

URSULA  
But are you sure  
That Benedick loves Beatrice so entirely?  
HERO  
So says the Prince and my new-trothèd lord.  
URSULA  
And did they bid you tell her of it, madam?  
HERO  
They did entreat me to acquaint her of it,  
But I persuaded them, if they loved Benedick,  
To wish him wrestle with affection  
And never to let Beatrice know of it.  
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.  
Disdain and scorn ride sparkling in her eyes,  
Misprizing what they look on, and her wit  
Values itself so highly that to her  
All matter else seems weak. She cannot love,  
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  
No, not to be so odd and from all fashions  
As Beatrice is cannot be commendable.  
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.  
Therefore let Benedick, like covered fire,  
Consume away in sighs, waste inwardly.  
It were a better death than die with mockings,  
Which is as bad as die with tickling.

BENEDICK

This can be no trick. The conference was sadly borne; they have the truth of this from Hero; they seem to pity the lady. It seems her affections have their full bent. Love me? Why, it must be requited! I hear how I am censured. They say I will bear myself proudly if I perceive the love come from her. They say, too, that she will rather die than give any sign of affection. I did never think to marry. I must not seem proud. Happy are they that hear their detractions and can put them to mending. They say the lady is fair; 'tis a truth, I can bear them witness. And virtuous; 'tis so, I cannot reprove it. And wise, but for loving me; by my troth, it is no addition to her wit, nor no great argument or 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 humor? No! The world must be peopled.

When I said I would die a bachelor, I did not think I should live till I were married. Here comes Beatrice. By this day, she's a fair lady. I do spy some marks of love in her.

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.  
PRINCE  
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 at the door of a brothel house  
for the  
sign of blind Cupid.

# Benedick and Beatrice: A Love Story Condensed

BENEDICK  
Soft and fair, friar.—Which is Beatrice?  
BEATRICE  
I answer to that name. What is your will?  
BENEDICK  
Do not you love me?  
BEATRICE  
Why no, no more than reason.  
BENEDICK  
Why then, your uncle and the Prince and  
Claudio  
Have been deceived. They swore you did.  
BEATRICE  
Do not you love me?  
BENEDICK  
Troth, no, no more than reason.  
BEATRICE  
Why then, my cousin, Margaret, and Ursula  
Are much deceived, for they did swear you  
did.  
BENEDICK  
They swore that you were almost sick for me.  
BEATRICE  
They swore that you were well-nigh dead for  
me.  
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,  
For here's a paper written in his hand,  
A halting sonnet of his own pure brain,  
Fashioned to Beatrice. He shows a paper.  
HERO  
And here's another,  
Writ in my cousin's hand, stol'n from her pocket,  
Containing her affection unto Benedick.  
She shows a paper.  
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.  
BENEDICK  
Peace! I will stop your mouth.  
They kiss.  
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.  
LEONATO  
We'll have dancing afterward.  
BENEDICK  
First, of my word! Therefore play, music.—  
Prince, thou art sad. Get thee a wife, get thee a wife.