

#5 - HERO, URSULA, MARGARET, BEATRICE - COMIC

HERO

Now, Ursula, when Beatrice doth come,
As we do trace this alley up and down,
Our talk must only be of Benedick.
When I do name him, let it be thy part
To praise him more than ever man did merit;
My talk to thee must be how Benedick
Is sick in love with Beatrice. Of this matter
Is little Cupid's crafty arrow made
That only wounds by hearsay.

Enter BEATRICE

HERO

Now begin; for look where Beatrice runs
Close by the ground to hear our conference.
(A little louder than usual)
No, truly, Ursula, she is too disdainful;
I know her spirits are as coy and wild
As haggards of the rock.

URSULA

But are you sure
That Benedick loves Beatrice so entirely?

HERO

So says the Captain and my new-trothed lord.

MARGARET

And did they bid you tell her of it, madam?

HERO

They did entreat me to acquaint her of it;
But I persuaded them, if they loved Benedick,
To wish him wrestle with affection,
And never to let Beatrice know of it.

MARGARET

Why did you so? Doth not the gentleman
Deserve as full as fortunate a bed
As ever Beatrice shall couch upon?

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,
Misprising what they look on, and her wit
Values itself so highly that to her
All matter else seems weak: she cannot love!

URSULA

Sure, I think so;
And therefore certainly it were not good
She knew his love, lest she make sport at it.

2

HERO

And who would 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 cover'd fire,
Consume away in sighs, waste inwardly;
It were a better death than die with mocks,
Which is as bad as die with tickling.

URSULA

Yet tell her of it: hear what she will say.

HERO

No; rather I will go to Benedick
And counsel him to fight against his passion.
And, truly, I'll devise some honest slanders
To stain my cousin with: one doth not know
How much an ill word may empoison liking.

URSULA

O, do not do your cousin such a wrong.
She cannot be so much without true judgment--
Having so swift and excellent a wit
As she is prized to have--as to refuse
So rare a gentleman as Captain Benedick.

HERO

He is but a man above all good men.
Always excepted my dear Claudio.

MARGARET

When are you married, madam?

HERO

Why, every day, to-morrow.

URSULA

She's limed, I warrant you: we have caught her, madam.

HERO

If it proves so, then loving goes by haps:
Some Cupid kills with arrows, some with traps.

Exeunt HERO, MARGARET and URSULA

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.