wel heare of it.
Time hath not yet so dried this bloud of mine,
Nor age so eate up my invention,
Nor Fortune made such havocke of my meanes,
Nor my bad life reft me so much of friends,
But they shall finde, awak'd in such a kinde,
Both strength of limbe, and policie of minde,
Ability in meanes, and choise of friends,
To quit me of them throughly.
Fri. Pause awhile :
And let my counsell sway you in this case,
Your daughter heere the Princesse (left for dead)
Let her awhile be secretly kept in,
And publish it, that she is dead indeed:
Maintaine a mourning ostentation,
And on your Families old monument,
Hang mournfull Epitaphes, and do all rites,
That appertaine unto a buriall.
Leon. What shall become of this? What wil this do?
Fri. Marry this wel carried, shall on her bahalfe,
Change slander to remorse, that is some good,
But not for that dreame I on this strange course,
But on this travaile looke for greater birth:
She dying, as it must be so maintain'd,
Upon the instant that she was accus'd,
Shal be lamented, pittied, and excus'd
Of every hearer : for it so fals out,
That what we have, we prize not to the worth,
Whiles we enjoy it; but being lack'd and lost,
Why then we racke the value, then we finde
The vertue that possession would not shew us
Whiles it was ours, so will it fare with *Claudio:*
When he shal heare she dyed upon his words,
Th'Idea of her life shall sweetly creepe
Into his study of imagination.
And every lovely Organ of her life,
Shall come apparel'd in more precious habite :
More moving delicate, and ful of life ,
Into the eye and prospect of his soule
Then when she liv'd indeed : then shal he mourne,
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 successe
Wil fashion the event in better shape,
Then I can lay it downe in likelihood.
But if all ayme but this be levelld false,
The supposition of the Ladies death,
Will quench the wonder of her infamie.
And if it sort not well, you may conceale her,
As best befits her wounded reputation,
In some reclusive and religious life,
Out of all eyes, tongues, mindes and injuries.
Bene. Signior *Leonato,* Let the Frier advise you,
And though you know my inwardnesse and love
Is very much unto the Prince and *Claudio.*

Yet, by mine honor, I will deale in this,
As secretly and justlie, as your soule
Should with your bodie.
Leon. Being that I flow in greefe,
The smallest twine may lead me.
Frier. 'Tis well consented, presently away,
For to strange sores, strangely they straine the cure,
Come Lady, die to live, this wedding day
Perhaps is but prolong'd, have patience & endure. *Exit.*
Bene. Lady *Beatrice,* have you wept all this while?
Beat. Yea, and I will weepe a while longer.
Bene. I will not desire that.
Beat. You have no reason, I doe it freely.
Bene. Surelie I do beleeve your fair cosin is wrog'd.
Beat. Ah, how much might the man deserve of mee that would right her!
Bene. Is there any way to shew such friendship?
Beat. A verie even way, but no such friend.
Bene, May a man doe it?
Beat. It is a mans office, but not yours.
Bene. I doe love nothing in the world so well as you, is not that strange?
Beat. As strange as the thing I know not, it were as possible for me to say, I loved nothing so well as you, but beleeve me not, and yet I lie not, I confesse nothing, nor I deny nothing, I am sorry for my cousin.
Bene, By my sword *Beatrice* thou lov'st me.
Beat. Doe not sweare by it and eat it.
Bene. I will sweare by it that you love mee, and I will make him eat it that sayes I love not you.
Beat. Will you not eat your word?
Bene, With no sawce that can be devised to it, I protest I love thee.
Beat. Why then God forgive me.
Bene. What offence sweet Beatrice?
Beat. You have stayed me in a happy howre, I was about to protest I loved you.
Bene. And doe it with all thy heart.
Beat. I love you with so much of my heart, that none is left to protest.
Bened. Come, bid me doe any thing for thee.
Beat. Kill *Claudio.*
Bene. Ha, not for the wide world.
Beat. You kill me to denie, farewell.
Bene. Tarrie sweet *Beatrice.*
Beat. I am gone,though I am heere, there is no love in you, nay I pray you let me goe.
Bene. Beatrice.
Beat. Infaith I will goe.
Bene. Wee'll be friends first.
Beat. You dare easier be friends with mee, than fight with mine enemy.
Bene. Is *Claudio* thine enemie?
Beat. Is a not approved in the height a villaine, that hath slandered,scorned, dishonoured my kinswoman? O that I were a man ! what, beare her in hand untill they come to take hands, and then with publike accusation uncovered slander, unmittigated rancour? O God that I were a man! I would eat his heart in the market-place.
Bene. Heare me *Beatrice.*
Beat. Talke with a man out at a window, a proper saying.
Bene. Nay but *Beatrice.*
Beat. Sweet *Hero,* she is wrong'd, shee is slandered, she is undone.
Bene. Beat?

Beat. Princes and Counties ! surelie a Princely testimonie, a goodly Count, Comfect, a sweet Gallant surelie, 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 curtsies, valour into complement, and men are onelie turned into tongue, and trim ones too : he is now as valiant as *Hercules,* that only tells a lie, and sweares it: I cannot be a man with wishing, therefore I will die a woman with grieving.

Bene. Tarry good *Beatrice,*by this hand I love thee.

Beat. Use it for my love some other way then swearing by it.

Bened. Thinke you in your soule the Count *Claudio* hath wrong'd *Hero?*

Beat. Yea, as sure as I have a thought, or a soule.

Bene. Enough, I am engagde, I will challenge him, I will kisse your hand, and so leave you : by this hand *Claudio* shall render me a deere account : as you heare of me, so thinke of me : goe comfort your coosin, I must say she is dead, and so farewell.

Enter the Constables, Borachio, and the Towne Clerke in gownes.

Keeper. Is our whole dissembly appeard?

Cowley. O a stoole and a cushion for the Sexton.

Sexton. Which be the malefactors?

Andrew. Mary that am I, and my partner.

Cowley. Nay that's certaine, wee have the exhibition to examine.

Sexton. But which are the offenders that are to be examined, let them come before master Constable.

Kemp. Yea marry, let them come before mee, what is your name, friend?

Bor. Borachio.

Kem. Pray write downe *Borachio.* Yours sirra.

Con. I am a Gentleman sir, and my name is *Conrade.*

Kee. Write downe Master gentleman *Conrade*: maisters, doe you serve God : maisters, it is proved alreadie that you are little better than false knaves, and it will goe neere to be thought so shortly, how answer you for your selves?

Con. Marry sir, we say we are none.

Kemp. A marvellous witty fellow I assure you, but I will goe about with him : come you hither sirra, a word in your eare sir , I say to you , it is thought you are false knaves.

Bor. Sir, I say to you, we are none.

Kemp. Well, stand aside, 'fore God they are both in a tale : have you writ downe that they are none?

Sext. Master Constable, you goe not the way to examine, you must call forth the watch that are their accusers.

Kemp. Yea marry, that's the eftest way, let the watch come forth : masters, I charge you in the Princes name, accuse these men.

Watch 1. This man said sir, that *Don John* the Princes brother was a villaine.

Kemp. Write down, Prince *John* a villaine: why this is flat perjurie, to call a Princes brother villaine.

Bora. Master Constable.

Kemp. Pray the fellow peace, I do not like thy looke I promise thee.

Sexton. What heard you him say else?

Watch 2. Mary that he had received a thousand Dukates of *Don John,* for accusing the Lady *Hero* wrongfully.

Kem.

Kemp. Flat Burglarie as ever was committed.

Const. Yea by th'masse that it is.

Sexton. What else fellow?

Watch 1. And that Count *Claudio* did meane upon his words, to disgrace *Hero* before the whole assembly, and not marry her.

Kemp. O villaine! thou wilt be condemn'd into everlasting redemption for this.

Sexton. What else?

Watch. This is all.

Sexton. And this is more masters then you can deny, Prince *John* is this morning secretly stolne away : *Hero* was in this manner accus'd, in this very manner refus'd, and upon the griefe of this sodainely died : Master Constable, let these men be bound, and brought to *Leonato ,* I will goe before, and shew him their examination.

Const. Come, let them be opinion'd.

Sex. Let them be in the hands of *Coxcombe.*

Kem. Gods my life, where's the Sexton? let him write downe the Princes Officer *Coxcombe* : come, binde them thou naughty varlet.

Couley. Away, you are an asse, you are an asse.

Kemp. Dost thou not suspect my place? dost thou not suspect my yeeres? O that hee were heere to write mee downe an asse! but masters, remember that I am an asse : though it be not written down, yet forget not y[t] I am an asse: No thou villaine, y[u] art full of piety as shall be prov'd upon thee by a good witnesse , I am a wise fellow , and which is more,an officer,and which is more,a houshoulder, and which is more, as pretty a peece of flesh as any in Messina, and one that knowes the Law, goe to, & a rich fellow enough, goe to, and a fellow that hath had losses , and one that hath two gownes, and every thing handsome about him: bring him away: O that I had been writ downe an asse! *Exit*

Actus Quintus.

Enter Leonato and his brother.

Brother. If you goe on thus, you will kill your selfe,
And 'tis not wisedome thus to second griefe,
Against your selfe.

Leon. I pray thee cease thy counsaile,
Which falls into mine eares as profitlesse,
As water in a sive : give not me counsaile,
Nor let no comfort delight mine eare,
But such a one whose wrongs doth sute with mine.
Bring me a father that so lov'd his childe,
Whose joy of her is over-whelmed like mine,
And bid him speake of patience,
Measure his woe the length and bredth of mine,
And let it answere every straine for straine,
As thus for thus, and such a griefe for such,
In every lineament, branch, shape and forme :
If such a one will smile and stroke his beard,
And sorrow, wagge, crie hem, when he should grone,
Patch griefe with proverbs, make misfortune drunke,
With candle-wasters : bring him yet to me,
And I of him will gather patience:
But there is no such man, for brother, men
Can counsaile, and speake comfort to that griefe,
Which they themselves not feele, but tasting it,
Their counsaile turnes to passion, which before,

Would give preceptiall medicine to rage,
Fetter strong madnesse in a silken thred,
Charme ache with ayre, and agony with words,
No,no, 'tis all mens office, to speake patience
To those that wring under the load of sorrow:
But no mans vertue nor sufficiencie
To be so morall, when he shall endure
The like himselfe : therefore give me no counsaile,
My griefs cry lowder then advertisement.
Broth. Therein do men from children nothing differ.
Leonato. I pray thee peace, I will be flesh and bloud,
For there was never yet Philosopher,
That could endure the tooth-ake patiently,
How ever they have writ the stile of gods,
And made a push at chance and sufferance.
Brother. Yet bend not all the harme upon your selfe,
Make those that doe offend you, suffer too.
Leon. There thou speak'st reason, nay I will do so,
My soule doth tell me *Hero* is belied,
And that shall *Claudio* know,so shall the Prince,
And all of them that thus dishonour her.
Enter Priince and Claudio.
Brot. Here comes the *Prince* and *Claudio* hastily.
Prin. Good den, good den.
Clau. Good day to both of you.
Leon. Heare you my Lords?
Prin, We have some haste *Leonato.*
Leo. Some haste my Lord! wel,fareyouwel my Lord,
Are you so hasty now? well, all is one.
Prin. Nay, do not quarrell with us, good old man.
Brot. If he could rite himselfe with quarrelling,
Some of us would lie low.
Claud. Who wrongs him?
Leon. Marry y[u] dost wrong me, thou dissembler, thou:
Nay, never lay thy hand upon thy sword,
I feare thee not.
Claud. Marry beshrew my hand,
If it should give your age such cause of feare,
Infaith my hand meant nothing to my sword.
Leonato. Tush, tush, man, never fleere and jest at me,
I speake not like a dotard, nor a foole,
As under privilege of age to bragge,
What I have done being yong, or what would doe,
Were I not old, know *Claudio* to thy head,
Thou hast so wrong'd my innocent childe and me,
That I am forc'd to lay my reverence by,
And with grey haires and bruise of many daies,
Doe challenge thee to triall of a man,
I say thou hast belied mine innocent childe.
Thy slander hath gone through and through her heart,
And she lies buried with her ancestors:
O in a tombe where never scandall slept,
Save this of hers, fram'd by thy villanie.
Claud. My villany?
Leonato. Thine *Claudio,* thine I say.
Prin. You say not right old man.
Leon. My Lord, my Lord,
Ile prove it on his body if he dare,
Despight his nice fence, and his active practise,
His Maie of youth, and bloome of lustihood.
Claud. Away, I will not have to do with you.
Leo. Canst thou so daffe me? thou hast kild my child,
If thou kilst me, boy, thou shalt kill a man.
Bro. He shall kill two of us, and men indeed,
But that's no matter, let him kill one first:
Win

Win me and weare me, let him answere me,
Come follow me boy, come sir boy, come follow me
Sir boy, ile whip you from your foyning fence,
Nay, as I am a gentleman, I will.

Leon. Brother.

Brot. Content your self,God knows I lov'd my neece,
And she is dead, slander'd to death by villaines,
That dare as well answer a man indeede,
As I dare take a serpent by the tongue.
Boyes,apes, braggarts,Jackes, milke-sops.

Leon. Brother *Anthony.*

Brot. Hold you content, what man? I know them,yea
And what they weigh, even to the utmost scruple,
Scambling, out-facing,fashion-mongring boyes,
That lye, and cog, and flout,deprave, and slander,
Goe antiquely, and show outward hidiousnesse,
And speake of halfe a dozen dang'rous words,
How they might hurt their enemies, if they durst.
And this is all.

Leon. But brother *Anthonie.*

Ant. Come, 'tis no matter,
Do not you meddle,let me deale in this.

Pri. Gentlemen both, we will not wake your patience
My heart is sorry for your daughters death :
But on my honour she was charg'd with nothing
But what was true, and very full of proofe.

Leon, My Lord, my Lord.

Prin. I will not heare you.

Enter Benedicke.

Leo. No come brother, away, I will be heard.

Exeunt ambo.

Bro. And shall, or some of us will smart for it.

Prin. See, see, here comes the man we went to seeke.

Clau. Now signior, what newes?

Ben. Good day my Lord.

Prin. Welcome signior, you are almost come to part almost a fray.

Clau. Wee had likt to have had our two noses snapt off with two old men without teeth.

Prin. Leonato and his brother, what think'st thou? had wee fought, I doubt we should have beene too yong for them.

Ben. In a false quarrell there is no true valour, I came to seeke you both.

Clau. We have beene up and downe to seeke thee, for we are high proofe melancholly, and would faine have it beaten away, wilt thou use thy wit?

Ben. It is in my scabberd, shall I draw it?

Prin. Doest thou weare thy wit by thy side?

Clau. Never any did so, though verie many have been beside their wit, I will bid thee drawe, as we do the minstrels, draw to pleasure us.

Prin. As I am an honest man he lookes pale, art thou sicke, or angrie?

Clau. What, courage man : what though care kil'd a cat, thou hast mettle enough in thee to kill care.

Ben. Sir, I shall meete your wit in the careere, and you charge it against me, I pray you chuse another subject.

Clau. Nay then give him another staffe, this last was broke crosse.

Prin. By this light, he changes more and more, I thinke he be angrie indeede.

Clau. If he be, he knowes how to turne his girdle.

Ben. Shall I speake a word in your eare?

Clau. God blesse me from a challenge.

Ben. You are a villaine, 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 cowardise : you have kill'd a sweet Ladie, and her death shall fall heavie on you, let me heare from you.

Clau. Well, I will meete you, so I may have good cheare.

Prin. What, a feast, a feast?

Clau. I faith I thanke him, he hath bid me to a calves head and a Capon, the which if I doe not carve most curiously, say my knife's naught, shall I not finde a woodcocke too?

Ben. Sir, your wit ambles well, it goes easily.

Prin. Ile tell thee how *Beatrice* prais'd thy wit the other day: I said thou hadst a fine wit : true saies shee, a fine little one: no said I, a great wit : right saies shee, a great grosse one : nay said I, the gentleman is wise: certaine said she, a wise gentleman: nay said I, he hath the tongues: that I beleeve said shee, for hee swore a thing to me on munday night, which he forswore on tuesday morning: there's a double tongue, there's two tongues : thus did shee an howre togeether trans-shape thy particular vertues, yet at last she concluded with a sigh, thou wast the proprest man in Italie.

Claud. For the which she wept heartily, and said shee car'd not.

Prin. Yea that she did, but yet for all that, and if shee did not hate him deadlie, shee would love him dearely, the old mans daughter told us all.

Clau. All, all, and moreover, God saw him when he was hid in the garden.

Prin. But when shall we set the savage Bulls hornes on the sensible *Benedicks* head?

Clau. Yea and text under-neath, heere dwells *Benedicke* the married man.

Ben. Fare you well, Boy, you know my minde, I will leave you now to your gossep-like humor, you breake jests as braggards do their blades, which God be thanked hurt not : my Lord, for your manie courtesies I thank you, I must discontinue your companie, your brother the Bastard is fled from *Messina* : you have among you, kill'd a sweet and innocent Ladie : for my Lord Lackebeard there, he and I shall meete, and till then peace be with him.

Prin. He is in earnest.

Clau. In most profound earnest, and Ile warrant you, for the love of Beatrice.

Prin. And hath challeng'd thee.

Clau. Most sincerely.

Prin. What a prettie thing man is, when he goes in his doublet and hose, and leaves off his wit.

Enter Constable, Conrade, and Borachio.

Clau. He is then a Giant to an Ape, but then is an Ape a Doctor to such a man.

Prin. But soft you, let me be, plucke up my heart, and be sad, did he not say my brother was fled?

Const. Come you sir, if justice cannot tame you, shee shall nere weigh more reasons in her ballance, nay, and you be a cursing hypocrite once, you must be lookt to.

Prin. How now, two of my brothers men bound? *Borachio* one.

Clau. Harken after their offence my Lord.

Prin. Officers, what offence have these men done?

Con. Marrie

Const. Marrie sir, they have committed false report, moreover they have spoken untruths, secondarily they are slanders, sixt and lastly they have belyed a Ladie, thirdly, they have verified unjust things, and to conclude they are lying knaves.

Prin. First I aske thee what they have done, thirdlie I aske thee what's their offence, sixt and lastlie why they are committed, and to conclude, what you lay to their charge.

Clau. Rightlie reasoned, and in his owne division, and by my troth there's one meaning vvell suted.

Prin. 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?

Bor. Sweet Prince, let me go no farther to mine answere: do you heare me, and let this Count kill mee: I have deceived even your verie eies : what your wisedomes could not discover, these shallow fooles have brought to light, who in the night overheard me confessing to this man how *Don John* your brother incensed me to slander the Ladie *Hero,* how you were brought into the Orchard, and saw me court *Margaret* in *Heroes* garments, how you disgrac'd her when you should marrie her : my villanie they have upon record, which I had rather seale with my death, then repeate over to my shame : the Ladie is dead upon mine and my masters false accusation : and brieflie, I desire nothing but the reward of a villaine.

Prin. Runs not this speech like yron through your bloud?

Clau. I have drunke poison whiles he utter'd it.

Prin. But did my Brother set thee on to this?

Bor. Yea, and paid me richly for the practise of it.

Prin. He is compos'd and fram'd of treacherie,
And fled he is upon this villanie.

Clau. Sweet *Hero,* now thy image doth appeare
In the rare semblance that I lov'd it first.

Const. Come, bring away the plaintiffes, by this time our *Sexton* hath reformed *Signior Leonato* of the matter : and masters, do not forget to specifie when time & place shall serve, that I am an Asse.

Con.2. Here,here comes master *Signior Leonato,* and the *Sexton* too.

Enter Leonato.

Leon. Which is the villaine? let me see his eies,
That when I note another man like him,
I may avoid him : which of these is he?

Bor. If you would know your wronger, looke on me.

Leon. Art thou the slave that with thy breath
hast kild mine innocent childe?

Bor. Yea,even I alone.

Leo. No,not so villaine,thou beliest thy selfe,
Here stand a paire of honourable men,
A third is fled that had a hand in it:
I thanke you Princes for my daughters death,
Record it with your high and worthie deedes,
'Twas bravely done, if you bethinke you of it.

Clau. I know not how to pray your patience,
Yet I must speake, choose your revenge your selfe,
Impose me to what penance your invention
Can lay upon my sinne, yet sinn'd I not,
But in mistaking.

Prin. By my soule nor I,
And yet to satisfie this good old man,

I would bend under anie heavie vvaight,
That heele enjoyne me to.
Leon. I cannot bid you bid my daughter live,
That vvere impossible,but I praie you both,
Possesse the people in *Messina* here,
How innocent she died, and if your love
Can labour aught in sad invention,
Hang her an epitaph upon her toomb,
And sing it to her bones, sing it to night:
To morrow morning come you to my house,
And since you could not be my sonne in law,
Be yet my Nephew: my brother hath a daughter,
Almost the copie of my childe that's dead,
And she alone is heire to both of us,
Give her the right you should have giv'n her cosin
And so dies my revenge.
Clau. O noble sir!
Your overkindnesse doth wring teares from me,
I do embrace your offer, and dispose
For henceforth of poore *Claudio.*
Leon. To morrow then I will expect your comming,
To night I take my leave, this naughtie man
Shall face to face be brought to *Margaret,*
Who I beleeve was packt in all this wrong,
Hired to it by your brother.
Bor. No by my soule she was not,
Nor knew not what she did when she spoke to me,
But alwaies hath bin just and vertuous,
In anie thing that I do know by her.
Const. Moreover sir, which indeede is not under white and black, this plaintiffe here, the offendour did call mee asse, I beseech you let it be remembred in his punishment, and also the watch heard them talk of one Deformed, they say he weares a key in his eare and a lock hanging by it, and borrowes monie in Gods name, the which he hath us'd so long,and never paied, that now men grow hard-harted and will lend nothing for Gods sake : praie you examine him upon that point.
Leon. I thanke thee for thy care and honest paines.
Const. Your worship speakes like a most thankefull and reverend youth, and I praise God for you.
Leon. There's for thy paines,
Const. God save the foundation.
Leon. Goe, I discharge thee of thy prisoner, and I thanke thee.
Const. I leave an arrant knave with your worship, which I beseech your worship to correct your selfe, for the example of others : God keepe your worship, I wish your worship well, God restore you to health, I humblie give you leave to depart, and if a merrie meeting may be wisht, God prohibite it : come neighbour.
Leon. Untill to morrow morning, Lords, farewell.
Exeunt.
Brot. Farewell my Lords, we looke for you to morrow.
Prin. We will not faile.
Clau. To night Ile mourne with *Hero.*
Leon. Bring you these fellowes on, weel talke with *Margaret,* how her acquaintance grew with this lewd fellow. *Exeunt.*

Enter Benedicke and Margaret.

Ben. Praie thee sweete Mistris *Margaret,* deserve well at my hands, by helping mee to the speech of *Beatrice.*

Mar. Will

Mar. Will you then write me a Sonnet in praise of my beautie?

Bene. In so high a stile *Margaret,* that no man living shall come over it, for in most comely truth thou deservest it.

Mar. To have no man come over me, why, shall I alwaies keepe below staires?

Bene. Thy wit is as quicke as the grey-hounds mouth, it catches.

Mar. And yours, as blunt as the Fencers foiles, which hit, but hurt not.

Bene. A most manly wit *Margaret,* it will not hurt a woman : and so I pray thee call *Beatrice,* I give thee the bucklers.

Mar. Give us the swords, we have bucklers of our owne.

Bene. If you use them *Margaret,* you must put in the pikes with a vice, and they are dangerous weapons for Maides.

Mar. Well, I will call *Beatrice* to you, who I thinke hath legges. *Exit Margarite.*

Ben. And therefore will come. The God of love that sits above, and knowes me, and knowes me, how pittifull I deserve. I meane in singing, but in loving, Leander the good swimmer, Troilus the first imploier of pandars, and a whole booke full of these quondam carpet-mongers, whose name yet runne smoothly in the even rode of a blanke verse, why they were never so truely turned over and over as my poore selfe in love: marrie I cannot shew it rime, I have tried, I can finde out no rime to Ladie but babie, an innocent rime : for scorne, horne, a hard [time]*[rime]* : for schoole foole, a babling [time]: verie ominous endings, no, I was not borne under a riming Plannet, for I cannot wooe in festivall tearmes:

Enter Beatrice.

sweete *Beatrice* would'st thou come when I cal'd thee?

Beat. Yea Signior, and depart when you bid me.

Bene. O stay but till then.

Beat. Then, is spoken fare you well now, and yet ere I goe, let me goe with that I came, which is, with knowing what hath past betweene you and *Claudio.*

Bene. Onely foule words, and thereupon I will kisse thee.

Beat. Foule words is but foule wind, and foule wind is but foule breath, and foule breath is noisome, therefore I will depart unkist.

Bene. Thou hast frighted the word out of his right sence,so forcible is thy wit, but I must tell thee plainely, *Claudio* under goes my challenge,and either I must shortly heare from him, or I will subscribe him a coward, and I pray thee now tell me, for which of my bad parts didst thou first fall in love with me?

Beat. For them all together, which maintain'd so politique a state of evill, that they will not admit any good part to intermingle with them: but for which of my good parts did you first suffer love for me?

Bene. Suffer love! a good epithite, I do suffer love indeede, for I love thee against my will.

Beat. In spight of your heart I think, alas poore heart, if you spight it for my sake, I will spight it for yours, for I will never love that which my friend hates.

Bened. Thou and I are too wise to wooe peaceablie.

Bea. It appeares not in this confession, there's not one wise man among twentie that will praise himselfe.

Bene. An old, an old instance *Beatrice,* that liv'd in the time of good neighbours, if a man doe not erect in this aga his owne tombe ere he dies, hee shall live no longer in monuments, then the Bels ring, & the Widdow weepes.

Beat. And how long is that thinke you?

Ben. Question, why an hower in clamour and a quarter in rhewme, therfore is it most expedient for the wise, if Don worme (his conscience) finde no impediment to the contrarie, to be the trumpet of his owne vertues, as I am to my selfe so much for praising my selfe, who I my selfe will beare withesse is praise worthie, and now tell me, how doth your cosin?

Beat. Verie ill.

Bene. And how doe you?

Beat. Verie ill too.

Enter Ursula.

Bene. Serve God,love me, and mend, there will I leave you too, for here comes one in haste.

Urs. Madam, you must come to your Uncle, yonders old coile at home, it is prooved my Ladie *Hero* hath bin falselie accused, the *Prince* and *Claudio* mightilie abusde, and *Don John* is the author of all, who is fled and gone : will you come presentlie?

Beat. Will you go heare this newes Signior?

Bene. I will live in thy heart, die in thy lap, and be buried in thy eies : and moreover, I will goe with thee to thy Uncles. *Exeunt.*

Enter Claudio, Prince, and three or foure with Tapers.

Clau. Is this the monument of *Leonato?*

Lord. It is my Lord. *Epitaph.*

Done to death by slanderous tongues,
Was the Hero *that here lies :*
Death in guerdon of her wrongs,
Gives her fame which never dies:
So the life that dyed with shame,
Lives in death with glorious fame.
Hang thou there upon the tombe,
Praising her when I am dombe.

Clau. Now musick sound & sing your solemn hymne

Song.

Pardon goddesse of the night,
Those that slew thy virgin knight,
For the which with songs of woe,
Round about her tombe they goe:
Midnight assist our mone, helpe us to sigh an grone.
Heavily, heavily.
Graves yawne and yeelde your dead,
Till death be uttered,
Heavenly, heavenly.

(this right.

Le. Now unto thy bones good night, yeerely will I do

Prin. Good morrow masters, put your Torches out,
The wolves have preied,and looke, the gentle day
Before the wheeles of Phoebus, round about
Dapples the drowsie East with spots of grey:
Thanks to you all, and leave us, fare you well.

Clau. Good morrow masters, each his severall way.

Prin, Come let us hence, and put on other weedes,
And then to *Leonatoes* we will goe.

Clau. And Hymen now with luckier issue speed,

Then

Then this for whom we rendred up this woe. *Exeunt.*
Enter Leonato,Bene,Marg,Ursula,old man,Frier,Hero.
Frier. Did I not tell you she was innocent?
Leo. So are the *Prince and Claudio* who accus'd her,
Upon the errour that you heard debated:
But *Margaret* was in some fault for this,
Although against her will as it appeares,
In the true course of all the question.
Old. 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.
Leo. Well daughter, and you gentlewomen all,
Withdraw into a chamber by your selves,
And when I send for you, come hither mask'd:
The *Prince,* and *Claudio* promis'd by this howre
To visit me, you know your office Brother,
And give her to young *Claudio.* *Exeunt Ladies.*
Old. Which I will doe with confirm'd countenance.
Bene. Frier, I must intreat your paines, I thinke.
Frier. To doe what Signior?
Bene. To binde me,or undoe me, one of them:
Signior *Leonato,* truth it is good Signior,
Your neece regards me with an eye of favour.
Leo. That eye my daughter lent her, 'tis most true.
Bene. And I doe with an eye of love requite her.
Leo. The sight whereof I thinke you had from me,
From *Claudio,* and the *Prince.* but what's your will?
Bened. Your answer sir is Enigmaticall,
But for my will, my will is, your good will
May stand with ours, this day to be conjoyn'd,
In the state of honourable marriage,
In which (good Frier) I shall desire your helpe.
Leon. My heart is with your liking.
Frier. And my helpe.
Enter Prince and Claudio, with attendants.
Prin. Good morrow to this faire assembly.
Leo. Good morrow *Prince.* good morrow *Claudio :*
We heere attend you, are you yet determin'd,
To day to marry with my brothers daughter?
Claud. Ile hold my minde were she an Ethiope.
Leo. Call her forth brother, here's the Frier ready.
Prin, Good morrow *Benedike,* why what's the matter?
That you have such a Februarie face,
So full of frost, of storme, and clowdinesse.
Claud. I thinke he thinkes upon the savage bull:
Tush, feare not man, wee'll tip thy hornes with gold,
And all Europa shall rejoyce at thee,
As once *Europa* did at lusty *Jove*,
When he would play the noble beast in love.
Ben. Bull *Jove* sir, had an amiable low,
And some such strange bull leapt your fathers Cow,
A got a Calfe in that same noble feat,
Much like to you, for you have just his bleat.
Enter brother, Hero, Beatrice,Margaret, Ursula.
Cla. For this I owe you: here comes other recknings.
Which is the Lady I must seize upon?
Leo. This same is she, and I doe give you her.
Cla. Why then she's mine, sweet let me see your face.
Leon. No that you shal not, till you take her hand,
Before this Frier, and sweare to marry her.
Clau. Give me your hand before this holy Frier,
I am your husband if you like of me.
Hero. And when I liv'd I was your other wife.
And when you lov'd, you were my other husband.
Clau. Another *Hero?*

Hero. Nothing certainer.
One *Hero* died, but I doe live,
And surely as I live, I am a maid.
Prin. The former *Hero, Hero* that is dead.
Leon. Shee died my Lord, but whiles her slander liv'd.
Frier. All this amazement can I qualifie,
When after that the holy rites are ended,
Ile tell you largely of faire *Heroes* death:
Meane time let wonder seeme familiar ,
And to the chappell let us presently.
Ben. Soft and faire Frier, which is *Beatrice?*
Beat. I answer to that name, what is your will?
Bene. Doe not you love me?
Beat. Why no, no more then reason.
Bene. Why then your Uncle, and the Prince, & *Claudio,* have beene deceived, they swore you did.
Beat. Doe not you love mee?
Bene. Troth no, no more then reason.
Beat. Why then my Cosin *Margaret* and *Ursula*
Are much deceiv'd, for they did sweare you did.
Bene. They swore you were almost sicke for me.
Beat. They swore you were wel-nye dead for me.
Bene, 'Tis no matter, then you doe not love me?
Beat. No truly, but in friendly recompence.
Leon. Come Cosin, I am sure you love the gentlema[n].
Clau. And Ile be sworne upon't, that he loves her,
Fore heres a paper written in his hand,
A halting sonnet of his owne pure braine,
Fashioned to *Beatrice.*
Hero. And heeres another,
Writ in my cosins hand, stolne from her pocket,
Containing her affection unto *Benedicke.*
Bene. A miracle, here's our owne hands against our hearts : come I will have thee, but by this light I take thee for pittie.
Beat. I would not denie you, but by this good day, I yeeld upon great perswasion & partly to save your life, for I was told, you were in a consumption.
Leon. Peace I will stop your mouth.
Prin. How dost thou *Benedicke* the married man?
Bene. Ile tell the what Prince: a Colledge of witte-crackers cannot flout mee out of my humour, dost thou think I care for a Satyre or an Epigram? no, if a man will be beaten with braines, a shall weare nothing handsome about him : in briefe, since I do purpose to marry, I will thinke nothing to any purpose that the world can say a-gainst it : for man is a giddy thing, and this is my con-clusion: for they part *Claudio,* I did thinke to have beaten thee, but in that thou art like to be my kinsman, live un-bruis'd, and love my cousin.
Cla. I had well hop'd y[u] wouldst have denied *Beatrice,*y[t] I might have cudgel'd thee out of thy single life, to make thee a double dealer, which out of questio[n] thou wilt be, if my Cousin do not looke 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 heeles.
Leon. Wee'll have dancing afterward.
Bene First, of my word, therfore play musick. *Prince,* thou art sad, get thee a wife, get thee a wife, there is no staff more reverend then one tipt with horn. *Enter Mes.*
Messen. My Lord, your brother *John* is tane in flight,
And brought with armed men backe to *Messina.*
Bene. Thinke not on him till to morrow , ile devise thee brave punishments for him: strike up Pipers. *Dance.*

L *F I N I S.*