

Extract 1 – Act 2 scene 1

Beatrice and Benedick have yet to declare their love for each other. At this point in the story they are still being rude to each other. At a party Benedick is in disguise and pretends to be someone else. Beatrice is very rude about Benedick to his face. We don't know whether she knows if it is really Benedick or not. Here is Benedick's reaction to what she said.

“O, she misused me past the endurance of a block; an oak but with one green leaf on it would have answered her; my very visor began to assume life and scold with her: she told me, - not thinking I had been myself, - that I was the prince's jester; that I was duller than a great thaw; huddling jest upon jest with such impossible conveyance upon me, that I stood like a man at a mark, with a whole army shooting at me.”

Key words

An oak tree

Jester

Jest

Dull(er)

Army

To shoot

Extract 2 – Act 3 scene 1

This scene takes place the day before Claudio and Hero's wedding. Don John is setting up his deception. He encourages Claudio to spy on Hero to witness her being unfaithful with Don John.

DON PEDRO	What's the matter?
DON JOHN (<i>to CLAUDIO</i>)	Means your lordship to be married tomorrow?
DON PEDRO	You know he does.
DON JOHN	I know not that, when he knows what I know.
CLAUDIO	If there be any impediment, I pray you discover it.
DON JOHN	You may think I love you not. Let that appear hereafter, and aim better at me by that I now will manifest. For my brother, I think he holds you well, and in dearness of heart hath help to effect your ensuing marriage – surely suit ill spent and labour ill bestowed.
DON PEDRO	Why, what's the matter?
DON JOHN	I came hither to tell you; and, circumstances shortened, for she has been too long a-talking of, the lady is disloyal.
CLAUDIO	Who, Hero?
DON JOHN	Even she, Leonato's Hero, your Hero, every man's Hero.
CLAUDIO	Disloyal?
DON JOHN	The word is too good to paint out her wickedness. I could say she were worse. Think you of a worse title, and I will fit her to it. Wonder not till further warrant. Go but with me tonight, you shall see her chamber window entered, even the night before her wedding day. If you love her then, tomorrow wed her. But it would better fit your honour to change your mind.
CLAUDIO (<i>to DON PEDRO</i>)	May this be so?

DON PEDRO	I will not think it.
DON JOHN	If you dare not trust that you see, confess not that 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 he.
DON PEDRO	And as I wooed for thee to obtain her, I will join with thee to disgrace her.

Key-words and expressions

What's the matter?

Impediment

Disloyal

Wickedness

Chamber

Wedding

To change your mind

To dare

To trust

Congregation

Shame

To disgrace

Extract 3 – Act 5 scene 4

This is the last scene of the play. Claudio still believes Hero is dead from the shame that his infidelity accusations caused her. He has promised to get married to Leonato's niece who is in fact Hero in disguise.

Enter DON PEDRO and CLAUDIO, and two or three others	
DON PEDRO	Good morrow to this fair assembly.
LEONATO	Good morrow, Prince; good morrow, Claudio. We here attend you. Are you yet determined today to marry with my brother's daughter?
CLAUDIO	I'll hold my mind were she an Ethiop.
LEONATO	Call her forth, brother. Here's the friar ready.
DON PEDRO	Good morrow, Benedick. Why, what's the matter That you have such a February face, so full of frost, of storm and cloudiness?
CLAUDIO	I think he thinks upon the savage bull. Tush, fear not, man. We'll tip thy horns with gold, and all Europa shall rejoice at thee as once Europa did at lusty Jove when he would play the noble beast in love.
BENEDICK	Bull Jove, sir, had an amiable low, and some such strange bull leapt your father's cow and got a calf in that same noble feat. Much like to you, for you have just his bleat.
CLAUDIO	For this I owe you. Here comes other reck'nings.
Enter Antonio, Hero, Beatrice, Margaret, Ursula, the ladies masked	
CLAUDIO	Which is the lady I must seize upon?
LEONATO	This same is she, and I do give you her.
CLAUDIO	Why, then she's mine.—Sweet, let me see your face.
LEONATO	No, that you shall not till you take her hand before this friar and swear to marry her.
CLAUDIO (<i>to HERO</i>)	Give me your hand before this holy friar. I am your husband, if you like of me.
HERO	And when I lived, I was your other wife, and when you loved, you were my other husband. (<i>She unmask</i> s)
CLAUDIO	Another Hero!
HERO	Nothing certainer. One Hero died defiled, but I do live, and surely as I live, I am a maid.
DON PEDRO	The former Hero! Hero that is dead!

Reading extract

LEONATO	She died, my lord, but whiles her slander lived.
FRIAR FRANCIS	All this amazement can I qualify. When after that the holy rites are ended I'll tell you largely of fair Hero's death. Meantime let wonder seem familiar, and to the chapel let us presently.

Key-words and expressions

Frost

Storm

Cloudiness

I owe you

To swear to do something

Former

Slander

The chapel