

MUCH ADO ABOUT NOTHING

BY

WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE

ADAPTED FOR THE SCREEN

BY

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1st Draft.

1992

Black. A series of lines from a song appear one by one on the screen, in bold white against the darkness. As each LEGEND materialises a woman's voice speaks the line simultaneously.

VOICE O/S

Sigh no more ladies, (DISSOLVE)
Sigh no more, (DISSOLVE)

The voice is wise, compassionate, knowing. The reading seems personal, read to herself. Almost as if we were overhearing it.

VOICE O/S

Men were deceivers ever, (DISSOLVE)

The rhythm of the dissolves and the voice is peaceful, steady.

VOICE O/S

One foot in sea and one on shore, (DISSOLVE)
To one thing constant never, (DISSOLVE)

as the next lines follow we sense a subtle uplift in the voice, an expectancy and lightness that is in sympathy with the unstuffy typeface before us.

VOICE O/S

Then sigh not so, (DISSOLVE)
But let them go, (DISSOLVE)
And be you blithe and bonny, (DISSOLVE)

Through the next section we start to hear, fading in gently, the sounds of the country. Birdsong, insects buzzing, leaves rustling, a light wind. The voice proceeds with a little more pace and fun.

VOICE O/S

Converting all your sounds of woe, (DISSOLVE)
into Hey nonny nonny !

This last line is accompanied by at least three other female voices at a raucous and merry full volume. It is immediately followed by loud shared laughter which continues as we

DISSOLVE

1. EXT. HILLTOP DAY

To a painting which fills the entire frame. It is a view from this hilltop of LEONATO'S VILLA. Nestling in the shallow valley below, it sits alone away from Messina itself. Looking more like a rather grand, expansive farmhouse, it suns itself in the beauty of the Autumnal late-afternoon. The painting, a talented watercolour shows us the villa's rather crumbling grandeur; the orchard behind, the formal garden to the side, the little chapel and here and there the farm workers occupied in tending to this self-contained rural Italian paradise. We have dwelt on the painting but a moment until the group laughter has subsided. As it does the VOICE O/S begins again. The sounds of the country and a light, as yet distant, musical Air fills the soundtrack as we PAN RIGHT to reveal.

2. EXT. HILLTOP DAY PICNIC

LEONATO'S VILLA itself. We are on the hilltop looking down at the actual house. An idyllic picnic is in progress. As our PAN from the painting across the group proceeds, the VOICE continues and it becomes clear that the group is being read to.

VOICE O/S

Sing no more ditties;
Sing no more,

We travel along the length of a beautifully tanned leg (these women work on the estate) past the bundle of material hitched up to the thigh. We follow the line of the reclining figure's body past the amply revealed bosom and proceed along the line of her practical summer dress until we see her face raised up out of the grass in which she lies. A beautiful dark Italian face, olive skin, silky curls. The face of a girl on the brink of womanhood. This is HERO. She laughs a guileless laugh at the next lines then joins in with mock actorish intensity. This is clearly a favourite.

VOICE O/S

Of dumps so dull and heavy,

More laughter. We continue our PAN to find that HERO rests her head on a pair of knees. We follow this body revealing yet more browned limbs. Arms this time, with hands that play gently with a garland in HERO'S hair. We move on up past a yet fuller country bosom, proudly displayed, to a face no

older than HERO but less striking. The same dark tresses by eyes more wicked and bright. As she joins in with the others her laugh is noticeably lower and more raunchy. Her sympathy and familiarity with the lyrics is all too clear.

VOICE O/S

The fraud of men was ever so,
Since Summer first was leafy.

As the PAN continues we also PULL OUT to reveal more of the whole scene including everyone we've seen to date plus our watercolour Artist, now on the left of frame with his back to us who is LEONATO. Waistcoat, sunhat, easel. Without turning he emits the odd distracted braying laugh as the song/poem continues with the other girls now joining in.

VOICE O/S

Then sigh not so, but let them go
And be you blithe and bonny,

We have now PULLED BACK even further revealing a tethered Donkey, a blissful Olive tree, a picnic cloth with the remains of a simple but delicious meal. URSULA, black, also young, sits at the right of our frame peeling and eating a pear. With the VILLA still in the background the whole scene looks like a French Impressionist painting.

Everyone is now gently chanting the words but our original voice is drawing closer to us. As our camera finishes it's reveal of the sun-drenched rural idyll, strong in RIGHT FOREGROUND, book in hand, from which she reads the last lines, emerges the glorious red haired profile of BEATRICE.

BEATRICE

Converting all your sounds of woe,
Into Hey nonny, nonny !

She finishes with a flourish and the most heartwarming laugh, which turns rather bashful as the others raucously applaud her. Teasing and laughter continues as we CUT

3. EXT. HILLTOP DAY PICNIC

LEONATO in profile left of the frame, laughing away to himself, dabbing still at his watercolour which sits on the right of frame. In the BACKGROUND between him and the canvas along the hilltop towards camera is galloping a young male rider. He covers the ground like the wind and pulls up sharply beside LEONATO, who aware of his approach has begun to clean brushes and tidy up.

4. EXT. HILLTOP DAY PICNIC

On the messenger as he dismounts and hands a letter to LEONATO. He reads for a moment. His jaw drops. He takes a moment, then slowly to the group of women,

LEONATO

I learn in this letter that Don Pedro of Arragon comes this night to Messina.

There is the briefest of pauses before everyone (LEONATO included) lets out an enormous SCREAM. Petite pandemonium. In his excitement LEONATO has fallen backwards against his easel, knocking brushes, water and paints everywhere. The women in the midst of scrabbling up bottles, food and books rush to his aid. So does the messenger, who whilst not wishing to exacerbate the situation is clearly keen to convey urgency, if as expected, LEONATO is to play Host to the returning soldiers.

MESSENGER

He is very near by this. He was not three leagues off when I left him.

LEONATO still on his back and scrabbling tries to maintain his dignity.

LEONATO

How many gentlemen have you lost in this action?

The MESSENGER helps LEONATO up from his horizontal sprawl, amid the flocking females, so that he now sits, on the ground amongst his painting debris.

MESSENGER

But few

LEONATO nods solemnly and begins to try to get up

LEONATO

A victory is twice itself when the achiever brings home full numbers.

(Referring back to the note)

I find here that Don Pedro hath bestowed much honour on a young Florentine called Claudio.

There is much wicked "ooing" at this from HERO, MARGARET & the ebony black URSULA. As they exchange laughs, looks and leers the MESSENGER tries to maintain his youthful composure whilst helping LEONATO finally to his feet.

MESSENGER

Much deserved on his part and equally remembered by Don Pedro. He hath borne himself beyond the promise of his age, doing in the figure of a lamb, the feats of a loin.

Something of a Lamb himself, he stand a little apart and a little uneasy having now delivered his news. The others continue to clear away but he finds himself fixed by the defiantly provocative stare of BEATRICE, who has refrained from all of this hub bubbing and sits exactly where she was when he arrived. She begins with ominous politeness.

BEATRICE

I pray you, is Signior Mountanto returned from the wars or no ?

The other girls ears prick up. The MESSENGER shifts uneasily.

MESSENGER

I know none of the name lady.

Stifled giggles begin to be heard as HERO in mid-tidy almost laughs the following into the MESSENGER'S ear as she rushes past him.

HERO

My cousin means Signior Benedick of Padua

The MESSENGER first startled then relieved.

MESSENGER

O, he's returned; and as pleasant as ever he was

BEATRICE moves towards him, moving in for the kill.

BEATRICE

I pray you, how many hath he killed and eaten
in these wars? But how many hath he killed?
For indeed I promised to eat all of his killing.

LEONATO whilst still dusting himself down, throws a knowing
glance at the MESSENGER before rounding with a smile on
BEATRICE.

LEONATO

Faith, niece, you tax Signior Benedick too much
but he'll be meet with you, I doubt it not.

The MESSENGER appreciating the support grows bold and rather
proud.

MESSENGER

He hath done good service. And a good
soldier too lady.

The MESSENGER is delicious honey to BEATRICE'S smiling Bee.

BEATRICE

And a good soldier to a lady. But what is he
to a lord?

MESSENGER

(uncomfortable) A lord to a lord, a man to a
man; stuffed with all honourable virtues.

BEATRICE

It is so indeed: he is no less than a stuffed man. But for the stuffing-well, we are all mortal.

General hilarity during which LEONATO takes the battered youth aside. The women's excitement is rising.

LEONATO

You must not, Sir, mistake my niece. There is a kind of merry war betwixt Signior Benedick and her: they never meet but there's a skirmish of wit between them.

Quick as a flash.

BEATRICE

Alas ! He gets nothing by that.

The is a distant rumble which we begin to be aware of but there is no stopping BEATRICE who is now well into her stride.

BEATRICE

Who is his companion now ? He hath every month a new sworn brother.

MESSENGER

Is't possible ?

BEATRICE

Very easily possible. He wears his faith but as the fashion of his hat. It ever changes with the next block.

MESSENGER

I see, Lady, the gentleman is not in your books.

The rest of the company cowers at the piece of classic understatement. BEATRICE shows no mercy.

BEATRICE

No; an he were, I would burn my study.

Her eyes continue to sweetly blaze "Answer my question". The MESSENGER has now given in almost completely.

MESSENGER

He is most in the company of the right noble Claudio.

BEATRICE finishes off her Benedictine party piece by rushing to the now almost hysterical woman loaded up to the gunnels with picnicery.

BEATRICE

O Lord, he will hang upon him like a disease
He is sooner caught than the pestilence, and
the taker runs presently mad. God help the
noble Claudio! If he have caught the Benedick,
it will cost him a thousand pound ere a' be
cured.

Renewed laughter during which the mildly confused young MESSENGER offers a sheepish grin to BEATRICE.

MESSENGER

I will keep friends with you, lady.

BEATRICE rushes to him and plants a smiling generous kiss on his cheek.

BEATRICE

Do, good friend.

With all things gather it's time to make their return to the VILLA. As she lifts her bundle LEONATO shares an intimate moment with her.

LEONATO

(Knowingly) You will never run mad niece.

BEATRICE

(Eyes atwinkle) No, not till a hot January.

They are interrupted by another enormous SCREAM from the women, the donkey and the MESSENGER. The roar we began to hear earlier has taken shape on the road to LEONATO'S VILLA where it meet the horizon. A great cloud of dust heralds the imminent arrival of Horsemen. As one LEONATO, HERO, MARGARET, URSULA, BEATRICE THE MESSENGER, THE DONKEY and TWO OTHER SERVANTS start to make down the hillside to reach the VILLA in time to welcome their guests. As we watch their manic retreat we hear, screamed

MESSENGER

Don Pedro is approached !

THE CREDITS BEGIN TO ROLL

over the following sequence of rapid intercutting between the men and the women. Drums will lead us into the full orchestral accompaniment. The mood is glorious celebratory, fun !

5. EXT. ROAD DAY

Road and sky and heat haze. All we can hear is the drumming of hooves. The flutter of a flag appears over the crest of the road. CUT

6. EXT. HILLSIDE DAY

Wide shot looking up at the top of the hill. A moment of silence before, Geronimo-like all the women surge over the top towards us.

7. EXT. ROAD DAY

CLOSE on horses hooves and rippling horse flesh. A mixture of real time and SLOW MOTION. CUT.

8. EXT. HILLSIDE DAY

CLOSE on donkey's feet traversing the hillside accompanied by annoyed and frantic braying.

9. EXT. ROAD DAY

At last, over the brow of the road, fully revealed are DON PEDRO and his men. Riding through a mist of dust and heat haze they look like a combination of Omar Shariff riding into "Lawrence" and "The Magnificent Seven". A classic arrowhead formation, they span the width of the road and our screen. Tight leather trousers and boots, naked to the waist they canter in uniform rhythm as one beast.

10. EXT. ORCHARD DAY

We track through the trees to see a similarly symmetrical phalanx of women run through the alleys of fruit trees towards us. A panting and wheezing LEONATO brings up the rear.

11. EXT. ROAD DAY

WIDE SHOT of DON PEDRO'S men.

12. EXT. DON PEDRO'S POV OF VILLA FROM THE ROAD DAY

We see frantic activity in front of the VILLA which from this angle resembles a FORT with enormous walls and wooden gates in front. Farmworkers scurry around and on the highest roof we see a flag of welcome raised. CUT.

13. EXT. ROAD DAY

WIDE SHOT reaction to the flag being raised. All seven lead riders throw their arms in the air, as one. CUT

14. INT. WOMEN'S BEDROOM DAY

Camera moving frantically in this large uncluttered, cool dormitory-style bedroom. Catching clothes as they fly through the air. Watching bodices be undone, female flesh being released all over.

15. EXT. ROAD DAY

A collection of shots CLOSE on the riders. Some real time, some SLOW MOTION.

Hirsute chests heaving

Taut leather thighs against horse flesh

Deep tanned biceps and pectorals.

16. EXT. ROAD DAY

Introductory CLOSE UPS on all the riders. DON PEDRO is in the centre riding in front, Fifties, bearded, dark brown eyes, natural commander. All muscle. To his right CLAUDIO, very young, very beautiful, nervous. To DON PEDRO'S right his brother DON JOHN, THE BASTARD, sexy, dark, reserved. By his side CONRADE and BALTHASAR, part of their entourage, all young and ferociously fit. To the right of CLAUDIO, BORACHIO, the cocky sidekick to DON JOHN. On the far right of the group, blonde, smiling and warmest of all is BENEDICK, who is clearly leading the fun and excitement.

17. INT. WOMEN'S SHOWER ROOM DAY

The CAMERA TRACKS down the centre of this primitive shower cubicle. Either side huge leather bags of water are dousing the women who occasionally streak across in front of camera to steal soap or splash the others. The CAMERA meanwhile continues it's progress to the end of the room and the enormous window with a view out to the front of the VILLA. Just outside the gates we see the men pull their horses up by the large circular water tank, intended to refresh horses.

18. EXT. WATER TANK DAY

WHOOSH ! From behind we see one of riders leap straight off his horse and into the tank. A series of quick CUTS follow in which we see -

Leather trousers and boots being hauled off.
The men splashing each other with wild abandon, all in the
tank bar DON PEDRO and DON JOHN
Chests and buttocks being lathered.

19. INT. WOMEN'S BEDROOM DAY

CLOSE on a pleasing cleavage which is then dabbed with a huge powder puff and then, by the pull of some strings is yanked together into an even more fulsome display. We TILT UP quickly to see the delighted face of MARGARET observing herself in the mirror. HERO fixing her hair while URSULA ties her dress at the back. The room is a bustle with the other THREE FEMALE SERVANTS rushing hither and thither. BEATRICE attempts to maintain a relative indifference to this but continues to make up her toilet and is not averse to the odd shriek.

20. INT. LEONATO'S ROOM DAY

LEONATO struggling to get into an old pair of "good" trousers which have mysteriously shrunk over the years. The attempt causes him to fall over. He gets up to shout at and hit his servant.

21. EXT. WATER TANK DAY

The men pulling shirts on and doing up trousers (leather and equally tight), attended by some manservants who brought up the rear in supply carts. Be-bronzed, be-silken, damp hair glinting in the sun with still enough firm flesh on show to have an effect, the men start to assemble.

22. EXT. VILLA DAY

LEONATO and the women rushing down the outer steps of the VILLA into the huge grassy courtyard (complete with trees) in front of the house. As they hear a trumpet from outside the gates he whispers a hurried instruction to line up in a formal group. The girls in front with him. The rest of the household (about 11, assorted maids and farmworkers) group behind.

23. EXT. WATER TANK DAY

CLOSE on DON PEDRO as he motions the others to form up behind him in the pedestrian version of the symmetrical arrowhead of before.

An aerial view may show us the formality of each group waiting either side of the gates.

24. EXT VILLA COURTYARD DAY

The huge gates fill our frame. Across them appears the last credit of the title sequence. This whole opening section has proceeds to this point like a funny and brisk musical mating dance.

END OF OPENING CREDITS

25. EXT. VILLA COURTYARD DAY

The gates open: DON PEDRO steps forward. So does LEONATO. These two are old friends.

DON PEDRO

Good Signior Leonato, you are come to meet your trouble. The fashion of the world is to avoid cost, and you encounter it.

LEONATO

(warmly) Never came trouble to my house in likeness of your grace.

An audible "Ah" from the household group followed by gentle applause as the two men hug. This is a cue for the groups to loosen up. Introductions are made. Servants jump to help with baggage. Hot looks begin to be exchanged between the men and women.

26. EXT. VILLA COURTYARD DAY - DON PEDRO'S GROUP

DON PEDRO

(towards HERO) I think this is your daughter.

LEONATO

Her Mother hath many times told me so.

Laughter all around. BENEDICK sees his opportunity.

BENEDICK

Were you in doubt, sir, that you asked her ?

Even more amusement. LEONATO laughs the next line as he leads DON PEDRO away for more introductions.

LEONATO

Signior Benedick, NO !

The groups are beginning to disperse and BENEDICK begins to make his way towards the clearly HERO - struck CLAUDIO. His jabber begins almost to himself.

BENEDICK

If Signior Leonato be her father, She would not have his head on her shoulders for all Messina as like him as she is.

He has failed to distract CLAUDIO'S attention but someone has heard him and forces him into the following semi-public skirmish, conducted against the toing and froing of the household and visitor traffic.

BEATRICE

I wonder that you will still be talking, Signior Benedick. Nobody marks you.

Stopping first to "act" trying to discover where the sound has come from, he turns to face her.

BENEDICK

(Innocent) 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, (HE KISSES THE HAND
OF A PASSING SERVANT GIRL AS IF TO PROVE THE
POINT. SHE IS THRILLED)
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 humor
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 gentlemen or other shall 'scape a
pre-destinate scratched face.

Now the gloves are really off. The crowd begin to prick up.

BEATRICE

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

BENEDICK

(Outraged) Well, you are a rare parrot teacher.

BEATRICE

(No mercy) A bird of my tongue is better than
a beast of yours.

She's laid herself open.

BENEDICK

I would my horse had the speed of your tongue !

She tries to retaliate. Too late. The crowd have laughed. He swishes away out of arm and tongues length to rejoin DON PEDRO.

BENEDICK

But keep you way, i'God's name. I have done.

CLOSE on BEATRICE. Her face sad, knowing. She speaks almost to herself.

BEATRICE

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

27. EXT VILLA COURTYARD DAY - THE WHOLE GROUP

DON PEDRO in public voice addresses all his men. Everyone stands attentive. This is important news.

DON PEDRO

Signior Claudio and Signior Benedick, my dear friend Leonato hath invited you all.

Much "oooing" and gasping. The girls and boys are in for some fun, but for how long ?

DON PEDRO

I tell him we shall stay here at the least a month.

Applause and delight all round. We feature CLOSE UPS on CLAUDIO, HERO, BEATRICE and BENEDICK'S reactions. LEONATO comes forward to DON JOHN, who alone has been standing a little to one side, his frosty presence having kept everyone at bay. This introduction also becomes a piece of theatre for the group.

LEONATO

Let me bid you welcome, my lord: being reconciled to the prince your brother, I owe you all duty.

A breathless pause filled with worried looks. A beat, then DON JOHN goes to LEONATO.

DON JOHN

I thank-you. (THE CROWD CONTINUES TO HOLD IT'S BREATH)

I am not of many words, but I thank you.

An almost audible sigh of relief passes through the group. LEONATO leads a gentle progress back to the house.

LEONATO

(TO DON PEDRO) Please it your grace lead on ?

DON PEDRO

Your hand Leonato; we will go together.

BENEDICK and CLAUDIO are left by the great tree. BENEDICK immediately sits on the bench which rings its trunk. CLAUDIO is deeply smitten and stands rooted to the spot gazing after the retreating HERO who throws him back a glance, caught by the giggling MARGARET who sweeps her into the house.

28. EXT. VILLA COURTYARD TREE BENCH

CLAUDIO

Benedick, didst thou note the daughter of Signior Leonato ?

BENEDICK

(ADJUSTING HIS BOOTS, NOT LOOKING UP.)
Do you question me, as an honest man should do, for my simple true judgment; or would you have me speak after my custom, as being a professed tyrant to their sex ?

CLAUDIO

No; I pray thee speak in sober judgment.

BENEDICK

Why, i'faith methinks she's too low for a high praise, too brown for a fair praise, and too little for a great praise. Only this commendation I can afford her, that were she other than she is, she were unhandsome; and being no other than as she is, (HE PAUSES FOR EFFECT AFTER THIS ANALYSIS) I do not like her.

CLAUDIO will not be beaten down by Benedictine wit and now that the object of his affection has completely disappeared into the house, he joins BENEDICK on the bench and eagerly engages with him face to face.

CLAUDIO

Thou thinkest I am in sport. I pray thee tell me truly how thou likest her.

BENEDICK turns to look at him with a deliberate scrutinising gaze.

BENEDICK

Would you buy her that you inquire after her ?

CLAUDIO

Can the world buy such a jewel ?

This is getting serious.

BENEDICK

Yea, and a case to put it into. (HE TURNS, SERIOUS) But speak you this with a sad brow ?

CLAUDIO rises to stare again at the palace that is Leonato's house.

CLAUDIO

In mine eye she is the sweetest lady that ever I looked on.

BENEDICK also gets up and looks in the same direction, more worried now.

BENEDICK

I can see yet without spectacles and I see no such matter.

At that moment BEATRICE walks across the upper balcony and BENEDICK finds himself saying the following almost to himself.

BENEDICK

There's her cousin, an she were not possessed with a fury, exceeds her as much in beauty as the first of May doth the last of December.

He shakes himself out of this reverie to turn on his companion.

BENEDICK

But I hope you have no intent to turn husband, have you ?

CLAUDIO

(SOLEMNLY) I would scarce trust myself, though I had sworn the contrary, if Hero would be my wife.

The final straw. BENEDICK'S comic outrage lets rip.

BENEDICK

(HITTING HIM) Is't come to this ?
Shall I never see a bachelor of threescore again ?

DON PEDRO has returned from the house, glass in hand.

DON PEDRO

What secret hath held you here, that you followed not to Leonato's ?

CLAUDIO begins to speak, BENEDICK jumps straight in.

BENEDICK

He (PAUSES, GATHERS HIMSELF) is "in love" (STILL CONTEMPTUOUS) With who ? With Hero, Leonato's short daughter.

Before CLAUDIO has a chance to protest, the smiling DON smoothes all

DON PEDRO

Amen if you love her; for the lady is very well worthy.

The bashful and battered CLAUDIO is still uncertain if he being taken seriously. BENEDICK is hovering ready to pounce with bachelor indignation.

CLAUDIO

You speak this to fetch me in, my lord.

DON PEDRO

(KINDLY) By my troth, I speak my thought.

CLAUDIO

And in faith my lord I spoke mine,

BENEDICK

(DESPERATELY) And, by my two faiths and two troths, my lord, I spoke mine.

They begin to move away from BENEDICK, attempting intimacy.

CLAUDIO

That I love her, I feel.

DON PEDRO

That she is worthy I know.

BENEDICK, the mad fly continues to buzz around them.

BENEDICK

That I neither feel how she should be loved nor know how she should be worthy, is the opinion that fire cannot melt out of me. I will die in it at the stake.

DON PEDRO

Thou wast ever an obstinate heretic in the despite of beauty.

BENEDICK now warming to his theme, sure of himself. This man has obviously been hurt.

BENEDICK

That a woman conceived me, I thank her; that she brought me up, I likewise give her most humble thanks. But that I will hang my bugle in an invisible baldrick, all women shall pardon me. Because I will not do them the wrong to mistrust any, I will do myself the right to trust none; I will live a bachelor.

DON PEDRO

(CERTAIN) I shall see thee, ere I die, look pale with love.

Red rag to a bull.

BENEDICK

With anger, with sickness, or with hunger, my lord, not with love. Prove that ever I lose more blood with love that I will get again with drinking, pick out mine eyes with a balladmaker's pen and hang me up at the door of a brothelhouse for the sign of blind cupid.

DON PEDRO

(CAT-LIKE, TEASING) Well as time shall try:
"In time the savage bull doth bear the yoke"

DON PEDRO'S eye has glanced around the courtyard to see just such a bull bearing the yoke of a stone-grinding harness. BENEDICK sees but heads him off.

BENEDICK

The savage bull may; but if ever the sensible Benedick bear it, pluck off the bull's horns and set them in my forehead. And let me be vilely painted and in such great letters as they write "Here is good horse to hire" let them signify under my sign "Here you may see Benedick the married man"

DON PEDRO and CLAUDIO laugh, there is obviously no shifting him. The DON changes tack.

DON PEDRO

Benedick, repair to Leonato's: tell him I will not fail him at supper; for indeed he hath made great preparation.

BENEDICK nods, military fashion to DON PEDRO, stares frostily at CLAUDIO.

BENEDICK

(TO CLAUDIO) Examine you conscience.
(BOWS) And so I leave you.

DON PEDRO strolls outside the VILLA gates, leans on a statue. Cigar in one hand, glass in the other he stares at the horizon and the setting sun. He waits for CLAUDIO to begin.

30. EXT. VILLA GATES SUNSET

CLAUDIO begins by adopting an apparently carefree, roundabout manner.

CLAUDIO

Hath Leonato any son, my lord ?

Still gazing away, blowing smoke rings.

DON PEDRO

No child but Hero; she's his only heir.

He turns to face him and speaks with delicacy, simplicity

DON PEDRO

Dost thou affect her Claudio ?

The floods gates are open

CLAUDIO

O, my lord,
When you went onward on this ended action,
I looked upon her with a soldier's eye,
That liked, but had a rougher task in hand,
Than to drive liking to the name of love.
But now I am returned and that war thoughts
Have left their places vacant, in their rooms
Come thronging soft and delicate desires,
All prompting me how fair young Hero is,
Saying I liked her ere I went to wars.

The smile and the light in his eyes tells us that he has heard
it all before from a hundred young men.

DON PEDRO

Thou wilt be like a lover presently
And tire the hearer with a book of words.
(SUDDENLY VERY SERIOUS)
If thou dost love fair Hero, cherish it,
And I will break with her and with her father
And thou shalt have her. (PAUSE, SMILES AGAIN)
Was't not to this end
That thou began'st to twist so fine a story ?

The speechless CLAUDIO breaks into a broad grin. DON PEDRO
continues, miles ahead of him.

DON PEDRO

I know we shall have revelling tonight.
I will assume thy part in some disguise
And tell fair Hero I am Claudio,

The older man steps away from his young charge to give more space to his plan which he begins to act out in romantic fashion against the brilliant sunset.

DON PEDRO

And in her bosom I'll unclasp my heart
And take her hearing prisoner with the force
And strong encounter of my amorous tale;
Then after to her father will I break;
And the conclusion is, she shall be thine !
In practise let us put it presently.

The men bound away like children towards the house while we remain to drink in the sunset. After a short beat one of the servant women comes strongly into frame. She has obviously overheard everything, as she beams a smile we DISSOLVE from the smile and the sunset to

31. INT. DON JOHN'S ROOMS NIGHT

Low light, candles. Don John stretched out on a slab, naked face down. CONRADE massages him as gently as possible. This is not a man to cross. He ventures a remark.

CONRADE

What the good year my lord ! Why are you
thus out of measure sad ?

We are CLOSE on the dead eyes of the saturnine Lord as his head lolls on the slab.

DON JOHN

There is no measure in the occasion that breeds
therefore the sadness is without limit.

CONRADE

(PLEADING) You should hear reason.

DON JOHN

(ANNOYED) And when I have heard it, what
blessing brings it ? (SITS UP)
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

business; laugh when I am merry and claw no man
in his humor.

JOHN starts to dress through this next speech of the
increasingly desperate CONRADE, who follows him trying to help
but only adding to his masters irritation.

CONRADE

Yea but you must not make the full show of this
till you may do it without controlment. You
have of late stood out against you brother, and
he hath ta'en you newly into his grace, where it
is impossible you should take true root but by
the fair weather that you make yourself. It is
needful that you frame the season for your own
harvest.

This proves too much for the now fully-dressed DON JOHN who
has added to his rage by glancing from time to time out of his
window at the supper festivities presided over by his brother
in the hall across the courtyard. He explodes at CONRADE
pressing him bodily against the wall and spitting out the
words.

DON JOHN

I had rather be a canker in a hedge than a rose
in his grace, and it better fits my blood to be
disdained of all than to fashion a carriage to
rob love from any. In this though I cannot be
said to be a flattering honest man, it must not
be denied but I am a plaindealing villain.

He hisses the next lines, his fury barely suppressed

I am trusted - with a muzzle ! And enfranchised
- with a clog !

He throws CONRADE down contemptuously. He is calming down.

Therefore I have decreed not to sing in my cage.

CLOSE on the chilling expression

DON JOHN

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.

BORACHIO enters the darken chambers. He has come from the
supper. He is drunk.

DON JOHN

(EAGER) What news Borachio ?

BORACHIO revels in his role as the teller of tales.

BORACHIO

I can give you intelligence of an intended marriage.

DON JOHN

(EYES ABLAZE) Will it serve for any model to build mischief on ? (DESPERATE) WHO ?

BORACHIO

(WITH RELISH) The most exquisite Claudio

DON JOHN

(BREATHLESS) And who ? And who ? Which way looks he ?

BORACHIO

Marry on Hero, the daughter and heir of Leonato.

DON JOHN

How came you to this ?

BORACHIO moves closer for the really juicy gossip. He whispers.

BORACHIO

I heard it agreed upon (DRAMATICALLY) that the prince should woo Hero for himself, and having obtained her.

He puts his mask to his face and then removes it by way of illustration ..

give her to Count Claudio.

DON JOHN

(PAUSE. SMILES) Come, come, let us thither. This may prove food to my displeasure. That

young start up hath all the glory of my overthrow. If I can cross him anyway, I bless myself everyway.

(WARMLY) Let us to the great supper. Their cheer is the greater that I am subdued. Would the cook were o' my mind ! Shall we go prove what's to be done ?

The three malcontents laugh and head toward the feast.

32. INT. HALL NIGHT

LEONATO, HERO ANTONIO, BEATRICE, MARGARET, URSULA, and others are walking towards camera, away from the supper room in the background. They pause as DON JOHN and CO, sweep past them with barely a nod, on in to the dining hall where the men are preparing for the masque dance.

LEONATO glances over his shoulder at their retreating forms.

LEONATO

(PUZZLED) Was not Count John here at supper ?

ANTONIO

I saw him not

BEATRICE

(BROWS FURROWED) How tartly that gentleman looks ! I never can see him but I am heart - burned an hour after.

HERO

He is of a very melancholy disposition.

BEATRICE

(BRIGHTENING) He were an excellent man that were made just in the midway between him and Benedick. The one is too like an image and says nothing, and the other too like my lady's eldest son, evermore tattling.

With this she sweeps past camera and out into the courtyard.

The place had been strung with fairy lights, stretched between the trees. The girls adjust the lights, help the musicians into their places and start to select from a group of masks that are on a trestle table. The conversation about ideal men continues.

LEONATO

Then half Signior Benedick's tongue in Count John's mouth, and half Count John's melancholy in Signior Benedick's face -

BEATRICE

(LAUGHING) With a good leg and a good foot uncle, and money enough in his purse, such a man would win any woman in the world - if a' could get her good will.

LEONATO

(SIGHING) By my troth, niece, thou wilt never get thee a husband, if thus be so shrewd of thy tongue.

BEATRICE ignores this as she moves to the masks. She picks one up. A ferocious bearded face in the Greek style. She looks at it and muses.

BEATRICE

Lord, I could not endure a husband with a beard on his face. I had rather lie in the woolen.

LEONATO

(IRONIC) You may light on a husband that hath no beard.

BEATRICE

What should I do with him? Dress him in my apparel and make him my waiting-gentlewoman?

This causes great hilarity among the now masked girls. BEATRICE moves towards the all - suffering LEONATO to gently reinforce her point.

BEATRICE

He that hath a beard is more that a youth, and
he that hath no beard is less than a man. And
he that is more that a youth is not for me, and
he that is less than a man, I am not for him.

LEONATO

(UTTERLY EXASPERATED) Well, then, go you into hell ?

BEATRICE

(SWEETLY) No, but to the gate; and there will
the devil meet me, and say, "Get you to heaven
Beatrice, get you to heaven; here's no place for
you maids." So, away to Saint Peter for the
heavens; he shows me where the bachelors sit,
and there live we as merry as the day is long.

ANTONIO interrupts the female applause to instruct the masked
HERO

ANTONIO

Well, niece, I trust you will be ruled by your
father.

BEATRICE

(INTERRUPTING) Yes, faith; it is my cousin's
duty to make curtsy and say "Father, as it
please you." But yet for all that cousin, let
him be a handsome fellow or else make another
curtsy and say "Father, as it please me."

LEONATO takes HERO to one side to avoid this barrage of filial
insurrection. The drums have started, heralding the imminent
arrival of the masked males for the dance. He speaks
hurriedly.

LEONATO

Daughter, remember what I told you: if the
prince do solicit you in that kind, you know
your answer.

This done, he turns for one last wistful glance at BEATRICE.
Shakes his head.

LEONATO

Well, niece. I hope to see you one day fitted with a husband.

BEATRICE

(MEETING HIS GAZE SQUARELY) Not till God make men of some other metal than earth.

Touché. LEONATO smiles and gives her the look of a wise old fellow owl.

LEONATO

Cousin you apprehend passing shrewdly

BEATRICE

(NOT LETTING HIM OFF THE HOOK) I have a good eye uncle; I can see a church by daylight.

From the doors to the house there is a great whoosh of male voices followed by the crash of dancing music. As the girls jump and scatter, LEONATO yells above the din.

LEONATO

The revellers are entering !

34. EXT. VILLA COURTYARD NIGHT - THE DANCE

During the following sequence the STEADICAM moves freely and effortlessly amongst the couples. We hear snatches of conversation as they dance in and out of shot. The effect is a kaleidoscope of coloured lights and faces and musical instruments and strange almost grotesque Comedia dell'arte masks. The men's masks are firmly on, but the women hold theirs in front of their faces so we can clearly see who they are. The heavily romantic music plays in swift waltz time. The couples dance by themselves, there is no formal group dance.

We first see the commanding mask and hear the distinctive voice of DON PEDRO as he whispers into the receptive ear of the ravishing HERO.

DON PEDRO

Lady, will you walk about with your friend ?

He leads her off under one of the trees, as the ever ample cleavage of MARGARET dances into view under the gaze of BORACHIO'S lecherous Satyr mask, They are both drunk and giggly.

BORACHIO

..... Well, I would you did like me

MARGARET

So would not I, for I have many ill qualities

BORACHIO

Which is one ?

MARGARET

I say my prayers aloud

She finds this unspeakably funny and barks herself off into the darkness whilst the groper of her partner goes on apace. We catch our next couple in the middle of an attempted grope. URSULA indulges ANTONIO, while slapping his hands away. His subterfuge is not working. She tugs on his mask.

URSULA

I know you well enough; you are Signior Antonio.

ANTONIO

At a word I am not

URSULA

I know you by the wagging of your head

He stops wagging his head.

ANTONIO

At a word I am not

He is so frustrated, he is practically stamping.

URSULA

Come, come, do you think I do not know you by your excellent wit ? Can virtue hide itself ? Go to, mum, you are he: graces will appear, and there's an end.

This mollifies him . They witter off to the drinks table to clam him down. BEATRICE charges into view, all pretence of using her mask having been abandoned as she pursues BENEDICK'S seedy Mr. Punch.

35. EXT. VILLA COURTYARD NIGHT - DRINKING FOUNTAIN

A madly grinning face is spewing water out of a wall and into a stone basin in front. Apples and pears are bobbing wildly, but not as wildly as BEATRICE who stands on one side of the spray facing BENEDICK, who is on the other.

BEATRICE

Will you not tell me who told you ?

Between slurps on water the smug BENEDICK disguises he voice under the mask.

BENEDICK

No, you shall pardon me.

Pause. Frustration. This is not working. Tries again.

BEATRICE

Nor will you not tell me who you are ?

BENEDICK

Not now

Musing; through gritted teeth,

BEATRICE

That I was disdainful, and that I had my wit out of the "Hundred Merry Tales" - well,

(SURPRISE, SURPRISE) this was Signior Benedick
that said so.

The ears of the mask appear to prick up. He looks, she is still standing by the grinning water fountain staring, apparently idly out at the couples dancing. He forgets to disguise his voice.

BENEDICK

What's he ?

BEATRICE

(NONCHALANT) I am sure you know him well enough.

He works hard to feign disinterest.

BENEDICK

Not I, believe me.

BEATRICE

Did he never make you laugh ?

More gritted teeth.

BENEDICK

I pray you, what is he ?

BEATRICE

(WITH RELISH) Why, he is the prince's jester,

BENEDICK'S hand slips from the edge of the trough where it has been leaning. His entire arm is soaked. He carries on Clouseau-like as if nothing has happened. She ploughs on.

BEATRICE

A very dull fool.

The face of BENEDICK'S mask appears to be getting longer.

BEATRICE

His only gift is in devising impossible slanders
None but libertines delight in him; for he both
pleases men and angers them, and then they laugh
at him and beat him.

BENEDICK is now a slumped man. She begins to take pity.

BEATRICE

I am sure he is in the fleet.

She begins to go then turns to look him right in the
semi-masked eye with naughty intents.

BEATRICE

I would he had boarded me.

Despite being rather hotly disturbed by her boldness he will
not have his humiliation bought off with bawdiness. He barks
at her.

BENEDICK

When I know the gentleman, I'll tell him what
you say.

She is smiling, radiant and irresistible. She almost kisses
the next words at him.

BEATRICE

Do, do.

The music is drawing to an end. She looks at the house where
the others are headed for refreshment.

BEATRICE

We must follow the leaders.

He is relieved to escape

BENEDICK

In every good thing.

36. EXT. VILLA COURTYARD NIGHT

As the crowd rushes into the house only a few revellers and musicians remain. Among them, a little apart, the understandably anxious CLAUDIO, who has watched from afar the prince's wooing on his behalf. DON JOHN and BORACHIO emerge from the shadows. They move with great urgency to the man they KNOW to be CLAUDIO. DON JOHN speaks in a highly convincing panicked whisper.

DON JOHN

Are not you signior Benedick ?

CLAUDIO decides to play along. This is clearly important, serious.

CLAUDIO

(ASSUMING BENEDICK'S VOICE)
You know me well, I am he.

DON JOHN grabs him and pulls him into the shadows, desperate.

DON JOHN

Signior, you are very near my brother in his love: (DRAMATICALLY) he is enamoured on Hero.

He feels CLAUDIO buckle

DON JOHN

I pray you dissuade him from her: she is no equal for his birth.

CLAUDIO

(DESPERATE) How know you he loves her ?

DON JOHN

I heard him swear his affection

BORACHIO

So did I too; and he swore he would marry her tonight.

At that point, a servant on collecting duty heads their way. With dramatic looks and a great show of swiftness the two dastardly messengers steal away in the direction of the house. CLAUDIO sinks back against the tree, devastated, his worst nightmare come true.

37. EXT. VILLA COURTYARD NIGHT

He speaks to himself in a muffled torrent of words, almost sick.

CLAUDIO

Thus answer I in name of Benedick,
But hear these ill news with the ears of Claudio
'Tis certain so: the prince woos for himself !
Friendship is constant in all other things
Save in the office and affairs of love.

He spits out the last word. He continues, grimly ironic.

CLAUDIO

This is an accident of hourly proof,
Which I mistrusted not. Farewell therefore
Hero !

38. EXT. VILLA COURTYARD NIGHT

He hears something behind him. It is BENEDICK. CLAUDIO tries to put the mask back on and hide his near tearful face.

BENEDICK

Count Claudio ?

CLAUDIO looks away. Replies barely audible.

CLAUDIO

Yea, the same.

BENEDICK motions to the house,

BENEDICK

Come, will you go with me ?

Still looking away,

CLAUDIO

Whither ?

This is getting tedious of BENEDICK. He speaks as if to a deaf man.

BENEDICK

About your own business,

Still waiting for some response. There is none. He decides to tell the news anyway.

BENEDICK

The prince hath got your Hero !

CLAUDIO lashes back bitterly.

CLAUDIO

I wish him joy of her !

This is beginning to make sense to BENEDICK. He sighs and looks askance at his young friend who is becoming more worked up. He has a very low opinion of CLAUDIO'S behaviour. He's seen it all before.

BENEDICK

Did you think the prince would have served you thus ?

CLAUDIO

(EXPLODING WITH PASSION) I pray you, leave me !

BENEDICK breathes an enormous sigh, as CLAUDIO storms off into the night. He looks after him and shakes his head.

39. EXT. VILLA COURTYARD NIGHT

BENEDICK

Alas, poor hurt fowl, now will he creep into
sedges.

He glances over to the mad, grinning face that spewed water
earlier in the evening and now has an apple stuck in it's
mouth. He remembers

BENEDICK

But that my Lady Beatrice should know me,
and not know me! (CONTEMPTUOUSLY) The Prince's
fool! Ha ? I am not so reputed. It is the base,
though bitter, disposition of Beatrice that puts
the world into her person, and so gives me out.
Well, I'll be revenged as I may.

He starts off determinedly but is prevented from completing
his mission of revenge by the arrival of DON PEDRO and HERO.

40. EXT. COURTYARD NIGHT

DON PEDRO

Now, Signor, where's the Count?

BENEDICK

Troth, my lord, I found him here as melancholy
as a lodge in a warren. I told him, and I think
I told him true, that your grace had got the
good will of this young lady.

He bows, news delivered and begins to leave. After a swift, mischievous look between HERO and DON PEDRO, the latter raises his voice to call his friend back again.

DON PEDRO

(MOCK OUTRAGE) The Lady Beatrice hath a quarrel to you. The gentleman that danced with her told her she is much wronged by you.

BENEDICK is stopped in his tracks. He turns and rushes back to the Prince, exploding and spluttering all the way. This woman is under his skin.

BENEDICK

O, she misused me past the endurance of a block! She told me, not thinking I had been myself, that I was the Prince's jester,

HERO and DON PEDRO struggle to maintain their sympathetic looks, battling against a sea of giggles. BENEDICK becomes more animated and hurt.

BENEDICK

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. She speaks poniards, and every word stabs. If her breath were as terrible as her terminations, there were no living near her.

HERO and DON PEDRO have to turn away but BENEDICK barks them back to attention with yet more frustration.

BENEDICK

I would to God some scholar would conjure her; for certainly, while she is here a man may live as quiet in hell as in a sanctuary, and people sin upon purpose, because they would go thither; so indeed, all disquiet, horror, and perturbation follows her.

BENEDICK is now facing DON PEDRO and so cannot see the approach of a familiar group. DON PEDRO plays the ace.

DON PEDRO

Look, here she comes.

BENEDICK does not even turn round. His eyes close briefly, then after the briefest beat he begins his urgent, intimate forlorn plea to the Prince.

BENEDICK

Will your grace command me any service to the world's end?

Reaction on BEATRICE, who has just managed to catch this. As the comically desperate BENEDICK continues his futile plea to the immovable Prince, BEATRICE'S group, including LEONATO and CLAUDIO all move closer. BENEDICK'S nose is almost touching DON PEDRO'S as he continues a feeble whisper.

BENEDICK

I will go on the slightest errand now to the Antipodes. I will fetch you a tooth-picker now from the furthest inch of Asia, fetch you a hair off the Great Cham's beard,

Grasping now for any deed that will make an impact.

do you any embassy to the pigmies, rather than hold three words' conference with this harpy.

Reaction on BEATRICE.

DON PEDRO is unflinching. His eyes give the answer. BENEDICK shakes his head, gives a wry smile; defeated.

BENEDICK

You have no employment for me?

DON PEDRO

(LAUGHING) None, but to desire your good company!

He hugs him and pats him on the back. At the same time

turning him round to face the sight of BEATRICE who has heard all this and stares him out. He meets her gaze before exploding once more.

BENEDICK

O God, sir, here's a dish I love not. I cannot endure my Lady Tongue!

41. EXT. COURTYARD NIGHT

The atmosphere has changes. DON PEDRO laugh has faded in the face of BEATRICE'S troubled look. He attempts to gently tease her out of it.

DON PEDRO

Come, lady, come; you have lost the heart of Signor Benedick.

She returns the smile but the tone is still rueful, rather sad. She's aware of the others listening and is shy.

BEATRICE

Indeed, my lord, he lent it me a while, and I gave him use for it, a double heart for his single one.

Marry, once before he won it of me, with false dice, Therefore your grace may well say I have lost it.

This gravity is more than he bargained for. He tries again with a gentle goad.

DON PEDRO

You have put him down, lady, you have put him down.

She rises to it this time

BEATRICE

So I would not he should do me, my lord, lest
I should prove the mother of fools.

This is the merry lady. Fully recovered she now gets on with
the tricky business in hand.

BEATRICE

I have brought Count Claudio, whom you sent me
to seek.

CLAUDIO rather sulkily steps forward. DON PEDRO and HERO are
confused.

DON PEDRO

Why, how now, Count, wherefore are you
sad?

CLAUDIO will not look at him

CLAUDIO

Not sad, my lord.

DON PEDRO

(GENUINELY CONCERNED) How then? Sick?

CLAUDIO

Neither, my lord.

BEATRICE enters the fray with her customary zeal. HERO has
not reacted well to this conversation.

BEATRICE

The Count is neither sad, nor sick, nor merry,
nor well, but civil count, civil as an orange,
and something of that jealous complexion.

The truth dawns slowly on DON PEDRO.

DON PEDRO

I' faith, lady, I think your blazon to be true,
though I'll be sworn, if he be so, his conceit
is false.

He goes to his young friend and takes his hand. CLAUDIO turns slowly to meet his gaze.

DON PEDRO

(WARMLY KIND) Here, Claudio, I have wooed in
thy name, and fair HERO is won.

Close ups on the vulnerably questioning look of CLAUDIO, and
the eagerly returned look from the nodding, smiling HERO.
CLAUDIO looks again to the Prince. Is it true?

DON PEDRO

I have broke with her father and his good
will obtained. Name the day of marriage, and God
give thee joy of her.

CLAUDIO 's head is BEGINNING to swim. LEONATO also takes pity
and speaks gently but with great dignity.

LEONATO

Count, take of me my daughter, and with her
my fortunes. His grace hath made the match, and
all grace say amen to it.

The longest silence. Moist eyed smiles from the onlookers.
Tear-stained cheeks on the faces of the two lovers, now rapt
with each other. The silence continues.

BEATRICE

Speak, Count, 'tis your cue.

His eyes are locked on HERO. He is rooted to the spot, like
her. He begins, barely audible.

CLAUDIO

Silence is the perfectest herald of joy. I were but little happy if I could say how much.

He takes a step towards her. Then; solemnly

Lady, as you are mine, I am yours.

BEATRICE

Speak, cousin! Or, if you cannot, stop his mouth with a kiss, and let not him speak, either.

The joy is infectious. They kiss and the others laugh, cheer and clap. HERO and CLAUDIO move a little aside. The others also withdraw a little to give the young couple this moment.

DON PEDRO

(LAUGHING) In faith, lady, you have a merry heart.

BEATRICE

Yea, my lord, I thank it. Poor fool, it keeps on the windy side of care.

42. EXT. COURTYARD NIGHT

DON PEDRO and BEATRICE under the great tree and oddly lit by the combination of the fairy lights and slowly encroaching dawn, watch the young lovers whispering to each other, while LEONATO quietly instructs some of the servants in the clearing-up operation. The mood is joyous but tinged with a strange melancholy.

BEATRICE

My cousin tells him in his ear that he is in her heart.

CLAUDIO hears this and responds laughing, excited. He calls to BEATRICE.

CLAUDIO

And so she doth, cousin.

The lovers move further away from potential teasing and leave us to the quiet between DON PEDRO and BEATRICE. She speaks, almost to herself.

BEATRICE

Good Lord, for alliance! Thus goes everyone to the world but I, and I am sunburnt. I may sit in a corner and cry "Heigh-ho for a husband".

DON PEDRO

Lady Beatrice, I will get you one.

BEATRICE

I would rather have one of your father's getting. Hath your grace ne'er a brother like you? Your father got excellent husbands if a maid could come by them.

DON PEDRO

(GENTLY) Will you have me, lady?

The atmosphere has changes completely. The tenderness and vulnerability of the Prince's remark, reminds BEATRICE that they have found themselves uncomfortably alone.

BEATRICE

(DELICATELY) No, my lord, unless I might have another for working days. Your grace is too costly to wear every day.

DON PEDRO looks away, shy.

BEATRICE

But I beseech your grace, pardon me. I was born to speak all mirth and no matter.

He comes round again with a smile.

DON PEDRO

Your silence most offends me, and to be merry
best becomes you; for out o' question, you were
born in a merry hour.

BEATRICE is now struck and looks away.

BEATRICE

(QUIETLY) No, sure, my lord, my mother cried.
But then there was a star danced, and under that
was I born.

Before allowing herself to go any further, she gathers herself
quickly and runs for the house. Smiling first at DON PEDRO,
then yelling to the lovers as she goes.

BEATRICE

Cousins, God give you joy!

43. EXT. COURTYARD NIGHT

Close on DON PEDRO. He speaks for himself semi-regretful but
generous.

DON PEDRO

By my troth, a pleasant-spirited lady.

LEONATO catches the last of this as he brings the lovers over
to the Prince.

LEONATO

There's little of the melancholy element in her,
my lord. She is never sad but when she sleeps,
and not ever sad then; for I have heard my
daughter say she hath often dreamt of
unhappiness and waked herself with laughing.

They all share the joke. DON PEDRO continues to muse.

DON PEDRO

She cannot endure to hear tell of a husband.

LEONATO

O, by no means.

The laughter continues. DON PEDRO cuts across it.

DON PEDRO

She were an excellent wife for Benedick.

LEONATO, who up to this point has had one leg up on the tree bench, leaning on his raised knee, slips and falls off it. HERO lets out a shriek. CLAUDIO'S jaw drops. LEONATO is in state of panicked shock. He has begun to shake.

LEONATO

O Lord, my lord, if they were but a week married, they would talk themselves mad.

But DON PEDRO is now in action mood. He speaks quickly, to the point.

DON PEDRO

County Claudio, when mean you to go to church?

CLAUDIO

(PASSIONATELY) Tomorrow, my lord.

Yet another shock for the increasingly bewildered and (FRANKLY) quite tipsy LEONATO.

LEONATO

Not till Monday, my dear son, which is hence a just sevensnight, and a time too brief, too, to have all things answer my mind.

The crestfallen CLAUDIO is given no time to protest. DON PEDRO is now in his stride.

DON PEDRO

I warrant thee, Claudio, the time shall not go dully by us. I will in the interim undertake one of Hercules' labours, which is to bring Signor Benedick and the Lady Beatrice into a mountain of affection th' one with th' other. I would fain have it a match, and I doubt not but to fashion it, if you three will but minister such assistance as I shall give you direction.

LEONATO is now almost hysterical.

LEONATO

My lord, I am for you, though it cost me ten nights' watchings.

CLAUDIO

And I, my lord.

DON PEDRO

And you too, gentle Hero?

HERO

I will do any modest office, my lord, to help my cousin to a good husband.

They all clasp hands. DON PEDRO speaks almost as if taking an oath.

DON PEDRO

If we can do this, Cupid is no longer an archer; his glory shall be ours, for we are the only love-gods. Go in with me, and I will tell you my drift.

DISSOLVE as they run towards the house to

44. EXT. LEONATO'S DAWN

Wide establishing shot of the villa nestling dream-like in the mist and early light.

DISSOLVE to

45. EXT. HILLSIDE OVERLOOKING LEONATO'S DAWN.

An unshaven, unhappy DON JOHN sits by the embers of an almost dead fire. His horse tethered to a tree in the background. He splices angrily at a piece of fruit.. Splitting out pips and talking through clenched teeth to a nervous BORACHIO who has had to sober up quickly.

DON JOHN

It is so: The Count Claudio shall marry the daughter of Leonato.

BORACHIO

Yea, my lord, but I can cross it.

DON JOHN throws up his angry animal eyes eagerly to his accomplice. He is eaten with hatred.

DON JOHN

Any bar, any cross, any impediment will be medicinable to me. I am sick in displeasure to him, and whatsoever comes athwart his affection ranges evenly with mine.

He grabs at him.

How canst thou cross this marriage?

BORACHIO

Not honestly, my lord, but so covertly that no dishonesty shall appear in me.

DON JOHN

Show me briefly how!

BORACHIO frees himself from the excited grip of his master and gathers his thoughts.

BORACHIO

I think I told your lordship a year since how much I am in the favour of Margaret, the waiting gentlewoman to Hero.

DON JOHN

I remember.

BORACHIO

I can at any unseasonable instant of the night appoint her to look out at her lady's chamber window.

DON JOHN

What life is in that to be the death of this marriage?

BORACHIO

The poison of that lies in you to temper.
He draws closer. Starts to whisper.

Go then. Find me a meet hour to draw Don Pedro and the Count Claudio alone. Tell them that you know that Hero loves me - that you have discovered thus. They will scarcely believe this without trial; Offer them instances, which shall bear no less likelihood than to see me at her chamber window, hear me call Margaret, Hero, hear Margaret term me Claudio; and bring them to see this the very night before the intended wedding -

DON JOHN eyes close in a moment of ecstasy

- in the mean time I will so fashion the matter that Hero shall be absent - and there shall

BORACHIO

appear such seeming truth of Hero's disloyalty
that jealousy shall be called assurance, and all
the preparation overthrown.

His master can barely speak for excitement. They both
scramble to their feet and head towards their tethered horses.

DON JOHN

Grow this to what adverse issue it can, I will
put it in practice. Be cunning in the working
this, and thy fee is a thousand ducats.

BORACHIO running to keep up with him

BORACHIO

Be you constant in the accusation, and my
cunning shall not shame me.

The two mount their horses.

DON JOHN

I will presently go learn their day of
marriage.

He spurs his horse into action as we see the two kick up dust
in to the dawn light and disappear over the brow of the hill
down towards LEONATO'S VILLA. We DISSOLVE slowly to

46. EXT. FORMAL GARDEN/ORCHARD DAY.

BENEDICK walks toward camera down a wide alley of high hedges.
Halfway down this alley is a large ornamental fountain and
pool. A sculpture spouts water from the centre of the wide
pool, the rim of which is at a height and width to sit on.
BENEDICK carries a folding canvas deck-chair. Unbeknown to
him, a small child is following directly behind him. BENEDICK
yells toward camera.

BENEDICK

Boy!

Behind him the child suddenly squeaks up.

BOY

Signor?

BENEDICK screams in surprise, turns and knocks in to the boy. Both are highly embarrassed and attempt to recover quickly.

BENEDICK

In my chamber window lies a book. Bring it hither to me in the orchard.

BOY

(ENTHUSIASTIC) I am here already, sir.

BENEDICK

(DEEP SIGH) I know that, but I would have thee hence and here again.

During the following speech BENEDICK attempts to find the right spot for his chair in relation to the fountain and also attempt to disguise the fact (THOUGH SEVERAL ATTEMPTS) that he doesn't know how to put the chair up. He watches the BOY run off and begins to speak, partly for himself and in part directly to camera. He is partly hurt and most perplexed.

47. EXT. FOUNTAIN DAY

BENEDICK

I do much wonder that one man, seeing how much another man is a fool when he dedicates his behaviours to love, will, after he hath laughed at such shallow follies in others, become the argument of his own scorn by falling in love.

5
There is a pause. To admit temporary defeat with the deckchair and to consider who that last remark might apply to.

BENEDICK

And such a man is Claudio. I have known when there was no music with him but the drum and the fife, and now had he rather hear the tabor and the pipe. I have known when he would have walked ten mile afoot to see a good armour, and now will he lie ten nights awake carving the fashion of a new doublet. He was wont to speak plain and to the purpose, like an honest man and a soldier, and now is he turned orthography. His words are a very fantastical banquet, just so many strange dishes.

As his frustration dies away so does his interest in the deckchair. He sits on the edge of the fountain and adopts a more ruminative tone.

BENEDICK

May I be so converted, and see with these eyes? I cannot tell. I think not. I will not be sworn but love may transform me to an oyster, but I'll take my oath on it, till he have made an oyster of me he shall never make me such a fool. One woman is fair, yet I am well. Another is wise, yet I am well. Another virtuous, yet I am well. But till all graces be in one woman, one woman shall not come in my grace. Rich she shall be, that's certain. Wise, or I'll none. Virtuous, or I'll never cheapen her. Fair, or I'll never look on her. Mild, or come not near. Noble, or not I for an angel. Of good discourse, an excellent musician - and her hair shall be of what colour it please God.

He hears the sound of voices and guitar, from the other end of the orchard alley DON PEDRO, CLAUDIO, LEONATO and BALTHASAR approach.

BENEDICK is thrown into panic

BENEDICK

Ha! The Prince and Monsieur Love.

He looks around desperately.

BENEDICK

I will hide me.

He tries behind the fountain wall. It's no good, they're getting closer. He runs backwards and forwards across the alley using the deckchair to shield his body. They appear to be talking and looking at each other. Eventually BENEDICK has no choice but to push himself through a very narrow gap in the hedge. He rear and legs are still plainly visible and struggling to get through to safety as we CUT.

48. EXT. ORCHARD/ALLEY DAY

On CLAUDIO, DON PEDRO, LEONATO AND BALTHASAR. We see their P.O.V. of the hapless BENEDICK.
DON PEDRO starts off the game.

DON PEDRO

(OVER-LOUD) Come, shall we hear this music?
(THEN WHISPERS) See you where Benedick hath hid himself ?

CLAUDIO

(WHISPERED) Very well my Lord.

DON PEDRO

(LOUD) Come, Balthasar, we'll hear that song again.

The men sit in the beautiful orange afternoon light as BALTHASAR plays his guitar. They are grouped among the fountain but through the slightly damaged hedge can see the skulking form of BENEDICK.

49. EXT. GRASSY BANK DAY

BENEDICK'S side of the hedge is a narrow shelf which then becomes a steep grassy bank leading down to a path. He attempts, (STILL UNSUCCESSFULLY) to erect his deck chair on the narrow grass verge. He stops as he hears the music begin.

BENEDICK

(IRONIC) Now, divine air! Now is his soul ravished ! Is it not strange that sheeps guts should hale souls out of men's bodies ?

50. EXT. FOUNTAIN DAY

The camera tracks around the circular fountain as BALTHASAR sings and the lounging nobles breathe an image of deep tranquillity. The camera movement is slow. The music beautiful, melodic, dancing on the late afternoon air.

BALTHASAR

Sigh no more, ladies, sigh no more.
Men were deceivers ever,
One foot in sea, and one on shore,
To one thing constant never.
Then sigh not so, but let them go,
And be you blithe and bonny,
Converting all your sounds of woe
Into hey nonny, nonny.

There is a melancholy breath. A pause. DON PEDRO breaks the spell gently.

DON PEDRO

By my troth, a good song.

BALTHASAR

(MODESTLY) And an ill singer, my lord.

DON PEDRO

(GENTLY) No, no, faith; Thou singest well enough.

With a grin, he throws him a purse of money.

51. EXT. GRASSY BANK DAY

BENEDICK

An he had been a dog that
should have howled thus,
they would have hanged him !

He makes one last effort with his deckchair.

52. EXT. FOUNTAIN DAY

DON PEDRO

(TO BALTHASAR) Farewell.
(VERY LOUDLY) Come hither, Leonato. What
was it you told me of today, that your niece
Beatrice was in love with Signor Benedick?

EXT. GRASSY BANK DAY

BENEDICK shrieks, falls in, over, and through the deckchair
and slides (FACE DOWN) to the bottom of the grassy bank.

54. EXT. FOUNTAIN DAY

CLAUDIO has rushed to the hedge to check on BENEDICK. He
throws a glance back to the others.

CLAUDIO

(WHISPERED) O, ay, stalk on, stalk on. The +
fowl sits.

He rushes back to the group to avoid being caught by BENEDICK

CLAUDIO

(LOUDLY) I did never think that lady would have
loved any man.

LEONATO

No, nor I neither. But most wonderful that she
should so dote on Signor Benedick, whom she
hath in all outward behaviours seemed ever to
abhor.

55. EXT. GRASSY SLOPE DAY

Huge close up on BENEDICK as he lifts his face to reveal a
grass green tyre-mark size strip down the middle of his face.

BENEDICK

Is 't possible?

He scrambles, slipping, up the bank to get closer to the hedge
and the voices.

56. EXT. FOUNTAIN DAY

DON PEDRO

Maybe she doth but counterfeit ?

CLAUDIO

Faith, like enough.

LEONATO

(WITH A GREAT YELL) O God! Counterfeit?

57. EXT. GRASSY SLOPE DAY

This frightens BENEDICK so much that he tumbles down the slope again.

58. EXT. FOUNTAIN DAY

DON PEDRO and CLAUDIO stifle their giggles as LEONATO continues, very dramatically in his stride now.

LEONATO

There was never counterfeit
of passion came so near the life of passion as
she discovers it.

They are all smugly delighted with their progress now. DON PEDRO sets LEONATO up for an ever more fulsome display of evidence.

DON PEDRO

Why, what effects of passion shows she?

LEONATO's face begins to pale as a maniacally excited CLAUDIO whispers in his ear.

CLAUDIO

Bait the hook well. This fish will bite.

LEONATO is completely stumped.

59. EXT. GRASSY SLOPE DAY.

A much more nervous BENEDICK is making his way, rather more slowly to a good listening position next to the hedge.

60. EXT. FOUNTAIN DAY.

LEONATO now in a cold sweat. Panic setting in on DON PEDRO and CLAUDIO. The star performer is letting them down and BENEDICK is getting closer.

LEONATO

What effects, my lord ? She will sit you...
you heard my daughter tell you how.

CLAUDIO clutches at the straw.

CLAUDIO

She did indeed.

DON PEDRO, desperately under pressure, throws the ball back to LEONATO.

DON PEDRO

How, how, I pray you?

LEONATO has a brain wave and whispers into DON PEDRO'S ear. He understands LEONATO'S plot. He turns away, having listened, shakes his head and acts quiet outrage.

DON PEDRO

You amaze me.

61. EXT. GRASSY SLOPE DAY

BENEDICK looks like a startled deer. What can he have said ?

BENEDICK

(DESPERATELY WORRIED) I should think this a trick, but that the white-bearded fellow speaks it.

62. EXT. FOUNTAIN DAY

They have all breathed an enormous sigh of relief. BENEDICK is still on the hook. They can now move into a regretful/tragic tone.

DON PEDRO

Hath she made her affection known to Benedick?

LEONATO

No, and swears she never will. That's her torment.
She'll be up twenty times a night, and there will she sit in her smock till she have writ a sheet of paper.
My daughter tells us she tore the letter into a thousand halfpence,
railed at herself that she should be so immodest to write to one that she knew would flout her.

CLAUDIO seizes on this image with relish.

CLAUDIO

Then down upon her knees she falls,
weeps, sobs, beats her heart, tears her hair,
prays, curses, "O sweet Benedick, God give me patience."

63. EXT. GRASSY SLOPE DAY

BENEDICK looking increasingly distressed on Beatrice's behalf. What has he done?

LEONATO

She doth indeed, my daughter says so.
My daughter is sometime afeard she will do a
desperate outrage to herself.
It is very true.

PAUSE.

DON PEDRO

It were good that Benedick knew of it.

CLAUDIO

To what end? He would make but a sport of it
and torment the poor lady worse.

They all nod, hem and hah. The mood very sad.

DON PEDRO

She's an excellent sweet lady, and, out of all
suspicion, she is virtuous.

CLAUDIO

And she is exceeding wise.

DON PEDRO

In everything but in loving Benedick.

65. EXT. GRASSY SLOPE DAY

BENEDICK not pleased with this remark.

66. EXT. FOUNTAIN DAY

LEONATO

I am sorry for her.

PAUSE.

DON PEDRO

I pray you tell Benedick of it, and hear
what a will say.

LEONATO

(GRAVELY) Were it good, think you?

CLAUDIO

(WITH EQUAL GRAVITY) Hero thinks surely she
will die, for she says she
will die if he love her not, and she will die
ere she make her love known,
and she will die if he woo her.

DON PEDRO

(GRIMLY) Ay. If she should make tender of
her love 'tis very possible he'll scorn it, for
the man, as you know all, hath a contemptible
spirit.

67. EXT. GRASSY SLOPE DAY

BENEDICK lets out a grunt of annoyance.

68. EXT. FOUNTAIN DAY.

The trio stop talking to listen.

69. EXT. GRASSY SLOPE DAY

BENEDICK, panicked turns the grunt into a bird noise, then a dog howling. All unconvincing.

70. EXT. FOUNTAIN DAY.

The trio do "Oh it was only a coyote" acting.

71. EXT. GRASSY SLOPE DAY.

BENEDICK sighs with relief.

72. EXT. FOUNTAIN DAY.

The men start to get up.

DON PEDRO

I love Benedick well, and I could wish he would modestly examine himself, to see how much he is unworthy so good a lady.

LEONATO

My lord, will you walk? Dinner is ready.

73. EXT. FOUNTAIN/ALLEY DAY

The threesome walk towards camera, down the alley away from the fountain and BENEDICK.

CLAUDIO

(WHISPERING) If he do not dote on her upon this, I will never trust my expectation.

DON PEDRO

Let there be the same net spread for her, and that must your daughter and her gentlewomen carry.

The three run past camera laughing.

74. EXT. HEDGE DAY.

With some difficulty, BENEDICK'S head emerges. A surprised blonde thing against the green. He is one astonished, bedraggled man.

BENEDICK

This can be no trick.

He starts to drag himself through the hedge.

BENEDICK

The conference was sadly borne.

He stops for a moment to say the miraculous thing.

Love me ?

THINKS.

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.

He stops again.

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

BENEDICK

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.

All this has been delivered to camera, as he paces the orchard/alley, but he moves forward for this next, frightened that someone might overhear.

When I said I would die a bachelor, I did not think I should live till I were married.

A thumping sound from the ground and the sense of a storm approaching indicated the imminent arrival of an angry person. BENEDICK turns round to see a marching, nostril flared, FLAME coloured thing. He turns to camera and shrieks.

BENEDICT

Here comes Beatrice !

75. EXT. FOUNTAIN DAY

With BEATRICE almost upon him, he calms down and whispers to camera rather goody.

BENEDICT

By this day !, she's a fair lady.

Then as an after thought

BENEDICK

I do spy some marks of
love in her.

The sun is now starting to go down. And sits in the sky
behind BEATRICE who looks glorious in this temper. She stops
marching as she reaches the fountain.

BEATRICE

Against my will I am sent to bid you come in
to dinner.

BENEDICK has thrown what he thinks to be a gallant and sexy
leg up on the edge of the fountain. He strikes a pose and a
tone of voice that reminds one of Tony Curtis as Cary Grant in
"Some Like It Hot". It is face frozen in a grin that is
trying to convey, sex, romance, intelligence, wit and warmth,
all at once. In short he looks ridiculous.

BENEDICK

Fair Beatrice, I thank you for your pains.

She speaks more slowly. She is clearly dealing with a
deranged person.

BEATRICE

I took no more pains for those thanks than you
take pains to thank me. If it had been painful
I would not have come.

BENEDICK in love sees the good in everything.

BENEDICK

You take pleasure, then, in the message?

BEATRICE

Yea, just so much as you may take upon a
knife's point.

He laughs hysterically. He thinks she's so funny. She
knows he's certifiable.

BEATRICE

You have no stomach, Signor? Fare you well.

She thunders her way back down the orchard alley and as she turns out of sight BENEDICK turns to camera.

BENEDICK

Ha!

He looks like the cat that got the cream, the milk, the fish and the keys to the house.

76. EXT. FOUNTAIN DAY

BENEDICK

"Against my will I am sent to bid you come in to dinner."

PAUSE.

There's a double meaning in that.

He's very pleased with himself.

"I took no more pains for those thanks than you took pains to thank me."
That's as much as to say "Any pains that I take for you is as easy as thanks."

His mind is made up

If I do not take pity of her I am a villain.
If I do not love her I am a fool.

As he says this last, his foot slips and he falls backwards in to the fountain, where after a beat of outrage, he decides to stay in the water, splashing, floating, laughing. He seems mad. But he is only blissfully, merrily, soakingly in love.

WE CUT.

69
77. EXT. FORMAL GARDEN DAY

Another part of the orchard/garden. BEATRICE is still powering back to the house.

78. EXT. FORMAL GARDEN DAY.

At one end of an alley URSULA and HERO wait. As they see BEATRICE come round the corner at the other end, we track right with them as they get to the other side of the hedge dividing the two alleys. They are on the right of frame walking away from camera as if on a promenade. BEATRICE is on the left storming towards camera. In the middle is the hedge.

79. EXT. HERO'S ALLEY DAY

The duo peeking through various gaps in the hedge to spot BEATRICE's progress. When she's near enough URSULA rushes back to HERO who waits by a formal swing nestling in a bower. URSULA yells,

URSULA

But are you sure
That Benedick loves Beatrice so entirely?

80. EXT. BEATRICE'S ALLEY DAY.

BEATRICE stops in her tracks. Nearly falls over. Coughs.

81. EXT. HERO'S ALLEY DAY.

BEATRICE'S thumping steps have stopped. They know she's listening,

HERO

So says the Prince and my new trothed lord.

URSULA

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

They begin to walk. BEATRICE walks parallel with them on the other side.

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.

URSULA

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.

They've reached a gap in the hedge. All three start to cross it. HERO and URSULA swiftly look the other way. BEATRICE runs back, waits til they have crossed and are ahead of her then dashes across the gap, bent double and on tip toes before catching up to hear.

HERO

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,

82. EXT. BEATRICE'S ALLEY DAY

CLOSE UP on the most hurt face.

83. EXT. HERO'S ALLEY DAY.

They turn around and start promenading the other way.

HERO

Nor take no shape nor project of affection,
She is so self-endear'd.

URSULA

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

HERO

Why, you speak truth. I never yet saw man,
How wise, now noble, young, how rarely featured,
But she would spell him backward.

URSULA

Sure, sure, such carping is not commendable.

HERO

But who 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.

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.

72
HERO

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 Signor Benedick.

HERO

He is the only man of Italy,
Always excepted my dear Claudio.

They laugh together.

URSULA

When are you married, madam?

HERO

Why, every day, ... tomorrow!

They shrink. Hug each other and start to run to the house.
We track with the excited couple.

URSULA

(WHISPERED) She's limed, I warrant you. We
have caught her, madam.

HERO

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

They run out of shot and in the distance down the beautiful
alley we see BEATRICE emerge very slowly from the left of
frame, through the gap in the hedge. She moves towards the

swing, it is almost sunset.

73

84. EXT. SWING SUNSET.

CLOSE on a very quiet much moved BEATRICE.

BEATRICE

What fire is in mine
ears? Can this be true?
Stand I condemned for pride and scorn so much?
Contempt, farewell; and maiden pride, adieu.
No glory lives behind the back of such.

She sits on the swing

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.

She begins to swing, and laugh, and cry. As the sunset takes full magical hold, we begin a series of beautiful dissolves. The music, perhaps a reprise of "Sigh No more Ladies" swells to romantic pitch and these intercut shots are partly in slow motion.

DISSOLVE

85. EXT FOUNTAIN SUNSET

Slow track around the splashing form of BENEDICK playing and laughing in SLO-MO

DISSOLVE

86. EXT. SWING SUNSET.

Slow track around the most fairyish bower in which BEATRICE beautifully swings.

DISSOLVE.

87. EXT. FOUNTAIN SUNSET

Close through the water on BENEDICKS happiness.

88. EXT. SWING SUNSET.

Ditto BEATRICE'S ecstatic face.

DISSOLVE

89.

To a slow crane shot, moving up and away from BENEDICK, but keeping him in view as we rise high up over the other hedges and begin to see BEATRICE in her swing just 30 or 40 yards away. Both oblivious to each other, alone in this beautiful formal garden. The shot widens and widens and now includes the house and finally the most beautiful, romantic, magical Italian sunset: HOLD

DISSOLVE.

90. INT. BENEDICK'S ROOM NIGHT.

Very late. The night before the wedding. In a large mirror we see BENEDICK sucking in his cheeks, arranging his clothes nervously and spraying himself with cologne.

91. INT. UPSTAIRS CORRIDOR NIGHT.

DON PEDRO, CLAUDIO and LEONATO reach the open door. They burst out laughing.

CLAUDIO

And when was he went to wash his face?

DON PEDRO

Yea, or to paint himself? For the which
(NUDGE,NUDGE, I hear what they say of him.

MORE LAUGHTER.

BENEDICK

Gallants, I am not as I have been

LEONATO

So say I. Me thinks you are sadder.

CLAUDIO

I hope he be in love.

BENEDICK walks to the group at the door and talks directly to LEONATO.

BENEDICK

Old Signor, walk aside with me. I have studied eight or nine wise words to speak to you which these hobby-horses must not hear.

He leads them off down the corridor.

DON PEDRO

For my life, to break with him about Beatrice.

92. INT. UPSTAIRS CORRIDOR NIGHT.

There is much excited movement of servants working for the great day. Noiselessly DON JOHN has appeared behind them and his sinisterly whispered first line startling DON PEDRO and CLAUDIO.

DON JOHN

My lord, and brother, God save you.

DON PEDRO answers tentatively. His brothers face is completely grim.

DON PEDRO

Good-e'en, brother.

DON JOHN

If your leisure served I would speak with you.

This is clearly very serious.

DON PEDRO

In private?

DON JOHN

If it please you. Yet Count Claudio may hear, for what I would speak of concerns him.

They draw aside into an alcove and speak in urgent whispers.

DON PEDRO

What's the matter?

DON JOHN
(to Claudio)

Means your lordship to be married tomorrow?

DON PEDRO

(IMPATIENT) You know he does.

The camera moves slowly past DON JOHN and onto the increasingly troubled face of CLAUDIO.

DON JOHN

I know not that when he knows what I know.

DISSOLVE

93. EXT. BALCONY NIGHT

BORACHIO and MARGARET wait kissing and whispering. We hear a sound and BORACHIO immediately starts to fondle and kiss MARGARET. He starts to mumble "Hero, Hero". She laughs.

CUT.

94. EXT. GARDEN NIGHT.

With DON JOHN, DON PEDRO and CLAUDIO, who is sweating, breathless, barely able to stand. He hears her name on the breeze and her laughter.

From his P.O.V., in silhouette, we can see BORACHIO undo MARGARET'S bodice, her breast clearly visible. He begins to nuzzle it. MARGARET hitches up her skirts and they begin to make love, BORACHIO pushing her back against the wall, both groaning the while.

CLAUDIO lets out a cry and makes to run at them but is held by DON PEDRO and DON JOHN. All three are shaking.

DON JOHN

(INTENSE, EMOTIONAL) The lady is disloyal !
If you love her then, tomorrow wed her. But it
would better fit your honour to change your
mind.

Close on CLAUDIO. Tears in angry eyes.
Then with terrifying coldness.

CLAUDIO

Tomorrow, in the congregation where I should
wed, there will I shame her.

DON PEDRO

And as I wooed for thee to obtain her, I will
join with thee to disgrace her.

CLAUDIO breaks down, DON PEDRO comforts him and as to leads he
weeping change away we pause for a moment on the triumphant
expression of DON JOHN who looks back to the balcony where
BORACHIO and MARGARET continue to make love.

DISSOLVE.

95. EXT. ROAD/BENCH NIGHT.

Thick fog. The sound of marching feet. Eventually the
lanterns and faces of THE WATCH appear through the mist. They
have stopped by roadside bench and water tank, Close on
LEONATO'S house. We pan along the troupe who are of assorted
height, face and intellectual capacity. Their dress, a
mixture of efficient police uniform and character cozziness.
The three stooges meets Terminator II.
We end on the face of DOGBERRY, now ready to inspect and
instruct his men before their night time vigil. He steps out
of the line. This is Patton talking to the troops.

DOGBERRY

Being chosen for the Prince's watch.
This is your charge: You are to bid any man
stand, in the Prince's name.

SECOND WATCHMAN

How if a will not stand?

DOGBERRY

Why then take no note of him, but let him go,

He continues to pace, intent, serious. Daring any one to correct him. VERGES (Robin to DOGBERRY'S Batman) nervously backs up his infallible chief.

VERGES

If he will not stand when he is bidden he is none of the Prince's subjects.

DOGBERRY jumps on this as if delivering the secret of life itself.

DOGBERRY

True ! and they are to meddle with none but the Prince's subjects.

Thrilled with that remark, he continues his Sergeant major speech.

DOGBERRY

You shall also make no noise in the streets.

3RD WATCHMAN

We will rather sleep than talk.

DOGBERRY

Why, you speak like an ancient and most quiet watchman, for I cannot see how sleeping should offend.

Now into the big stuff.

If you meet a thief you may suspect him, by virtue of your office, to be no true man; and for such kind of men, the less you meddle or make with them why, the more is for your honesty.

VERGES

You have been always called a merciful man, partner.

DOGBERRY

(TOUCHED) Truly, I would not hang a dog by my will, much more a man who hath any honesty in him.

VERGES

'Tis very true.

DOGBERRY

Well, masters, good night. An there be any matter of weight chances, call up me.
(TO VERGES) Come, neighbour.

SECOND WATCHMAN

We hear our charge.
Let us go sit here upon the bench till two, and then all to bed.

Laugh to and relief all round is silenced as a familiar face booms out of the mist.

DOGBERRY

One word more, honest neighbours. I pray you watch about Signor Leonato's door, for the wedding being there tomorrow, there is a great coil tonight.
Adieu. Be vigilant, I beseech you.

DOGBERRY and VERGES exit through the mist.
THE WATCH take their places on the bench and settle in for the night.

96. EXT. BENCH/ROAD NIGHT.

THE WATCH'S P.O.V. of two lanterns dancing towards them from the direction of LEONATO'S house. They hear a noise.

BORACHIO

What, Conrad!

THE WATCH all scurry behind the large bench, smother their lanterns and crouch behind the enormous structure. BORACHIO comes into view with CONRADE just behind although the drunken BORACHIO is unaware.

BORACHIO

Conrad, I say.

CONRAD

(tapping him to the shoulder)
Here, man, I am at thy elbow.

BORACHIO

Mass, an my elbow itched, I thought there would a scab follow.

CONRAD

I will owe thee an answer for that. And now, forward with thy tale.

BORACHIO

(SITTING ON THE BENCH)
Sit close then, and I will, like a true drunkard, utter all to thee.

97. EXT. BEHIND BENCH NIGHT.

3rd WATCHMAN

Some treason, masters.

2nd WATCHMAN

I know him. He has been a vile thief this seven year. A goes up and down like a gentleman. I remember his name.

98. EXT. BENCH NIGHT.

PAUSE.

BORACHIO

Didst thou not hear somebody?

He looks around, into the mist

CONRAD

No, 'twas the vane on the house.

A slow smile breaks on BORACHIO's face. He takes a drink from a bottle he has with him.

BORACHIO

Know that I have tonight

BORACHIO

wooed Margaret, the Lady Hero's gentlewoman, by the name of Hero. She leans me out at her mistress' chamber window, - I tell this tale vilely, I should first tell thee how The Prince, Claudio, and my master, planted and placed and possessed by my master, Don John, saw afar off in the orchard this amiable encounter.

CONRAD

And thought they Margaret was Hero?

CUT to Close on THE WATCH's horrified faces.

BORACHIO

Two of them did, the Prince and Claudio, but the devil my master knew she was Margaret, and chiefly by my villainy, which did confirm any slander that Don John had made, away went Claudio enraged.....

THE WATCH move as one man.

99. EXT. BENCH/WATER TANK NIGHT.

FIRST WATCHMAN

We charge you in the Prince's name. Stand.

THE WATCH surround the terrified pair and circle them menacingly.

SECOND WATCHMAN

Call up the right Master Constable. We have here recovered the most dangerous piece of lechery that ever was known in the commonwealth.

CONRADE

Masters, masters!

FIRST WATCHMAN

Never speak. We charge you. Let us obey you to go with us.

The bemused, frightened pair give in. These men are dangerous.

CONRAD

We'll obey you.

THE WATCH lead them off into the mist.

DISSOLVE

100. INT. HERO'S ROOM ALMOST DAWN.

Hurrying, scurrying and all forms of nervous anticipation as HERO begins to choose things for the great day ahead.

MARGARET

I think your other necklace were better.

HERO

No, pray thee, good Meg, I'll wear this.

MARGARET

By my troth, 's not so good, and I warrant your cousin will say so.

HERO

My cousin's a fool, and thou art another: I'll wear none but this.
God give me joy to wear it, for my heart is exceeding heavy.

MARGARET

'Twill be heavier soon by the weight of a man.

HERO

Fie upon thee, art not ashamed?

MARGARET

Of what, lady? An it be the right husband and the right wife

Enter a sniffing BEATRICE

Ask my Lady Beatrice

HERO

Good morrow, coz.

BEATRICE

Good morrow, sweet Hero.

HERO

Why, how now? Do you speak in the sick tune?

BEATRICE

(FORLORNLY) I am out of all other tune,
methinks.

PAUSE.

'Tis almost five o'clock,
cousin. 'Tis
time you were ready. By my troth, I am
exceeding ill.
Heigh-ho!

MARGARET

Get you some of this distilled {carduus
benedictus}, and lay it to your heart.
It is the only thing for a qualm.

HERO

There thou prickest her with a thistle.

BEATRICE

(EYES ABLAZE. PANICKED)
Benedictus why Benedictus? You have some
moral in this Benedictus.

MARGARET

Moral? No, by my troth, I have no moral
meaning. I meant plain holy-thistle. You may
think perchance that I think you are in love.
Nay, by 'r Lady, I am not such a fool to think
what I list, nor I list not to think what I can,
nor indeed I cannot think, if I
would think my heart out of thinking, that you
are in love, or that you will be in love, or
that you can be in love. Yet Benedick was such

MARGARET

another, and now is he become a man. He swore he would never marry, and yet now in despite of his heart he eats his meat without grudging. And how you may be converted I know not, but methinks you look with your eyes, as other women do.

BEATRICE

(BEADY) What pace is this that thy tongue keeps?

MARGARET

(SMUG) Not a false gallop.

URSULA almost flies into the room, breathless.

URSULA

Madam, withdraw. The Prince, the Count, Signor Benedick, Don John, and all the gallants of the town are come to fetch you to church.

HERO

Help to dress me, good coz, good Meg, good Ursula.

101. EXT. COURTYARD DAWN.

We crane down from outside of the house as the women start to tear around the rooms within. We reach the door as an ultra-agitated LEONATO emerges still in night shirt to greet the dynamic duo DOGBERRY and VERGES, who have begged for this urgent meeting with the master of the house. LEONATO stands at his front door shivering.

LEONATO

What would you with me, honest neighbour?

DOGBERRY

Marry, sir, I would have some confidence with you that decerns you nearly.

LEONATO

Brief I pray you, for you see it is a busy time with me.

DOGBERRY

Marry, this it is, sir.

VERGES

Yes, in truth it is, sir.

LEONATO

(EXASPERATED ALREADY)
What is it, my good friends?

DOGBERRY

(ASIDE TO LEONATO) Goodman Verges, sir, speaks a little off the matter. An old man, sir, and his wits are not so blunt as, God help, I would desire they were. But in faith, honest as the skin between his brows.

VERGES

(VERY PROUD) Yes, I thank God, I am as honest as any man living that is an old man and no honester than I.

DOGBERRY

(AMUSED) Comparisons are odorous. Palabras, neighbour Verges.

This has gone too far for the freezing, frantic LEONATO

LEONATO

Neighbours, you are tedious.

DOGBERRY

(VERY MOVED BY THIS)
It pleases your worship to say so, but we are
the poor Duke's officers. But truly, for mine
own part, if I were as tedious as a king I could
find in my heart to bestow it all of your
worship.

LEONATO

(COMPLETELY NON-PLUSED)
All thy tediousness on me ?
(SHAKING HIS HEAD)
I would fain know what you have to say !

VERGES

Marry, sir, our watch tonight, excepting your
worship's presence, ha' ta'en a couple of as
arrant knaves as any in Messina.

Garrulous apologies flood out. He talks to VERGES as if he's
deaf.

DOGBERRY

(TO LEONATO)
A good old man, sir. He will be talking. As
they say, when the age is in, the wit is out.
(TO VERGES)
Well said, i' faith, neighbour Verges.
(TO LEONATO)
Well, God's a good man. An two men ride of
a horse, one must ride behind.
(TO VERGES)
All men are not alike, alas, good neighbour.

LEONATO

(DRYLY) Indeed, neighbour, he comes too short
of you.

DOGBERRY

(QUIET PRIDE) Gifts that God gives!

LEONATO has had enough.

LEONATO

I must leave you.

He starts to go into the house.

DOGBERRY

One word, sir. Our watch, sir, have indeed comprehended two auspicious persons, and we would have them this morning examined before your worship.

LEONATO

(ON HIS WAY) Take their examination yourself, and bring it me. I am now in great haste, as it may appear unto you. (he goes)

DOGBERRY

(VERY SELF-IMPORTANT) We are now to examination these men.

He looks to VERGES and then gives the full John Wayne

DOGBERRY

Meet me at the jail.

DISSOLVE.

107. EXT. CHURCH DAY.

A crowd of twenty or thirty are gathered in front of the small chapel-sized church which is in the grounds of the house. The whole place is be-decked with flowers. LEONATO, the FRIAR and the radiant HERO emerge from the front of the little church, to great applause.

8
DON PEDRO and CLAUDIO wait at the front of the CROWD next to a makeshift outdoor table/alter. BEATRICE and BENEDICK are at the front also on the groom and brides side's respectively.

The crowd quietens.

LEONATO

Come, Frair Francis, be brief, only to the plain form of marriage, and you shall recount their particular duties afterwards.

A general delighted murmur passes over the crowd of friends and farm workers. The FRIAR moves toward the couple.

FRIAR

You come hither, my lord to marry this lady.

CLAUDIO

No

LEONATO

(NERVOUS LAUGHTER) To be married to her, you come to marry her.

The FRIAR smiles, the crowd relax.

FRIAR

Lady, you come hither to be married to this count.

HERO

I do

FRIAR

If either of you know any inward impediment why you should not ne conjoined, I charge you, on your souls, to utter it.

CLAUDIO

Know you any Hero?

HERO

None, my Lord.

FRIAR

(SLIGHTLY PERELEXED) Know you any count?

LEONATO

(EAGER) I dare make his answer, none.

CLAUDIO moves forward to HERO

CLAUDIO

Stand thee by, Friar. Father by your leave;
Will you with free and unconstrained soul
Give me this maid, your daughter?

LEONATO

(PROUDLY) As freely son, as God did give her me

He takes HERO's hand and places it in CLAUDIO's

CLAUDIO

And what have I to give you back whose worth,
May counterpoise this rich and precious gift?

DON PEDRO

(FIRMLY) Nothing, unless you render her again

CLAUDIO

Sweet Prince, you learn me noble thankfulness.

Then with great venom

There LEONATO, take her back again. He throws her away from him against the alter/table. The crowd is appalled then from both sides have to be restrained, Floral decorations have fallen down. The congregation have knocked over their makeshift benches.

(BEATRICE RUSHES TO HER COUSIN'S SIDE)

In a moment, Chaos has come. LEONATO is signalling to people to cool down but the enraged CLAUDIO continues..

CLAUDIO

Give not this rotten orange to your friend;
She's but the sigh 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:
Her blush is guiltiness, not modesty!

More Shrieks and outrage from the crowd. Can this be true?

LEONATO

What do you mean, my Lord?

CLAUDIO

Not to be married
(GASPS) Not to knit my soul to an approved wanton

LEONATO now desperately trying to gauge an unpleasant truth begins to think on his feet, appalling though the situation is. He attempts to make this intimate unheard by the rivetted crowd.

LEONATO

Dear my Lord, if you, in your own proof
Have vanquished the resistance of her youth,
And made defeat of her virginity

CLAUDIO

(PUBLIC) No, Leonato
I never tempted her with word too large
But as a brother to his sister showed
Bashful sincerity and comely love.

HERO

And seemed I ever otherwise to you?

CLAUDIO

(FIGHTING TEARS) You seem to me as Dian in her
Orb.
But you are more intemperate in your blood
Than Venus or those pampered animals
That rage in savage sensuality.

HERO lies, almost sick, in BEATRICE's arms. BENEDICK looks on
appalled.

HERO

Is my Lord well, that he doth speak so wide?

LEONATO

(DESPERATE) Sweet prince, Why speak not you?

DON PEDRO

(ICY) What shall I speak? I stand dishonoured
that have gone about to link my dear friend to a
common stale

LEONATO

(VERY FAINT) Are these things spoken, or do I
but dream?

DON JOHN

Sir, they are spoken and these things are true.

Recovering slightly, CLAUDIO prolongs the courtroom
atmosphere, by once more approaching HERO and making an
accusation public.

CLAUDIO

What man was he talked with you yesternight
Out at your window betwixt twelve and one?
Now if you are a maid, answer to this.

HERO

(TERRIFIED) I talked with no man at that hour,
my lord.

DON PEDRO

(STEPPING FOTWARD) Why, then are you no maiden.
Leonato, I am sorry you must hear. Upon mine
honour, Myself, my brother, and this grieve\d
Count
Did see her, hear her, at that hour last night
Talk with a ruffian at her chamber window,
Who hath indeed, most like a liberal villain,
Confessed the vile encounters they have had
A thousand times in secret.

The crowd is stunned. Reactions of BEATRICE, BENEDICK.
LEONATO is beaten.

LEONATO

Hath no man's dagger here a point for me?

HERO faints once more.

BEATRICE

Why, how now, cousin, wherefore sink you down?

The crowd react as if this is some proof. DON JON acts
quickly.

DON JOHN

Come. Let us go. These things come thus to
light, Smother her spirits up.

The princes and the count leave. The crowd likewise start to
move away.

WE CUT.

103. EXT. CHURCH DAY

Wide shot showing the debris as the crowd disperse. Furniture
overturned, flowers are strewn. A bleak, tiny group LEONATO,
ANTONIO, BEATRICE, URSULA, the FRIAR, BENEDICK gather around
the hapless HERO whose wedding day has turned into a
nightmare. HERO starts to come to.

FRIAR

Have comfort, lady.

LEONATO

Dost thou look up?

FRIAR

Yea, wherefore should she not?

LEONATO bursts out of his guilt, pained lamenting into an
angry, confused, distracted attack.

LEONATO

Wherefore? Why, doth not every earthly thing
Cry shame upon her? Could she here deny
The story that is printed in her blood?
Do not live, Hero, do not ope thine eyes,

Reactions on HERO, BEATRICE.

LEONATO

Grieved I, I had but one? Why had I one?
Why ever wast thou lovely in my eyes?
Why had I not with charitable hand
Took up a beggar's issue at my gates,
Who smirched thus and mired with infamy,
I might have said "No part of it is mine,
This shame derives itself from unknown loins."
But mine, and mine I loved, and mine I praised,
And mine that I was proud on, mine so much
That I myself was to myself not mine,
Valuing of her why she, O she is fallen
Into a pit of ink.

BENEDICK

Sir, sir, be patient.
For my part, I am so attired in wonder
I know not what to say.

BEATRICE

O, on my soul, my cousin is belied!

BENEDICK

Lady, were you her bedfellow last night?

BEATRICE

No, truly not, although until last night
I have this twelvemonth been her bedfellow.

LEONATO

Confirmed, confirmed. O, that is stronger made
Which was before barred up with ribs of iron.
Would the two princes lie? And Claudio lie,
Who loved her so that, speaking of her foulness,
Washed it with tears? Hence from her, let her
die.

LEONATO weeps quietly as does HERO, as does BEATRICE.
The atmosphere is desperately sad, but calmer. The Friar
takes his opportunity.

FRIAR

Hear me a little,
For I have only been silent so long
And given way unto this course of fortune
By noting of the lady. I have marked
A thousand blushing apparitions
To start into her face, a thousand innocent
shames
In angel whiteness beat away those blushes,
And in her eye there hath appeared a fire
To burn the errors that these princes hold
Against her maiden truth. Call me a fool,
If this sweet lady lie not guiltless here
Under some biting error.

LEONATO

Friar, it cannot be.
Thou seest that all the grace that she hath left
Is that she will not add to her damnation
A sin of perjury. She not denies it.

FRIAR

(URGENT) Lady, what man is he you are accused
of?

HERO

They know that do accuse me. I know none.
If I know more of any man alive
Than that which maiden modesty doth warrant,
Let all my sins lack mercy.

She looks to LEONATO, then a great cry.

Oh my father!

She sinks again into BEATRICE'S arms to weep. The FRIAR
continues to hammer out the problem.

FRIAR

There is some strange misprision in the princes.

BENEDICK

Two of them have the very bent of honour,
And if their wisdoms be misled in this
The practice of it lives in John the bastard,

Suddenly we begin to see a little of the LEONATO of old.

LEONATO

I know not. If they speak but truth of her
These hands shall tear her. If they wrong her
honour
The proudest of them shall well hear of it.

Sanity is beginning to return.

FRIAR

Pause awhile,
And let my counsel sway you in this case.
Your daughter here the princes left for dead,
Let her a while be secretly kept in,
And publish it that she is dead indeed.

LEONATO

(IMPATIENT) What shall become of this? What will
this do?

FRIAR

Marry, this, well carried, shall on her behalf
Change slander to remorse. That is some good.
But not for that dream I on this strange course,
She dying, as it must be so maintained,
Upon the instant that she was accused,
Shall be lamented, pitied, and excused
Of every hearer. So will it fare with Claudio.
When he shall hear she died upon his words,
The idea of her life shall sweetly creep
Into his study of imagination,
And every lovely organ of her life
Shall come apparelled in more precious habit,
Than when she lived indeed. Then shall he mourn,
And wish he had not so accuse'd her,
No, though he thought his accusation true.
Let this be so, and doubt not but success
Will fashion the event in better shape
Than I can lay it down in likelihood.

BENEDICK

(INTERRUPTING) Signor Leonato, let the Friar advise you. And though you know my inwardness and love is very much unto the Prince and Claudio, Yet, by mine honour, I will deal in this as secretly and justly as your soul should with your body.

LEONATO

Being that I flow in grief,
The smallest twine may lead me.

FRIAR

'Tis well consented. Presently away,

HERO and URSULA and BEATRICE rise. The former pair lead her away to the house with the Friar.

FRIAR

Come, lady, die to live. This wedding day
Perhaps is but prolonged. Have patience, and
endure.

They go, so does LEONATO. BEATRICE rises and goes into the little church.

104. INT. CHURCH DAY.

BEATRICE her back to us kneels at the bench nearest the door. She is hunched over and praying/attempting to control her distress. BENEDICK approaches and kneels beside her.

In the background, a large but simple wooden cross hangs on the wall between them.

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

Surely I do believe your fair cousin is wronged.

BEATRICE

Ah, how much might the man deserve of me that would right her!

BENEDICK

Is there any way to show such friendship?

BEATRICE

A very even way, but no such friend.

BENEDICK

May a man do it?

BEATRICE

It is a man's office, but not yours.

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.

BEATRICE

Will you not eat your word?

BENEDICK

With no sauce that can be devised to it. 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 anything for thee.

BEATRICE

Kill Claudio.

BENEDICK

Ha! Not for the wide world.

BEATRICE

You kill me to deny it. (SHE GETS UP TO GO)
Farewell.

BENEDICK

Tarry, sweet Beatrice. (HE STOPS HER)

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 a 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

Talk with a man out at a window! A proper
saying!

BENEDICK

Nay, but Beatrice.

BEATRICE

Sweet Hero, she is wronged, she is slandered,
she is undone.

BENEDICK

Beat...

BEATRICE

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 courtesies, valour into
compliment, and men are only turned into tongue,

BEATRICE

and trim ones, too.
He is now as valiant as Hercules that only tells
a lie and swears it. I cannot be a man with
wishing, therefore I will die a woman with
grieving.

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.
I will kiss your hand, and so I leave you. By
this hand, Claudio shall render me a dear
account. As you hear of me, so think of me. Go
comfort your cousin. I must say she is dead.
And so, farewell.

BEATRICE goes. BENEDICK looks after her, then turns and
kneels to pray. He starts to whisper as we DISSOLVE.

105. INTERIOR PRISON DAY

Light Streaming in through barred windows to a dark damp
dungeon like cellar. DOGBERRY in Perry Mason mode. The
SEXTON, serious, determined.

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.

BORACHIO

Master Constable.

DOGBERRY

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

SEXTON

What heard you him say else?

SECOND WATCHMAN

Marry, that he had received a thousand ducats
of Don John for accusing the Lady Hero
wrongfully.

DOGBERRY

Flat burglary, as ever was committed.

VERGES

Yea, by mass, that it is.

SEXTON

What else, fellow?

FIRST WATCHMAN

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

DOGBERRY

(APPALLED) O villain! Thou wilt be condemned into everlasting redemption for this.

SEXTON

What else?

WATCH

This is all. (THE TERRIBLE TRUTH DAWNS ON THE SEXTON)

SEXTON

And this is more, masters, than you can deny. Prince John is this morning secretly stolen away. Hero was in this manner accused, in this very manner refused, and upon the grief of this suddenly died. Master Constable, let these men be bound and brought to Leonato's. I will go before and show him their examination.

DOGBERRY

Come, let them be opinioned.

VERGES

Let them be, in the hands.

CONRAD

Off, coxcomb!

DOGBERRY

God's my life, where's the Sexton? Let him write down the Prince's officer coxcomb. Come, bind them. Thou naughty varlet!

CONRAD

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. No, thou villain, thou art full of piety, as shall be proved upon thee by good witness. 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, go to, and a rich fellow enough, go to, and a fellow that hath had losses, and one that hath two gowns, and everything handsome about him. Bring him away. O that I had been writ down an ass!

106. EXT. STABLES DAY

LEONATO, visibly older, takes a grim faced constitutional with his worried brother. We track with him as they walk.

ANTONIO

If you go on thus, you will kill yourself,
And 'tis not wisdom thus to second grief
Against yourself.

LEONATO

I pray thee cease thy counsel,
Which falls into mine ears as profitless
As water in a sieve. Give not me counsel,
Nor let no comforter delight mine ear
But such a one whose wrongs do suit with mine.
Bring me a father that so loved his child,
Whose joy of her is overwhelmed like mine,
And bid him speak of patience.
But there is no such man, for, brother, men
Can counsel and speak comfort to that grief

LEONATO

Which they themselves not feel, but tasting it
Their counsel turns to passion.
I pray thee peace, I will be flesh and blood,
For there was never yet philosopher
That could endure the toothache patiently,

ANTONIO

Yet bend not all the harm upon yourself.
Make those that do offend you suffer, too.

LEONATO

There thou speak'st reason, nay I will do so.
My soul doth tell me Hero is belied,
And that shall Claudio know, so shall the
Prince, And all of them that thus dishonour
her.

ANTONIO

Here comes the Prince and Claudio hastily.

DON PEDRO

Good e'en, good e'en.

CLAUDIO

Good day to both of you.

LEONATO

Hear you, my lords?

DON PEDRO

We have some haste,

LEONATO

Some haste, my lord! Well, fare you well, my
lord.
Are you so hasty now? Well, all is one.

DON PEDRO

Nay, do not quarrel with us, good old man.

ANTONIO

If he could right himself with quarrelling,
Some of us would lie low.

CLAUDIO

Who wrongs him?

LEONATO

Marry, thou dost wrong me, thou dissembler,
thou.
Nay, never lay thy hand upon thy sword,
I fear thee not.

CLAUDIO

Marry, beshrew my hand
If it should give your age such cause of fear.
In faith, my hand meant nothing to my sword.

LEONATO

Tush, tush, man, never fleer and jest at me.
I speak not like a dotard nor a fool,
I say thou hast belied mine innocent child.
Thy slander hath gone through and through her
heart,
And she lies buried with her ancestors,
O, in a tomb where never scandal slept
Save this of hers, framed by thy villainy.

CLAUDIO

My villainy?

LEONATO

Thine, Claudio, thine I say.

DON PEDRO

You say not right, old man.

LEONATO

My lord, my lord,
I'll prove it on his body if he dare.

CLAUDIO

Away, I will not have to do with you.

LEONATO

Canst thou so daff me? Thou hast killed my
child.
If thou kill'st me, boy, thou shalt kill a man.

ANTONIO

He shall kill two of us, and men indeed.
But that's no matter, let him kill one first.
Win me and wear me. Let him answer me.
Come follow me boy, come sir boy, come follow
me,
Sir boy, I'll whip you from your foining fence.
Nay, as I am a gentleman, I will.

LEONATO

Brother.

ANTONIO

Content yourself. God knows, I loved my niece,
And she is dead, slandered to death by villains
That dare as well answer a man indeed
As I dare take a serpent by the tongue.
Boys, apes, braggarts, jacks, milksops!

LEONATO

Brother Antony

ANTONIO

Hold you content. What, man, I know them, yea
And what they weigh, even to the utmost scruple.
Scambling, outfacing, fashion-monging boys,
That lie, and cog, and flout, deprave, and
slander,
Go anticly, and show an outward hideousness,

ANTONIO

And speak off half a dozen dangerous words,
How they might hurt their enemies, if they
durst,
And this is all.

LEONATO

But brother Antony

ANTONIO

Come, 'tis no matter,
Do not you meddle, let me deal in this.

DON PEDRO

Gentlemen both, we will not wake your
patience.
My heart is sorry for your daughter's death,
But on my honour she was charged with nothing
But what was true and very full of proof.

LEONATO

My lord, my lord

DON PEDRO

I will not hear you.

LEONATO

No? Come brother, away. I will be heard.

ANTONIO

And shall, or some of us will smart for it.

107. EXT. STABLES DAY.

A Stonefaced Benedick approaches on horseback.

DON PEDRO

See, see, here comes the man we went to seek.

CLAUDIO

Now signor, what news?

BENEDICK

Good day, my lord.

DON PEDRO

Welcome, signor. You are almost come to part almost a fray.

CLAUDIO

We had liked to have had our two noses snapped off with two old men without teeth.

BENEDICK

In a false quarrel there is no true valour. I came to seek you both.

CLAUDIO

We have been up and down to seek thee, for we are high-proof melancholy and would fain have it beaten away. Wilt thou use thy wit?

BENEDICK

It is in my scabbard. Shall I draw it?

DON PEDRO

As I am an honest man he looks pale. Art thou sick, or angry?

BENEDICK

Shall I speak a word in your ear?

CLAUDIO

God bless me from a challenge.

BENEDICK

You are a villain. I jest not. I will make it good how you dare, with what you dare, and when you dare. Do me right, or I will protest your cowardice. You have killed a sweet lady, and her death shall fall heavy on you.

Fare you well, boy, you know my mind. I will leave you now to your gossip-like humour. You break jests as braggarts do their blades which, God be thanked, hurt not. My lord, for your many courtesies I thank you. I must discontinue your company. Your brother the bastard is fled from Messina. You have among you killed a sweet and innocent lady. For my lord Lackbeard there, he and I shall meet, and till then, peace be with him.

DON PEDRO

He is in earnest.

CLAUDIO

In most profound earnest, and, I'll warrant you, for the love of Beatrice.

DON PEDRO

And hath challenged thee.

CLAUDIO

Most sincerely.

DON PEDRO

What a pretty thing man is when he goes in his doublet and hose and leaves off his wit!

DON PEDRO

But soft you, let me be. Pluck up, my heart,
and be sad. Did he not say my brother was fled?

108. EXT. STABLES DAY

The Watch arrive on a cart with their prisoners bound.

DON PEDRO

How now, two of my brother's men bound?
Borachio one.

CLAUDIO

Hearken after their offence, my lord.

DON PEDRO

Officers, what offence have these men done?

DOGBERRY

Marry, sir, they have committed false report,
moreover they have spoken untruths, secondarily
they are slanders, sixth and lastly they have
belied a lady, thirdly they have verified unjust
things, and to conclude, they are lying knaves.

DON PEDRO

First I ask thee what they have done, thirdly
I ask thee what's their offence, sixth and
lastly why they are committed, and to conclude,
what you lay to their charge.

CLAUDIO

Rightly reasoned

DON PEDRO

Who have you offended, masters, that you are thus bound to your answer? This learned constable is too cunning to be understood. What's your offence?.

BORACHIO

Sweet Prince, let me go no farther to mine answer. Do you hear me, and let this Count kill me. I have deceived even your very eyes. What your wisdoms could not discover, these shallow fools have brought to light, who in the night overheard me confessing to this man how Don John your brother incensed me to slander the Lady Hero, how you were brought into the orchard and saw me court Margaret in Hero's garments, how you disgraced her when you should marry her. My villainy they have upon record, which I had rather seal with my death than repeat over to my shame. The lady is dead upon mine and my master's false accusation, and briefly, I desire nothing but the reward of a villain.

DON PEDRO

Runs not this speech like iron through your blood?

CLAUDIO

I have drunk poison whiles he utter'd it.

DON PEDRO

But did my brother set thee on to this?

BORACHIO

Yea, and paid me richly for the practice of it.

DON PEDRO

He is composed and framed of treachery,
And fled he is upon this villainy.

CLAUDIO

Sweet Hero

CLAUDIO falls back against the stable door.

DOGBERRY

Come, bring away the plaintiffs. By this time our Sexton hath reformed Signor Leonato of the matter. And masters, do not forget to specify, when time and place shall serve, that I am an ass.

VERGES

Here, here comes Master Signor Leonato, and the Sexton, too.

109. EXT. STABLES DAY.

Running from the house come LEONATO (ANTONIA) his brother and SEXTON.

LEONATO

Which is the villain? Let me see his eyes,
That when I note another man like him
I may avoid him. Which of these is he?

BORACHIO

If you would know your wronger, look on me.

LEONATO

Art thou the slave that with thy breath hast
killed mine innocent child?

BORACHIO

Yea, even I alone.

LEONATO

No, not so, villain, thou beliest thyself.
Here stand a pair of honourable men.
A third is fled that had a hand in it.
I thank you, Princes, for my daughter's death.
Record it with your high and worthy deeds.
'Twas bravely done, if you bethink you of it.

CLAUDIO

I know not how to pray your patience,
Yet I must speak. Choose your revenge yourself,
Impose me to what penance your invention
Can lay upon my sin. Yet sinned I not
But in mistaking.

DON PEDRO

By my soul, nor I; And yet to satisfy this good
old man I would bend under any heavy weight
That he'll enjoin me to.

LEONATO

I cannot bid you bid my daughter live-
That were impossible but I pray you both
Possess the people in Messina here
How innocent she died, and if your love
Can labour aught in sad invention,
Hang her an epitaph upon her tomb
And sing it to her bones, sing it tonight.
Tomorrow morning come you to my house,
And since you could not be my son-in-law,
Be yet my nephew. My brother hath a daughter,
Almost the copy of my child that's dead,
And she alone is heir to both of us.
Give her the right you should have giv'n her
cousin, And so dies my revenge.

CLAUDIO

O noble sir!
Your overkindness doth wring tears from me.
I do embrace your offer; and dispose
For henceforth of poor Claudio.

LEONATO

Tomorrow then I will expect your coming.
Tonight I take my leave. This naughty man

LEONATO

Shall face to face be brought to Margaret,
Who I believe was packed in all this wrong,
Hired to it by your brother.

BORACHIO

No, by my soul, she was not,
Nor knew not what she did when she spoke to me,
But always hath been just and virtuous
In anything that I do know by her.

DOGBERRY

Moreover, sir, which indeed is not
under white and black, this plaintiff here, the
offender, did call me ass. I beseech you let it
be remembered in his punishment.

LEONATO

I thank thee for thy care and honest pains.

DOGBERRY

Your worship speaks like a most thankful and
reverend youth, and I praise God for you.

LEONATO

There's for thy pains.

DOGBERRY

God save the foundation.

LEONATO

Go. I discharge thee of thy prisoner, and I
thank thee.

DOGBERRY

I leave an arrant knave with your worship,
which I beseech your worship to correct
yourself, for the example of others. God keep
your worship, I wish your worship well. God

DOGBERRY

restore you to health. I humbly give you leave
to depart, and if a merry meeting may
be wished, God prohibit it. Come, neighbour

EXEUNT DOGBERRY AND VERGES

LEONATO

Until tomorrow morning, lords, farewell.

ANTONIO

Farewell, my lords. We look for you tomorrow.

DON PEDRO

We will not fail.

CLAUDIO

Tonight I'll mourn with Hero.

LEONATO (TO THE WATCH)

Bring you these fellows on. We'll talk with
Margaret How her acquaintance grew with this
lewd fellow.

As they move back towards the house we DISSOLVE

110. EXT. MOUNTAIN TOP NIGHT.

A wide shot of a cloaked, torched procession towards HERO'S
tomb. Beautiful and Sombre, a snake of lights against the
hillside. We move closer to see DON PEDRO, CLAUDIO and a
choir of people sing as CLAUDIO weeps before the tomb.

CLAUDIO

Done to death by slanderous tongues
Was the Hero that here lies.

Death in guerdon of her wrongs
 Gives her fame which never dies.
 So the life that died with shame
 Lives in death with glorious fame.
 (HANGS UP THE SCROLL)

BALTHAZAR

song

Pardon, goddess of the night,
 Those that slew thy virgin knight,
 For the which with songs of woe
 Round about her tomb they go.
 Midnight, assist our moan,
 Help us to sigh and groan,
 Heavily, heavily.
 Graves yawn, and yield your dead
 Till death be utter'd,
 Heavily, heavily.

We move past the sobbing boy, a little further up the hillside
 where two cloaked figures watch. They throw off their hoods.
 It is the FRIAR and LEONATO. They take in the scene and share
 a grimly satisfied look as we DISSOLVE.

111. EXT. LOVERS BOWER DAWN.

BENEDICK pacing up and down as he awaits the arrival of
 BEATRICE. He has written a song which (ALAS) he's attempting
 to practice.

BENEDICK

The God of Love,
 That sits above,
 And knows me, and knows me,
 How pitiful I deserve-

(TO CAMERA) I mean in singing; but in loving,
 Leander the good swimmer, Troilus the first
 employer of panders, and a whole book full of
 these quondam carpet-mongers whose names yet run
 smoothly in the even road of a blank verse, why
 they were never so truly turned over and over as
 my poor self in love. Marry, I cannot show
 it in rhyme. I have tried. I can find out no

BENEDICK

rhyme to "lady" but "baby", an innocent rhyme;
for "scorn" "horn", a hard rhyme; for "school"
"fool", a babbling rhyme. Very ominous endings.
No, I was not born under a rhyming planet, nor
I cannot woo in festival terms.

Suddenly BEATRICE is there.

Sweet Beatrice, wouldst thou come when I called
thee?

BEATRICE

Yea, signor, and depart when you bid me.

BENEDICK

O, stay but till then.

BEATRICE

"Then" is spoken. Fare you well now.

She sits in the bower seat. He sits next to her. Very close.

BEATRICE

And yet ere I go, let me go with that I came
for, which is with knowing what hath passed
between you and Claudio.

BENEDICK

Only foul words, and thereupon I will kiss
thee.

BEATRICE

Foul words is but foul wind, and foul wind is
but foul breath, and foul breath is noisome,
therefore I will depart unkissed.

12
BENEDICK

Thou hast frightened the word out of his right sense, so forcible is thy wit. But I must tell thee plainly, Claudio undergoes my challenge, and either I must shortly hear from him or I will subscribe him a coward. And I pray thee now tell me, for which of my bad parts didst thou first fall in love with me?

BEATRICE

For them all together, which maintain so politic a state of evil that they will not admit any good part to intermingle with them. But for which of my good parts did you first suffer love for me?

BENEDICK

Suffer love a good epithet. I do suffer love indeed, for I love thee against my will.

BEATRICE

In spite of your heart, I think. Alas, poor heart. If you spite it for my sake I will spite it for yours, for I will never love that which my friend hates.

BENEDICK

Thou and I are too wise to woo peaceably. And now tell me how doth your cousin?

BEATRICE

Very ill.

BENEDICK

And how do you?

BEATRICE

Very ill too.

BENEDICK

Serve God, love me, and mend. There will I
leave you too, for here comes one in haste.

URSULA runs in, Wildly excited.

URSULA

Madam, you must come to your uncle - Yonder's
old coil at home. It is proved my lady Hero hath
been falsely accused, the Prince and Claudio
mightily abused, and Don John is the author of
all who is fled and gone.
Will you come presently?

BEATRICE

Will you go hear this news, signor?

BENEDICK

I will live in thy heart, die in thy lap, and be
buried in thy eyes. And moreover, I will go with
thee to thy uncle's.

They both leap to their feet.

Enter LEONATO, BENEDICK, BEATRICE, MARGARET, URSULA,
OLD MAN, ANTONIO, FRIAR, FRANCIS, HERO all pouring out of
church.

112. EXT. CHURCH DAY.

FRIAR

Did I not tell you she was innocent?

LEONATO

So are the Prince and Claudio who accused her
Upon the error that you heard debated.
But Margaret was in some fault for this,

12
LEONATO

Although against her will as it appears
In the true course of all the question.

ANTONIO

Well, I am glad that all things sorts so well.

BENEDICK

And so am I, being else by faith enforced
To call young Claudio to a reckoning for it.

LEONATO

Well, daughter, and you gentlewomen all,
Withdraw
And when I send for you come hither masked.

They all go back into the church.

LEONATO

The Prince and Claudio promised by this hour
To visit me. You know your office, brother,
You must be father to your brother's daughter,
And give her to young Claudio.

ANTONIO

Which I will do with confirmed countenance.

BENEDICK

(ASIDE) Friar, I must entreat your pains, I
think.

FRIAR

To do what, signor?

BENEDICK

To bind me or undo me, one of them.
Signor Leonato, truth it is, good signor,
Your niece regards me with an eye of favour.

LEONATO

That eye my daughter lent her, 'tis most true.

BENEDICK

And I do with an eye of love requite her.

LEONATO

The sight whereof I think you had from me,
From Claudio and the Prince. But what's your
will?

BENEDICK

Your answer, sir, is enigmatical.
But for my will, my will is your good will
May stand with ours this day to be conjoined
In the state of honourable marriage,
In which, good Friar, I shall desire your help.

LEONATO

My heart is with your liking.

FRIAR

And my help.
Here comes the Prince and Claudio.

(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?

LEONATO

Call her forth, brother, here's the Friar
ready.

126
1
ANTONIO steps into the church and immediately the veiled women
came out. A crowd has begun to gather.

use.
nd

LEONATO

Which is the lady I must seize upon?

ANTONIO

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

Give me your hand before this holy friar.
I am your husband if you like of me.

dio

HERO

(UNMASKING) And when I lived I was your other
wife;
And when you loved, you were my other husband.
One Hero died defiled, but I do live,
And surely as I live, I am a maid.

LEONATO

She died, my lord, but whiles her slander lived.

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FRIAR

All this amazement can I qualify
When after that the holy rites are ended
I'll tell you largely of fair Hero's death.

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BENEDICK

'Tis no such matter. Then you do not love me?

BEATRICE

No, truly, but in friendly recompense.

LEONATO

Come, cousin, I am sure you love the gentleman.

CLAUDIO

And I'll be sworn upon 't that he loves her,

steals a letter from Benedick's pocket.

For here's a paper written in his hand,
A halting sonnet of his own pure brain,
Fashioned to Beatrice.

HERO

And here's another,

steals a letter from Benedick's pocket.

Writ in my cousin's hand, stol'n from her
pocket, Containing her affection unto Benedick.

BENEDICK

A miracle! Here's our own hands against our
hearts. Come, I will have thee, but by this
light, I take thee for pity.

BEATRICE

I would not deny you, but by this good day, I
yield upon great persuasion, and partly to save
your life, for I was told you were in a
consumption.

F 61 12

BENEDICK

Peace, I will stop your mouth.

Kisses her, with the greatest tenderness.
Great applause and ah's and ooc's.

DON PEDRO

How dost thou, Benedick the married man?

BENEDICK

I'll tell thee what, Prince: a college of wit-crackers cannot flout me out of my humour. Dost thou think I care for a satire or an epigram? No, if a man will be beaten with brains, a shall wear nothing handsome about him. In brief, since I do purpose to marry, I will think nothing to any purpose that the world can say against it, and therefore never flout at me for what I have said against it. For man is a giddy thing, and this is my conclusion. For thy part, Claudio, I did think to have beaten thee, but in that thou art like to be my kinsman, live unbruised, and love my cousin.

BENEDICK

Come, come, we are friends, let's have a dance ere we are married, that we may lighten our own hearts and our wives' heels.

The crowd cheers

LEONATO

(VAINLY) We'll have dancing afterward.

BENEDICK

First, of my word. Therefore play, music.
Prince, thou art sad, get thee a wife!

A horseman rides into the courtyard. Behind him another group of horsemen with a trussed DON JOHN. The two brothers exchange a long terrible look. We see the reactions of each of the others, considering for a moment what might have been.

MESSENGER

My lord, your brother John is ta'en in flight,
And brought with arme\d men back to Messina.

DON PEDRO, much shaken is gently brought out of his reverie by BENEDICK.

BENEDICK

Think not on him till tomorrow, I'll devise thee
brave punishments for him. Strike up, pipers.

As the music starts (ONE FINAL REPRISE OF "SIGH NO MORE") the camera moves back and begins to rise. All the couples dance merrily in front of us and we see one joyous image of each of them before we become too high and far away from the scene. We also note the melancholic, solitary figure of DON PEDRO finally being dragged into the festivities by a delirious URSULA. We carry on up and up till the dancing figures look small in the courtyard and the house rises serenely behind to complete a picture of merriment and peace.

The house, the late afternoon sun and the sound of happiness floating on the air mixes in with a swell of the most joyous music as we FREEZE and happily DISSOLVE to BLACK.

THE END