

Selections from "Much Ado About Nothing"

Claudio: O my Lord,
When you went onward on this ended action,
I look'd vpon her with a souldiers eie,
That lik'd, but had a rougher taske in hand,
Than to driue liking to the name of loue:
But now I am return'd, and that warre-thoughts
Haue left their places vacant: in their roomes,
Come thronging soft and delicate desires,
All prompting mee how faire yong Hero is,
Saying I lik'd her ere I went to warres

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**Don John:** I cannot hide what I am: I must bee sad when  
I haue cause, and smile at no mans iests, eat when I haue  
stomacke, and wait for no mans leisure: sleepe when I am  
drowsie, and tend on no mans businesse, laugh when I am merry,  
and claw no man in his humor

**Conrad:** Yea, but you must not make the ful show of this,  
till you may doe it without controllment, you haue of  
late stood out against your brother, and hee hath tane  
you newly into his grace, where it is impossible you  
should take root, but by the faire weather that you make  
your selfe, it is needful that you frame the season for your  
owne haruest

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At the masked ball:

Beatrice: Will you not tell me who told you so?

Benedick: No, you shall pardon me

Beat. Nor will you not tell me who you are?

Bened. Not now

Beat. That I was disdainfull, and that I had my good
wit out of the hundred merry tales: well, this was Signior
Benedicke that said so

Bene. What's he?

Beat. I am sure you know him well enough

Bene. Not I, beleeeue me

Beat. Did he neuer make you laugh?

Bene. I pray you what is he?

Beat. Why he is the Princes ieaster, a very dull foole,
onely his gift is, in deuising impossible slanders, none
but Libertines delight in him, and the commendation is
not in his witte, but in his villanie, for hee both pleaseth
men and angers them, and then they laugh at him, and
beat him: I am sure he is in the Fleet, I would he had

boarded me

Bene. When I know the Gentleman, Ile tell him what
you say

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**Claudio:** Thus answere I in name of Benedicke,  
But heare these ill newes with the eares of Claudio:  
'Tis certaine so, the Prince woes for himselfe:  
Friendship is constant in all other things,  
Saue in the Office and affaires of loue:  
Therefore all hearts in loue vse their owne tongues.  
Let euerie eye negotiate for it selfe,  
And trust no Agent: for beautie is a witch,  
Against whose charmes, faith melteth into blood:  
This is an accident of hourelly prooffe,  
Which I mistrusted not. Farewell therefore Hero.

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Benedick: But that my Ladie Beatrice should know me, &
not know me: the Princes foole! Hah? It may be I goe
vnder that title, because I am merrie: yea but so I am
apt to do my selfe wrong: I am not so reputed, it is the
base (though bitter) disposition of Beatrice, that putt's
the world into her person, and so giues me out: well, Ile
be reuenged as I may.

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**Borachio:** ... offer them instances which  
shall beare no lesse likelihood, than to see mee at her  
chamber window, heare me call Margaret, Hero; heare  
Margaret terme me Claudio, and bring them to see this  
the very night before the intended wedding, for in the  
meane time, I will so fashion the matter, that Hero shall  
be absent, and there shall appeare such seeming truths of  
Heroes disloyaltie, that iealousie shall be cal'd assurance,  
and all the preparation ouerthrowne

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Benedick: This can be no tricke, the conference was sadly
borne, they haue the truth of this from Hero, they seeme
to pittie the Lady: it seemes her affections haue the full
bent: loue me? why it must be requited: I heare how I
am censur'd, they say I will beare my selfe proudly, if I
perceiue the loue come from her: they say too, that she
will rather die than giue any signe of affection: I did neuer
thinke to marry, I must not seeme proud, happy are
they that heare their detractions, and can put them to
mending: they say the Lady is faire, 'tis a truth, I can

beare them witsse: and vertuous, tis so, I cannot reprocue
it, and wise, but for louing me, by my troth it is
no addition to her witte, nor no great argument of her
folly; for I wil be horribly in loue with her, I may chance
haue some odde quirkes and remnants of witte broken
on mee, because I haue rail'd so long against marriage:
but doth not the appetite alter? a man loues the meat in
his youth, that he cannot indure in his age. Shall quips
and sentences, and these paper bullets of the braine awe
a man from the careere of his humour? No, the world
must be peopled. When I said I would die a batcheler, I
did not think I should liue till I were married, here comes
Beatrice: by this day, shee's a faire Lady, I doe spie some
markes of loue in her.

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**Beatrice:** What fire is in mine eares? can this be true?  
Stand I condemn'd for pride and scorne so much?  
Contempt, farewell, and maiden pride, adew,  
No glory liues behinde the backe of such.  
And Benedicke, loue on, I will requite thee,  
Taming my wilde heart to thy louing hand:  
If thou dost loue, my kindnesse shall incite thee  
To binde our loues vp in a holy band.  
For others say thou dost deserue, and I  
Beleeue it better then reportingly.

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Claudio: O Hero! what a Hero hadst thou beene
If halfe thy outward graces had beene placed
About thy thoughts and counsailes of thy heart?
But fare thee well, most foule, most faire, farewell
Thou pure impiety, and impious puritie,
For thee Ile locke vp all the gates of Loue,
And on my eie-lids shall Coniecture hang,
To turne all beauty into thoughts of harme,
And neuer shall it more be gracious.

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**Leonato:** I know not: if they speake but truth of her,  
These hands shall teare her: If they wrong her honour,  
The proudest of them shall wel heare of it.  
Time hath not yet so dried this bloud of mine,  
Nor age so eate vp my inuention,  
Nor Fortune made such hauocke of my meanes,  
Nor my bad life reft me so much of friends,  
But they shall finde, awak'd in such a kinde,  
Both strength of limbe, and policie of minde,  
Ability in meanes, and choise of friends,  
To quit me of them throughly

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Benedick: I doe loue nothing in the world so well as you,
is not that strange?

Beatrice: As strange as the thing I know not, it were as
possible for me to say, I loued nothing so well as you, but
beleue me not, and yet I lie not, I confesse nothing, nor
I deny nothing, I am sorry for my cousin

Bene. By my sword Beatrice thou lou'st me

Beat. Doe not sweare by it and eat it

Bene. I will sweare by it that you loue mee, and I will
make him eat it that sayes I loue not you

Beat. Will you not eat your word?

Bene. With no sawce that can be deuised to it, I protest
I loue thee

Beat. Why then God forgiue me

Bene. What offence sweet Beatrice?

Beat. You haue stayed me in a happy howre, I was about
to protest I loued you

Bene. And doe it with all thy heart

Beat. I loue you with so much of my heart, that none
is left to protest

Bened. Come, bid me doe any thing for thee

Beat. Kill Claudio

Bene. Is Claudio thine enemies?

Beat. Is a not approued in the height a villaine, that
hath slandered, scorned, dishonoured my kinswoman? O
that I were a man! what, beare her in hand vntill they
come to take hands, and then with publike accusation
vncouered slander, vnmittigated rancour? O God that I
were a man! I would eat his heart in the market-place

Bene. Heare me Beatrice

Beat. Talke with a man out at a window, a proper
saying

Bene. Nay but Beatrice

Beat. Sweet Hero, she is wrong'd, shee is slandered,
she is vndone

Bene. Beat?

Beat. Princes and Counties! surelie a Princely testimonie,
a goodly Count, Comfect, a sweet Gallant surelie,
O that I were a man for his sake! or that I had any
friend would be a man for my sake! But manhood is melted
into cursies, valour into complement, and men are
onelie turned into tongue, and trim ones too: he is now
as valiant as Hercules, that only tells a lie, and sweares it:
I cannot be a man with wishing, therefore I will die a woman
with grieuing