



"Much Ado About Nothing"

By William Shakespeare; Adapted and Directed by Lindsay Bryan

May 9-19, Little Theatre

Some Cupid kill with arrows, some with traps. Shakespeare explores the hate to love trope in this comedy that is mired in word play. We are setting our story in 1947 Messina, Italy at the home of Leonato. The war has just ended and Don Pedro is coming with his soldiers for a victory stay at Leonato's house. Former rivals battle it out, revenge is sought and trickery runs amok in this timeless comedy of romantic retribution and miscommunication.

Characters (with monologues for auditioning... this isn't the full cast!):

Leonato: Governor of Messina, Hero's father

Benedick: Soldier and renowned bachelor who rails against love

Beatrice: Leonato's niece, feisty and witty

Don Pedro: Prince of Aragon, plays matchmaker for all

Claudio: Soldier who falls in love with Hero upon arriving in Messina

Hero: Leonato's only child, obedient "good girl" who wants to marry Claudio

Don John: Don Pedro's villainous bastard brother

Dogberry: Swaggering watchman who has a flare for malapropism. Easily offended.

Please memorize one of the following monologues from the play to perform at the audition on Wednesday, January 24. You may sign up for an audition time at www.tinyurl.com/MJCMuchAdo

LEONATO Do not live, Hero; do not open 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. Grieved I, I had but one? Chide I for that at frugal nature's frame? O, one too much by thee! Why had I one? Why ever wast thou lovely in my eyes? Why had I not with charitable hand Took up a beggar's issue at my gates, Who smirch'd thus and mired with infamy, I might have said 'No part of it is mine; This shame derives itself from unknown loins'? But mine and mine I loved and mine I praised 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!

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 of 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 humour? 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.

BEATRICE What fire is in mine ears? Can this be true? Stand I condemn'd for pride and scorn so much? Contempt, farewell! and maiden pride, adieu! No glory lives behind the back of such. And, Benedick, love on; I will requite thee, Taming my wild heart to thy loving hand: If thou dost love, my kindness shall incite thee To bind our loves up in a holy band; For others say thou dost deserve, and I Believe it better than reportingly.

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. And Benedick is not the unhopefullest husband that I know. Thus far can I praise him; he is of a noble strain, of approved valour and confirmed honesty. I will teach you how to humour your cousin, that she shall fall in love with Benedick; and I, with your two helps, will so practise on Benedick that, in despite of his quick wit and his queasy stomach, he shall fall in love with Beatrice. If we can do this, Cupid is no longer an archer: his glory shall be ours, for we are the only love-gods. Go in with me, and I will tell you my drift.

CLAUDIO: Benedick, didst thou note the daughter of Signior Leonato? Is she not a modest young lady? No; I pray thee speak in sober judgment. Thou thinkest I am in sport: I pray thee tell me truly how thou likest her. Can the world buy such a jewel? In mine eye she is the sweetest lady that ever I looked on. I would scarce trust myself, though I had sworn the contrary, if Hero would be my wife. O, my lord, When you went onward on this ended action, I look'd upon her with a soldier's eye, That liked, 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 liked her ere I went to wars.

HERO: I never yet saw man, How wise, how noble, young, how rarely featured, But she would spell him backward: if fair-faced, She would swear the gentleman should be her sister; If black, why, Nature, drawing of an antique, Made a foul blot; if tall, a lance ill-headed; If low, an agate very vilely cut; If speaking, why, a vane blown with all winds; If silent, why, a block moved with none. So turns she every man the wrong side out And never gives to truth and virtue that Which simpleness and merit purchaseth. 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 cover'd fire, Consume away in sighs, waste inwardly: It were a better death than die with mocks, Which is as bad as die with tickling.

DON JOHN: 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. 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.

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 is 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 every thing handsome about him. Bring him away. O that I had been writ down an ass!