

I will assume thy part in some disguise,
 And tell fair Hero I am Claudio,
 And in her bosom I'll unclasp my heart,
 And take her hearing prisoner with the force
 And strong encounter of my amorous tale: 250
 Then after, to her father will I break,
 And the conclusion is, she shall be thine:
 In practice let us put it presently.

Exeunt

[1.2] Enter LEONATO and an old man [ANTONIO,] brother to Leonato

LEONATO How now, brother, where is my cousin your son? Hath he provided this music?

ANTONIO He is very busy about it: but, brother, I can tell you strange news that you yet dreamed not of.

LEONATO Are they good? 5

ANTONIO As the events stamps them, but they have a good cover: they show well outward. The prince and Count Claudio walking in a thick-pleached alley in mine orchard, were thus much overheard by a

Act 1, Scene 2 3, 6, 14 SH ANTONIO] *Old Q* 3-4 strange news] *Q*: news F

248 tell . . . Claudio This is the first of the many impersonations proposed in the play. For Pedro to do the wooing with an 'amorous tale' as well as acting as broker and go-between seems (to us) odd. And he says 'my heart', 'my amorous tale', which can be seen as the origin of the misunderstanding by the 'good sharp fellow' (1.2.14) who overhears. The whole proposal shows little concern for Hero's possible feelings.

249 in her bosom in confidence.

Act 1, Scene 2

o SD They probably enter by separate doors, since Leonato's 'How now' suggests a greeting as they meet. There is a bustle of several extras across the stage indicated at 19. 'A room in Leonato's house' was Capell's location.

1 cousin your son 'Cousin' was loosely used at this time of members of the extended family; so here it means 'nephew' as at 2.1.58 it means 'niece'; at 19 the plural could almost include family servants. There is a contradiction if Rowe's identification of 'old man', 'brother' and 'Antonio' is accepted, since at 5.1.257 Hero is asserted to be 'heir to both of us'.

6-7 As . . . outward It depends on how they turn out, but they look good.

6 events stamps Though this appears to be a plural noun with a singular verb, 'events' is in fact seen as collective (= outcome). See Abbott 338 for a discussion of similar anomalies.

8 thick-pleached . . . orchard 'Orchard' could still mean 'pleasure garden' in Shakespearean England – though such a garden would probably contain fruit trees. A 'thick-pleached alley' could be a walk between carefully trimmed and intertwined trees, or an arbour composed of intertwined or naturally climbing plants. A description of the Duke of Buckingham's estate at Thornbury when confiscated to the Crown after his execution in 1521 includes the following: 'Beside the same privy garden is a large and a goodly orchard full of young grafes, well laden with fruit, many roses, and other pleasures; and in the same orchard are many goodly allies to walk in openly: and round about the same orchard is covered on a good height, other goodly allies with roosting places covered thoroughly with white thorn and hazel' (*Archaeologia* 25 (1834), 312). See also William Lawson, *A New Orchard and Garden* (1618), chapter 17. Compare 2.3.4 and 28, and 3.1.7-9, and see illustration 1, p. 7 above.

man of mine: the prince discovered to Claudio that he loved my niece your daughter, and meant to acknowledge it this night in a dance, and if he found her accordant, he meant to take the present time by the top, and instantly break with you of it. 10

LEONATO Hath the fellow any wit that told you this?

ANTONIO A good sharp fellow, I will send for him, and question him yourself. 15

LEONATO No, no, we will hold it as a dream till it appear itself: but I will acquaint my daughter withal, that she may be the better prepared for an answer, if peradventure this be true: go you, and tell her of it.

[Several persons cross the stage]

Cousins, you know what you have to do. O I cry you mercy, friend, go you with me and I will use your skill: good cousin, have a care this busy time. 20

Exeunt

[1.3] Enter DON JOHN the bastard and CONRADE his companion

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. 5

19 SD] *Theobald; not in Q* Act 1, Scene 3 o SD DON JOHN] *sir Iohn Q* 3 SH DON JOHN] *John Q (and throughout scene)*

11 accordant in accord, willing.

12 top forelock. The allusion is to the icon of *Occasio*, a female figure who was bald behind but had a long forelock hanging down in front; see the illustration from Geoffrey Whitney's *A Choice of Emblems* (1586), in Russell Fraser (ed.), *All's Well That Ends Well*, 1985, p. 26. This forelock symbolised the auspicious moment that must not be allowed to pass (Tilly 1311). Compare Spenser's description of Occasion:

Her lockes, that loathly were and hoarie gray
 Grew all afore, and loosely hong vnrold,
 But all behind was bald, and worne away,
 That none thereof could ever taken hold . . .

(*FQ* II, 4, iv)

This comes from the beginning of the story of Phedon, one of the analogues of *Much Ado*; see p. 3 above.

16 appear itself (1) makes itself appear, (2) till the event itself appear. (1) is reflexive, (2) elliptic.

18 *SD Theobald's stage direction is needed, since the disjunctions of Leonato's speech suggest at least two people, and possibly more.

Act 1, Scene 3

o SD NS suggests that the servants of 1.2 were used to set the stage with properties required for 2.1, in the mask. 1.3 is then played 'above' and the direction 'A door opens in the gallery' is provided. Assuming that some large properties were required this would be an economical use of time and space on the Elizabethan stage. The scene is unlocalised, and editors have suggested variously a room in Leonato's house (Capell) or 'the street' (Hanmer).

1 What . . . year A mild expletive of obscure origin.

1 measure moderation. In 3 Don John takes 'measure' in the sense of limit, boundary.

DON JOHN And when I have heard it, what blessing brings it?
 CONRADE If not a present remedy, at least a patient sufferance.
 DON JOHN I wonder that thou (being as thou sayest thou art, born under Saturn) goest about to apply a moral medicine to a mortifying mischief. 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 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 mean time, let me be that I am, and seek not to alter me.
 CONRADE Can you make no use of your discontent?
 DON JOHN I make all use of it, for I use it only. Who comes here?

6 brings] Q; bringeth F 7 at least] Q; yet F 17 true root] Q; root F 29 make] Q; will make F

9 Saturn The saturnine were 'sad, sour, lumpish, melancholy' (Cotgrave); Conrade, born under Saturn, should have a temperament like Don John's own.

9-10 moral . . . mischief medicine of moral precepts to an incurable disease. Don John is melancholy by temperament, as, he claims, Conrade should be by the dominance of Saturn in his horoscope. Good advice can have no effect.

10-13 'An envious and unsocial mind, too proud to give pleasure, and too sullen to receive it, always endeavours to hide its malignity from the world and from itself, under the plainness of simple honesty, or the dignity of haughty independence' (Johnson).

12 tend attend, wait.

13 claw flatter, 'scratch the back of'; but it contains a hint of cruelty as well.

15 stood out rebelled. Compare R2 1.4.38: 'Now for the rebels which stand out in Ireland'. This is the clearest indication of the cause of the war and Don John's disgrace: it is not very clear.

17 root This vegetable image of friendship is found elsewhere in Shakespeare: compare *Mac* 1.4.28-33.

17-19 fair weather . . . harvest Conrade insists that if John is to benefit from his reconciliation with Don Pedro, he must make sure that good relations are maintained between them.

20 canker wild rose. It is also a general term for diseases of malformation, excessive growth or ulcers in animals and plants (cognate with modern 'cancer') and this connotation attaches to Don John.

20 grace Newcomer suggests a pun on 'grass'.

21-2 fashion a carriage devise a way of behaving.

24 muzzle . . . clog Restraints for animals. A clog is a heavy block of wood to which an animal is tied to prevent straying.

26 liking what I like.

29 only alone.

Enter BORACHIO

What news, Borachio?
 BORACHIO I came yonder from a great supper, the prince your brother is royally entertained by Leonato, and I can give you intelligence of an intended marriage.
 DON JOHN Will it serve for any model to build mischief on? What is he for a fool that betroths himself to unquietness?
 BORACHIO Marry, it is your brother's right hand.
 DON JOHN Who, the most exquisite Claudio?
 BORACHIO Even he.
 DON JOHN A proper squire! And who, and who, which way looks he?
 BORACHIO Marry, on Hero, the daughter and heir of Leonato.
 DON JOHN A very forward March-chick. How came you to this?
 BORACHIO Being entertained for a perfumer, as I was smoking a musty room, comes me the prince and Claudio, hand in hand, in sad conference: I whipped me behind the arras, and there heard it agreed upon, that the prince should woo Hero for himself, and having obtained her, give her to Count Claudio.
 DON JOHN 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 any way, I bless myself every way. You are both sure, and will assist me?
 CONRADE To the death, my lord.
 DON JOHN Let us to the great supper, their cheer is the greater that I am subdued. Would the cook were a my mind: shall we go prove what's to be done?
 BORACHIO We'll wait upon your lordship.

Exeunt

39 squire!] squier, Q 40 on Hero,] F; one Hero Q 44 whipped me] Q; whipt F 53 a] Q; of F

32 intelligence information of a valuable or secret kind. The meaning is preserved in such phrases as 'military intelligence'.

34 model builder's or architect's plan.

34-5 What . . . fool What kind of a fool is he?

39 proper squire smart little fellow. The tone is contemptuous, but hard to render in modern English.

40 *on The Q reading 'one' is possible, but unlikely since it suggests that Hero is unknown to John and Borachio.

41 March-chick precocious child. A March chick is early hatched.

42 entertained employed.

42-3 perfumer . . . room Elizabethan domestic

hygiene was rudimentary, so that strong and unpleasant odours had to be disguised by burning sweet-smelling substances such as juniper.

43 me The ethical dative: The speaker, me (i.e. Borachio), is perceiver of the action reported.

43-4 sad conference serious conversation.

48 start-up upstart. But 'start-ups' were also high shoes - 'lifts' in modern stage terms - and so may refer, like 'young' and 'squire', to Claudio's youth and small stature; compare 1.1.11-12.

49 sure trusty, to be relied upon.

53 cook . . . mind i.e. that the cook would agree to poison them.

53 prove find out. Or perhaps, for the whole phrase, 'see what we can do'.