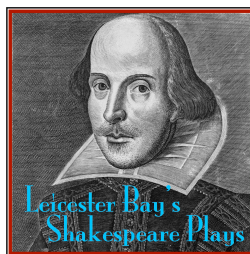




Freely adapted and updated from the  
Shakespeare Classic  
by  
**J. D. Newman**



Newport, Maine

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*LOGO ART made from images supplied by the Utah Valley University premiere production in November of 2018, featuring Jacob Thomason as Benedick and Sam Sanduk as Beatrice. Used by permission of August Miller, UVU Marketing.*

# MUCH ADO ABOUT NOTHING

by William Shakespeare

adapted by J.D. Newman

**SETTING:** A park in the small town of Messina, Colorado

**TIME:** The first week of July, 1945, between VE Day and VJ Day

## CAST OF CHARACTERS: (7m, 6F, 3child)

### MALE:

**Mayor Leonato:** Mayor of Messina

**Verges:** The long-time postmaster of Messina, a decorated WWI veteran

**Major Benedick:** A decorated fighter pilot who fought in Europe under Don Pedro

**Captain Claudio:** A comrade of Benedick and a suitor of Hero

**Dean John\*:** An embittered professor at Messina College who stayed home

**Conrad Borachio:** Dean John's protege and trusted assistant at the college

**Don Pedro:** Benedick's commander

*\*Don John in original*

### FEMALE:

**Beatrice:** The spirited niece of Leonato, in the mold of Rosie the Riveter

**Hero:** Leonato's daughter, a nurse for the Red Cross

**Ursula:** A friend of Hero, a "working girl"

**Margaret:** A domestic servant in the home of Leonato, Ursula's niece

**Dogberry:** The restless air-raid warden of the town

**Balthasar Wilson#:** A USO singer

*#Mr. Wilson is credited for singing the role at the Globe.*

### YOUTH:

**George Seacoal:** An over-eager Boy Scout who hopes he'll get to go to war

**Hugh Coil+:** A young Boy Scout, loves to tie knots, especially on Conrad

**Hazel Oatcake+:** A girl who poses as a Boy Scout, sees herself as a junior detective

*\*Adapted from the name Hugh Oatcake in original*

Notes on this adaptation of the script:

- "Doth" and "hath" have been updated as "does" and "have."
- "Ye" "thou" and "thee" have been changed to "you" and "thine" to "your"
- The text is based on the Arden edition, ed. Clair McEachern
- Suggested period music is listed in the text. Producers are responsible for obtaining copyright clearance for their productions.

**Original Cast for Adaptation**  
**as performed at Utah Valley University, Bastian Black Box Theatre**

Mayor Leonato  
Verges  
Don Pedro  
Major Benedick  
Captain Claudio  
Dean John  
Conrad Borachio  
Beatrice  
Hero  
Ursula  
Margaret  
Dogberry  
Balthasar Wilson  
George Seacoal  
Hugh Coil  
Hazel Oatcake

Shane Nuttall  
Ammon Jenkins  
Duncan Johnson  
Jacob Thomason  
Josh Needles  
Matt Oviatt  
Tyler Botill  
Sam Sanduk  
Aspen Thompson  
Laura Williamson  
Maren Lethbridge  
Devon Trop  
Rilyn Gardner  
Jonothan Curtis  
David Curtis  
Alexandra Hanks

Producer  
Director  
Dramaturg  
Scenic & Properties Designer  
Costume Designer  
Lighting Designer  
Sound Designer  
Makeup, Hair, & Wig Designer  
Production Stage Manager  
Technical Director  
Production Manager  
Assistant Stage Manager  
Props Master  
Wardrobe Supervisor  
Dresser  
Light Board Operator  
Sound Board Operator  
Costume Design & Makeup Mentor  
Lighting, Sound & Management Mentor  
Dramaturgy Mentor

Lisa Hagen  
John Newman  
Laura Dexter  
Alicia Freeman  
Chris Lancaster  
Emma Eugenia Belnap  
Kevin Criman  
Shelby Noelle Gist  
Melissa Bonilla  
Cristian Bell  
Aja Vogelmann  
Nick Crapo  
Zachary Ballard  
Sarah Cousins  
McKenzie Kiser  
McKell Petersen  
Allyson Mitchell  
La Beene  
Matt Taylor  
Janine Sobeck Knighton

**JOHN D. NEWMAN** is a professor of theatre at Utah Valley University and the director of the Noorda Theatre Center for Children and Youth. He lives with his family in Sandy City, Utah. Dr. Newman became the first recipient of the Reba R. Robertson Award from the Children's Theatre Foundation of America. At UVU, Dr. Newman has directed *The Secret Garden*, *Princess Academy*, and *Androcles and the Lion* in the Noorda Theatre. He has also served as the director of the Noorda Theatre Summer Camp and has produced or co-produced touring productions including *A Village Fable*, *The Princess and the Goblin*, *Honk!*, and *Pedro's Magic Shoes*. As a playwright, he has adapted scripts for Newbery medalists including Avi, Paul Fleischman, and Richard Peck. Newman taught and directed at Highland High School for eighteen years, from 1991 to 2010 with a sabbatical to Texas in 1998-99. He served as Artistic Director of the Salt Lake School for the Performing Arts during the 2009-2010 school year. Newman earned his B.F.A. and M.Ed. from the University of Utah, his M.A. from the University of Texas, and his Ph.D. from New York University. With Judy Matetzschk-Campbell, he co-authored *Tell Your Story: The Plays and Playwriting of Sandra Fenichel Asher*. Dr. Newman chairs the Playwrights In Our Schools Project and served three years on the board of the American Alliance for Theatre and Education.

**MUCH ADO ABOUT NOTHING** Freely adapted and updated from the Shakespeare Classic by J.D. Newman. 7M 6W 3children. 1 Exterior. 1940's costumes including military uniforms. About 90 minutes. The military war is over, but the "merry war" of love has just begun! Considered one of Shakespeare's most popular comedies, join Beatrice and Benedict, Hero and Claudio as they navigate through mine fields of words and jealous rivals to the safety of finding that one person with whom you truly belong. Drawing serious and frivolous into one realm, the show tells of nobleman Leonato, who shares his home with his daughter, Hero; niece, Beatrice; and elder brother, Antonio, as he welcomes friends home from the war. The play is set in 1945, just as WWII was coming to a close. A time in history where feminism had just experienced more progress than it ever had before. The Allies quickly realized that the only way to victory was to incorporate the efforts of as many citizens as possible. While men were being drafted to serve as soldiers, women were encouraged to take up jobs that had been previously deemed "man's work". They were working in factories building and fixing planes, working as conductors, and driving trucks and fire engines. And for the first time in history, women were officially recognized as part of the military. Traditional gender roles are confronted as women who went to work are finding that they are now expected to return home. The dark time of the war has finally passed. Women have been holding down the Homefront and the boys are returning to rejoin everyday life. And while some young men are looking forward to the romances in store, there are others who swear to never fall prey to the distractions of love. Beatrice, is a "Rosie the Riveter"-style hero with her sharp words and independent streak. Her rival-turned-lover, Benedick, is a returning war hero. Their friends determine to test their stubbornness and start a game of matchmaking and mischief that turns everyone's world upside down. Benedick and Beatrice, who "never meet but there's a skirmish of wit between them", stand head to head and go toe to toe. The romantic tension is palpable and the clever banter sends sparks flying. **ORDER #3146**

## MUCH ADO ABOUT NOTHING

by William Shakespeare

adapted by J.D. Newman

*The original stage setting was a town park in Messina, Colorado, with a gazebo stage-left; a park bench, loud speaker, and balcony stage-right, and a wooden fence covered with war posters upstage. Bunting and parts of a "victory garden," including a scarecrow, surrounded the playing space and audience.*

### ACT I Scene 1 (Evening, Wednesday, July 4, 1945)

*(Suggested period music underscoring: "Boogie-Woogie Bugle Boy of Company B" sung by BALTHASAR WILSON. VERGES the postmaster appears on a bicycle, giving (or not giving) letters to HERO, DOGBERRY, DEAN JOHN, CONRAD, URSULA, MARGARET, BALTHASAR WILSON, and DOGBERRY. GEORGE SEACOAL and HUGH COIL, dressed as Boy Scouts, see flyer calling for volunteers for the night-watch and exit. A bit later, HAZEL OATCAKE sees the flyer and picks up the hat that GEORGE left behind and runs offstage. Enter MAYOR LEONATO, HERO, and BEATRICE who approach Verges. He gives Leonato a letter. Music ends.)*

**LEONATO:** I learn from this that Don Pedro Prince comes this night to Messina.

**VERGES:** He is very near: he was not three miles off when I left him.

**LEONATO:** How many gentlemen of Messina have we lost in this war?

**VERGES:** Few of any sort, and none of name.

**LEONATO:** A victory is twice itself when the achiever brings home full numbers. I find here that Don Pedro has bestowed much honor on a young flyer called Captain Claudio.

**VERGES:** Much deserved on his part. He has borne himself beyond the promise of his age, doing, in the figure of a lamb, the feats of a lion.

**LEONATO:** He has an uncle here in Messina who will be much glad of it.

**VERGES:** I have already delivered him letters, and there appears much joy in him.

**LEONATO:** Did he break out into tears?

**VERGES:** In great measure.

**LEONATO:** There are no faces truer than those that are so washed. How much better is it to weep at joy than to joy at weeping!

**BEATRICE:** I pray you, is Major Benedick returned from the war or no?

**VERGES:** O, he's returned; and as pleasant as ever he was.

**BEATRICE:** How many has he killed and eaten in this war? For indeed I promised to eat all of his killing.

**VERGES:** He has done good service in the war. A good soldier, lady.

**BEATRICE:** And a good soldier to a lady: but what is he to a man?

**VERGES:** A man to a man, stuffed with all honorable virtues.

**BEATRICE:** *(referencing the scarecrow)* It is so, indeed; he is no less than a stuffed man.

*(She might hum or whistle "If I Only Had a Brain" from the 1939 film The Wizard of Oz)*

PERUSAL SCRIPT -- MUCH ADO ABOUT NOTHING by J.D. Newman

--well, we are all mortal.

**LEONATO:** You must not, sir, mistake my niece. There is a kind of merry war betwixt Major Benedick and her: they never meet but there's a skirmish of wit between them.

**BEATRICE:** Alas, he gets nothing by that. In our last conflict, four of his five wits went limping off, and now is the whole man governed with one.

**VERGES:** I see, lady, the gentleman is not in your books.

**BEATRICE:** No; and if he were, I would burn my study. But, I pray you, who is his companion? He has every month a new sworn brother.

**VERGES:** He is most in the company of the right noble Captain Claudio.

**BEATRICE:** God help the noble Claudio!

**VERGES:** Don Pedro and his company approach!

*(Enter DON PEDRO, MAJOR BENEDICK, and CAPTAIN CLAUDIO in uniform. A musical fanfare plays: suggested tune "Sun Valley Jump.")*

**DON PEDRO:** Good Mayor Leonato, are you come to meet your trouble?

**LEONATO:** Never came trouble to my house in the likeness of your grace. When you depart from me, sorrow abides and happiness takes his leave.

**DON PEDRO:** You embrace your charge too willingly. I think this is your daughter.

**LEONATO:** Her mother has many times told me so.

**BENEDICK:** Were you in doubt, sir, that you asked her?

**LEONATO:** Major Benedick, no; for then were you a child.

**BENEDICK:** Mayor Leonato must be her father. She could have his head on her shoulders, as like him as she is.

*(If fanfare music continues under dialogue, it should cut out now.)*

**BEATRICE:** I wonder that you will still be talking, Major Benedick: nobody marks you.

**BENEDICK:** What, my dear Lady Disdain! Are you yet living?

**BEATRICE:** Is it possible disdain should die, while she has such food to feed it as Major Benedick?

**BENEDICK:** I am loved of all ladies, only you excepted: and I would I could find in my heart that I had not a hard heart; for, truly, I love none.

**BEATRICE:** A dear happiness to women --they would else have been troubled with a pernicious suitor. I thank God and my cold blood, I am of your humor for that: I had rather hear my dog bark at a crow than a man swear he loves me.

**BENEDICK:** God keep your ladyship still in that mind, so some gentleman or other shall escape a scratched face.

**BEATRICE:** Scratching could not make it worse, if it were such a face as yours.

**BENEDICK:** Well, you are a rare parrot-teacher.

**BEATRICE:** A bird of my tongue is better than a beast of yours.

**BENEDICK:** I would my horse had the speed of your tongue. But keep your way, I am done.

**BEATRICE:** You always end with a jade's trick.

**DON PEDRO:** Captain Claudio and Major Benedick, my dear friend Leonato has invited us all. I tell him we shall stay here at the least a month; and he heartily prays some occasion

may detain us longer.

**DON PEDRO:** (*To Dean John*) John, let me be reconciled to you, my brother. I owe you all duty.

**DEAN JOHN:** I thank you: I am not of many words, but I thank you.

**LEONATO:** If it please you, sir, lead on.

**DON PEDRO:** Your hand, Leonato; we will go together.

*(Exeunt all except Benedick and Claudio.)*

**CLAUDIO:** Benedick, did you note the daughter of Mayor Leonato?

**BENEDICK:** I noted her not; but I looked on her.

**CLAUDIO:** Is she not a modest young lady?

**BENEDICK:** Do you question me for my simple true judgment? Or would you have me speak after my custom, as a professed tyrant to their sex?

**CLAUDIO:** No; I pray you, speak in sober judgment.

**BENEDICK:** Why, in faith, methinks she's too low for a high praise and too little for a great praise: only this commendation I can afford her, that were she other than she is, she were unhandsome; and being no other but as she is, I do not like her.

**CLAUDIO:** You think I am in sport: I pray you tell me truly how you like her.

**BENEDICK:** Would you buy her since you inquire after her?

**CLAUDIO:** Can the world buy such a jewel?

**BENEDICK:** Yea, and a case to put it in. But speak you this with a sad brow? Come, in what key shall a man take up your song?

**CLAUDIO:** In mine eye she is the sweetest lady that ever I looked on.

**BENEDICK:** Her cousin Beatrice, were she not possessed with a fury, would exceed her as much in beauty as the first of May does the last of December. But I hope you have no intent to turn husband-have you?

**CLAUDIO:** I would scarce trust myself if Hero would be my wife.

**BENEDICK:** Is it come to this? Shall I never see a bachelor of three-score years again? Go to, in faith; if you would thrust your neck into a yoke, wear the print of it and sigh away. Look Don Pedro is returned to seek you.

*(Re-enter Don Pedro. Claudio gestures for Benedick to keep quiet.)*

**DON PEDRO:** What secret has held you here that you followed not to Leonato's?

**BENEDICK:** I would your grace would constrain me to tell.

**DON PEDRO:** I charge you on your allegiance.

**BENEDICK:** You hear, Claudio? I can be as secret as a dumb man; but, on my allegiance, he is in love. With who? With Hero, Leonato's daughter.

**CLAUDIO:** If my passion change not shortly, God forbid it should be otherwise.

**DON PEDRO:** Amen, if you love her; for the lady is very well worthy.

**CLAUDIO:** You speak this to fetch me in, my lord?

**DON PEDRO:** In truth, I speak my thought.

**CLAUDIO:** And, in faith, my lord, I spoke mine.

**BENEDICK:** And, by my two faiths and truths, my lord, I spoke mine.



**CLAUDIO:** That I love her, I feel.

**DON PEDRO:** That she is worthy, I know.

**BENEDICK:** I neither feel how she should be loved nor know how she should be worthy.

**DON PEDRO:** You were ever an obstinate heretic in contempt of beauty.

**BENEDICK:** That a woman conceived me, I thank her; that she brought me up, I will likewise give her most humble thanks. But because I will not do them the wrong to mistrust any, I will do myself the right to trust none. I will live a bachelor.

**DON PEDRO:** I shall see you, 'ere I die, look pale with love.

**BENEDICK:** With anger, with sickness, or with hunger, sir, not with love.

**DON PEDRO:** Well, if ever you do fall from this faith, you will prove a notable argument.

**BENEDICK:** If I do, hang me like a cat in a barrel and shoot at me; and he that hits me, let him be clapped on the shoulder.

**DON PEDRO:** 'In time each savage bull does bear the yoke.'

**BENEDICK:** The savage bull may; but if ever the sensible Benedick bear it, pluck off the bull's horns and set them in my forehead: and let it be vilely painted on a sign, in as great letters as they write: 'Here you see Benedick, the married man.'

**DON PEDRO:** In the meantime, good Major Benedick, repair to Leonato's: commend me to him and tell him I will not fail him at supper; for indeed he has made great preparations.

**BENEDICK:** I have almost matter enough for a telegram: 'I commend you, Leonato, to the protection of God, the fourth of July, conveyed by Pedro's loving friend, Benedick.' And so I leave you.

*(Exit Benedick.)*

**CLAUDIO:** Good sir, your highness now may do me good.

**DON PEDRO:** My love is yours to teach: teach it but how,  
And you shall see how apt it is to learn  
Any hard lesson that may do you good.

*(Conrad Borachio appears smoking. He conceals himself, hearing the whole conversation.)*

**CLAUDIO:** Has Mayor Leonato any son?

**DON PEDRO:** No child but Hero; she's his only heir.  
Do you adore her, Claudio?

**CLAUDIO:** O my lord,  
I look'd upon her with a soldier's eye,  
That liked, but had a rougher task in hand  
Than to drive liking to the name of love.  
But now I am returned, and those war-thoughts  
Have left their places vacant, in their rooms  
Come thronging soft and delicate desires,  
All whispering how fair young Hero is.

**DON PEDRO:** You will be like a lover presently  
And tire the hearer with a book of words.  
If you do love fair Hero, cherish it,

I'll reveal it to her and to her father,  
And you shall have her. Was't not to this end  
That you began to twist so fine a story?

**CLAUDIO:** How sweetly you do minister to love,  
That know love's grief by its complexion!  
But lest my liking might too sudden seem,  
I should have told you with a longer tale.

**DON PEDRO:** Why need the bridge be broader than the flood?  
You love; so I'll apply the remedy.

I know we shall have reveling tonight:  
I will assume your part in some disguise  
And tell fair Hero I am Claudio

*(VERGES appears and only hears the following part of the conversation)*

And to her bosom I'll unclasp my heart.  
And take the hearer prisoner with the force  
And strong encounter of my amorous tale:  
Then after to her father will I speak;  
And the conclusion is, she shall be won!

*(Exeunt Claudio and Don Pedro. Verges reappears; CONRAD steals away.)*

**ACT I Scene 2** *(immediately following)*

*(Enter LEONATO meeting VERGES.)*

**VERGES:** Mayor Leonato, I can tell you strange news that you dream not of.

**LEONATO:** Is it good?

**VERGES:** Don Pedro and Captain Claudio were overheard by me. Don Pedro revealed to Claudio that he loves your daughter and means to acknowledge it this night at the dance: and if he finds her agreeable, he means to speak with you of it.

**LEONATO:** I will hold it as a dream till it appear itself: but I will acquaint my daughter with it, that she may be the better prepared for an answer, if peradventure this be true. I will tell her of it.

**VERGES:** Take care. This is a busy time.

*(Exeunt)*

**ACT I Scene 3** *(immediately following)*

*(Enter Dean John and Conrad Borachio.)*

**CONRAD:** Dean! Why are you out of measure and sad?

**DEAN JOHN:** There is no measure that causes it; therefore the sadness is without limit.

**CONRAD:** You should hear reason.

**DEAN JOHN:** And when I have heard it, what blessing brings it?

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**CONRAD:** If not a present remedy, at least a patient sufferance.

**DEAN JOHN:** I cannot hide what I am not and therefore cannot hide what I am: I must be sad when I have cause, eat when I have stomach, sleep when I am drowsy, and laugh at no man's jests.

**CONRAD:** Yea, but you must not make the full show of this till you may do it without restraint. You have lately stood against your brother, and yet he has taken you newly into his grace.

**DEAN JOHN:** I had rather be a weed in a hedge than a rose in his grace, and it better fits my blood to be disdained of all than to assume a manner that robs love from any. Though I cannot be said to be a flattering honest man, it must not be denied that I am a plain-dealing villain. I am fitted with a muzzle and fettered to a block; therefore, I have decreed not to sing in my cage. If I had my mouth, I would bite; if I had my liberty I would do my liking. In the meantime let me be that I am and seek not to alter me.

**CONRAD:** Can you make no use of your discontent?

**DEAN JOHN:** I make all use of it, for I use it only.

**CONRAD:** Your brother Don Pedro is royally entertained by Leonato: and I can give you intelligence of an intended marriage.

**DEAN JOHN:** Will it serve for any basis to build mischief on? What fool is he that betroths himself to unquietness?

**CONRAD:** Marry, it is your brother's right hand.

**DEAN JOHN:** Who? The most exquisite Captain Claudio?

**CONRAD:** Even he.

**DEAN JOHN:** A proper officer! And which way looks he?

**CONRAD:** Marry, on Hero, the daughter and heir of Mayor Leonato.

**DEAN JOHN:** How came you to this knowledge?

**CONRAD:** While I was smoking, came your brother and Claudio in sad conference: I whipt me into shadow; and there heard it agreed that Don Pedro should woo Hero for himself, and having obtained her, give her to Captain Claudio.

**DEAN JOHN:** Come, come, let us thither: this may prove food to my displeasure. That young up-start has all the glory. If I can cross him in any way, I'll bless myself in every way. You are faithful and will assist me?

**CONRAD:** To the death.

**DEAN JOHN:** Let us to the great supper: their cheer is the greater that I am subdued. Shall we go find what's to be done?

**CONRAD:** I wait upon your honor.

*(Exeunt)*

**ACT II Scene 1** *(Evening, Wednesday, July 4)*

*(Enter Leonato, Hero, and Beatrice as others decorate the gazebo for a Fourth of July masked ball during musical underscoring. Suggested music: an instrumental version of "In the Mood.")*

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**LEONATO:** Was Dean John at supper?

**HERO:** I saw him there.

**BEATRICE:** How tartly that gentleman looks! I never can see him but I am heart-burned an hour after.

**HERO:** He is of a very melancholy disposition.

**BEATRICE:** He is an excellent man that is midway between him and Benedick: the one is too like a statue and says nothing, and the other evermore tattling.

**LEONATO:** Then half Major Benedick's tongue in Dean John's mouth, and half Dean John's melancholy in Major Benedick's face.

**BEATRICE:** Such a man would win any woman in the world, if he could get her good will.

**LEONATO:** In truth, niece, if you be so shrewd of tongue. God will send you no husband.

**BEATRICE:** For the which blessing I am upon my knees every morning and evening. Sir, could not endure a husband with a beard on his face: I had rather sleep in a woolen blanket.

**LEONATO:** You may light on a husband that has no beard.

**BEATRICE:** What should I do with him? Dress him in my apparel and make him my waiting gentlewoman? He that has a beard is merely a youth, and he that has no beard is less than a man: and he that is more than a youth is not for me, and he that is less than a man I am not for him.

**LEONATO:** They say "those who die maids will lead apes into hell."

**HERO:** Well, then, cousin, go you into hell?

**BEATRICE:** No, but to the gate; and there will the devil meet me, like an old cuckold, with horns on his head, and say 'Get you to heaven, Beatrice, get you to heaven. Here's no place for you maids!' So I will deliver up my apes and away I go to heaven, where Saint Peter shows me where the bachelors sit, and there we shall live as merry as the day is long.

*(Underscoring ends.)*

**LEONATO:** *(to Hero)* Well, daughter, I trust you will be ruled by your father.

**BEATRICE:** Yea, faith; it is my cousin's duty to make curtsy and say 'Father, as it please you.' But yet for all that, cousin, let your husband be a handsome fellow, or else make another curtsy and say 'Father, as it please me.'

**LEONATO:** Well, niece, I hope to see you one day fitted with a husband.

**BEATRICE:** Not till God make men of some other material than earth. Would it not grieve a woman to be overmastered by one God made of dust?

**LEONATO:** *(to Hero)* Daughter, remember what I told you: if Don Pedro do solicit you, then make your answer.

**BEATRICE:** The fault will be in the music, cousin, if you be not wooed in good time. Wooing, wedding, and regretting are like a jig, a waltz and a tango. The suit is hot and hasty, the wedding mannerly and modest, and regrets dance faster and faster till they sink us in the grave. The revelers are here: make good room.

*(Masquerade Ball begins. Music suggestion: a jazzy version of "June Night." Beatrice, Hero, and Leonato put on their masks. Enter Don Pedro, Claudio, Benedick, Balthasar Wilson, Dean John, Conrad, Margaret, and Ursula, masked. The dance begins; Conrad with*

PERUSAL SCRIPT -- MUCH ADO ABOUT NOTHING by J.D. Newman

*Margaret, Ursula with Leonato, Benedick with Beatrice, and Claudio and Dean John looking on from the sidelines. Don Pedro approaches Hero. Balthasar Wilson takes her place at a microphone to sing Shakespeare's lyrics to a 1945 song.)*

**BALTHASAR WILSON:** *(singing)* Sigh no more, ladies, sigh no more,  
Men were deceivers ever,  
One foot in sea and one on shore,  
To one thing constant never.

**DON PEDRO:** Lady, will you dance a round with an old friend?

**HERO:** If you dance softly, and look sweetly, and say nothing,  
I am yours for the walk; especially when I walk away.

**DON PEDRO:** With me in your company?

**HERO:** I may say so, if I please.

**DON PEDRO:** And when please you to say so?

**HERO:** When I find I like the face behind the mask.

**BALTHASAR WILSON:** *(singing)* Then sigh not so, but let them go  
And be you blithe and bonny,  
Converting all your sounds of woe  
Into 'hey nonny, nonny.'

**CONRAD:** I would you did like me.

**MARGARET:** I would not, for your sake; for I have many ill-qualities.

**CONRAD:** Which is one?

**MARGARET:** I speak my thoughts aloud.

**CONRAD:** I love you the better: the hearers may cry, Amen.

**MARGARET:** God match me with a good dancer!

**CONRAD:** Amen.

**MARGARET:** And God keep him out of my sight when the dance is done!

**BALTHASAR WILSON:** *(singing)* Sing no more ditties, sing no more,  
Of dumps so dull and heavy;  
The fraud of men was ever so,  
Since summer first was leave-y.

**URSULA:** I know you well enough; you are Mayor Leonato.

**LEONATO:** At a word, I am not.

**URSULA:** I know you by the waggling of your head.

**LEONATO:** To tell you true, I counterfeit him.

**URSULA:** You could never do him so ill-well, unless you were the very man. Here's his dry  
hand up and down: you are he, you are he!

**LEONATO:** At a word, I am not.

**BALTHASAR WILSON:** *(singing)* Then sigh not so, but let them go,  
And be you blithe and bonny,  
Converting all your sounds of woe  
Into "hey nonny, nonny."

**BEATRICE:** Will you not tell me who told you that jest?

**BENEDICK:** No, you shall pardon me.

**BEATRICE:** Nor will you tell me who you are?

**BENEDICK:** Not now.

**BEATRICE:** I'd wager it was Benedick that told it.

**BENEDICK:** Who's he?

**BEATRICE:** I am sure you know him well enough.

**BENEDICK:** Not I, believe me.

**BEATRICE:** Did he never make you laugh?

**BENEDICK:** I pray you, who is he?

**BEATRICE:** Why, he's Don Pedro's jester

**BALTHASAR WILSON:** (*singing*) Sigh no more, ladies, sigh no more,  
Men were deceivers ever,  
One foot in sea and one on shore,  
To one thing constant never.

**BEATRICE:** Benedick is a very dull fool; his only gift is in devising impossible slanders: He both pleases men and angers them, and then they laugh at him and beat him. I am sure he is in the crowd: I would he had danced with me.

**BENEDICK:** When I meet the gentleman, I'll tell him what you say.

**BEATRICE:** Do, do: he'll hit me with figures of speech as if they were shot from his musket.  
We must follow the leaders.

**BENEDICK:** In every good thing.

**BEATRICE:** Nay, if they lead to any ill, I will leave them at the next turning.

**BALTHASAR WILSON:** (*singing*) Then sigh not so, but let them go,  
And be you blithe and bonny,  
Converting all your sounds of woe  
Into 'hey nonny, nonny.'

*(Balthasar Wilson dances with Claudio while the cast sings the final refrain.)*

**ALL:** (*singing*) Then sigh not so, but let them go,  
And be you blithe and bonny,  
Converting all your sounds of woe  
Into "hey nonny, nonny."

*(The dance ends. Dean John and Conrad Borachio stand apart together, with Claudio alone further off. The others exit or disperse.)*

**DEAN JOHN:** Sure my brother is not amorous of Hero and has withdrawn with her father to speak with him about Claudio. The ladies follow her and but one masked man remains.

**CONRAD:** And that is Claudio: I know him by his bearing.

**DEAN JOHN:** (*approaching CLAUDIO*) Are not you Major Benedick?

**CLAUDIO:** You know me well; I am he.

**DEAN JOHN:** Major, you are very near my brother. He is enamored of Hero; I pray you,

dissuade him from her: she is no equal to his birth.

**CLAUDIO:** How do you know he loves her?

**DEAN JOHN:** I heard him swear his affection.

**CONRAD:** So did I; and he swore he would marry her.

**DEAN JOHN:** Come, let us to the banquet.

*(Exeunt Dean John and Conrad.)*

**CLAUDIO:** *(unmasking)* Thus answer I in the name of Benedick,

But hear this ill news with the ears of Claudio.

'Tis sure; Don Pedro woos her for himself.

Friendship is constant in all other things

Save in the functions and affairs of love.

Therefore, all hearts in love use their own tongues;

Let every eye negotiate for itself

And trust no agent; for beauty is a witch

Against whose charms faith melteth into blood.

This is an incident of timely proof,

Which I mistrusted not. Farewell, therefore, Hero!

*(Re-enter Benedick.)*

**BENEDICK:** Claudio?

**CLAUDIO:** Yea, the same.

**BENEDICK:** Come, will you go with me?

**CLAUDIO:** Whither?

**BENEDICK:** To the willow of unrequited love, for Don Pedro has won your Hero.

**CLAUDIO:** I wish him joy with her.

**BENEDICK:** Did you think Don Pedro would have served you thus?

**CLAUDIO:** I pray you leave me!

**BENEDICK:** Ho! Now you strike like a blind man. 'Twas the knave that stole your meat, and you'll beat the messenger?

**CLAUDIO:** If you will not let me be, I'll leave you.

*(Exit Claudio.)*

**BENEDICK:** Alas, poor hurt fowl! Now will he creep into the hedges. But how should my Lady Beatrice know me, and not know me! Don Pedro's fool! Ha? It may be I go under that title because I am merry. Yea, I am so reputed; it is the base, though bitter, disposition of Beatrice that says the world describes me thus. Well, I'll be revenged as I may.

*(Re-enter Don Pedro and Leonato with Hero.)*

**DON PEDRO:** Now, Major, where's the captain? Did you see him?

**BENEDICK:** In truth, I found him here as melancholy as a lodge in a warren. I told him, and I think I told him true, that you had got the good will of his young Hero. I offered to lead him to a willow-tree, either to make him a garland, for being forsaken, or a rod to whip himself!

**LEONATO:** Whip himself! What's his fault?

**BENEDICK:** The foolish transgression of a schoolboy, who, being overjoyed with finding a

bird's nest, shows it to his companion, who steals it!

**DON PEDRO:** The transgression of that would be in the stealer.

**BENEDICK:** You have stolen his love bird: Hero!

**HERO:** He did but teach the bird to sing and restored it to its owner.

**BENEDICK:** *(To Leonato)* Is her singing answer honest?

**DON PEDRO:** We sent Beatrice to fetch good Claudio that I may tell him of it.

**LEONATO:** Lady Beatrice has a quarrel with you, Benedick. When I danced with her, she said she is much wronged by you.

**BENEDICK:** O, she misused me past endurance! She told me, not thinking I had been myself, that I was Don Pedro's jester: hurling jest after jest upon me that I stood like a man at a target, with a whole army shooting at me. She speaks daggers, and every word stabs. If her breath were as terrible as her curses, there were no living near her. I would not marry her if she were endowed with all that Adam left behind. She would have turned Hercules' club into kindling! Come, talk not of her: you shall find her the goddess of strife in good apparel. I would some scholar would conjure her back to Hades; for while she is here, a man may live more quietly in hell; men would sin on purpose to go thither!

**DON PEDRO:** Look, here she comes.

*(Enter Beatrice with Claudio.)*

**BENEDICK:** Sir, will you command me any service, send me to the world's end? I will go on the slightest errand that you can devise to send me on. I will fetch you a tooth-pick from the furthest reach of Asia, bear a message to the Japanese, fetch you a hair off the emperor's beard, rather than hold three words' conference with this harpy! You have no employment for me?

**DON PEDRO:** None, but to desire your good company.

**BENEDICK:** O good sir, I cannot endure this Lady Tongue.

*(Benedick exits.)*

**DON PEDRO:** Come, lady, come; you have lost the heart of Major Benedick.

**BEATRICE:** Indeed, my lord, he lent it me awhile; and I paid him back with interest: my double heart for his single one.

**DON PEDRO:** You have put him down, lady, you have put him down.

**BEATRICE:** So I would not he should do to me, lest I should prove the mother of fools. I have brought Captain Claudio, whom you sent me to seek.

**HERO:** Why, how now, Claudio! Wherefore are you sad?

**CLAUDIO:** Not sad.

**LEONATO:** How then? Sick?

**CLAUDIO:** Neither.

**BEATRICE:** The man is neither sad, nor sick, nor merry, nor well; but bittersweet as an orange and jealous with a red complexion.

**DON PEDRO:** In faith, lady, I think your description to be true, but his belief is false. Claudio, I have wooed in your name, and fair Hero is won. I have spoken with her father, and his good will has been obtained: name the day of your marriage, and God give you joy!

**LEONATO:** Claudio, take from me my daughter, and with her my fortunes. Don Pedro has



arranged the match, and I say amen to it.

**BEATRICE:** Speak, Captain, 'tis your cue.

**CLAUDIO:** Silence is the perfectest herald of joy. I were little happy if I could say how much.

Lady, as you are mine, I am yours. I give away myself for you and treasure the exchange.

**BEATRICE:** Speak, cousin; or, if you cannot, stop his mouth with a kiss, and let not him speak either.

*(Claudio and Hero kiss and exit.)*

**DON PEDRO:** In faith, lady, you have a merry heart.

**BEATRICE:** Yea, my lord; I thank God for it, for it keeps me on the windward side of care. My cousin tells me in mine ear that he is in her heart.

**LEONATO:** And so she does, niece.

**BEATRICE:** Thus goes every one in the world but I, so I sit in a corner and cry “Hey-ho” for a husband!

**DON PEDRO:** Lady Beatrice, I will get you one.

**BEATRICE:** I would rather have one of your father's getting. Your father made excellent husbands, if a maid could come by them.

**DON PEDRO:** Would you have me, lady?

**BEATRICE:** No, sir, unless I might have another husband for working-days. Your grace is too costly to wear every day. But, pardon me, I was born to speak all mirth and no matter.

**DON PEDRO:** Your silence disappoints me your merriment best becomes you. Out of question, you were born in a merry hour.

**BEATRICE:** No, my mother cried; but then a star danced, and under that was I born. Sir, God 4 give you joy!

*(Exit Beatrice.)*

**DON PEDRO:** In truth, a pleasant-spirited lady.

**LEONATO:** There's little of the melancholy element in her. She is never sad but when she sleeps, and not ever sad then; for I have heard my daughter say, she has often dreamt of unhappiness and waked herself with laughing.

**DON PEDRO:** She cannot endure to consider a husband.

**LEONATO:** O, by no means: she mocks all her wooers out of their suits.

**DON PEDRO:** She would be an excellent wife for Benedict.

**LEONATO:** If they were but married a week, they would talk themselves mad!

*(Don Pedro and Leonato exchange looks. Claudio and Hero return.)*

**DON PEDRO:** Captain Claudio, when mean you to marry?

**CLAUDIO:** Tomorrow, my lord. Time goes on crutches till love's rituals are fulfilled.

**HERO:** At least not until Monday, which is less than a seven-night away

**LEONATO:** And still a time too brief for all preparations to suit my mind.

**DON PEDRO:** *(to Claudio)* Come, you shake the head at so long a wait, but, I warrant you, the time shall not go dully for us. In the interim, I will undertake one of Hercules' labors to bring Major Benedick and the Lady Beatrice into a mountain of affection the one for the other. I would yearn to see the match, and I doubt we could make it happen, if you three will but minister such assistance as

I shall give you direction.

**LEONATO:** My lord, I am with you, though it cost me ten nights' watchings.

**CLAUDIO:** And I, my lord.

**DON PEDRO:** And you too, gentle Hero?

**HERO:** I will do any modest office to help my cousin to a good husband.

**DON PEDRO:** And Benedick is not the unhopefullest husband that I know. Thus far can I praise him; he is of a noble strain, of demonstrated valor and confirmed honesty. I will teach you how to entice your cousin, that she shall fall in love with Benedick; and I, with your two helps, will so play on Benedick that, in spite of his quick wit and his queasy stomach, he shall fall in love with Beatrice. If we can do this, Cupid will no longer be the great archer. His glory shall be ours, for we shall be the only love-gods. Go in with me, and I will tell you my plan.

*(Exeunt Don Pedro, Leonato, Claudio, and Hero.)*

**ACT II Scene 2** *(immediately following)*

*(Enter Dean John and Conrad Borachio.)*

**DEAN JOHN:** It is so; Captain Claudio shall marry the daughter of Leonato.

**CONRAD:** Yea, sir; but I can cross it.

**DEAN JOHN:** Any bar, any cross, any impediment will be medicinal to me: I am sick with displeasure because of him, and whatsoever thwarts his affection aligns with mine. How can you cross this marriage?

**CONRAD:** Not honestly, Dean, but so stealthily that no dishonesty shall appear in me.

**DEAN JOHN:** Show me how, briefly.

**CONRAD:** I told you how much I am in the favor with Margaret, the maidservant of Hero.

**DEAN JOHN:** I remember.

**CONRAD:** I can, at any instant of the night, ask her to steal a garment of Hero's and appear on her lady's balcony.

**DEAN JOHN:** How might that be the death of this marriage?

**CONRAD:** The poison is for you to temper. Go to your brother; spare not to tell him that he has wronged his honor in marrying the renowned Claudio--whose reputation you do mightily hold up--to a contaminated wretch like Hero.

**DEAN JOHN:** What proof shall I make of that?

**CONRAD:** Draw Captain Claudio aside. Tell him that you know that Hero loves me. Pretend a kind of outrage that your brother's honor and his friend's reputation have been sullied by this semblance of a maid. They will scarcely believe this without proof. Bring Claudio to see me on her balcony, hear me call Margaret "Hero," and do this the very night before the intended wedding. In the meantime, I will ensure that Hero shall be absent, and there shall appear such seeming truth of Hero's disloyalty that jealousy shall be called certain proof.

**DEAN JOHN:** I will put this plan in practice. Be cunning in the working of this, and your fee is a thousand dollars.

**CONRAD:** Be you constant in the accusation, and my cunning shall not shame me.

**DEAN JOHN:** I will presently go learn their day of marriage.  
*(Exeunt DEAN JOHN and CONRARD BORACHIO separately.)*

**ACT II Scene 3** *(Thursday, July 5, morning)*  
*(Enter Benedick.)*

**BENEDICK:** I do much wonder that one man, seeing how much another man becomes a fool when he dedicates his behaviors to love, will, after he has laughed at such shallow follies in others, become the argument of his own scorn by falling in love: and such a man is Claudio. I have known when there was no music with him but the drum and the fife; and now had he rather hear the tambourine and flute. I have known when he would have walked ten miles afoot to see a suit of armor; and now will he lie ten nights awake, craving a fashionable new jacket. He used speak plain and to the purpose, like an honest man and a soldier, and now is he become an orator; his words are now a fantastical banquet with many strange dishes. May I be so converted and see with those eyes? I cannot tell; I think not: I will not be sworn, since love may transform me to an oyster; but I'll take my oath on it, till Cupid has made an oyster of me, he shall never make me such a fool. One woman is fair, yet I am well. Another is wise, yet I am well. Another virtuous, yet I am well. But till all graces come in one woman, one woman shall not come into my grace. Rich she shall be, that's certain; wise, or I'll none; virtuous, or I'll never cheapen her; fair, or I'll never look on her; mild, or come not near me; noble, or I not I for her angel; of good discourse, an excellent musician, and her hair shall be of what color it pleases God. Hah!

*(He hears CLAUDIO and DON PEDRO approaching.)*

Don Pedro and Monsieur Love approach! I will hide me behind the gazebo.

*(Benedick withdraws and eavesdrops. Enter Don Pedro, Claudio, Leonato and Balthasar Wilson.)*

**DON PEDRO:** Come, shall we hear this music?

**CLAUDIO:** Yea, my good lady.

**BALTHASAR WILSON:** O, good Captain, tax not so bad a voice  
To slander music any more than once.

**DON PEDRO:** It is the witness of true excellence  
To put strange face on your own perfection.  
I pray you sing, and let me woo no more.

**BALTHASAR WILSON:** Because you talk of wooing I will sing,  
Since many a wooer does commence his suit  
To her he thinks not worthy, yet he woos,  
And he will swear he loves.

**DON PEDRO:** If you will longer argue, do it in notes.

**BALTHASAR WILSON:** There's not a note of mine that's worth the noting.

**DON PEDRO:** *(aside to Claudio)* Note where Benedick has hid himself?

**CLAUDIO:** Go practice music, Balthasar.  
Tomorrow night we would have you sing it

At Lady Hero's balcony.

**BALTHASAR:** The best I can, good sir.

*(Exit Balthasar Wilson. Claudio and Don Pedro signal Leonato to enter.)*

**DON PEDRO:** Come, Leonato. What was it you told me of today? That your niece Beatrice was in love with Major Benedick?

**CLAUDIO:** I did never think that lady would have loved any man.

**LEONATO:** No, nor I neither; but most wonderful that she should so dote on Major Benedick, whom she has in all outward behaviors seemed ever to abhor.

**BENEDICK:** *(aside)* Is it possible?

**LEONATO:** In truth, good sir, she loves him with an enraged affection: it is beyond imagining.

**DON PEDRO:** Maybe she does but counterfeit.

**CLAUDIO:** That's likely enough.

**LEONATO:** There was never a counterfeit of passion that came so near this passion she displays.

**CLAUDIO:** *(aside to Don Pedro and Leonato)* Bait the hook well; this fish will bite!

**DON PEDRO:** I thought her spirit had been invincible against all assaults of affection.

**LEONATO:** I would have sworn it, sir, especially against Benedick.

**BENEDICK:** *(aside to audience)* I should think this a trick, but that the white-bearded fellow speaks it: knavery cannot hide itself in such reverence.

**CLAUDIO:** *(aside to Don Pedro and Leonato)* He has taken the bait: pull him in.

**DON PEDRO:** Has she made her affection known to Benedick?

**LEONATO:** No; and swears she never will. That's her torment.

**CLAUDIO:** 'Tis true, indeed. Your daughter says she said, 'Shall I, who have so oft encountered him with scorn, write to him that I love him?'

**LEONATO:** Despite what she says, she'll be up twenty times a night, and there will she sit in her nightgown till she has written sheets of paper.

**CLAUDIO:** When she had writ it and was reading it over, does she find 'Benedick' and 'Beatrice' between the sheets?

**LEONATO:** She tears the letter into a thousand pieces and rails at herself that she should be so Immodest to write to one that she knew would flout her; 'I measure him,' says she, 'by my own spirit; for I should flout him, if he writ to me.'

**CLAUDIO:** Then down upon her knees she falls, weeps, sobs, beats her heart, tears her hair, prays, curses; 'O sweet Benedick! God give me patience!'

**LEONATO:** She does indeed; my daughter says so: and the frenzy has so much overcome her that my daughter is sometime afeared that Beatrice will do a desperate outrage to herself. It is very true.

**DON PEDRO:** It would be good if Benedick knew of it by some means, if she will not reveal it.

**CLAUDIO:** To what end? He would make sport of it and torment the poor lady worse.

**DON PEDRO:** And if he should, it would be an act of charity to hang him. She's an excellent sweet lady; and, out of all suspicion, she is virtuous.

**CLAUDIO:** And she is exceeding wise.

**DON PEDRO:** In everything but in loving Benedick.

**LEONATO:** I am sorry for her, being her uncle and her guardian.

**DON PEDRO:** I would she had bestowed this dotage on me: I would set everything aside and made her half myself. I pray you, tell Benedick of it, and hear what he will say.

**LEONATO:** Would it be good, think you?

**CLAUDIO:** Hero thinks surely Beatrice will die; for she says she will die if he love her not, and she will die ere she make her love known.

**DON PEDRO:** If she reveals her love, 'tis very possible he'll scorn it; for the man, as you know all, has a contemptible spirit.

*(Benedick starts to leave. The others start to praise him to keep him from leaving.)*

**CLAUDIO:** No, he is a very proper man.

**DON PEDRO:** He has indeed an outward happiness.

**CLAUDIO:** In my mind, he is very wise.

**DON PEDRO:** He does indeed show some sparks that are like wit.

**LEONATO:** And I take him to be valiant.

**DON PEDRO:** As Hector, I assure you. Well, I am sorry for your niece. Shall we go seek Benedick, and tell him of her love?

**CLAUDIO:** Never tell him, my lord,

**DON PEDRO:** Well, we will hear more about it from your daughter. Let it cool awhile. I love Benedick well; and I wish he would modestly examine himself, to see how unworthy he is of so good a lady.

**LEONATO:** My lord, will you come? Dinner at my house is ready.

**CLAUDIO:** *(aside to Leonato and Don Pedro)* If he do not dote on her upon this, I will never trust my judgment.

**DON PEDRO:** *(aside to Claudio and Leonato)* Let there be the same net spread for her; and that one your daughter and her ladies must carry. The sport will be when they both believe in the other's dotage. That's the scene that I would see. Let us send Beatrice to call Benedick to dinner.

*(Exeunt Don Pedro, Claudio, and Leonato.)*

**BENEDICK:** *(revealing himself and speaking to the audience)* This can be no trick. The conversation was seriously borne. They have the truth of this from Hero. They seem to pity the lady: it seems that her affections bend toward me. Why, then they must be satisfied! I hear how I am censured; they say I will bear myself proudly if I perceive any love from her. They say too that she will rather die than give any sign of affection. I must not seem proud; Happy are they that hear their faults and can put to mending them. They say the lady is fair -- 'tis a truth, and virtuous-- 'tis so, and wise but for loving me. In truth, that is no great evidence of her folly, for I will be horribly in love with her. I may chance have some odd remarks thrown at me, because I have railed so long against marriage: but does not the appetite alter? A man loves the meat in his youth that he cannot endure in his age. O, the world must be peopled! When I said I would die a bachelor, I did not think I should live till I were married. Here comes Beatrice. By this day, she's a fair lady: I do spy some marks of love in her.

*(Enter BEATRICE.)*

**BEATRICE:** Against my will I am sent to bid you come in to dinner.

**BENEDICK:** Fair Beatrice, I thank you for your pains.

**BEATRICE:** I took no more pains for those thanks than you take pains to thank me: if it had been painful, I would not have come.

**BENEDICK:** You take pleasure, then, in the message?

**BEATRICE:** Yea, just so much as you may take in gutting a crow. You have no stomach, Major? Fare you well.

*(Exit Beatrice.)*

**BENEDICK:** Ha! 'Against my will I am sent to bid you come in to dinner' --There's a double meaning in that. 'I took no more pains for those thanks than you took pains to thank me.'-- That's as much as to say, 'Any pains that I take for you is as easy as thanks'. If I do not pity her I am a villain; if I do not love her, I am a stone.

*(Exit Benedick.)*

**ACT III Scene 1** *(Thursday morning, July 5, later the same morning)*

*(Balthasar Wilson sings a period song in the gazebo while Hero And Margaret work in the victory garden and Ursula resists working in it. Music fades as dialogue begins.)*

**HERO:** Good Margaret, run you to Beatrice.

Whisper in her ear that I and Ursula  
Work in the garden and our whole discourse  
Is all of her; so will she hide her,  
To listen to our argument. This is your role;  
Play it well and leave us here alone.

**MARGARET:** I'll make her come, I warrant you, presently. Beatrice!

*(Exit Margaret.)*

**HERO:** Now, Ursula, when Beatrice shall come,  
As we will tread this garden up and down,  
Our talk must only be of Benedick.  
When I do name him, let it be your part  
To praise him more than ever man did merit:  
My talk to you must be how Benedick  
Is sick in love with Beatrice. Of this  
Is little Cupid's crafty arrow made.

*(Enter BEATRICE, hidden)*

Now begin,  
For look where Beatrice like a quail runs  
Close by the ground, to hear our conference.

**URSULA:** The pleasant'st angling is to see the fish  
Cut with her golden fins the silver stream,  
And greedily devour the treacherous bait:  
So angle we for Beatrice.

**HERO:** We should go near her, so her ear lose nothing  
Of our false sweet bait.

*(They begin their ruse.)*

-- No, truly, Ursula, she is too disdainful;  
I know her spirits are as coy and wild  
As she-hawks on the rocks.

**URSULA:** But are you sure  
That Benedick loves Beatrice so entirely?

**HERO:** So says Don Pedro and my new fiancé.

**URSULA:** And did they bid you tell her of it, madam?

**HERO:** They did entreat me to acquaint her of it;  
But I persuaded them, if they loved Benedick,  
To bid him wrestle with affection,  
And never to let Beatrice know of it.

**URSULA:** Why did you so? Does not the gentleman  
Deserve a wife so fine as Beatrice?

**HERO:** O god of love! I know he does deserve  
As much as may be yielded to a man.  
But Nature never framed a woman's heart  
Of prouder stuff than that of Beatrice.  
Disdain and scorn are sparkling in her eyes,  
Despising what they look on, and her wit  
Values itself so highly that to her  
All matter else seems weak. She cannot love,  
Nor contemplate a notion of affection,  
She is so self-endear'd.

**URSULA:** Sure, I think so;  
And therefore certainly it were not good  
She knew his love, lest she make sport of it.

*(Margaret returns. Beatrice and Margaret communicate silently to one another during the rest of the scene, Beatrice thinking that Margaret has helped her to overhear the conversation about her and Margaret trying to help Beatrice hide from Ursula and Hero.)*

**HERO:** Why, you speak truth. I never yet saw man –  
However wise and fine and rarely featured,  
But she would flout his looks.

**MARGARET:** If fair, she would swear the gentleman should be her sister.

**HERO:** If dark, a most exotic creature.

**MARGARET:** If tall, a lance; if short, an agate stone.

**HERO:** If speaking, why, a vane blown by all winds.

**MARGARET:** If silent, why, a block moved *by* none.

**HERO:** So turns she every man the wrong side out.

**URSULA:** Sure, sure, such carping is not commendable.

**HERO:** But who dare tell her so? If I should speak,  
She would mock me into air; O, she would laugh me  
Out of myself, press me to death with wit.  
Therefore let Benedick consume himself in sighs.

**URSULA:** Yet tell her of it

**MARGARET:** Hear what she will say.

**HERO:** No; rather I will go to Benedick  
And counsel him to fight against his passion.  
And, truly, I'll devise some honest slanders  
To stain my cousin with: one does not know  
How much an ill word may poison liking.

**URSULA:** O, do not do your cousin such a wrong!  
She cannot be so much without true judgment,  
Having so swift and excellent a wit  
As she is prized to have--as to refuse  
So rare a gentleman as Major Benedick.

**HERO:** He was the finest man in Italy.  
Except, of course, my own dear Claudio.

**URSULA:** I pray you, be not angry with me, madam,  
To say I prefer Major Benedick.  
His deeds, his bearing, argument, and valor,  
Came foremost in reports from Italy.

**HERO:** Indeed, he has an excellent good name.

**URSULA:** When will you be married, madam?

**HERO:** Why, every day after Monday.

**URSULA:** Come, go in:

**MARGARET:** I'll show you some attire.

**HERO:** I'll ask your counsel  
Which is the best to furnish me tomorrow.

**URSULA:** (*aside*) She's caught, I warrant you: we have snared her, madam.

**HERO:** (*aside*) If so, then her resistance will collapse:  
Some Cupid kills with arrows, some with traps.

*(Exeunt Hero, Ursula, and Margaret. Rapturous period music plays under Beatrice's monologue.)*

**BEATRICE:** What fire is in mine ears? Can this be true?  
Stand I condemned for pride and scorn so much?



Contempt, farewell; and maiden pride, adieu!  
My shrewish pranks? I'll find no peace in such.  
And, Benedick, love on! I will requite you,  
Taming my wild heart to your loving hand.  
If you do love, my kindness shall incite you  
To bind our loves up in a holy band.  
For others say you do deserve, and I  
Believe it better than reportingly.

*(Exit Beatrice.)*

**ACT III Scene 2** *(Sunday Evening, July 8)*

*(Enter Don Pedro, Claudio, Verges, and Balthasar Wilson. Period music grows into a serenade that Claudio sings toward Hero's balcony, seen to the side of the audience. Balthasar Wilson coaches the men with some simple choreography she taught them and sings melody with Don Pedro, Claudio, and Verges singing backup, Claudio ending the song and blowing a kiss to Hero's balcony. Hero may throw a rose to Claudio. Suggested song: "When They Begin the Begain.")*

**DON PEDRO:** Claudio, I do but stay till your marriage be consummated, and then go I home to Arragon.

**CLAUDIO:** I'd bring you thither, sir, if you would allow it.

**DON PEDRO:** Nay, that would be as great a soil to your new marriage as to show a child his new coat and forbid him to wear it. I would only go with Benedick for he is all mirth. He has twice or thrice cut Cupid's bow-string and so the little scoundrel dares not shoot at him.

*(Benedick appears, clean-shaven, perhaps trying to hid his face.)*

**BENEDICK:** Gentlemen, I am not as I have been.

**LEONATO:** Methinks you are more serious.

**CLAUDIO:** Perhaps he be in love.

**DON PEDRO:** There's no true drop of blood in him to be truly touched with love.

**BENEDICK:** I have a toothache.

**DON PEDRO:** What! Sigh for a toothache?

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

**CLAUDIO:** Yet, I say, he is in love.

**DON PEDRO:** There is no appearance of love in him, unless he has a love of foolery, as it appears he has, he is no fool for love, as you say he appears.

**CLAUDIO:** If he be not in love with some woman, there is no believing old signs.

**DON PEDRO:** Has any man seen him at the barber's?

**CLAUDIO:** No, but the barber has been seen with him, and his beard, the old ornament of his cheek, now stuffs tennis-balls.

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

**DON PEDRO:** Nay, a' rubs himself with 'eau de cologne': can you smell that?

**CLAUDIO:** That's as much as to say that the sweet youth is in love.

**DON PEDRO:** The greatest sign of it is his melancholy.

**CLAUDIO:** And when was he inclined to wash his face?

**DON PEDRO:** Yea, or to paint himself?

**LEONATO:** Conclude, conclude he is in love.

**CLAUDIO:** Nay, but I would like to know who loves him.

**DON PEDRO:** That would I know too; I warrant it is one who knows him not.

**BENEDICK:** Yet this is no charm but a toothache. Good sir, walk aside with me: I have eight or nine wise words to speak to you, which these hobby-horses must not hear.

*(Exeunt Benedick and Leonato.)*

**DON PEDRO:** On my life, to see him shave for Beatrice!

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

*(Enter Dean John.)*

**DEAN JOHN:** My brother, God save you!

**DON PEDRO:** Good evening, brother.

**DEAN JOHN:** I would speak with Claudio

**CLAUDIO:** In private?

**DEAN JOHN:** If it please you:

*(Don Pedro nods and exits.)*

**CLAUDIO:** What's the matter?

**DEAN JOHN:** Mean you to be married tomorrow?

**CLAUDIO:** You know I do.

**DEAN JOHN:** I know you won't, when you know what I know.

**CLAUDIO:** If there be any impediment, I pray you disclose it.

**DEAN JOHN:** You may think I love you not. Let that appear hereafter, and think better of me. In short, I came to tell you that the lady is disloyal.

**CLAUDIO:** Who, Hero?

**DEAN JOHN:** Even she; Leonato's Hero, your Hero, every man's Hero.

**CLAUDIO:** Disloyal?

**DEAN JOHN:** The word is too good to paint her wickedness; I could say she is worse: think you of a worse title, and I will fit her to it. Wonder not until you have the proof. Go with me, tonight you shall see her balcony mounted, even the night before her wedding-day. If you love her still, tomorrow wed her; but it would better fit your honor to change your mind.

**CLAUDIO:** May this be so? I dare not think it.

**DEAN JOHN:** If you dare not trust what you see, confess not what 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.

**DEAN JOHN:** I will disparage her no farther till you are my witness. Bear it coldly but till

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midnight, and then let the issue show itself.

**CLAUDIO:** O day untowardly turned! O mischief strangely thwarting!

**DEAN JOHN:** O plague right well prevented! So will you say when you have seen.

*(Time shift, town clock strikes midnight, followed or accompanied by period music.*

*Suggestion: "Say It Isn't So." Claudio follows Dean John in and they are both concealed in shadows in the park. Conrad appears on the balcony with Margaret, who wears a garment we have previously seen Hero wear. Conrad embraces Margaret and she reciprocates.*

*Conrad may croon to Margaret, "Hero, Hero, my Hero." Claudio stares until he has seen enough and exits unseen. Dean John follows with a satisfied smirk, possibly following a look between him and Conrad.)*

**INTERMISSION**

20 more pages in ACTS 3(remainder), 4, & 5