

Claudio is a bit of a prig

LEONATO Come, Friar Francis, be brief, only to the plain form of marriage, and you shall recount their particular duties afterwards.

FRIAR *[to Claudio]* You come hither, my lord, to marry this lady?

CLAUDIO No.

LEONATO To be married to her. – Friar, you come to marry her.

FRIAR Lady, you come hither to be married to this count?

HERO I do.

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

CLAUDIO Know you any, Hero?

HERO None, my lord.

FRIAR Know you any, count?

LEONATO I dare make his answer, none.

CLAUDIO O, what men dare do! What men may do! What men daily do, not knowing what they do!

BENEDICK How now, interjections? Why, then, some be of laughing, as ah, ha, he!

CLAUDIO Stand thee by, friar. – *[to Leonato]* Father, by your leave, Will you with free and unconstrained soul Give me this maid, your daughter?

LEONATO As freely, son, as God did give her me.

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

PRINCE Nothing, unless you render her again.

CLAUDIO Sweet prince, you learn me noble thankfulness. – There, Leonato, take her back again. Give not this rotten orange to your friend. She's but the sign and semblance of her honour. Behold how like a maid she blushes here! O, what authority and show of truth Can cunning sin cover itself withal! Comes not that blood as modest evidence To witness simple virtue? Would you not swear, All you that see her, that she were a maid, By these exterior shows? But she is none. She knows the heat of a luxurious bed. Her blush is guiltiness, not modesty.

LEONATO What do you mean, my lord?

CLAUDIO Not to be married, Not to knit my soul To an approved wanton.

Beatrice makes her feelings known

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 cousin.

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 offense, 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 anything for thee.

BEATRICE Kill Claudio.

BENEDICK Ha! Not for the wide world.

BEATRICE You kill me to deny it. Farewell.

[She begins to exit.]

BENEDICK Tarry, sweet Beatrice.

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 marketplace.

BENEDICK Hear me, Beatrice –

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

BENEDICK Nay, but Beatrice –

BEATRICE Sweet Hero, she is wronged, she is slandered, she is undone.

BENEDICK Beat –

BEATRICE Princes and counties! Surely a princely testimony, a goodly count,
Count Comfekt, a sweet gallant, surely! 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 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 Tarry, good Beatrice. By this hand, I love thee.

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

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

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

BENEDICK Enough, I am engaged. I will challenge him. I will kiss your hand, and so
I leave you. By this hand, Claudio shall render me a dear account. As
you hear of me, so think of me. Go comfort your cousin. I must say
she is dead, and so farewell.

[They exit.]