

Much Ado About Nothing abbreviated

Act 5, Scene 4

Contrition

Situation: It's a beautiful ending. Claudio has served certain terms of penance as demanded by Leonato. Claudio, having agreed to marry Leonato's brother's daughter, finds when he "unmasks" his new wife that she is Hero, not her cousin. Benedick, the avowed bachelor, and Beatrice, the avowed spinster, soon marry.

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 I was told you were in consumption.

BENEDICK: Peace! I will stop your mouth.

They kiss.

PRINCE: How dost thou, Benedick, the married man?

Benedick to Prince and Claudio

I'll tell you what, Prince; a group of flippant,
Sarcastic, wisecrackers such as you can't
Jest me out of my new found state of mind.
Dost thou think I care for satire or an
Epigram? Those beaten by wit will find
Nothing handsome about themselves and can
Walk from love. Since I plan to marry, I'll
Hear nothing said against it even while
Others may choose to flout me for what I
Have said against it, for man is within
A fickle, giddy thing. Claudio, my
Kinsman, live unbruised, and love my cousin.
Let's have a dance before each marriage seals
That we lighten our hearts and our wives' heels.

BENEDICK: Come, come, we are friends.

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.