

## **Much Ado About Nothing**

### **Benedick's first soliloquy in Act 2 Scene 3 (The gulling scene)**

*Much Ado About Nothing* is the original rom-com. Beatrice and Benedick are the archetypal rom-com lovers. They seem to hate each other so much, we know they must really be in love.

Benedick claims to be a confirmed bachelor.

Unbeknown to him, his comrades and friends, led by his commanding officer are preparing a trick to bring the couple together.

Before Benedick is tricked into believing Beatrice is madly in love with him he puts forward an argument why he will never fall in love or marry.

#### **The soliloquy**

##### **Benedick:**

I do much wonder that one man, seeing how much another man is a fool when he dedicates his behaviours to love, will, after he hath laughed at such shallow follies in others, become the argument of his own scorn by falling in love: and such a man is Claudio.

I have known when there was no music with him but the drum and the fife; and now had he rather hear the tabour and the pipe: I have known when he would have walked ten mile a-foot to see a good armour; and now will he lie ten nights awake, carving the fashion of a new doublet.

He was wont to speak plain and to the purpose, like an honest man and a soldier; and now is he turned orthography; his words are a very fantastical banquet, just so many strange dishes.

May I be so converted and see with these eyes?

I cannot tell; I think not: I will not be sworn, but love may transform me to an oyster; but I'll take my oath on it, till he have made an oyster of me, he shall never make me such a fool.

One woman is fair, yet I am well; another is wise, yet I am well; another virtuous, yet I am well; but till all graces be in one woman, one woman shall not come in my grace.

Rich she shall be, that's certain; wise, or I'll none; virtuous, or I'll never cheapen her; fair, or I'll never look on her; mild, or come not near me; noble, or not I for an angel; of good discourse, an excellent musician, and her hair shall be of what colour it please God.

Ha! the prince and Monsieur Love! I will hide me in the arbour.

##### *Commentary*

*Benedick wonders how his old friend Claudio could have fallen in love, given how many times he has told him how love just leads to a man looking a fool.*

*He laments that Claudio has given up manly pursuits: he used to like rousing military music, now he just listens to soppy love songs; he used love armour, now he spends ages thinking about fashionable clothes.*

*Claudio used to be a plain speaker, now he spouts poetry all the time.*

*Benedick is a bit worried that he might fall in love, like Claudio.*

*He says that love may one day make him look foolish, but it's as likely as him literally turning into an oyster.*

*(An oyster is a fairly stupid creature, which is easily caught and at the time was sold as a cheap snack.)*

*He now sort of tests himself by trying to imagine the qualities of the perfect woman who might one day tempt him into falling in love.*

*He is interrupted by the arrival of his friends and comrades. He can't bear to be around the love struck Claudio so goes off to hide*