

MONOLOGUE - Much Ado About Nothing

DON PEDRO (for context)

The Lady Beatrice hath a quarrel to you: the gentleman that danced with her told her she is much wronged by you.

BENEDICK

O, she misused me past the endurance of a block!
an oak but with one green leaf on it would have answered her; my very visor began to assume life and scold with her. She told me, not thinking I had been myself, that I was the prince's jester, that I was duller than a great thaw; huddling jest upon jest with such impossible conveyance upon me that I stood like a man at a mark, with a whole army shooting at me. She speaks poniards, and every word stabs: if her breath were as terrible as her terminations, there were no living near her; she would infect to the north star. I would not marry her, though she were endowed with all that Adam had left him before he transgressed: she would have made Hercules have turned spit, yea, and have cleft his club to make the fire too. Come, talk not of her: you shall find her the infernal Ate in good apparel. I would to God some scholar would conjure her; for certainly, while she is here, a man may live as quiet in hell as in a sanctuary; and people sin upon purpose, because they would go thither; so, indeed, all disquiet, horror and perturbation follows her.

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Enter DON JOHN and BORACHIO

DON JOHN

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

BORACHIO

Yea, my lord; but I can cross it.

DON JOHN

Any bar, any cross, any impediment will be medicinal to me: I am sick in displeasure to him, and whatsoever comes athwart his affection ranges evenly with mine. How canst thou cross this marriage?

BORACHIO

Not honestly, my lord; but so covertly that no dishonesty shall appear in me.

DON JOHN

Show me briefly how.

BORACHIO

I think I told your lordship a year since, how much

I am in the favour of Margaret, the waiting

gentlewoman to Hero.

DON JOHN

I remember.

BORACHIO

I can, at any unseasonable instant of the night,

appoint her to look out at her lady's chamber window.

DON JOHN

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

BORACHIO

The poison of that lies in you to temper. Go you to the prince your brother; spare not to tell him that he hath wronged his honour in marrying the renowned

DON JOHN

What proof shall I make of that?

BORACHIO

Proof enough to misuse the prince, to vex Claudio,

to undo Hero and kill Leonato. Look you for any

other issue?

DON JOHN

Only to despite them, I will endeavour any thing.

BORACHIO

Go, then; find me a meet hour to draw Don Pedro and

the Count Claudio alone: tell them that you know

that Hero loves me; intend a kind of zeal both to the

prince and Claudio, as,--in love of your brother's

honour, who hath made this match, and his friend's

reputation, who is thus like to be cozened with the

semblance of a maid,--that you have discovered

thus. They will scarcely believe this without trial:

offer them instances; which shall bear no less

likelihood than to see me at her chamber-window,

hear me call Margaret Hero, hear Margaret term me

Claudio; and bring them to see this the very night

before the intended wedding,--for in the meantime I will so fashion the matter that Hero shall be

absent,--and there shall appear such seeming truth

of Hero's disloyalty that jealousy shall be called

assurance and all the preparation overthrown.

DON JOHN

Grow this to what adverse issue it can, I will put

it in practise. Be cunning in the working this, and

thy fee is a thousand ducats.

BORACHIO

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

DON JOHN

I will presently go learn their day of marriage

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BENEDICK

[Coming forward] This can be no trick: the

conference was sadly borne. They have the truth of

this from Hero. They seem to pity the lady: it seems her affections have their full bent. Love me!

why, it must be requited. I hear how I am censured: they say I will bear myself proudly, if I perceive

the love come from her; they say too that she will rather die than give any sign of affection. I did never think to marry: I must not seem proud: happy are they that hear their detractions and can put them to mending. They say the lady is fair; 'tis a

truth, I can bear them witness; and virtuous; 'tis

so, I cannot reprove it; and wise, but for loving

me; by my troth, it is no addition to her wit, nor

no great argument of her folly, for I will be horribly in love with her. I may chance have some odd quirks and remnants of wit broken on me, because I have railed so long against marriage: but

doth not the appetite alter? a man loves the meat in his youth that he cannot endure in his age.

Shall quips and sentences and these paper bullets of the brain awe a man from the career of his humour? No, the world must be peopled. When I said I would die a bachelor, I did not think I

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

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BEATRICE

[Coming forward]

What fire is in mine ears? Can this be true?

Stand I condemn'd for pride and scorn so much?

Contempt, farewell! and maiden pride, adieu!

No glory lives behind the back of such.

And, Benedick, love on; I will requite thee,

Taming my wild heart to thy loving hand:

If thou dost love, my kindness shall incite thee

To bind our loves up in a holy band;

For others say thou dost deserve, and I

Believe it better than reportingly.

DUOLOGUE - Much Ado About Nothing (Beatrice and Margaret)

BEATRICE

'Tis almost five o'clock, cousin; tis time you were ready. By my troth, I am exceeding ill: heigh-ho!

MARGARET

For a hawk, a horse, or a husband?

BEATRICE

For the letter that begins them all, H.

MARGARET

Well, and you be not turned Turk, there's no more sailing by the star.

BEATRICE

What means the fool, trow?

MARGARET

Nothing I; but God send every one their heart's desire!

HERO

These gloves the count sent me; they are an excellent perfume.

BEATRICE

I am stuffed, cousin; I cannot smell.

MARGARET

A maid, and stuffed! there's goodly catching of cold.

BEATRICE

O, God help me! God help me! how long have you professed apprehension?

MARGARET

Even since you left it. Doth not my wit become me rarely? BEATRICE

It is not seen enough, you should wear it in your cap. By my troth, I am sick.

MARGARET

Get you some of this distilled Carduus Benedictus, and lay it to your heart: it is the only thing for a qualm.

HERO

There thou prickest her with a thistle.

BEATRICE

Benedictus! why Benedictus? you have some moral in this Benedictus.

MARGARET

Moral! no, by my troth, I have no moral meaning; I meant, plain holy-thistle. You may think perchance that I think you are in love: nay, by'r lady, I am not such a fool to think what I list, nor I list not to think what I can, nor indeed I cannot think, if I would think my heart out of thinking, that you

are in love or that you will be in love or that you can be in love. Yet Benedick was such another, and now is he become a man: he swore he would never marry, and yet now, in despite of his heart, he eats his meat without grudging: and how you may be converted I know not, but methinks you look with your eyes as other women do.

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BENEDICK

Lady Beatrice, have you wept all this while?

BEATRICE

Yea, and I will weep a while longer.

BENEDICK

I will not desire that.

BEATRICE

You have no reason; I do it freely.

BENEDICK

Surely I do believe your fair cousin is wronged.

BEATRICE

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

BENEDICK

Is there any way to show such friendship?

BEATRICE

A very even way, but no such friend.

BENEDICK

May a man do it?

BEATRICE

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

BENEDICK

I do love nothing in the world so well as you: is not that strange?

BEATRICE

As strange as the thing I know not. It were as possible for me to say I loved nothing so well as

you: but believe me not; and yet I lie not; I confess nothing, nor I deny nothing. I am sorry for my

BENEDICK

By my sword, Beatrice, thou

lovest me.

BEATRICE

Do not swear, and eat it.

BENEDICK

I will swear by it that you love
me; and I will make
him eat it that says I love not you.

BEATRICE

Will you not eat your word?

BENEDICK

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

BEATRICE

Why, then, God forgive me!

BENEDICK

What offence, sweet Beatrice?

BEATRICE

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

BENEDICK

And do it with all thy heart.

BEATRICE

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

BENEDICK

Come, bid me do any thing for thee.

BEATRICE

Kill Claudio.

BENEDICK

Ha! not for the wide world.

BEATRICE

You kill me to deny it. Farewell.

BENEDICK

Tarry, sweet Beatrice. cousin.

BEATRICE

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

BENEDICK

Beatrice,--

BEATRICE

In faith, I will go.

BENEDICK

We'll be friends first.

BEATRICE

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

BENEDICK

Is Claudio thine enemy?

BEATRICE

Is he not approved in the height a villain, that hath slandered, scorned,
dishonoured my kinswoman? O that I were a man! What, bear her in hand until they come to
take hands; and then, with public accusation, uncovered slander, unmitigated rancour,
--O God, that I were a man! I
would eat his heart in the market-place.