

Much Ado About Nothing

3.2

Enter Don Pedro the Prince, Claudio, Benedick, and Leonato

DON PEDRO I do but stay till your marriage be consummate, and then go I toward Aragon.

CLAUDIO I'll bring you thither, my lord, if you'll vouchsafe me.

DON PEDRO Nay, that would be as great a soil in the new gloss of your marriage as to show a child his new coat and forbid him to wear it. I will only be bold with Benedick for his company, for from the crown of his head to the sole of his foot he is all mirth. He hath twice or thrice cut Cupid's bow-string, and the little hangman dare not shoot at him. He hath a heart as sound as a bell, and his tongue is the clapper, for what his heart thinks his tongue speaks. 5

BENEDICK Gallants, I am not as I have been.

LEONATO So say I. Methinks you are sadder. 15

CLAUDIO I hope he be in love.

DON PEDRO Hang him, truant! There's no true drop of blood in him to be truly touched with love. If he be sad, he wants money.

BENEDICK I have the toothache. 20

DON PEDRO Draw it.

BENEDICK Hang it.

CLAUDIO You must hang it first and draw it afterwards.

DON PEDRO What? Sigh for the toothache?

LEONATO Where is but a humour or a worm. 25

BENEDICK Well, everyone can master a grief but he that has it.

CLAUDIO Yet say I he is in love.

DON PEDRO There is no appearance of fancy in him, unless it be a fancy that he hath to strange disguises, as to be a Dutchman today, a Frenchman tomorrow, or in the shape of two countries at once, as a German from the waist downward, all slops, and a Spaniard from the hip upward, no doublet. Unless he have a fancy to 30

this foolery, as it appears he hath, he is no fool for 35
fancy, as you would have it appear he is.

CLAUDIO If he be not in love with some woman there is
no believing old signs. A brushes his hat o' mornings,
what should that bode?

DON PEDRO Hath any man seen him at the barber's? 40

CLAUDIO No, but the barber's man hath been seen with
him, and the old ornament of his cheek hath already
stuffed tennis balls.

LEONATO Indeed, he looks younger than he did by the
loss of a beard. 45

DON PEDRO Nay, a rubs himself with civet. Can you smell
him out by that?

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

DON PEDRO The greatest note of it is his melancholy. 50

CLAUDIO And when was he wont to wash his face?

DON PEDRO Yea, or to paint himself?±±for the which I
hear what they say of him.

CLAUDIO Nay, but his jesting spirit, which is now crept
into a lute-string, and now governed by stops. 55

DON PEDRO Indeed, that tells a heavy tale for him.
Conclude, conclude, he is in love.

CLAUDIO Nay, but I know who loves him.

DON PEDRO That would I know, too. I warrant, one that
knows him not. 60

CLAUDIO Yes, and his ill conditions, and in despite of all,
dies for him.

DON PEDRO She shall be buried with her face upwards.

BENEDICK Yet is this no charm for the toothache. Old
signor, walk aside with me. I have studied eight or 65
nine wise words to speak to you which these hobby-
horses must not hear.

Exeunt Benedick and Leonato

DON PEDRO For my life, to break with him about Beatrice.

CLAUDIO 'Tis even so. Hero and Margaret have by this
played their parts with Beatrice, and then the two bears 70
will not bite one another when they meet.

Enter Don John the bastard

DON JOHN My lord, and brother, God save you.

DON PEDRO Good-e'en, brother.

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

DON PEDRO In private? 75

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

DON PEDRO What's the matter?

DON JOHN (*to Claudio*) Means your lordship to be married
tomorrow? 80

DON PEDRO 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 85
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. 90

DON PEDRO 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? 95

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 100
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 105
mind.

CLAUDIO May this be so?

DON PEDRO 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 110
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. 115

DON PEDRO 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. 120

DON PEDRO 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.

Exeunt