

AUDITION #1 (*Beatrice & Benedick meet for the first time in the play*)

Beatrice. I wonder that you will still be talking, Signior Benedick: nobody marks you.

Benedick. What, my dear Lady Disdain! are you yet living?

Beatrice. Is it possible disdain should die while she hath such meet food to feed it as Signior Benedick? Courtesy itself must convert to disdain, if you come in her presence.

Benedick. Then is courtesy a turncoat. But it is certain I am loved of all ladies, only you excepted: and I would I could find in my heart that I had not a hard heart; for, truly, I love none.

Beatrice. A dear happiness to women: they would else have been troubled with a pernicious suitor. I thank God and my cold blood, I am of your humour for that: I had rather hear my dog bark at a crow than a man swear he loves me.

Benedick. God keep your ladyship still in that mind! so some gentleman or other shall 'scape a predestinate scratched face.

Beatrice. Scratching could not make it worse, an 'twere such a face as yours were.

Benedick. Well, you are a rare parrot-teacher.

Beatrice. A bird of my tongue is better than a beast of yours.

Benedick. I would my horse had the speed of your tongue, and so good a continuer. But keep your way, i' God's name; I have done.

Beatrice. You always end with a jade's trick: I know you of old.

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AUDITION #2 (*Benedick has just overheard that Beatrice loves him*)

Benedick. [*Coming forward*]

This can be no trick: the conference was sadly borne. They have the truth of this from Hero. Love me! why, it must be requited. I hear how I am censured: they say I will bear myself proudly, if I perceive the love come from her; they say too that she will rather die than give any sign of affection. I did never think to marry: I must not seem proud: happy are they that hear their detractions and can put

them to mending. They say the lady is fair; 'tis a truth, I can bear them witness; and virtuous; 'tis so, I cannot reprove it; and wise, but for loving me; by my troth, it is no addition to her wit, nor no great argument of her folly, for I will be horribly in love with her. I may chance have some odd quirks and remnants of wit broken on me, because I have railed so long against marriage: but doth not the appetite alter? a man loves the meat in his youth that he cannot endure in his age. Shall quips and sentences and these paper bullets of the brain awe a man from the career of his humour? No, the world must be peopled. When I said I would die a bachelor, I did not think I should live till I were married. Here comes Beatrice. By this day! she's a fair lady: I do spy some marks of love in her.

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AUDITION #3 (*Beatrice has just overheard that Benedick loves her*)

Beatrice. [*Coming forward*]

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.

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AUDITION #4 (*Hero has just been jilted and humiliated at the altar, Benedick goes to comfort Beatrice*)

Benedick. Lady Beatrice, have you wept all this while?

Beatrice. Yea, and I will weep a while longer.

Benedick. I will not desire that.

Beatrice. You have no reason; I do it freely.

Benedick. I do love 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 loved nothing so well as you: but believe me not; and yet I lie not; I confess nothing, nor I deny nothing. I am sorry for my cousin.

Benedick. By my sword, Beatrice, thou lovest me.

Beatrice. Do not swear, and eat it.

Benedick. I will swear by it that you love me; and I will make him eat it that says I love not you. I protest I love thee.

Beatrice. Why, then, God forgive me!

Benedick. What offence, sweet Beatrice?

Beatrice. You have stayed me in a happy hour: I was about to protest I loved you.

Benedick. And do it with all thy heart.

Beatrice. I love you with so much of my heart that none is left to protest.

Benedick. Come, bid me do any thing for thee.

Beatrice. Kill Claudio.

Benedick. Ha! not for the wide world.

Beatrice. You kill me to deny it. Farewell.

Benedick. Tarry, sweet Beatrice.

Beatrice. I am gone, though I am here: there is no love in you: nay, I pray you, let me go.

Benedick. Beatrice,—

Beatrice. In faith, I will go.

Benedick. We'll be friends first.

Beatrice. You dare easier be friends with me than fight with mine enemy.

Benedick. Is Claudio thine enemy?

Beatrice. Is he not approved in the height a villain, that hath slandered, scorned, dishonoured my kinswoman? O that I were a man! What, bear her in hand until they come to take hands; and then, with public accusation, uncovered slander, unmitigated rancour, —O God, that I were a man! I would eat his heart in the market-place.

Benedick. Hear me, Beatrice,—

Beatrice. Sweet Hero! She is wronged, she is slandered, she is undone.

Benedick. Tarry, good Beatrice. By this hand, I love thee.

Beatrice. Use it for my love some other way than swearing by it.

Benedick. Think you in your soul the Count Claudio hath wronged Hero?

Beatrice. Yea, as sure as I have a thought or a soul.

Benedick. Enough, I am engaged; I will challenge him.

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AUDITION #5 (*The humiliating of Hero at the altar*)

Claudio / Leonato.

There, take her back again:
Give not this rotten orange to your friend;
She's but the sign and semblance of her honour.
Behold how like a maid she blushes here!
Would you not swear,
All you that see her, that she were a maid,
By these exterior shows? But she is none:
She knows the heat of a luxurious bed.

You seem to me as Dian in her orb,
As chaste as is the bud ere it be blown;
But you are more intemperate in your blood
Than Venus, or those pamper'd animals
That rage in savage sensuality.

Death is the fairest cover for her shame
That may be wish'd for.
Do not live, Hero; do not ope thine eyes:
Why ever wast thou lovely in my eyes?
why, she, O, she is fallen Into a pit of ink

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AUDITION #6 (*the villain reveals his true nature and how he is being forced to 'tow the line' for his brother*)

Don John.

I cannot hide what I am:
I must be sad when I have cause and smile
at no man's jests, eat when I have stomach and wait
for no man's leisure, sleep when I am drowsy and
tend on no man's business, laugh when I am merry and
claw no man in his humour

I had rather be a canker in a hedge than a rose in
his grace: in this, though I cannot be said to
be a flattering honest man, it must not be denied
but I am a plain-dealing villain. I am trusted with
a muzzle and enfranchised with a clog; therefore I
have decreed not to sing in my cage. If I had my

mouth, I would bite; if I had my liberty, I would do my liking: in the meantime let me be that I am and seek not to alter me.

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AUDITION #7 (*The fool, Dogbery, interrogates witlessly*)

Dogberry. Is our whole dissembly appeared?

Sexton. Which be the malefactors?

Dogberry. Marry, that am I and my partner.

Sexton. But which are the offenders that are to be examined?

Dogberry. What is your name, friend?

Borachio. Borachio.

Dogberry. Pray, write down, Borachio. Yours, sirrah?

Conrade. I am a gentleman, sir, and my name is Conrade.

Dogberry. Write down, master gentleman Conrade. Masters, it is proved already that you are little better than false knaves. How answer you for yourselves?

Conrade. Marry, sir, we say we are none.

Dogberry. You?

Borachio. Sir, I say to you we are none.

Dogberry. Have you writ down, that they are none?

Sexton. Master constable, you go not the way to examine: you must call forth the watch that are their accusers.

Dogberry. Let the watch come forth. Masters, I charge you, in the prince's name, accuse these men.

First Watchman. This man said, sir, that Don John, the prince's brother, was a villain.

Dogberry. Write down Prince John a villain. Why, this is flat perjury, to call a prince's brother villain.

Borachio. Master constable,—

Dogberry. Pray thee, fellow, peace: I do not like thy look, I promise thee.

Second Watchman. I heard him say that he had received a thousand ducats of Don John for accusing the Lady Hero wrongfully.

Dogberry. Flat burglary as ever was committed.

First Watchman. And that Count Claudio did mean, upon his words, to disgrace Hero before the whole assembly and not marry her.

Dogberry. O villain! thou wilt be condemned into everlasting redemption for this.

Conrade. Away! you are an ass, you are an ass.

Dogberry. Dost thou not suspect my place? dost thou not suspect my years? O that he were here to write me down an ass! But, masters, remember that I am an ass; though it be not written down, yet forget not that I am an ass.

I am a wise fellow, and, which is more, an officer, and, which is more, a householder, and, which is more, as pretty a piece of flesh as any is in Messina, and one that knows the law.

Bring him away. O that

I had been writ down an ass!

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