

BENEDICK You hear, Count Claudio, I can be secret as a dumb man, I would have you think so, but on my allegiance—mark you this, on my allegiance—he is in love. With who? Now, that is your Grace's part. Mark how short his answer is: with Hero, Leonato's short daughter.

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CLAUDIO If this were so, so were it uttered.

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BENEDICK Like the old tale, my lord: "It is not so, nor 'twas not so, but, indeed, God forbid it should be so."

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CLAUDIO If my person change not shortly, God forbid it should be otherwise.

PRINCE Amen, if you love her, the lady is very well worthy.

CLAUDIO You speak this to fetch me my lord.

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PRINCE By my troth, I speak no thought.

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

BENEDICK And by many faiths and troths, my lord, I spoke mine.

CLAUDIO That I love her, I feel.

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PRINCE That she is worthy, I know.

BENEDICK That I neither feel how she should be loved nor know how she should be worthy is the opinion that will not melt out of me. I will die in it at the stake.

PRINCE Thou wast ever an obstinate heretic in the despite of beauty.

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CLAUDIO And never could maintain his part but in the force of his will.

BENEDICK That a woman conceived me, I thank her; that she brought me up, I likewise give her most humble thanks. But that I will have a recheat winded in my forehead or hang my bugle in an invisible baldrick, all women shall pardon me.

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Because I will not do them the wrong to mistrust any, I will do myself the right to trust none. And the fine is, for the which I may go the finer, I will live a bachelor.

240

PRINCE I shall see thee, ere I die, look pale with love.

BENEDICK With anger, with sickness, or with hunger, my lord, not with love. Prove that ever I lose more blood with love than I will get again with drinking, pick out mine eyes with a ballad-maker's pen and hang me up at the door of a brothel house for the sign of blind Cupid.

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PRINCE Well, if ever I love, I'll swear this faith, thou wilt prove a notable argument.

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BENEDICK If I do, hang me in a bottle like a cat and shoot at me, and what hits me, let him be charged on the shoulder and call it a dam.

PRINCE Well, as time shall give opportunity. In time thou shalt see our doth bear the yoke.

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