Much ado about nothing act 4, scene 1 essay sample

Literature, Play

Act 4, scene 1 is an important scene in the play. In this scene we should see a happy event- the wedding between Claudio and Hero. However, we know that Don John has other plans. He has set up a fake apparition of Hero having sex with another man before the wedding night to anger Claudio, Benedick and Don Pedro, his half brother who he is rebelling against. This means that we are expecting Claudio to accuse Hero of being impure; having witnessed her losing her virginity before the weeding night.

As the scene opens, Leonarto, the father of the bride, says, " Come. Friar Frances, be brief: only to the plain form of marriage, and you shall recount their particular duties afterwards" which shows that he is eager to get the wedding going and wants the event over and done with as quickly as possible. He wants Hero wed to a noble and loyal knight to Don Pedro.

Claudio, the bridegroom, normally adored Hero and calls her his " jewel." However, he seems to have had a very swift character change! He accuses Hero of being like a rotten orange – Beautiful to look at on the outside, but rotten and disgusting inside. His language is very passionate and colourful. He speaks his feelings and used the colourful metaphors to protest his innocence. Claudio's speech most definitely sounds rehearsed. He is playing the victim to the congregation at the wedding.

Through his words he shows that he feels hurt and betrayed. He uses colourful metaphors to stress his feeling of anger and hatred towards Hero, as she has lost her virginity before the wedding night. There is, however, a suggestion that he may have rehearsed his speech. The oxymoron used is not something you would just come out with in a speech.

Unfortunately, Don Pedro backs him up in his speech. He clearly feels some blame for Claudio's situation because he was the man that introduced the couple and convinced Claudio that his future wife was pure and not tainted. As a result, we feel some understanding of his position after this fake apparition but it seems like they're all ganging up against Hero.

As Hero is forced to hear what they say about her, Leonarto himself turns against Hero and says, " Death is the fairest cover for her shame that may be wished for." He sides with the men over his own daughter showing that he would rather lay trust in the prince and his men than in his own daughter, Hero. He also feels personally hurt and ashamed by what she has done as her honour and the family's honour was tied in with each other. If Hero had had sex before she was married, she would dishonour herself and the family name.

Benedick stays behind after the speech and the argument. This shows that he cares more about the truth than his loyalty to his friends, the Prince Don Pedro and Claudio. It also proves that he has a suspicion that the whole thing was set up by Don John to annoy the Prince.

Beatrice is desperate to help her cousin. She shows that in those days, it was a man's world because she suppresses her tongue and says nothing due to the fact that it wasn't permitted unless she was directly questioned. She cannot verbally or physically protect her, so she helps her recover. Her conversation with Benedick is in prose, which shows that there is not much time between what they say in the conversation. Their conversation reveals

that they love each other deeply. It also reveals that Benedick searches for the truth but gets swayed by Beatrice to do her dirty work, and challenge Claudio to a duel, for love.

At the end of the scene we, as the audience, respond very differently towards the main characters. We think well of Benedick because he searches for the truth instead of jumping to conclusions but feel disappointed in Claudio, Leonato and Don Pedro. They have jumped prematurely to conclusions with no evidence. This scene has proved that they can be very nasty people and Leonato disowns his own daughter when she is perfectly innocent.