

HERO

O god of love ! I know he doth 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 ride sparkling in her eyes,
Misprizing what they look on ; and her wit
Values itself so highly that to her
All matter else seems weak. She cannot love,
Nor take no shape nor project 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'll make sport at it.

HERO

Why, you speak truth. I never yet saw man,
How wise, how noble, young, how rarely featured,
But she would spell him backward. If fair-faced,
She would swear the gentleman should be her sister ;
If black, why, Nature, drawing of an antic,
Made a foul blot ; if tall, a lance ill-headed ;
If low, an agate very vilely cut ;
If speaking, why, a vane blown with all winds ;
If silent, why, a block movèd with none.
So turns she every man the wrong side out
And never gives to truth and virtue that
Which simpleness and merit purchaseth.

URSULA

Sure, sure, such carping is not commendable.

HERO

No, not to be so odd, and from all fashions,
As Beatrice is, cannot be commendable.
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, like covered fire,
Consume away in sighs, waste inwardly.
It were a better death than die with mocks,
Which is as bad as die with tickling.

(III i : 47-80)

BEATRICE [*coming forth from hiding*]

What fire is in mine ears ? Can this be true ?

Stand I condemn'd for pride and scorn so much ?

Contempt, farewell ! and maiden pride, adieu !

No glory lives behind the back of such.

And, Benedick, love on ; I will requite thee,

Taming my wild heart to thy loving hand.

If thou dost love, my kindness shall incite thee

To bind our loves up in a holy band ;

For others say thou dost deserve, and I

Believe it better than reportingly.

Exit.

(III i : 107-116)

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 bowstring, 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.

(III ii : 5-12)

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 ?

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

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.

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.

PEDRO The greatest note of it is his melancholy.

CLAUDIO And when was he wont to wash his face ?

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 lutestring, and now governed by stops.

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

(III ii : 36-55)