

# MUCH ADO !

## THE SHAKESPEARE MUSICAL

"IF MUSIC  
BE THE FOOD  
OF LOVE

PLAY ON"  
W. Shakespeare



ON TOUR FROM  
**DECEMBER 2024**

2004 - 2024 ERASMUS THEATRE TWENTY YEARS WITH YOU!!!

## CHARACTERS

**LEONATO** - Governor of Messina

**HERO** - Leonato's Daughter

**BEATRICE** - Leonato's Niece

**MARGARET AND URSULA** - Serving women to Hero

**DON PEDRO** - Prince of Aragon

**CLAUDIO** - Soldier and companion of Don Pedro

**BENEDICK** - Soldier and companion of Don Pedro

**DON JOHN** - Illegitimate brother of Don Pedro

**BORACHIO** - Follower of Don John

**FRIAR FRANCIS** - Friar

**DOGBERRY** - Master constable

**VERGES** - Dogberry's partner

**SEXTON** - Judge

**MESSENGER** - Royal respondent

## SONGS

THE BOYS ARE BACK IN TOWN	- Thin Lizzy
SHOT THROUGH THE HEART	- Bon Jovi
(You Give Love A Bad Name)	
I DON'T WANT TO MISS A THING	- Aerosmith
TORN	- Natalie Imbruglia
SHOULD I STAY OR SHOULD I GO	- The Clash
DON'T STOP BELIEVING	- Journey

## MUCH ADO – THE SHAKESPEARE MUSICAL

Adapted from the original play “*Much Ado About Nothing*” by William Shakespeare

### ACT 1 SCENE 1

#### **Song - The Boys Are Back In Town – Thin Lizzy**

Sung by DON PEDRO, CLAUDIO AND BENEDICK

*Guess who just got back today  
Them wild-eyed boys that had been away  
Haven't changed, had much to say  
But man, I still think them cats are crazy  
They were askin' if you were around  
How you was, where you could be found  
Told them you were livin' downtown  
Drivin' all the old men crazy*

*The boys are back in town, the boys are back in town  
I said, the boys are back in town, the boys are back in town  
The boys are back in town, the boys are back in town  
The boys are back in town, the boys are back in town*

*You know that chick that used to dance a lot  
Every night, she'd be on the floor, shakin' what she'd got  
Man, when I tell you she was cool, she was red hot  
I mean, she was steamin'  
And that time over at Benny's place  
Well, this chick got up and she slapped Benny's face  
Man, we just fell about the place  
If that chick don't want to know, forget her*

*The boys are back in town, the boys are back in town  
I said, the boys are back in town, the boys are back in town  
The boys are back in town, the boys are back in town  
The boys are back in town, the boys are back in town*

*Spread the word around  
Guess who's back in town?  
You spread the word around  
Friday night, they'll be dressed to kill  
Down at Leo's Bar 'n' Grill  
The drink will flow and blood will spill  
And if the boys want to fight, you better let 'em  
That jukebox in the corner blastin' out my favorite song  
The nights are getting warmer, it won't be long  
Won't be long 'til the summer comes*

*Now that the boys are here again*

*The boys are back in town, the boys are back in town  
The boys are back in town, the boys are back in town  
The boys are back in town, the boys are back in town  
The boys are back in town, the boys are back in town  
(The boys are back, the boys are back)*

*Exit DON PEDRO, BENEDICK and CLAUDIO  
Enter LEONATO and MESSENGER*

Leonato:           *(reading letter)* Don Pedro of Aragon and his company are driving to Messina tonight.

Messenger:       He will not be long now, sir.

Leonato:           Excellent! *(continues to read letter)* Apparently, Don Pedro has also given honours to a young man from Florence called Claudio.

Messenger:       Considering his youth, it is a surprise how tenacious he was in battle.

*Enter BEATRICE*

Beatrice:           And what about Signior Mountanto has he returned from battle?

Messenger:       *(nervous)* I am not sure who you are referring to ma'am. There is no Signior Mountanto within our army.

Leonato:           I believe she is referring to Benedick of Padua.

Messenger:       Oh I see, yes, Benedick has returned safely and as cheerful as ever.

Beatrice:           How surprising!

Leonato:           Beatrice, please calm your criticism of Benedick. Although, I am sure he will be just as severe with you.

Messenger:       Benedick, fought well, ma'am.

Beatrice:           Have you eaten rotten food? Maybe that is why you are so dazed and confused when describing Benedick.

Messenger:       He is a good soldier, lady.

Beatrice:           *(Mocking)* He is a good soldier, lady.

Messenger:       Benedick is tenacious in battle and stuffed with good virtues.

Beatrice:           Of course he is stuffed! Like a dummy! What he is actually stuffed with...well nobody is perfect I guess.

Leonato: Please do not get the wrong impression from my niece. Benedick and Beatrice have been waging a war of wits for a while now.

Beatrice: And I'm winning. Who is he hanging around with these days anyhow? He has a new friend every month. He is so incredibly fickle! The man's affections change quicker than the latest fashions and trends.

Messenger: It seems you do not like this man?

Beatrice: Of course I do not like this man! Now tell me who his new best friend is? This new swaggering ruffian who will happily go to hell with Benedick?

Messenger: It seems he spends much of his time with the good noble, Claudio.

Beatrice: That poor man! Benedick is a disease! An infection; a cold that is easy to catch but hard to shake! If he has caught "the Benedick", he will lose all his money before he is cured.

Messenger: Remind me to always stay good friends with you ma'am.

*(Exit MESSENGER)*

Beatrice: That would be wise, "good friend".

Leonato: One day you will fall victim to Benedick's charms Beatrice.

Beatrice: Never. When pigs fly. When hell freezes over. When we see a hot January. When th-

*Enter DON PEDRO, Prince of Aragon, with CLAUDIO and BENEDICK.*

Don Pedro: My dear Signor Leonato!

Leonato: Don Pedro!

Don Pedro: I cannot thank you enough! Most people choose to avoid trouble, but you always seem to run to it.

Leonato: You are never trouble to this house.

Don Pedro: Bless you.

*Enter HERO*

Don Pedro (*cont'd*): This must be your daughter Hero.

Leonato: Her mother constantly reminds me of that.

Benedick: Given that you had to ask, sir, did you doubt she was your daughter in the first place?

Leonato: Not even a hello before we start sparring Benedick. Very well. I would say there is no doubt whatsoever. You were only a child when my daughter was born, and not yet old enough to seduce my wife.

Don Pedro: That must have hurt Benedick! Good serve. Hero resembles Leonato so much, there can be no doubt as to whom the father is.

*BEATRICE and BENEDICK aside.*

Benedick: Regardless of whom the father is, it would be very strange to imagine an old man's head on Hero's shoulders.

Beatrice: Oh sorry, are you still talking?

Benedick: Hello lady scorn. Haven't you died of boredom yet?

Beatrice: How could 'scorn' die when you are here Benedick? You can make the most courteous of women transform into scorn.

Benedick: I highly doubt that. It appears that all ladies love me. It is such a burden to be born cold hearted. I really feel I cannot love anyone as much as they love me.

Beatrice: Then how lucky we women are. For once, I can actually thank God that we feel the same on something; romance is dead. You know, I would rather listen to my dog bark at a crow than a man telling me he loves me.

Benedick: Funny, I feel the same.

Beatrice: Oh really?

Benedick: Of course. Otherwise some poor man will have his entire face ruined by your annoying scratching.

Beatrice: If he bears any resemblance to your face, the scratching would be a marked improvement.

Benedick: That's your response. Listen to this well trained parrot, repeating everything I say instead of having an original thought.

Beatrice: Better a beautiful bird of paradise than a foul and wretched beast.

Benedick: I'm the beast? I wish my horse had the same speed of your tongue and was far less tireless.

Beatrice: Signior Bene-

Benedick: That's it, I'm done.

Beatrice: That's not how this wor-

Benedick: Done. Finished. No more.

Beatrice: Pity...You always run away from the argument when I am winning.

*DON PEDRO and LEONATO rejoin the conversation.*

Don Pedro: Claudio, Benedick, our good friend Leonato has invited us to reside here for a month!

Leonato: But of course! Now, where is your brother Don John? I understand the 'discussions' have finally finished. You have settled your differences?

Don Pedro: My brother will join us later. Don John is a man of few words. Now come, let us go inside.

*Exit all except BENEDICK and CLAUDIO*

Claudio: Benedick, please tell me you saw Leonato's daughter?

Benedick: I saw Leonato's daughter.

Claudio: Is she not a polite and beautiful young lady?

Benedick: I saw Leonato's daughter...truthfully Claudio...*(takes a breath and catches themselves)* do you want my honest or false opinion of all women?

Claudio: Honest of course.

Benedick: Well, she cannot be praised for her height as she is too small. She cannot be praised for her beauty as she is too ugly. She cannot be praised for her greatness as she seems too boring.

Claudio: Benedick, I am serious.

Benedick: So am I. The only compliment I can give is if she was slightly different she would be a different shade of ugly.

Claudio: Benedick, I am implore you, I am not joking about her. I just wish to hear your honest opinion of Hero.

Benedick: Why are you so bothered? Are you wanting to buy her? Is that why you are interrogating me so much?

Claudio: Oh would it be even possible to buy a jewel so rare and beautiful as Hero?

Benedick: Yes. Easily.

Claudio: I think she is one of the most wonderful women I have every laid my eyes on.

Benedick: That's nice.

Claudio: Oh surely Benedick, you must agree? Isn't she the most beautiful girl you have ever seen?

Benedick: I've just answered this! No! I honestly do not see the attraction. If her cousin was not so foul tempered, you could even consider Beatrice a higher beauty than your Hero. Why are you so bothered anyhow? Do you want to marry her or something?

Claudio: Even if I had vowed never to marry, I could not keep that promise if was Hero.

Benedick: Good lord! Why does every man want to have a wife! Where have all my sixty year old bachelors escaped too? Hmm? Or are all men doomed in wanting to marry in their adolescence?

*Enter DON PEDRO*

Don Pedro: Now boys, what secrets have you been telling?

Benedick: You will have to force me to tell you good sir.

Don Pedro: You will tell me.

Benedick: Fair enough. I tried to resist Claudio.

Claudio: Benedick plea-

Benedick: Our young lover has affections for a young lady.

Don Pedro: That was quick. With whom?

Benedick: Oh I could never say (*coughs abruptly the name 'Hero'*).

Claudio: If you say so.

Benedick: Listen to him trying to deny it.

Claudio: Because I am telling the truth.



Benedick: Claudio, would you lie to good Leonato?

Claudio: Fine. When we left Messina to fight the war, I first looked at Hero through a soldier's eyes. I was so occupied with the violent task ahead of me I could not even consider love. But now that I am back, the room in my head that used to be filled with war plans has become crowded with soft and delicate thoughts.

Don Pedro: Bless you! If you truly love Hero, then I cannot think of anyone more worthy of you.

Benedick: *(Imitates a vomiting noise)*

Don Pedro: I will speak with her and her father about the matter. I'll convince Leonato to promise Hero to you.

Claudio: Oh please do not tease me lord, I do not wish you to think me hasty in my emotions.

Don Pedro: I do not speak passively. I have a plan.

Benedick: Here we go.

Leonato: Tonight they are going to have a masked ball. I shall disguise myself as you, pour out my feelings to Hero, then talk to her father. In the end, she will be yours.

Claudio: Sounds simple enough. Thank you Sir, I must confess I am truly only devoted to Hero.

Benedick: Claudio, she is not worthy of your love.

Don Pedro: You never did believe in the power of love Benedick.

Claudio: And you have no evidence to back your claims against Hero, or any other woman for that matter.

Benedick: Was I not born by a woman? Conceived by a woman? I thank her for that, and only for that. Every other I simply do not trust as I do not want to be made a fool.

Don Pedro: I swear that before I die, I will see you love sick.

Benedick: Sick with anger, yes. Frustration, most definitely. But never love.

Don Pedro: I will remember this moment well Benedick. You will be the perfect example of how love can hit the strangest of targets.

Benedick: If I fall in love, you can use me for real target practice.

Claudio: Cupid does have arrows spare. Benedick I am sure they will hit you just as strongly as they have hit me.

Benedick: Oh please. Cupid should not be feared.

### **Song - You Give Love A Bad Name By Bon Jovi (Shot Through The Heart )**

*Sung by BENEDICK, CLAUDIO and DON PEDRO.*

*Shot through the heart and you're to blame Darling, you give love a bad name*

*An angel's smile is what you sell  
You promised me heaven, then put me through hell  
Chains of love got a hold on me  
When passion's a prison, you can't break free*

*Woah, you're a loaded gun, yeah  
Oh, there's nowhere to run  
No one can save me, the damage is done*

*Shot through the heart and you're to blame  
You give love a bad name (Bad name)  
I play my part and you play your game  
You give love a bad name (Bad name)  
Yeah, you give love a bad name*

*Paint your smile on your lips  
Blood red nails on your fingertips  
A school boy's dream, you act so shy  
Your very first kiss was your first kiss goodbye*

*Woah, you're a loaded gun Oh, there's nowhere to run  
No one can save me, the damage is done*

*Shot through the heart and you're to blame  
You give love a bad name (Bad name)  
I play my part and you play your game  
You give love a bad name (Bad name)  
You give love a-*

*Oh, shot through the heart and you're to blame  
You give love a bad name  
I play my part and you play your game  
You give love a bad name (Bad name)  
Shot through the heart and you're to blame  
You give love a bad name (Bad name)  
I play my part and you play your game*

*You give love a bad name (Bad name)*  
*You give love*  
*You give love, bad name*  
*You give love*  
*You give love, bad name*  
*You give love*  
*You give love, bad name*  
*You give love*  
*You give love, bad name*

*END SONG and BENEDICK, CLAUDIO and DON PEDRO exit.*  
*Music transition - Rock instrumental.*

## **ACT 1 SCENE 2**

*Music transition - Rock instrumental.*  
*Enter DON JOHN and BORACHIO*

Borachio: Don John, you look troubled.

Don John: There is not a measure for the permanent sadness I feel. My sadness seems limitless.

Borachio: Might I suggest you consider thinking with reason?

Don John: *(mockingly)* Might I suggest you consider thinking with reason? Yes, I have never thought of that...

Borachio: Thank you Don Joh-

Don John: Of course I have considered that!

Borachio: My apologies. Truthfully, this reasoning would help your suffering come to a quicker end, or at least lessen it slightly.

Don John: *(mockingly)* Really?

Borachio: In doing so, you will be able to endure your sadness more patiently.

Don John: I cannot hide what I am Borachio! If you try to humour me when I am sad, I will not falsely smile or chuckle stupidly.

Borachio: But might I advise that you mask these emotions more carefully.

Don John: Why should I?

Borachio: It was only recently that you challenged and opposed your brother, Don Pedro.

Don John: And?

Borachio: And it took a rather long time for him to forgive you and return you to his good graces. It would be very difficult to recover this now if you continue in such a sad and gloomy manner.

Don John: Well, I would rather be hated for who I am than loved for who I am not. I am not righteous, but I will remain an honest villain at least.

Borachio: Then use this misery as an advantage, Don John.

Don John: You think I do not? I am sad but I am not stupid, I am biding my time to seek my revenge.

Borachio: And that time might have come but it will be snatched away if you are so obviously gloomy.

Don John: That time?

Borachio: Yes! Listen closely, before meeting with yourself, I attended a great feast with Leonato; he is entertaining your brother.

Don John: *(under his breath)* Guzzling baffoon.

Borachio: There I heard word of an intended marriage that might interest your devious ways.

Don John: Oh really? Excellent. Who is the intended fool who wishes to marry?

Borachio: One of your brother's closest friends.

Don John: The delicate Claudio?

Borachio: You guessed wisely.

Don John: Oh goody. Claudio stopped me gaining power over my brother in the first place. Who is the lady that has caught his eye?

Borachio: Hero, the daughter and heir to Leonato.

Don John: Well done, Borachio. Well done. How did you come to learn of this marriage?

Borachio: When your brother was making a bellowing entrance, I decided to hide behind a tapestry incase anything exciting was discussed. Apparently, Don Pedro will court Hero at the masked ball tonight, win her heart and then give her to Claudio.

Don John: Excellent. If this is the case, we must go and prepare for the ball

immediately.

Exit DON JOHN and BORACHIO.

Music transition - Rock instrumental.

### **ACT 1 SCENE 3**

#### **Song - I Don't Want To Miss A Thing by Aerosmith**

Sung by HERO and DON PEDRO and company; underscored instrumentals during the ball.

*I could stay awake just to hear you breathing  
Watch you smile while you are sleeping  
While you're far away and dreaming  
I could spend my life in this sweet surrender  
I could stay lost in this moment forever  
Where a moment spent with you is a moment I treasure*

*Don't wanna close my eyes  
I don't wanna to fall asleep  
'Cause I'd miss you baby  
And I don't wanna miss a thing  
'Cause even when I dream of you (even when I dream)  
The sweetest dream would never do  
I'd still miss you baby  
And I don't wanna miss a thing*

*Lying close to you, feeling your heart beating  
And I'm wondering what you're dreaming  
Wondering if it's me you're seeing  
Then I kiss your eyes  
And thank God we're together  
And I just wanna stay with you in this moment forever  
Forever and ever*

*I don't wanna close my eyes  
I don't wanna to fall asleep  
'Cause I'd miss you baby  
And I don't wanna miss a thing  
'Cause even when I dream of you (even when I dream)  
The sweetest dream will never do  
I'd still miss you baby  
And I don't wanna miss a thing*

*I don't wanna miss one smile  
And I don't wanna miss one kiss  
And I just wanna be with you  
Right here with you, just like this  
And I just wanna hold you close*

*I feel your heart so close to mine  
And just stay here in this moment  
For all the rest of time  
Yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah*

*Don't wanna close my eyes  
Don't wanna fall asleep  
'Cause I'd miss you baby  
And I don't wanna miss a thing  
'Cause even when I dream of you (even when I dream)  
The sweetest dream would never do  
I'd still miss you baby  
And I don't wanna miss a thing*

Don Pedro:       *(Disguised as Claudio)* May I have your hand for this dance?

Hero:               You shall.

Don Pedro:       *(offers hand)* Why than-

Hero:               But, only if you dance with grace, remain silent the entire time and can promise you are handsome under that mask.

Don Pedro:       I promise. Will I be yours then?

Hero:               For this dance, yes. After this ball...you shall have to wait and see. God forbid your real face is ugly.

Don Pedro:       My mask maybe humble, but my looks are rather God like underneath.

Hero:               I shall be the judge of that.

*(Both move aside and exit DON PEDRO)*

Beatrice:         Scornful? Tell me who told you this?

Benedick:         I shall not.

Beatrice:         And you won't tell me who you are?

Benedick:         No.

Beatrice:         This is ridiculous! This reeks of Benedick. To say that I, Beatrice, can be scornful? Me? Scornful!

Benedick:         Imagine that.

Beatrice:         And that my humour is from a second hand joke book.

Benedick: How rude! This man sounds awful.

Beatrice: Truly.

Benedick: May I ask who this man is?

Beatrice: You must be joking.

Benedick: Apparently that is you, not me.

Beatrice: I am sure he will have made you laugh.

Benedick: Oh really?

Beatrice: Yes. For the worst possible reasons.

Benedick: Ah, noted.

Beatrice: Benedick is the prince's jester, a clown, a joker, and a very poor one at that. It seems that his true gift is to create lies and slander everyone but himself.

Benedick: *(sarcastically)* Oh the horror!

Beatrice: Yes...only the most immoral and dishonest people enjoy his company. Benedick manages to both please and anger people at the same time.

Benedick: *(sarcastically)* By Jove!

Beatrice: They laugh at first, but his comments usually lead to his own demise when they start winning the argument. It is a shame really?

Benedick: How so?

Beatrice: I wished he was brave enough to approach me for a battle. *(a moment is shared)*

*(Both move aside and DON JOHN moves forward)*

Don John: *(to the audience)* Shhh! It is I, Don John. It seems my brother has successfully wooed Hero pretending to be Claudio. What a wretch! Even now he has taken Leonato inside to discuss the proposed marriage. But who is this new man before me?

*(seeing CLAUDIO DANCING)*

Don John (cont'd): By his strange stature and gait, it appears to be the real Claudio himself. Oh fun! *(DON JOHN gestures to CLAUDIO)*

Don John: Why good sir, are you Benedick under that mask?

Claudio: I am...

Don John: Good. I am need of your assistance "Benedick".

Claudio: Okay?

Don John: Please convince my brother Don Pedro that his love for Hero is useless.

Claudio: His love for her?

Don John: I pray you will dissuade him away from this pointless romantic cause. She is far too low in social rank.

Claudio: Are you sure that he loves her? I think you might be confused.

Don John: I heard him swear it. Don Pedro wishes to marry her tonight.

*Exit DON JOHN*

Claudio: *(taking off their mask)* I may have answered to Benedict, but I have heard this dreadful news through Claudio's ears. Oh what a fool I have been! Of course Don Pedro wants Hero for himself. Why wouldn't he? Look at her! I should have said my true feelings for Hero and not allowed Don Pedro to speak for me. Goodbye Hero, I shall forever mourn for what could have been.

*Enter BENEDICK*

Benedick: Claudio?

Claudio: A jester's name would have been more appropriate, but yes, I am Claudio.

Benedick: What? A jester? Nevermind. Come with me.

Claudio: Where?

Benedick: Don Pedro has your Hero and now prepare those silly wedding attires.

Claudio: You wish to push the dagger even further into my heart. Fine. I wish him every happiness with her.

Benedick: Wait? Wha-

Claudio: I hope he enjoys her. Truly.

Benedick: Surely not...do you honestly think the Prince, Don Pedro, would treat you so poorly and snatch Hero for himself?



Claudio: Please, leave me alone.

*Exit CLAUDIO and enter DON PEDRO a moment is shared.*

Don Pedro: Why hello Benedick, where is our suitor going?

Benedick: He leaves with a rather heavy heart. I told him that you had won Hero's affections. I then offered to accompany him inside but he refused. Strangely he believes that you have stolen his love away from him.

Don Pedro: What?

Benedick: I know.

Don Pedro: I only wish to help him in this romantic escapade; not steal Hero for my own desires. Oh dear, oh dear. I must tell him that Hero's hand will be his. Trust me on this Benedick. As for other affairs, it appears that Beatrice is still rather angry.

Benedick: Surprise, surprise.

Don Pedro: Apparently, you have publicly insulted her this evening.

Benedick: Oh the irony! Her words were far more foul and abusive. Beatrice stated, without realising that it was me she was speaking too, that 'Benedick' was a Prince's jester. She fired so many varying and wicked insults that soldiers would have mistaken me for a live target.

Don Pedro: Have you finally met your match, Benedick?

Benedick: Do not be silly. I am simply stating that her temperament is so rude, I would not marry her even if she were the last woman on Earth. I pray that some magician might conjure up a spell, or charm or exorcism to return her to the fiery hell in which she crawled from.

Don Pedro: It seems you have summoned her. Here she comes.

Benedick: Oh God, why do you torment me so. *Exit BENEDICK*

*Enter BEATRICE, CLAUDIO, LEONATO and HERO*

Don Pedro: I am afraid to say you have lost good Benedick's heart.

Beatrice: What a pity. Here, I have brought Claudio like you asked for.

Don Pedro: Why hello good, Claudio.

Claudio: *(waves unenthusiastically)*

Don Pedro: Now, Claudio, I want to hear from your own words, why do you appear so sad?

Claudio: *(shrugs shoulders unenthusiastically)*

Don Pedro: You are you not sick or confused, perhaps?

Claudio: Nope.

Beatrice: The count, simply put, is jealous.

Don Pedro: Yes, I shall have to agree. But Claudio, you should not be jealous for there is no real reason to be.

Claudio: You are highly mistaken if you believe that losing Hero would not sadden me.

Don Pedro: I am afraid to say Claudio, it is you who is mistaken. Yes, I have wooed Hero. But I have pursued her for your love only.

Claudio: I do not understand.

Leonato: My good count, Don Pedro has negotiated my daughter's hand in marriage to you, along with my fortunes.

Claudio: *(finding the words to speak in shock)*

Beatrice: Speak Claudio, that is your cue.

Claudio: Complete joy can make one speechless.

Beatrice: Now you, Hero. Are you to whisper your love to him?

Hero: *(Hero screams with excitement as she embraces Claudio)*

Beatrice: A whisper Hero, a whisper.

Don Pedro: Do you not delight in their happiness, Beatrice?

Beatrice: I was born to tell jokes, not to make sense. Anyhow, I must take my leave before I am bombarded in statements of how I should be next in marriage.

*Exit BEATRICE.*

Don Pedro: She cannot bear to think of having a husband, can she?

Leonato: Absolutely not. She mocks every romantic suitor until they give up.  
Don Pedro: A shame. Benedick would be a good match for her.

Leonato: You must be joking. They would drive each other mad within a week.

Don Pedro: Some would say it would be an impossible task...

Leonato: What are you conspiring?

Don Pedro: A challenge. I am going to play matchmaker for Lady Beatrice and Senior Benedick. Your assistance would be both greatly appreciated and admired.

Leonato: I am not sure.

Don Pedro: Come now, you know it will be fun.

Leonato: I suppose I do not have much choice in this matter. Very well, I shall assist you.

Claudio: And I.

Don Pedro: Excellent. And you Hero?

Hero: I will help in any way I can. Perhaps, you could show me the best way Don Pedro to highlight Benedick's fairer qualities. That way, Beatrice has more reason to fall for him.

Don Pedro: Wonderful.

Claudio: And we shall scheme together on how we can make Benedick less cynical about the joys of marriage. Surely then, he will fall for Beatrice.

Don Pedro: How marvellous. Now, all come inside and we shall devise our plan.

*Exit DON PEDRO, CLAUDIO, LEONATO and HERO with MUSIC*

*Music transition - Rock instrumental.*

## **ACT 2 SCENE 1**

*Music transition - Rock instrumental.*

*Enter BORACHIO and DON JOHN*

Borachio: So it has been decided. Claudio will marry the daughter of Leonato. We failed. But do not worry, we can still foil this arrangement.

Don John: Good. The thought of his marital joy is infuriating.

Borachio: Do you remember Margaret?

Don John: Hero's servant woman.

Borachio: Yes. She still favours me. I can arrange that at some indecent time of night she can stand by Hero's open window.

Don John: Right...

Borachio: You approach Claudio and tell him how wrong he is to take Hero as his wife.

Don John: Okay.

Borachio: When he disagrees with you, you then explain how she cannot be trusted.

Don John: Right...but what has this got to do with the window?

Borachio: Well, you will then inform Claudio that Hero is actually in love with me. You will say how you have seen both Hero and I, at her window, countless times before and therefore you must bring him to the courtyard to witness such treachery himself.

Don John: Oh I see...excellent.

Borachio: Claudio's honour would thus be compromised with this match and you are wanting to warn him; see how kindly this makes you?

Don John: Yes.

Borachio: The night before the wedding, I will appear at said window engaging in frivolous talk with Margaret. However, Claudio will be confused believing that he is seeing his Hero courting and flirting with me, destroying and cancelling their marriage an-

Don John: And thus taking my revenge! Bravo, Borachio. Bravo.

Borachio: Thank you, I have learnt from the best.

Don John: Make the arrangements and I shall play my part. If this works, you shall be rewarded one thousand gold coins.

Borachio: You are most generous, Don John. Make the accusation convincingly and my cunning shall not shame me.

Don John: Let us begin! I feel my anger subsiding already.

*Exit DON JOHN and BORACHIO.*

## ACT 2 SCENE 2

*Music transition - Rock instrumental.*

*Enter BENEDICK*

Benedick: I cannot believe that Claudio, a man who would publicly laugh at the stupidity of love has now become a lover himself. He would rage with the drums of battle and war and now...and now the only drumming left is that of his wretched heart.

A commotion is heard off stage.

Benedick: Speak of the devil and they appear. I must hide, I cannot bear to hear another stupid word from that romantic's mouth.

*Enter DON PEDRO, CLAUDIO and LEONATO*

Don Pedro: *(whispering)* Can you see where Benedick is hiding?

Claudio: *(whispering)* Yes, I can. Let us begin.

Don Pedro: *(coughing as though to start to a speech)* Leonato, remind me again of what you said earlier today; how Beatrice was in fact in love with Benedick?

Claudio: Yes! I never thought that this could be possible?

Benedick: *(aside)* Beatrice loves me? Surely not?

Leonato: The level of passion she has for him is rather strange, but her love for him is undoubtable.

Don Pedro: Do you think it is false? An act? That Beatrice is simply pretending to like him.

Leonato: If she was faking, then she is one of the most passionate performers I have ever witnessed.

Don Pedro: I would have thought the mighty Beatrice was well armoured against the pursuits of love.

Claudio: Didn't we all! Plus, the fact her affections have landed on none other than Benedick. It is a shame he is not around to hear any of this.

Don Pedro: *(aside)* Subtly Claudio, subtly.

Claudio: *(aside)* Sorry.

Leonato: Yes...it is interesting that he is her chosen match.

Benedick: *(aside)* I would usually not believe such gossip and rumour...but they are respectable. They would not entertain such mischief unless there is some truth to the matter...

Don Pedro: Has Beatrice told her new lover about her devotions to him?

Leonato: No, and she swears she never will.

Claudio: I also know this to be true! Hero has told me in confidence that Beatrice will never write to him and confess her love since she has publicly scolded him so much.

Don Pedro: How awful!

Claudio: Undoubtedly. Beatrice is so truly besotted with Benedick that she weeps for hours and hours over her new love.

Leonato: Hero even fears Beatrice may do some harm upon herself with how love sick she is.

Don Pedro: Oh what ever can be done...surely someone should tell Benedick...

Claudio: No such truths would lead Benedick to joke about the matter; he would mock Beatrice over her infatuation

Don Pedro: Then what would you suggest?

Claudio: We never tell Benedick this incredibly secretive and sensitive news...time and good counsel will heal Beatrice only.

Leonato: I disagree. The heart cannot withstand such brutality.

Don Pedro: I am fond of Benedick, but I wish he would realise how lucky he is for a woman of Beatrice's calibre to be so madly in love with him. I pray, wherever he is now, that he hears my plea.

Claudio: Because he is definitely not here and we did not know-

Don Pedro: *(steps on Claudio's foot and whispers aside)* smooth...real smooth...

Claudio: *(aside)* Sorry...surely he must be more inclined to fall in love with Beatrice now?

Don Pedro: *(aside)* We shall see. Now the trap must be laid for Beatrice...

Leonato: *(aside)* Oh this is fun.

Don Pedro: *(aside)* Hero will speak in Beatrice's ear and suggest Benedick's affections for her too.

Claudio: *(aside)* Even though none of it is true. This is all going rather well.

Leonato: *(speaking publicly once more)* Come, let us away. I shall make Beatrice call upon Benedick for dinner.

*Exit DON PEDRO, CLAUDIO and LEONATO.*

Benedick: What is happening? Surely this cannot be some trick? A scheme? To fall for Beatrice? Their tone and temperament did seem truthful and honest. Plus, they also have Hero's testimony to back their claims. But Beatrice loves me? Beatrice. The lady scorn. The squawking parrot. How does this make sense? If she truly loves me, then maybe this love should be returned. Beatrice's beauty is undeniable after all and her intelligence is unmatched in her responses to my insults. Oh but people will poke and jibe at me for changing my mind so suddenly. When I said I would die a bachelor what I really meant is that I would die before the time I was married. More fool you for not understanding. Silly really.

*A commotion is heard off stage from Beatrice to show her scorn for having to speak to Benedick.*

Benedick: Here comes my new found beauty now.

Beatrice: I have been commanded to beckon you for dinner. So here I am, beckoning... "BENEDICK please come to dinner".

Benedick: Oh my dear Beatrice, I thank you for your efforts.

Beatrice: Dear? No need to thank me.

Benedick: So you enjoyed calling upon me then?

Beatrice: I am filled with joy. Did you just call me dear? How strange. I see you are not at the task of sparring today. If this is the case then I will see you at dinner.

*Exit BEATRICE*

Benedick: See how she flirts. "I am filled with joy". I must love her. If I don't then I truly I am coldhearted.

*Exit BENEDICK and music transition - Rock instrumental.*

## ACT 3 SCENE 1

*Music transition - Rock instrumental.*

*Enter HERO and URSULA*

Hero: All is going according to plan, Ursula.

Ursula: And what is the plan?

Hero: Why do I always feel like I have to repeat myself to you Ursula? After hearing whispers that you and I will be walking around the garden gossiping, Beatrice will arrive soon and eavesdrop on our conversation.

Ursula: Gotcha.

Hero: When she arrives we will pretend not to notice, even though she is terrible at hiding.

Ursula: She really is.

Hero: After she has settled, we will then slip into the conversation that Benedick is truly in love with Beatrice.

Ursula: Right...I think I understa-

Hero: Shhh, she is coming!

*Enter BEATRICE and assumes a hiding position.*

Ursula: *(winking at Hero)* Are you sure that Benedick actually loves Beatrice?

Hero: Claudio and Don Pedro professed it to me.

Beatrice: *(aside)* Benedick loves me? Surely not?

Ursula: That is amazing news. Did they ask you to tell Beatrice?

Hero: Yes they did, but I decided against it?

Ursula: Oh?

Hero: I suggested that if they respected Benedick they would allow him to swallow his feelings.

Ursula: But why? Benedick deserves to be happy and how will we ever know if she feels the same?



Hero: Very true, every person is worthy of such a merry matrimony. But Beatrice's love is not an easy task to acquire. She's very stubborn and proud

Ursula: She despises everything she looks upon. Hero: She values her wit more than anything else. Ursula: She is so in love with herself.

Hero: Meaning she would be incapable of loving anyone else but herself.

Ursula: Oh such sorrows! She would just tease Benedick over his affections for her.

Hero: Of course she would. Beatrice's new found talents is twisting a man's qualities into the most foul and wretched things imaginable. It is a rather interesting gift.

Ursula: 'Interesting' is the polite way of saying it.

Hero: But who dares tell her that she is walking down such a self-destructive road. She would simply mock me if I were to tell her the truth.

Ursula: What do you suggest we should do?

Hero: The only thing we can do, I will go to Benedick and tell him some awful details about my cousin. That way this might dampen his devotions for her.

Ursula: This would be such an awful action though! It is such a shame. Shame, shame, shame. Oh, the sha-

Hero: Shame, yes we get it Ursula! Shame is bad.

Ursula: *(aside)* I'm sorry.

Ursula *(cont'd)*: I feel that such shame-...shambolic comments would wrong your cousin too much. Surely, she is intelligent enough to realise that it would be a huge mistake to ignore Benedick.

Hero: Some would say he is the only notable man in all of Messina; apart from Claudio of course.

Ursula: Not wanting to offend, but I would say Benedick trumps your Claudio in bravery, intelligence and beauty.

Hero: *(aside)* Watch yourself Ursula...

Ursula: *(aside)* Apologies.

Hero:                   Come Ursula, let us go inside. you can help pick garments for my wedding.

*Exit HERO and URSULA. BEATRICE returns from her hiding location.*

Beatrice:             Can this really be true? Do people really criticise me for being too proud and scornful? Maybe it is time to say goodbye to this scornful image I have created...maybe it is time to return this romantic love which is delivered so "tenderly" by Benedick...but surely this will cause more pain? Or make me the happiest I have ever been?

### **Song - Torn by Natalie Imbruglia**

*Sung by BEATRICE and company*

*I thought, I saw a man brought to life  
He was warm, he came around and he was dignified  
He showed me what it was to cry  
Well, you couldn't be that man I adored  
You don't seem to know  
Seem to care what your heart is for  
But I don't know him anymore  
There's nothing where he used to lie  
The conversation has run dry  
That's what's going on Nothing's fine, I'm torn*

*I'm all out of faith  
This is how I feel  
I'm cold and I am shamed  
Lying naked on the floor  
Illusion never changed  
Into something real  
I'm wide awake and I can see  
The perfect sky is torn  
You're a little late, I'm already torn*

*So I guess the fortune teller's right  
Should have seen just what was there  
And not some holy light  
It crawled beneath my veins  
And now I don't care, I had no luck  
I don't miss it all that much  
There's just so many things  
That I can touch, I'm torn*

*I'm all out of faith  
This is how I feel  
I'm cold and I am shamed*

*Lying naked on the floor  
Illusion never changed Into something real  
I'm wide awake and I can see  
The perfect sky is torn  
You're a little late, I'm already torn, torn*

*Exit BEATRICE and Music transition - Rock instrumental*

## **Act 3 Scene 2**

*Music transition - Rock instrumental.  
Enter BENEDICK, CLAUDIO and LEONATO*

Leonato: Don Pedro has informed me to make the following statements whilst he attends to his duties.

*LEONATO begins reading from a letter.*

Leonato (*cont'd*): "I shall stay in Messina until Claudio has been married. After, I shall return to Aragon. Benedick will also return with me considering he has evaded Cupid's arrows too many times".

Benedick: I am afraid I will have to dampen Don Pedro's recent statement.

Claudio: How so?

Leonato: Wait...has the man finally been shot through the heart?

Benedick: Perhaps...

Claudio: Why his clothes are freshly ironed, his shoes are polished and...(sniffs) is that my aftershave?

Benedick: It smells better on me.

Leonato: It's true! Benedick is in love!

Claudio: (*playing coy*) And I think I might know who it is.

Benedick: Yes, yes, I am sure you do. Leonato, might I have a word with you in private. There is something I wish to propose to you.

Leonato: But of course, lead the way... Exit BENEDICK and LEONATO

Claudio: (*aside*) Everything is falling into place! What could possibly go wrong?

*Enter DON JOHN*

Don John: Why hello there...

Claudio: Don John, good day to you sir.

Don John: Yes, it is a day isn't it. Claudio, I was wondering if I could have a word with you?

Claudio: I suppose.

Don John: It will only take a moment, it is a small and trivial matter; your marriage. I was wondering whether you are still planning on being betrothed to Hero tomorrow?

Claudio: But of course.

Don John: I hope this news will show how much I hold you in high regard Claudio, as I truly respect your...feelings.

Claudio: I am starting to worry Don John, please tell me what you have come to say.

Don John: Oh it is not easy to say. My brother respects you highly and has devoted an awful lot of time towards the ceremony.

Claudio: Don John, please tell me. Otherwise it will get the better of my nerves.

Don John: So be it. The lady is unfaithful.

Claudio: What? Hero?

Don John: Truly. Leonato's Hero. Your Hero. Apparently everyone's Hero.

Claudio: But how?

Don John: It is hard to explain without action...meet me later this evening. You will see her lover enter through the bedroom window. If you see such cruelty and can continue with the ceremony...then on your head be it. But at least then my conscious is clean.

Claudio: If I were to see such foul deeds in play with my own eyes, it would be difficult to continue with such a marriage.

Don John: I am sorry dear Claudio. What will you do if it is true?

Claudio: The only logical solution...publicly slander her at the congregation.

Don John: What an embarrassment that could be. Come, we will not discuss it anymore until you have seen the foul deeds for yourself.

*Exit DON JOHN and CLAUDIO*  
*Music transition - Rock instrumental.*

### ACT 3 SCENE 3

*Music transition - Rock instrumental.*

*Enter DOGBERRY and VERGES*

Dogberry: As constable of this police force, I must request you repeat my code of conduct and instructions Verges.

Verges: Very well, sir. I must apprehend any homeless man I see. I must apprehend any drunken man I see. I must apprehend any thief I see.

Dogberry: Very good, Verges. You are learning well. Now then, our next port of ca-

*DOGBERRY is interrupted by BORACHIO entering in a drunken manner.*

Borachio: A thousand pieces. One thousand. Not one hundred. No, no. A thousand. HA. Pleasure working for you Don John. My absolute pleasure! No more living on the streets!

Dogberry: *(aside)* Homeless. Drunk. A thief! Your first test Verges! The very treason I was describing has arrived.

Borachio: How easy it was! Margret was everything and more. She played her part perfectly.

Verges: You there! Freeze!

*BORACHIO stands suddenly very still.*

Verges *(cont'd)*: What treachery are you up to this evening? BORACHIO does not answer.

Verges *(cont'd)*: Speak man!

Borachio: *(through gritted teeth)* But officer you told me to freeze?

Verges: Very well! Unfreeze! Now tell me, what are you up too?

Borachio: Why should I?

Verges: Erm, please?

Borachio: Since you asked so nicely. I met with Margaret tonight, you know her, and consistently called her Hero by the window; like we planned. The precious Claudio saw his beloved wife to be with another man and became blind with rage and waffling. Now he will shame her on their wedding day and cancel the nuptials! Brilliant!

Dogberry: Wait, I know you. This man has been a wanted criminal for over seven years! Borachio is one of the worst men in all of Messina!

Verges: We order you to stop in the name of the law!

Borachio: *(looking in the wrong direction)* Gentlemen, gentlemen, gentlemen...you see...the thing is...

BORACHIO runs off stage. Dogberry: Stop right there! Verges: Why do they always run...

*Exit DOGBERRY and VERGES*  
*Music transition - Rock instrumental.*

## **ACT 4 SCENE 1**

*Enter CLAUDIO*

### **Song - Should I Stay Or Should I Go by The Clash**

Sung by CLAUDIO and COMPANYY.

*Whilst CLAUDIO is singing, Enter FRIAR FRANCIS, HERO, LEONATO preparing in their own ways for the wedding.*

*Darlin' you got to let me know  
Should I stay or should I go?  
If you say that you are mine  
I'll be here 'til the end of time  
So you got to let me know  
Should I stay or should I go?*

*It's always tease tease tease  
You're happy when I'm on my knees  
One day is fine and next is black  
So if you want me off your back  
Well come on and let me know*

*Should I stay or should I go?  
Should I stay or should I go now?  
Should I stay or should I go now?  
If I go there will be trouble  
And if I stay it will be double  
So come on and let me know*

Friar Francis: Welcome all on this joyous day. We are here to witness the partnership of both Claudio and Hero. Now, let us begin. Claudio, do you come here today to marry this good lady?

Claudio: No, I do not.

Leonato: Ah very witty good sir, very witty. I think Friar, he is referring to how you will be leading the marriage rather than actually marrying Hero...

Friar Francis: Oh yes, very humorous. I shall be more clear. Hero, are you here today to be married to Claudio and therefore wish to be united in holy matrimony?

Hero: I do.

Friar Francis: If either of you know of any reason why you should not be joined in marriage, I ask you to state this now.

*A short silence.*

Claudio: You are strangely quiet Hero, do you not wish to state a reason.

Hero: I do not.

Claudio: How about you Leonato, are you aware of any reason?

Leonato: Claudio, what has gotten into you.

Claudio: Why don't we ask the friar as I am the only one brave enough to state such reasons.

Friar Francis: I am sensing there might be cause to be worried.

Claudio: Worried? Friar that is a small statement in the grand scheme of things.

Hero: My love what is wrong?

Claudio: My love? Look how a sin can be disguised so artfully. My love. HA.

Leonato: I do not understand.

Claudio: Neither do I!

Hero: Claudio!

Claudio: Fine, I shall say it since you are such a coward. Your daughter has been unfaithful. Sleeping in another man's bed!

Friar Francis: Oooh that is worrying.

Leonato: Quiet Friar! This cannot be the case, surely?

Claudio: It's true. How could you do this to me? Leonato, you can take your defiled daughter back.

Hero: Is it a sickness? This must be the cause of such wild accusations.

Claudio: Accusations? Even now, caught red handed you lie so passionately!

Leonato: What proof do you have Claudio?

Claudio: I saw you with my own eyes! At midnight, what man were you speaking to?

Hero: I spoke to no man at such a time of night.

Claudio: Liar!

Hero: It's true!

Claudio: It's false!

Hero: No!

Claudio: I swear on my own honour and everyone before me that I saw a man at your window last night.

Hero: No.

Claudio: The stranger was screeching and bellowing!

Hero: NO!

Claudio: Screaming on how he has been secretly coming to your window on so many previous occasions.

*HERO faints in FRIAR FRANCIS' arms.*

Claudio (*cont'd*): Even now she acts to hide her embarrassment. I will not be fooled anymore!

*Exit CLAUDIO walking past BENEDICK and BEATRICE entering the stage.*

Benedick: What did I miss?

Beatrice: Cousin! Quick! Help her!

Friar Francis: Is she dead?

Leonato: No, you idiot, she has merely fainted.

Friar Francis: Thank God.

Leonato: But death would be welcomed upon her if there is any truth to this shameful story!



Beatrice: What are you talking about? *HERO stirs.*

Beatrice: Cousin, I am here. Take your time.

Benedick: Please, this is the most entertaining wedding I have ever attended.

Beatrice: Quiet man!

Leonato: Has she woken Beatrice.

Friar Francis: Why wouldn't she?

Leonato: The shame alone should kill her. Hero, I command that you never open your eyes again! How dare you besmirch our name, our family name so unlawfully, so selfishly!

Beatrice: My lord!

Leonato: Damn you for embarrassing me so! For taking to another man's bed before your wedding night!

Benedick: What?

Beatrice: This cannot be the case.

Benedick: Sir, this seems improbable with this young lover.

Beatrice: Leonato you must believe me! These accusations are false!

Benedick: Beatrice, did you stay in the same chambers at Hero last night?

Beatrice: I did not.

Leonato: This just adds more evidence to Claudio's story! Why would he lie if he truly loved her!

Beatrice: Yes, I did not sleep there last night. But this is the first time in a full year. Claudio's statements do not make any sense! I have never seen a lover return frequently to her room!

*HERO awakes fully.*

Hero: Beatrice? Is that you?

Beatrice: Oh cousin!

Benedick: Hero, do you know any possible man who is being confused as your lover?

Hero: No, not at all. Why is this happening to me?

Beatrice: Shh, calm now.

Leonato: Calm? You ask for calm!

Hero: Oh father, if you can prove that I spoke with any other man last night, or any other, only then can you refuse me, hate me and torture me to death!

Benedick: Leonato, I have to say that I believe your daughter. Claudio acts foolishly in love, but he is not stupid. If his wisdom was misled then there can be only one cause of this. I believe Don John is to blame.

Leonato: Are you sure?

Benedick: I cannot think of any other who would want to cause such outrage.

Leonato: This is madness! If Claudio has spoken the truth, then these hands shall tear Hero apart. But if Don John has wronged both Claudio's and Hero's honour, they best start running from me.

Friar Francis: Might I make a suggestion Lord?

Leonato: Considering you have pried your way into this situation already, I see no reason why.

Friar Francis: Thank you. Claudio left your daughter here for dead. Perhaps it is best to hide her away in your house and tell everyone that she is indeed dead. If done correctly we may transform slander into remorse. We'll maintain that she died upon the instant that she was accused.

Benedick: That isn't a bad idea at all...

Friar Francis: Oh why thank you. You have always been kin-

Leonato: Friar!

Friar Francis: Sorry...on hearing this dreadful news, everyone will grieve for her and excuse her actions. When Claudio hears that she died from his words, he'll mourn and wish he had never spoken. In death, every aspect of her life will appear more beautiful in his mind.

Beatrice: It is an outlandish plan...but I feel it might just work...

Benedick: I do too. I swear I will play my part accordingly.

Beatrice: And I.

Friar Francis: And I.

*A silence whilst waiting for Leonato's confirmation.*

Leonato: ...and I.

Friar Francis: Then it is agreed. Come Hero, you must die in order to live.

*Exit LEONATO, HERO and FRIAR FRANCIS.*

Benedick: Beatrice have you been crying this entire time?

Beatrice: I cannot see it stopping.

Benedick: I hope not.

Beatrice: You have no reason for your wishing so I will continue do it freely.

Benedick: Yes, if that makes you happy.

*An awkward silence falls between the two.*

Benedick (*cont'd*): I still believe that Hero has been falsely accused.

Beatrice: I would do anything for the man who would avenge her...

Benedick: Really?

Beatrice: Of course.

Benedick: Perhaps I could be that man...

Beatrice: You could...but I believe this is no task for a mere man.

Benedick: Then a lover shall do it?

Beatrice: You are correct that it is a job for a lover...but I feel you might not be right for the role.

Benedick: Right...

*Another awkward silence.*

Benedick (*cont'd*): (*outburst*) There is nothing else in the world that I love as much as you!

Beatrice: Really?

Benedick: Really really. Isn't that strange?

Beatrice: Very...it's even more strange in fact that I love you...

Benedick: Really?

Beatrice: Really really. But don't believe me...even though i'm not lying.

Benedick: What?

Beatrice: I am confessing nothing to you but I am also not denying anything either....

Benedick: You love me.

Beatrice: No.

Benedick: You truly love me.

Beatrice: No.

Benedick: You do.

Beatrice: I don't. Sort of.

Benedick: I love you...and I swear that you love me too...

Beatrice: Oh God.

Benedick: You do!

Beatrice: I was about to protest my love for you but...

Benedick: But?

Beatrice: I am ashamed to admit that I love you with so much of my heart that there is not much left to protest.

Benedick: Fantastic!

*An awkward silence.*

Benedick (*cont'd*): I mean...this is highly favourable news and I express gratitude towards your personal statement.

*A smile between the characters.*

Beatrice: So what now?

Benedick: Well, ask me anything and I shall follow my lov- I mean... I will attempt to complete any wishes set before me.

Beatrice: Simple enough.

Benedick: So, what do you require?

Beatrice: Kill Claudio.

Benedick: Come again?

Beatrice: Kill. Claudio.

Benedick: I thought you said that.

Beatrice: So you'll do it?

Benedick: You're serious?

Beatrice: And you're not?

Benedick: Of course I won't! He has been my closest friend for the past week!

Beatrice: Fine. By rejecting this request, you have killed our love instead. Farewell.

*BEATRICE begins to leave.*

Benedick: Beatrice wait!

Beatrice: Yes? Romance killer, you called?

Benedick: Beatrice.

Beatrice: Benedick.

*BENEDICK is trying to formulate the correct words.*

Beatrice: Good day. *(they begin to leave)*

Benedick: You cannot ask of me this.

Beatrice: Of course not, we are no longer lovers.

Benedick: Fine. Then, let us part at least as friends.

Beatrice: Friends? Friends? How dare you even suggest such a kinship after what you have witnessed with Claudio!

Benedick: Is Claudio really that much of your enemy?

Beatrice: Is he that much of my enemy? My enemy! He declares his love for my cousin, waits until the moment of their public matrimony, only to slander her in front of her entire family and friends. Scorning her, dishonouring her, bullying her to the point of fainting! Is he my enemy? Are you that

stupid?

Benedick: Beatrice?

Beatrice: Beatrice what? Tell me why I shouldn't cut out his heart! Only then will he know a small fraction of the shame he has placed on Hero.

Benedick: Please listen to me Beatr-

Beatrice: A man at a window? Is he crazy!

Benedick: No, but I belie-

Beatrice: Sweet Hero, how could he have done this to you! She will never recover from this! Claudio has ruined her and I too will never be the same by grieving!

*A moment is shared between BENEDICK and BEATRICE.*

Benedick: I swear by this hand that I love you Beatrice and I want to do everything in my power to help you.

Beatrice: I do not want such false promises Benedick, only actions.

Benedick: Do you honestly believe that Claudio has wronged Hero?

Beatrice: I do.

Benedick: If this will place me in your good favour once more than I shall challenge him. Comfort your cousin and I shall see you shortly. It shall be done.

## **ACT 4 SCENE 2**

*Music transition - Rock instrumental.*

*Enter DOGBERRY, VERGES and BORACHIO. SEXTON is already sitting within the scene.*

Sexton: Now, where is the criminal?

Dogberry: Here your grace.

Sexton: Name?

Borachio: *(drunkenly)* Borachio. But you can call me...Borachio.

Verges: Do you serve God?

Borachio: I am not a butler...

Verges: No, do you serve God with religion?

Borachio: Is that food?

Dogberry: Write down "is that food?".

Verges: I forgot my pen.

Sexton: Quiet you fools! God give me strength.

Borachio: So God serves you?

Sexton: What? Be quiet man!

Verges/Dogberry: Sorry.

Sexton: Not you, him!

Borachio: Sorry.

Sexton: Oh Lord.

Borachio: There he is again.

Sexton: Shush!

Verges: So he does know God?

Dogberry: Classic Borachio!

Sexton: Enough! Borachio, you have been brought before me as a lying criminal. How do you plead?

Borachio: Honestly, I am not guilty.

Verges/Dogberry: Liar!

Sexton: Which is precisely what he would say you imbeciles.

Verges/Dogberry: Oh.

Sexton: What is the evidence for the charge?

Verges: Sir, this man has been cooperating with Don John and his villainous ways once more.

Sexton: I see.

Verges: See what?

Dogberry: I don't know, I don't have my glasses.

Verges: Write down where you last had them.

Dogberry: I told you, I don't have a pen.

Sexton: Will you be quiet in my court room!

Borachio: Oh this is fun...

Sexton: What else was said?

Verges: That Don John had given him a thousand gold pieces to wrongfully accuse the Lady Hero.

Sexton: And what else?

Dogberry: That he knew this would cause count Claudio to disgrace Hero before the whole assembly, and therefore destroy the wedding

Sexton: And what else?

Verges/Dogberry: Well, that's pretty much everything really...

Sexton: It was reported to me this morning that Don John has ran away from Messina. Hero has died instantly from the grief of this public shaming. Therefore, this tale must be true and Borachio must be locked away. Verdict. Guilty.

Borachio: It is never boring.

Sexton: Master Constable, take this man to Leonato's and I shall inform him of what has been discovered.

*Exit BORACHIO, SEXTON, VERGES and DOGBERRY*  
*Music transition - Rock instrumental.*

## **ACT 5 SCENE 1**

*Music transition - Rock instrumental.*  
*Enter DON PEDRO, CLAUDIO who are greeted by LEONATO*

Claudio/Don Pedro: Good evening.

Leonato: I must speak with you both on personal matters and to deliver this letter.

Claudio: I am afraid we are in somewhat of a hurry.



Leonato: Somewhat of a hurry? I am sorry I have burdened you now that my daughter is dead from your actions. Please let me just be your messenger boy and be on my way.

Claudio: Hero is dead?

Leonato: Yes, she is with us no more. My sweet and beloved Hero has ceased to be. But please do not now allow me to take up so much of your precious time.

Don Pedro: Do not quarrel with us good lord.

Leonato: Quarrel? You have both done me wrong!

*CLAUDIO visibly shocked by this news gestures to his sword to steady themselves.*

Leonato (*cont'd*): Did you just grasp your sword? Even now in the depths of my despair you try and intimidate a man who has lost his child!

Claudio: You are mistaken, I would never threaten my elders; especially in a time like this.

Leonato: So now you mock me? I'm not a doddering old fool!

Don Pedro: He never meant such a stat-

Leonato: Claudio, you have wronged my innocent child and personally insulted me! For this I challenge you to a duel! Your slander has broken my daughters heart and now she lies in a tomb with her ancestors due to your wickedness!

Claudio: My wickedness?

Don Pedro: This is a mistake old man.

Leonato: You think I am incapable? I am perfectly capable of defeating this child before me. I only wish I could trade his wretched life for that of my daughters!

Claudio: I will not fight you!

Don Pedro: And I shall not give audience to anymore of this madness!

Leonato: Then I shall find an audience who will. Prepare yourself junior! (*throws the letter at them before leaving*)

*Exit LEONATO.*

Claudio: Don Pedro, do you think there is any element of truth about Hero dying?

Don Pedro: I cannot tell you what I do not know. But, I would by lying to you if I was not concerned over his enraged actions.

Claudio: I cannot take this insanity. Please, tell me some logical news from this message.

Don Pedro: *(reading the letter)* It is from Benedick.

Claudio: Oh thank the heavens, I can at least be cheered up by his good humour.

Don Pedro: I would not be so certain.

Claudio: What do you mean?

Don Pedro: "Claudio, you truly are a villain".

Claudio: Well that is not very funny...

Don Pedro: "You have killed a sweet lady today and you shall pay dearly".

Claudio: My dear friend challenging me? To a duel! That's two in one day!

Don Pedro: "Don Pedro, I am sure you will be in Claudio's company whilst reading this print. I thank you for your many kindnesses, but I must leave your court. You have killed a sweet and innocent lady and I cannot stand idly by. Claudio will meet with me in a duel or else".

Claudio: What a day! Do you think he is serious?

Don Pedro: Benedick is always one for practical jokes my boy, but even now I feel this would be too far for him.

Claudio: What would cause such a venom within his words.

Don Pedro: I feel his love for Beatrice would be the only true cause.

Claudio: This is all insane!

*Enter VERGES struggling to hold BORACHIO*

Claudio: What is happening?!

Don Pedro: I know this man! This is one of my brother's companions! Borachio! Why are you in chains?

Verges: He is not wearing any jewellery my lord!

Don Pedro: No, you idiot! Why is Borachio in handcuffs?

Verges: Oh I see! Apologies! He has said many things which are not true. Borachio has falsely accused a lady of adultery.

Don Pedro: But how is this a crime?

Borachio: If you will allow me, I shall answer you now with my guilt ridden conscious.

Claudio: And quickly.

Borachio: I must confess that Don John, your brother, incensed me to slander the good lady Hero. We decided to bring Claudio to the orchard where he would see me court Margaret. Little did he know that she would actually be disguised as his own good love Hero.

Claudio: What!

Borachio: Like now, we knew this would fill you with a fury, leading to the disgrace of Hero publicly and destroying the wedding. But now the lady has died because of these false accusations.

Don Pedro: Claudio should not be your only concern.

Claudio: And Don John asked you to do this.

Borachio: Yes, and he paid me handsomely to do so.

Don Pedro: Typical. The coward has fled from his own treachery.

Claudio: Oh my poor Hero, you seem even more beautiful now as the first day I met you. What have I done!

*Enter LEONATO*

Leonato: Which is the villain! Show him to me! You! You are one of the ones responsible for the death of my child!

Claudio: His accomplice has fled but I am afraid to say that I too must shoulder some blame. If you wish to punish me, then I accept full responsibility.

Leonato: Enough of your self-loathing Claudio. My daughter is gone. Whether it is you or them as the guilty party, it changes nothing.

Claudio: I am truly sorry for my actions.

Leonato: Stop grovelling. If you wish to help me let this death act as a source of inspiration. The task I ask of you now is to make the good people of Messina realise how pure of heart she truly was; prove her innocence for me.

Claudio: How can I be of service?

Leonato: Come to my house tomorrow morning. You will never be my son-in-law. But perhaps it is not too late to be my nephew instead.

Don Pedro: I do not understand?

Leonato: My brother has a daughter who is identical to Hero. Marry her. Marry her and my revenge will die with your nuptials.

*A moment where Claudio accepts his new fate.*

Claudio: I accept. My future is now, and forever will be, in your hands.

Leonato: Good. Officer?

Verges: Yes sir?

Leonato: Take Borachio away.

Verges: Yes sir! Where...exactly?

Leonato: The prison you halfwit!

Verges: Ay ay captain.

*Exit VERGES and BORACHIO*

Leonato: Till tomorrow morning gentlemen.

*Exit LEONATO, CLAUDIO and DON PEDRO*  
*Music transition - Rock instrumental.*

## **ACT 5 SCENE 2**

*Music transition - Rock instrumental. Enter LEONATO, BENEDICK and BEATRICE*

Benedick: So let me just confirm this for my piece of mind. Hero is innocent?

Beatrice: Yes.

Benedick: And those that accused her are too? beatrice: Unfortunately yes.

Benedick: So I do not have to fight Claudio?

Beatrice: No.

Benedick: Well, that is somewhat of a relief...I would have won though.

Leonato: Beatrice, please attend to your cousin. I am sure she would like some assistance after being brought back from the dead.

Beatrice: Yes uncle.

*Exit BEATRICE.*

Benedick: Leonato, I was wondering if I could borrow a moment of your time.

Leonato: Of course.

Benedick: Sir, I must tell you that I have fallen for your niece Beatrice.

Leonato: Really? This is a shock.

Benedick: And I would like to believe that she returns these feelings also. I was wondering if I could receive your blessing to marry her!

Leonato: Ask and you shall receive! You have my full support Benedick! Our wishes are aligned and I wish you every happiness.

Enter DON PEDRO and CLAUDIO

Claudio/Don Pedro: Good day Leonato.

Leonato: Good day. Are you still willing to marry my brother's daughter?

Claudio: I am in your capable hands and I will follow all of your wishes. Now, where is the lady I am to marry?

*Enter HERO and BEATRICE to an electric guitar instrumental of 'The Bridal March' both wearing veils.*

Claudio: I swear myself to you, now and forever, if you will have me as your husband.

Hero: I will. But you were my husband already.

Claudio: Sorry?

Hero: When I lived I was already your other wife.

Don Pedro: I do not understand.

Hero: Then let me help you (*removes veil*).

Claudio: Hero?

Hero: Claudio!

Don Pedro: She lives!

Leonato: She lives now those slanderous stories have stopped.

Claudio: Oh Hero! I am so sorry for everyth-

Hero: You have a habit of talking far too much at the altar.

Benedick: Beatrice?

Beatrice: *(removes veil)* Correct.

Benedick: I have to ask, both as plainly and bluntly as possible, no tricks or games, do you love me?

Beatrice: No, no more than reason.

Benedick: Oh, well then I have been deceived. The other gentlemen swore you did.

Beatrice: Interesting. Well, I too also have to ask, both as plainly and bluntly as possible, no tricks or games, do you love me?

Benedick: No, no more than reason.

Beatrice: Oh, well than I have also been deceived. The other ladies swore you did.

*An awkward silence falls.*

Claudio: Oh for heaven's sake you both love each other! Admit it now or it will forever be your downfalls! I know Benedick has written many a love song declaring his love for Beatrice!

Hero: As Beatrice has done for Benedick!

Benedick: I guess I can take your hand...but only out of pity.

Beatrice: I guess I shall accept it, but only to save your grovelling.

Don Pedro: I must ask Benedick, what was this ballad that you so delicately created?

### **Song - Don't Stop Believing by Journey**

*Sung by BENEDICK, BEATRICE, HERO, CLAUDIO, DON PEDRO and LEONATO*

*Just a small town girl Livin' in a lonely world  
She took the midnight train going anywhere*

*Just a city boy  
Born and raised in South Detroit  
He took the midnight train going anywhere*

*A singer in a smokey room  
A smell of wine and cheap perfume  
For a smile they can share the night  
It goes on and on and on and on*

*Strangers waitin'  
Up and down the boulevard  
Their shadows searchin' in the night  
Streetlights, people  
Livin' just to find emotion  
Hidin' somewhere in the night*

*Workin' hard to get my fill  
Everybody wants a thrill  
Payin' anything to roll the dice  
Just one more time  
Some'll win, some will lose  
Some are born to sing the blues  
Whoa, the movie never ends  
It goes on and on and on and on*

*Strangers waitin'  
Up and down the boulevard  
Their shadows searchin' in the night  
Streetlights, people  
Livin' just to find emotion  
Hidin', somewhere in the night*

*Don't stop believin'  
Hold on to that feelin'  
Streetlights, people  
Don't stop believin'  
Hold on  
Streetlights, people  
Don't stop believin'  
Hold on to that feelin'  
Streetlights, people*

**THE END**