

Much Ado About Nothing  
Sides

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## MUCH ADO SIDES

CLAUDIO

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O! my lord,  
When you went onward on this ended action,  
I looked upon her with a soldier's eye,  
That lik'd, but had a rougher task in hand  
Than to drive liking to the name of love;  
But now I am return'd, 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 lik'd her ere I went to wars.

DON PEDRO

DON PEDRO.

Come, you shake the head at so long a breathing; but, 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  
Signior Benedick  
and the Lady Beatrice into a mountain of affection the one  
with the  
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.

BENEDICK AND DON PEDRO

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 have a  
recheat  
winded in my forehead, or 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; and the fine  
is,--for  
the which I may go the finer,--I will live a bachelor.

DON PEDRO.

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

BENEDICK.

With anger, with sickness, or with hunger, my lord; not with  
love: prove  
that ever I lose more blood with love than I will get again  
with  
drinking, pick out mine eyes with a ballad-maker's pen and  
hang me up for the sign of blind Cupid.

DON JOHN AND CONRAD

CONRADE.

What the good-year, my lord! why are you thus out of measure  
sad?

DON JOHN.

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

CONRADE.

You should hear reason.

DON JOHN.

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

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  
your 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.

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 plain-dealing  
 villain. I am trusted with a muzzle and enfranchised with a  
 clog;  
 therefore I have decreed not to sing in my cage. If I had my  
 mouth, I would bite; if I had my liberty, I would do my  
 liking: in the meantime, let me be that I am, and seek not to  
 alter me.

HERO

HERO.

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

LEONATO

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;  
 For, did I think thou wouldst not quickly die,  
 Thought I thy spirits were stronger than thy shames,  
 Myself would, on the rearward of reproaches,  
 Strike at thy life. Griev'd I, I had but one?  
 Chid I for that at frugal nature's frame?  
 O! one too much by thee. Why had I one?  
 Why ever wast thou lovely in mine eyes?  
 Why had I not with charitable hand  
 Took up a beggar's issue at my gates,  
 Who smirched thus, and mir'd with infamy,  
 I might have said, 'No part of it is mine;  
 This shame derives itself from unknown loins?'

But mine, and mine I lov'd, and mine I prais'd,  
 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, that the wide sea  
 Hath drops too few to wash her clean again,  
 And salt too little which may season give  
 To her foul-tainted flesh.

DOGBERRY

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 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!

MARGARET

MARGARET.

Of what, lady? of speaking honourably? is not marriage  
 honourable in a beggar? Is not your lord honourable without  
 marriage? I think you would have me say, 'saving your  
 reverence, a husband:' an bad thinking do not wrest true  
 speaking, I'll offend nobody. Is there any harm in 'the  
 heavier for a husband'? None, I think, an it be the right  
 husband and the right wife; otherwise 'tis light, and not  
 heavy: ask my Lady Beatrice else; here she comes.

BEATRICE AND BENDICK

BEATRICE.

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

BENEDICK.

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

BEATRICE.

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

BENEDICK.

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

BEATRICE.

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

BENEDICK.

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

BEATRICE.

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

BENEDICK.

Well, you are a rare parrot-teacher.

BEATRICE.

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

BENEDICK.

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

BEATRICE.

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