

John the Bastard...

DON JOHN My lord and brother, God save you.

PRINCE Good e'en, brother.

DON JOHN If your leisure served, I would speak with you.

PRINCE In private?

DON JOHN If it please you. Yet Count Claudio may hear, for what I would speak of concerns him.

PRINCE What's the matter?

DON JOHN *[to Claudio]* Means your Lordship to be married tomorrow?

PRINCE You know he does.

DON JOHN I know not that, when he knows what I know.

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

DON JOHN You may think I love you not. Let that appear hereafter, and aim better at me by that I now will manifest. For my brother, I think he holds you well, and in dearness of heart hath help to effect your ensuing marriage – surely suit ill spent and labour ill bestowed.

PRINCE Why, what's the matter?

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

CLAUDIO Who, Hero?

DON JOHN Even she: Leonato's Hero, your Hero, every man's Hero.

CLAUDIO Disloyal?

DON JOHN The word is too good to paint out her wickedness. I could say she were worse. Think you of a worse title, and I will fit her to it. Wonder not till further warrant. Go but with me tonight, you shall see her chamber window entered, even the night before her wedding day. If you love her then, tomorrow wed her. But it would better fit your honour to change your mind.

CLAUDIO *[to Prince]* May this be so?

PRINCE I will not think it.

DON JOHN If you dare not trust that you see, confess not that you know. If you will follow me, I will show you enough, and when you have seen more and heard more, proceed accordingly.

CLAUDIO If I see anything tonight why I should not marry her, tomorrow in the congregation, where I should wed, there will I shame her.

PRINCE And as I wooed for thee to obtain her, I will join with thee to disgrace her.

DON JOHN I will disparage her no farther till you are my witnesses. Bear it coldly but till midnight, and let the issue show itself.

PRINCE O day untowardly turned!

CLAUDIO O mischief strangely thwarting!

DON JOHN

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