

**Beatrice - 1**

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.

**Beatrice - 2**

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.  
O that I were a man for his sake! or that I  
had any friend would be a man for my sake! But  
manhood is melted into courtesies, valour into  
compliment, and men are only turned into tongue, and  
trim ones too: he is now as valiant as Hercules  
that only tells a lie and swears it. I cannot be a  
man with wishing, therefore I will die a woman with grieving.

**Benedick**

I do much wonder that one man, seeing how much  
another man is a fool when he dedicates his  
behaviors to love, will, after he hath laughed at  
such shallow follies in others, become the argument  
of his own scorn by failing in love: and such a man  
is Claudio. I have known when there was no music  
with him but the drum and the fife; and now had he  
rather hear the tabour and the pipe: his  
words are a very fantastical banquet, just so many  
strange dishes. May I be so converted and see with  
these eyes? I cannot tell; I think not: I will not  
be sworn, but love may transform me to an oyster; but  
I'll take my oath on it, till he have made an oyster  
of me, he shall never make me such a fool. One woman

is fair, yet I am well; another is wise, yet I am well; another virtuous, yet I am well; but till all graces be in one woman, one woman shall not come in my grace. Rich she shall be, that's certain; wise, or I'll none; virtuous, or I'll never cheapen her; fair, or I'll never look on her; mild, or come not near me; noble, or not I for an angel; of good discourse, an excellent musician, and her hair shall be of what colour it please God. Ha! the prince and Monsieur Love! I will hide me in the arbour.

### **Claudio**

When you went onward on this ended action,  
I look'd upon her with a soldier's eye,  
That liked, but had a rougher task in hand  
Than to drive liking to the name of love:  
But now I am return'd and that war-thoughts  
Have left their places vacant, in their rooms  
Come thronging soft and delicate desires,  
All prompting me how fair young Hero is,  
Saying, I liked her ere I went to wars.  
How sweetly you do minister to love,  
That know love's grief by his complexion!  
But lest my liking might too sudden seem,  
I would have salved it with a longer treatise.

### **Hero**

For look where Beatrice, like a lapwing, runs  
Close by the ground, to hear our conference.  
No, truly, Ursula, she is too disdainful;  
I know her spirits are as coy and wild  
As haggards of the rock.  
But who dare tell her so? If I should speak,  
She would mock me into air; O, she would laugh me  
Out of myself, press me to death with wit.  
Therefore let Benedick, like cover'd fire,  
Consume away in sighs, waste inwardly:  
It were a better death than die with mocks,  
Which is as bad as die with tickling.  
No; rather I will go to Benedick  
And counsel him to fight against his passion.  
And, truly, I'll devise some honest slanders

To stain my cousin with: one doth not know  
How much an ill word may empoison liking.

**Don Pedro**

My love is thine to teach: teach it but how,  
And thou shalt see how apt it is to learn  
Any hard lesson that may do thee good.  
Thou wilt be like a lover presently  
And tire the hearer with a book of words.  
If thou dost love fair Hero, cherish it,  
And I will break with her and with her father,  
And thou shalt have her. Was't not to this end  
That thou began'st to twist so fine a story?  
Look, what will serve is fit: 'tis once, thou lovest,  
And I will fit thee with the remedy.  
I know we shall have revelling to-night:  
I will assume thy part in some disguise  
And tell fair Hero I am Claudio,  
And in her bosom I'll unclasp my heart  
And take her hearing prisoner with the force  
And strong encounter of my amorous tale:  
Then after to her father will I break;  
And the conclusion is, she shall be thine.  
In practise let us put it presently.

**Don John**

I cannot hide what I am: I must be sad when I have cause and smile at no man's jests, eat when I have stomach and wait for no man's leisure, sleep when I am drowsy and tend on no man's business, laugh when I am merry and claw no man in his humour. I had rather be a canker in a hedge than a rose in his grace, and it better fits my blood to be disdained of all than to fashion a carriage to rob love from any: in this, though I cannot be said to be a flattering honest man, it must not be denied but I am a plain-dealing villain. I am trusted with a muzzle and enfranchised with a clog; therefore I have decreed not to sing in my cage. If I had my mouth, I would bite; if I had my liberty, I would do my liking: in the meantime let me be that I am and seek not to alter me.

**Leonato**

Wherefore! Why, doth not every earthly thing  
Cry shame upon her? Could she here deny  
The story that is printed in her blood?  
Do not live, Hero; do not ope thine eyes:  
For, did I think thou wouldst not quickly die,

Thought I thy spirits were stronger than thy shames,  
Myself would, on the rearward of reproaches,  
Strike at thy life. Grieved I, I had but one?  
Chid I for that at frugal nature's frame?  
O, one too much by thee! Why had I one?  
Why ever wast thou lovely in my eyes?  
Why had I not with charitable hand  
Took up a beggar's issue at my gates,  
Who smirch'd thus and mired with infamy,  
I might have said 'No part of it is mine;  
This shame derives itself from unknown loins'?  
But mine and mine I loved and mine I praised  
And mine that I was proud on, mine so much  
That I myself was to myself not mine,  
Valuing of her. Why, she, O, she is fallen  
Into a pit of ink, that the wide sea  
Hath drops too few to wash her clean again  
And salt too little which may season give  
To her foul-tainted flesh!

### **Dogberry**

Dost thou not suspect my place? dost thou not suspect my years? O that he were here to write me down an ass! But, masters, remember that I am an ass; though it be not written down, yet forget not that I am an ass. No, thou villain, thou art full of piety, as shall be proved upon thee by good witness. I am a wise fellow, and, which is more, an officer, and, which is more, a householder, and, which is more, as pretty a piece of flesh as any is in Messina, and one that knows the law, go to; and a rich fellow enough, go to; and a fellow that hath had losses, and one that hath two gowns and every thing handsome about him. Bring him away. O that I had been writ down an ass!