

Much Ado About Nothing

5.1

Enter Leonato and Antonio his brother

ANTONIO

If you go on thus, you will kill yourself,
And 'tis not wisdom thus to second grief
Against yourself.

LEONATO

I pray thee cease thy counsel,
Which falls into mine ears as profitless
As water in a sieve. Give not me counsel, 5
Nor let no comforter delight mine ear
But such a one whose wrongs do suit with mine.
Bring me a father that so loved his child,
Whose joy of her is overwhelmed like mine,
And bid him speak of patience. 10
Measure his woe the length and breadth of mine,
And let it answer every strain for strain,
As thus for thus, and such a grief for such,
In every lineament, branch, shape, and form.
If such a one will smile and stroke his beard, 15
Bid sorrow wag, cry 'hem' when he should groan,
Patch grief with proverbs, make misfortune drunk
With candle-wasters, bring him yet to me,
And I of him will gather patience.
But there is no such man, for, brother, men 20
Can counsel and speak comfort to that grief
Which they themselves not feel, but tasting it
Their counsel turns to passion, which before
Would give preceptual medicine to rage,
Fetter strong madness in a silken thread, 25
Charm ache with air and agony with words.
No, no, 'tis all men's office to speak patience
To those that wring under the load of sorrow,
But no man's virtue nor sufficiency
To be so moral when he shall endure 30
The like himself. Therefore give me no counsel.
My griefs cry louder than advertisement.

ANTONIO

Therein do men from children nothing differ.

LEONATO

I pray thee peace, I will be flesh and blood,
For there was never yet philosopher
That could endure the toothache patiently,
However they have writ the style of gods,
And made a pish at chance and sufferance.

ANTONIO

Yet bend not all the harm upon yourself.
Make those that do offend you suffer, too.

LEONATO

There thou speak'st reason, nay I will do so.
My soul doth tell me Hero is belied,
And that shall Claudio know, so shall the Prince,
And all of them that thus dishonour her.

Enter Don Pedro the Prince and Claudio

ANTONIO

Here comes the Prince and Claudio hastily.

DON PEDRO

Good e'en, good e'en.

CLAUDIO

Good day to both of you.

LEONATO

Hear you, my lords?

DON PEDRO

We have some haste, Leonato.

LEONATO

Some haste, my lord! Well, fare you well, my lord.
Are you so hasty now? Well, all is one.

DON PEDRO

Nay, do not quarrel with us, good old man.

ANTONIO

If he could right himself with quarrelling,
Some of us would lie low.

CLAUDIO

Who wrongs him?

LEONATO

Marry, thou dost wrong me, thou dissembler, thou.
Nay, never lay thy hand upon thy sword,
I fear thee not.

CLAUDIO

Marry, beshrew my hand

If it should give your age such cause of fear.

In faith, my hand meant nothing to my sword.

LEONATO

Tush, tush, man, never fleer and jest at me.
I speak not like a dotard nor a fool,
As under privilege of age to brag 60
What I have done being young, or what would do
Were I not old. Know Claudio to thy head,
Thou hast so wronged mine innocent child and me
That I am forced to lay my reverence by
And with grey hairs and bruise of many days 65
Do challenge thee to trial of a man.
I say thou hast belied mine innocent child.
Thy slander hath gone through and through her heart,
And she lies buried with her ancestors,
O, in a tomb where never scandal slept 70
Save this of hers, framed by thy villainy.

CLAUDIO

My villainy?

LEONATO Thine, Claudio, thine I say.

DON PEDRO

You say not right, old man.

LEONATO

My lord, my lord,

I'll prove it on his body if he dare,
Despite his nice fence and his active practice, 75
His May of youth and bloom of lustihood.

CLAUDIO

Away, I will not have to do with you.

LEONATO

Canst thou so doff me? Thou hast killed my child.
If thou kill'st me, boy, thou shalt kill a man.

ANTONIO

He shall kill two of us, and men indeed. 80

But that's no matter, let him kill one first.

Win me and wear me. Let him answer me.

Come follow me boy, come sir boy, come follow me,

Sir boy, I'll whip you from your foining fence.

Nay, as I am a gentleman, I will. 85

LEONATO Brother.

ANTONIO

Content yourself. God knows, I loved my niece,

And she is dead, slandered to death by villains

That dare as well answer a man indeed

As I dare take a serpent by the tongue. 90

Boys, apes, braggarts, jacks, milksops!

LEONATO Brother Antony±±

ANTONIO

Hold you content. What, man, I know them, yea
And what they weigh, even to the utmost scruple.
Scambling, outfacing, fashion-monging boys, 95
That lie, and cog, and flout, deprave, and slander,
Go anticly, and show an outward hideousness,
And speak off half a dozen dangerous words,
How they might hurt their enemies, if they durst,
And this is all. 100

LEONATO But brother Antony±±

ANTONIO Come, 'tis no matter,
Do not you meddle, let me deal in this.

DON PEDRO

Gentlemen both, we will not wake your patience.
My heart is sorry for your daughter's death, 105
But on my honour she was charged with nothing
But what was true and very full of proof.

LEONATO

My lord, my lord±±

DON PEDRO I will not hear you.

LEONATO

No? Come brother, away. I will be heard.

ANTONIO

And shall, or some of us will smart for it. 110

Exeunt Leonato and Antonio

Enter Benedick

DON PEDRO

See, see, here comes the man we went to seek.

CLAUDIO Now signor, what news?

BENEDICK (to Don Pedro) Good day, my lord.

DON PEDRO Welcome, signor. You are almost come to part
almost a fray. 115

CLAUDIO We had liked to have had our two noses snapped
off with two old men without teeth.

DON PEDRO Leonato and his brother. What thinkest thou?
Had we fought, I doubt we should have been too young
for them. 120

BENEDICK In a false quarrel there is no true valour. I came
to seek you both.

CLAUDIO We have been up and down to seek thee, for we
are high-proof melancholy and would fain have it
beaten away. Wilt thou use thy wit? 125

BENEDICK It is in my scabbard. Shall I draw it?

DON PEDRO Dost thou wear thy wit by thy side?

CLAUDIO Never any did so, though very many have been
beside their wit. I will bid thee draw as we do the
minstrels, draw to pleasure us. 130

DON PEDRO As I am an honest man he looks pale. Art
thou sick, or angry?

CLAUDIO What, courage, man. What though care killed
a cat, thou hast mettle enough in thee to kill care.

BENEDICK Sir, I shall meet your wit in the career an you 135
charge it against me. I pray you choose another subject.

CLAUDIO Nay then, give him another staff. This last was
broke cross.

DON PEDRO By this light, he changes more and more. I
think he be angry indeed. 140

CLAUDIO If he be, he knows how to turn his girdle.

BENEDICK (*aside to Claudio*) Shall I speak a word in your
ear?

CLAUDIO God bless me from a challenge.

BENEDICK You are a villain. I jest not. I will make it good 145
how you dare, with what you dare, and when you
dare. Do me right, or I will protest your cowardice.
You have killed a sweet lady, and her death shall fall
heavy on you. Let me hear from you.

CLAUDIO Well, I will meet you, so I may have good cheer. 150

DON PEDRO What, a feast, a feast?

CLAUDIO I'faith, I thank him, he hath bid me to a calf's
head and a capon, the which if I do not carve most
curiously, say my knife's naught. Shall I not find a
woodcock too? 155

BENEDICK Sir, your wit ambles well, it goes easily.

DON PEDRO I'll tell thee how Beatrice praised thy wit the
other day. I said thou hadst a fine wit. 'True,' said she,
'a fine little one.' 'No,' said I, 'a great wit.' 'Right,'
says she, 'a great gross one.' 'Nay,' said I, 'a good wit.' 160
'Just,' said she, 'it hurts nobody.' 'Nay,' said I, 'the
gentleman is wise.' 'Certain,' said she, 'a wise gentle-

man.' `Nay,' said I, `he hath the tongues.' `That I believe,' said she, `for he swore a thing to me on Monday night which he forswore on Tuesday morning. There's a double tongue, there's two tongues.' Thus did she an hour together trans-shape thy particular virtues, yet at last she concluded with a sigh thou wast the properest man in Italy. 165

CLAUDIO For the which she wept heartily and said she cared not. 170

DON PEDRO Yea, that she did. But yet for all that, an if she did not hate him deadly she would love him dearly. The old man's daughter told us all.

CLAUDIO All, all. And moreover, God saw him when he was hid in the garden. 175

DON PEDRO But when shall we set the savage bull's horns on the sensible Benedick's head?

CLAUDIO Yea, and text underneath, `Here dwells Benedick the married man'. 180

BENEDICK Fare you well, boy, you know my mind. I will leave you now to your gossip-like humour. You break jests as braggarts do their blades which, God be thanked, hurt not. *(To Don Pedro)* My lord, for your many courtesies I thank you. I must discontinue your company. Your brother the bastard is fled from Messina. You have among you killed a sweet and innocent lady. For my lord Lackbeard there, he and I shall meet, and till then, peace be with him. 185

Exit

DON PEDRO He is in earnest. 190

CLAUDIO In most profound earnest, and, I'll warrant you, for the love of Beatrice.

DON PEDRO And hath challenged thee.

CLAUDIO Most sincerely.

DON PEDRO What a pretty thing man is when he goes in his doublet and hose and leaves off his wit! 195

Enter Dogberry and Verges the constables, the Watch, Conrad, and Borachio

CLAUDIO He is then a giant to an ape. But then is an ape a doctor to such a man.

DON PEDRO But soft you, let me be. Pluck up, my heart,

and be sad. Did he not say my brother was fled? 200

DOGBERRY Come you sir, if justice cannot tame you, she shall ne'er weigh more reasons in her balance. Nay, an you be a cursing hypocrite once, you must be looked to.

DON PEDRO How now, two of my brother's men bound? 205
Borachio one.

CLAUDIO Hearken after their offence, my lord.

DON PEDRO Officers, what offence have these men done?

DOGBERRY Marry, sir, they have committed false report, moreover they have spoken untruths, secondarily they are slanders, sixth and lastly they have belied a lady, 210
thirdly they have verified unjust things, and to conclude, they are lying knaves.

DON PEDRO First I ask thee what they have done, thirdly I ask thee what's their offence, sixth and lastly why they are committed, and to conclude, what you lay to 215
their charge.

CLAUDIO Rightly reasoned, and in his own division. And by my troth there's one meaning well suited.

DON PEDRO (*to Conrad and Borachio*) Who have you offended, masters, that you are thus bound to your 220
answer? This learned constable is too cunning to be understood. What's your offence?

BORACHIO Sweet Prince, let me go no farther to mine answer. Do you hear me, and let this Count kill me. I have deceived even your very eyes. What your wisdoms 225
could not discover, these shallow fools have brought to light, who in the night overheard me confessing to this man how Don John your brother incensed me to slander the Lady Hero, how you were brought into the orchard and saw me court Margaret in Hero's garments, 230
how you disgraced her when you should marry her. My villainy they have upon record, which I had rather seal with my death than repeat over to my shame. The lady is dead upon mine and my master's false accusation, and briefly, I desire nothing but the reward 235
of a villain.

DON PEDRO (*to Claudio*)
Runs not this speech like iron through your blood?

CLAUDIO

I have drunk poison whiles he uttered it.

DON PEDRO *(to Borachio)*

But did my brother set thee on to this?

BORACHIO

Yea, and paid me richly for the practice of it. 240

DON PEDRO

He is composed and framed of treachery,
And fled he is upon this villainy.

CLAUDIO

Sweet Hero, now thy image doth appear
In the rare semblance that I loved it first.

DOGBERRY Come, bring away the plaintiffs. By this time 245
our Sexton hath reformed Signor Leonato of the matter.
And masters, do not forget to specify, when time and
place shall serve, that I am an ass.

VERGES Here, here comes Master Signor Leonato, and the
Sexton, too. 250

Enter Leonato, Antonio his brother, and the Sexton

LEONATO

Which is the villain? Let me see his eyes,
That when I note another man like him
I may avoid him. Which of these is he?

BORACHIO

If you would know your wronger, look on me.

LEONATO

Art thou the slave that with thy breath hast killed 255
Mine innocent child?

BORACHIO Yea, even I alone.

LEONATO

No, not so, villain, thou beliest thyself.
Here stand a pair of honourable men.
A third is fled that had a hand in it.
I thank you, Princes, for my daughter's death. 260
Record it with your high and worthy deeds.
'Twas bravely done, if you bethink you of it.

CLAUDIO

I know not how to pray your patience,
Yet I must speak. Choose your revenge yourself,
Impose me to what penance your invention 265
Can lay upon my sin. Yet sinned I not
But in mistaking.

DON PEDRO By my soul, nor I,
And yet to satisfy this good old man
I would bend under any heavy weight
That he'll enjoin me to. 270

LEONATO
I cannot bid you bid my daughter live±±
That were impossible±±but I pray you both
Possess the people in Messina here
How innocent she died, and if your love
Can labour aught in sad invention, 275
Hang her an epitaph upon her tomb
And sing it to her bones, sing it tonight.
Tomorrow morning come you to my house,
And since you could not be my son-in-law,
Be yet my nephew. My brother hath a daughter, 280
Almost the copy of my child that's dead,
And she alone is heir to both of us.
Give her the right you should have giv'n her cousin,
And so dies my revenge.

CLAUDIO O noble sir!
Your overkindness doth wring tears from me. 285
I do embrace your offer; and dispose
For henceforth of poor Claudio.

LEONATO
Tomorrow then I will expect your coming.
Tonight I take my leave. This naughty man
Shall face to face be brought to Margaret, 290
Who I believe was packed in all this wrong,
Hired to it by your brother.

BORACHIO No, by my soul, she was not,
Nor knew not what she did when she spoke to me,
But always hath been just and virtuous
In anything that I do know by her. 295

DOGBERRY (to Leonato) Moreover, sir, which indeed is not
under white and black, this plaintiff here, the offender,
did call me ass. I beseech you let it be remembered in
his punishment. And also the watch heard them talk
of one Deformed. They say he wears a key in his ear 300
and a lock hanging by it, and borrows money in God's
name, the which he hath used so long and never paid

that now men grow hard-hearted and will lend nothing
for God's sake. Pray you examine him upon that point.

LEONATO

I thank thee for thy care and honest pains. 305

DOGBERRY Your worship speaks like a most thankful and
reverend youth, and I praise God for you.

LEONATO (*giving him money*) There's for thy pains.

DOGBERRY God save the foundation.

LEONATO Go. I discharge thee of thy prisoner, and I thank 310
thee.

DOGBERRY I leave an arrant knave with your worship,
which I beseech your worship to correct yourself, for
the example of others. God keep your worship, I wish
your worship well. God restore you to health. I humbly 315
give you leave to depart, and if a merry meeting may
be wished, God prohibit it. Come, neighbour.

Exeunt Dogberry and Verges

LEONATO

Until tomorrow morning, lords, farewell.

ANTONIO

Farewell, my lords. We look for you tomorrow.

DON PEDRO

We will not fail.

CLAUDIO Tonight I'll mourn with Hero. 320

LEONATO (*to the Watch*)

Bring you these fellows on.±±We'll talk with Margaret
How her acquaintance grew with this lewd fellow.

Exeunt