Enter Leonato, Antonio, Benedick, Beatrice, Margaret, Ursula, Friar Francis, and Hero

Friar Francis
Did I not tell you she was innocent?

Leonato
So are the prince and Claudio, who accused her
Upon the error that you heard debated:
But Margaret was in some fault for this,
Although against her will, as it appears
In the true course of all the question.

Antonio
Well, I am glad that all things sort so well.

Benedick
And so am I, being else by faith enforced
To call young Claudio to a reckoning for it.

Leonato
Well, daughter, and you gentle-women all,
Withdraw into a chamber by yourselves,
And when I send for you, come hither mask’d.

Exeunt Ladies

The prince and Claudio promised by this hour
To visit me. You know your office, brother:
You must be father to your brother’s daughter
And give her to young Claudio.

Antonio
Which I will do with confirm’d countenance.

Benedick
Friar, I must entreat your pains, I think.

Friar Francis
To do what, signior?

Benedick
To bind me, or undo me; one of them.
Signior Leonato, truth it is, good signior,
Your niece regards me with an eye of favour.

Leonato
That eye my daughter lent her: ’tis most true.

Benedick
And I do with an eye of love require her.

Leonato
The sight whereof I think you had from me,
From Claudio and the prince: but what’s your will?

Benedick
Your answer, sir, is enigmatical:
But, for my will, my will is your good will
May stand with ours, this day to be conjoin’d
In the state of honourable marriage:
In which, good friar, I shall desire your help.

Leonato
My heart is with your liking.

Friar Francis
And my help.
Here comes the prince and Claudio.

Enter Don Pedro and Claudio, and two or three
Don Pedro

Good morrow to this fair assembly

Leonato

Good morrow, prince; good morrow, Claudio:
We here attend you. And you yet determined
To-day to marry with my brother’s daughter?

Claudio

I’ll hold my mind, were she an Ethiope.

Leonato

Call her forth, brother; here’s the friar ready.

Exit Antonio

Don Pedro

Good morrow, Benedick. Why, what’s the matter,
That you have such a February face,
So full of frost, of storm and cloudiness?

Claudio

I think he thinks upon the savage bull.
Tush, fear not, man; we’ll tip thy horns with gold
And all Europa shall rejoice at thee,
As once Europe did at lusty Jove,
When he would play the noble beast in love.

Benedick

Bull Jove, sir, had an amiable low;
And some such strange bull leap’d your father’s cow,
And got a calf in that same noble feat
Much like to you, for you have just his bleat.

Claudio

For this I owe you: here comes other reckonings.

Re-enter
Antonio, with
the Ladies
masked

Which is the lady I must seize upon?

Antonio

This same is she, and I do give you her.
Claudio

Why, then she’s mine. Sweet, let me see your face.

Leonato

No, that you shall not, till you take her hand
Before this friar and swear to marry her.

Claudio

Give me your hand: before this holy friar,
I am your husband, if you like of me.

Hero

And when I lived, I was your other wife:
And when you loved, you were my other husband.

Claudio

Another Hero!

Hero

Nothing certainer:
One Hero died defiled, but I do live,
And surely as I live, I am a maid.

Don Pedro

The former Hero! Hero that is dead!

Leonato

She died, my lord, but whiles her slander lived

Friar Francis

All this amazement can I qualify:
When after that the holy rites are ended,
I’ll tell you largely of fair Hero’s death:
Meantime let wonder seem familiar,
And to the chapel let us presently.

Benedick

Soft and fair, friar. Which is Beatrice?

Beatrice

I answer to that name. What is your will?

Benedick

Do you not love me?
Beatrice
   Why, no; no more than reason.

Benedick
   Why, then your uncle and the prince and Claudio
   Have been deceived; they swore you did.

Beatrice
   Do not you love me?

Benedick
   Troth, no; no more than reason.

Beatrice
   Why, then my cousin Margaret and Ursula
   Are much deceived; for they swear you did.

Benedick
   They swore that you were almost sick for me.
Beatrice
   They swore that you were well-nigh dead for me.

Benedick
   'Tis no such matter. Then you do not love me?

Beatrice
   No, truly, but in friendly recompense.