

DOGBERRY

Quiet! I told you he wasn't speaking to you!

VERGES

I think he was, Dogberry.

DUCK

He was!

DOGBERRY

Noooo. He said goodnight to me, and to my watch!

DOGBERRY points to his pocket watch.

HUSH

Dooogggberry!

VERGES

We are your watch!

DOGBERRY

No! Well! You can't be! You don't tick like a watch! You can't tell time!

WINCE

No, no Dogberry...the other kind.

DUCK

The kind that WATCHes out for evil!

DOGBERRY

No! That's not what Leonato said! He said snickering around for evil.

VERGES

Sneaking!

SQUAT

Evil Sneaking around!

WINCE

We are supposed to WATCH for evil SNEAKING around!

DOGBERRY

I KNOW! That's exactly what I just said! Are you hard of herring?

HUSH and DUCK
Arrrgh!

VERGES
Hearing!

DOGBERRY
Oh, stop your whining! There is no time to be wasted.
EVIL is snickering around.

ALL exit. Curtain closes.

SCENE 8

*Curtain opens. In the morning. Birds are singing.
BENEDICK and CLAUDIO enter.*

BENEDICK
What a morning!

CLAUDIO
Messina is far more beautiful than a battlefield.

BENEDICK
Did you sleep well, Claudio?

CLAUDIO
I did. My dreams were filled with visions of Hero.

DON JOHN enters.

BENEDICK
Good morning, Don John. Have you heard the news?

DON JOHN
Good morning, soldiers. What news do you speak of?

BENEDICK
Claudio has fallen into a deep, dark hole!

DON JOHN
And yet, he stands right here.

CLAUDIO

Benedick speaks in riddles. Simply, I am in love.

DON JOHN

And who is the lucky lady?

CLAUDIO

Hero.

BENEDICK

Your brother spoke with Leonato on his behalf.

DON JOHN

I think you are confused. My brother was speaking for himself.

CLAUDIO

How do you mean?

DON JOHN

Last night I overheard them talking in the garden.
Leonato gave Don Pedro permission to marry Hero.

BENEDICK

I hope you are mistaken!

CLAUDIO

Benedick! You joked, and now it is true!

BENEDICK

You must challenge Don Pedro, Claudio. For sure, he has wronged you!

CLAUDIO

I cannot challenge my commander. Hero is lost!

BENEDICK

Do you fall out of love as quickly as you fall in?
Here he comes now, speak your mind!

DON PEDRO enters.

DON PEDRO

Claudio, I have good news! Hero shall be yours!

CLAUDIO
Have you not taken her for yourself?

DON PEDRO
I would never do such a thing.

CLAUDIO looks at DON JOHN

DON JOHN
I guess I was mistaken. Forgive me, Claudio.

*DON JOHN exits.
LEONATO enters with HERO.*

LEONATO
Oh, happy day! I am pleased to accept your offer, Claudio!
And I've brought Hero so that you might speak to her yourself.

DON PEDRO
Gentlemen, let us leave them to speak in private!

ALL exit but CLAUDIO and HERO.

CLAUDIO
Hello Hero.

HERO
Hello.

CLAUDIO
You look lovely this morning.

HERO
Thank you.

CLAUDIO
Hero?

HERO
Yes, Claudio?

CLAUDIO
I cannot hide my feelings any longer. The truth is... I love you!