

Much Ado About Nothing abbreviated

Act 2, Scene 3

Deviousness

Situation: There in the garden, the Prince says he will “undertake one of Hercules’ labors, which is to bring Signior Benedick and the Lady Beatrice into a mountain of affection.” His plan is to have Benedick overhear their devious scheme. The plan is for Leonato to say that his daughter has been talking about Benedick and has told him that Beatrice “thinks surely she will die if he loves her not, and she will die before she makes her love known.”

Benedick to himself, No. 2

**This can be no trick, for Hero I trust.
The maid’s full bent affections for me must
Be requited. They say I’ll act above
Love proudly, if I perceive love, and she
Would rather die than give me a sign of
Affection. ‘Tis true she’s fair. I agree
She’s virtuous and wise, but for loving
Me; ‘tis no claim to her folly seeing
I am horribly in love with her. Since
I have railed so against marriage, I may
Have some odd quirks of wit broken agains’
Me. When I without wit said I’d die a
Bachelor, I thought not I should grow old
And married, yet the world must be peopled.**

BENEDICK: Here comes Beatrice. I do spy some marks of love in her.

Beatrice enters.

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

BENEDICK: Fair Beatrice, I thank you for your pains.

BEATRICE: I took no more pains for those thanks than you take pains to thank me.

BENEDICK: You take pleasure then in the message?

BEATRICE: Yea, just so much as you may take upon a knife’s point and choke a crow withal.

She exits.

BENEDICK: Ha! “Against my will I am sent to bid you come in to dinner.” There’s a double meaning in that.