

Much Ado About Nothing

4.2

Enter Dogberry and Verges the constables, and the Sexton, in gowns, and the Watch, with Conrad and Borachio

DOGBERRY Is our whole dissembly appeared?

VERGES O, a stool and a cushion for the Sexton.

SEXTON [*sits*] Which be the malefactors?

DOGBERRY Marry, that am I, and my partner.

VERGES Nay, that's certain, we have the exhibition to
examine. 5

SEXTON But which are the offenders that are to be
examined? Let them come before Master Constable.

DOGBERRY Yea, marry, let them come before me. What is
your name, friend? 10

BORACHIO Borachio.

DOGBERRY (*to the Sexton*) Pray write down `Borachio'. (*To
Conrad*) Yours, sirrah?

CONRAD I am a gentleman, sir, and my name is Conrad.

DOGBERRY Write down `Master Gentleman Conrad'. ±± 15
Masters, do you serve God?

CONRAD AND BORACHIO Yea, sir, we hope.

DOGBERRY Write down that they hope they serve God.
And write `God' first, for God defend but God should
go before such villains. Masters, it is proved already 20
that you are little better than false knaves, and it will
go near to be thought so shortly. How answer you for
yourselves?

CONRAD Marry, sir, we say we are none.

DOGBERRY A marvellous witty fellow, I assure you, but I 25
will go about with him. Come you hither, sirrah. A
word in your ear, sir. I say to you it is thought you
are false knaves.

BORACHIO Sir, I say to you we are none.

DOGBERRY Well, stand aside. Fore God, they are both in 30
a tale. Have you writ down that they are none?

SEXTON Master Constable, you go not the way to examine.
You must call forth the watch that are their accusers.

DOGBERRY Yea, marry, that's the efastest way. Let the watch
come forth. Masters, I charge you in the Prince's name
accuse these men. 35

FIRST WATCHMAN This man said, sir, that Don John, the
Prince's brother, was a villain.

DOGBERRY Write down Prince John a villain. Why, this is
flat perjury, to call a prince's brother villain. 40

BORACHIO Master Constable.

DOGBERRY Pray thee, fellow, peace. I do not like thy look,
I promise thee.

SEXTON What heard you him say else?

SECOND WATCHMAN Marry, that he had received a
thousand ducats of Don John for accusing the Lady
Hero wrongfully. 45

DOGBERRY Flat burglary, as ever was committed.

VERGES Yea, by mass, that it is.

SEXTON What else, fellow? 50

FIRST WATCHMAN And that Count Claudio did mean upon
his words to disgrace Hero before the whole assembly,
and not marry her.

DOGBERRY O villain! Thou wilt be condemned into ever-
lasting redemption for this. 55

SEXTON What else?

WATCH This is all.

SEXTON And this is more, masters, than you can deny.
Prince John is this morning secretly stolen away. Hero
was in this manner accused, in this very manner
refused, and upon the grief of this suddenly died. Master
Constable, let these men be bound and brought to
Leonato's. I will go before and show him their
examination. 60

Exit

DOGBERRY Come, let them be opinioned. 65

VERGES Let them be, in the hands±±

[CONRAD] Off, coxcomb!

DOGBERRY God's my life, where's the Sexton? Let him
write down the Prince's officer coxcomb. Come, bind
them. Thou naughty varlet! 70

CONRAD Away, you are an ass, you are an ass.

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 75
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 80
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 everything handsome about him. Bring
him away. O that I had been writ down an ass!

Exeunt