

Beatrice and benedick's relationship in "much ado about nothing" essay sample

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Beatrice and Benedick's Relationship in "Much Ado About Nothing" Essay Sample

In Shakespeare's "Much Ado About Nothing" there are two plots involving lovers; one is serious and potentially tragic; the other is humorous and entertaining. It is upon this second love hate relationship between Beatrice and Benedick, that I shall be focusing and commenting upon the relationship between Beatrice and Benedick and the phases their relationship goes through. The pair have shared love in the past but Benedick won her love "with false dice" and Beatrice gave him her love "a double heart for his single one".

They are both intelligent individuals and have battles of wit in public to attempt to gain the advantage over the other. Don Pedro decides to play a trick on the two by tricking them into love; "Cupid is no longer an archer, his glory shall be ours" This scene is one of the main comical moments as both characters go completely against their beliefs that they so proudly and loudly proclaimed at the beginning of the play.

As Benedick and Beatrice comes to terms to their new found love they begin to trust each other. When Leonato's daughter and one of Don Pedro's soldiers Claudio decide to get married. Don John decides to try and wreck the marriage and deceives him into thinking that Hero has been deceitful and this is when Beatrice tells Benedick to kill Claudio for mistrusting Hero.

In the first scene of the play Beatrice has a small argument with the messenger. She is insulting Benedick when the messenger is trying to

defend him. First she insults his name, calling him "Senior Mountanto" which is a showy upward thrust in fencing, she is implying that Benedick is only for show, there is no substance to the man. It is clear from the start what her feelings are about him and she continues to insult him, saying he has lost four of his five wits so that he is left with only common sense to raise him above the level of common sense. Leonato then says, "You will never run mad" she replies "No, not till a hot January". Leonato is asking her if she will ever fall in love and her reply indicates that it is an unlikely outcome, just as unlikely as the wrong temperature in January. Thus showing her thoughts on Benedick and love.

When Claudio's love for Hero becomes apparent Beatrice tries to give her some advice on marriage. She gives Hero very down to earth advice saying there is no perfect man so why marry? "He were an excellent man that made mid-way between him and Benedick" she is also starting to show a soft spot for Benedick as she cleverly disguises it by saying mid-way between him a Don Pedro. Beatrice then describes her perfect man who should have "a good leg and a good foot" but soon after this she prays that god does not send her a husband,

"If he send me no husband, for the which blessing I am upon my knees"

This shows the lengths she will go to ensure that she does not have to marry.

Benedick has similar views to Beatrice on marriage and women. Benedick insults Beatrice in the first battle between them and he thinks she sees

herself as superior when she has no reason to be. Yet though Benedick dislikes her he recognises her beauty,

“ There's her cousin, and she were not possessed with fury, exceeds her as much in beauty”

Meaning he finds her attractive but with her fiery personality he finds her difficult. Benedick respect and is thankful for them as they brought him into the world “ That a woman conceived me, I thank her.” Yet in affairs of the heart and in marriage he finds them completely untrustworthy, he says he would not hang his “ bugle in a baldrick” and be made a cuckold

Beatrice and Benedick are both intelligent and both quick witted they use each other's insults to fuel their own fight. The battle starts off in Leonato's house and Beatrice says

“ I wonder that you will still be talking, Signor Benedick, nobody marks you.”

She means that no one is paying attention to you and he comes back with the reply of “ What, my dear lady Disdain! Are you yet living?” He is calling her disdainful meaning she is stuck up for no reason. It goes on like this until when Beatrice says “ A bird of my tongue is better than a beast of yours” which Benedick replies by taking the main point of her insult and using it to throw right back at her “ I would my horse had the speed of your tongue” He then leaves safe in the knowledge that he has won the round.

Beatrice's and Benedicks second battle takes place at the masked ball. This allows Beatrice to attack Benedick as he believes that she does not know

that it is him because he is in disguise. She insults him by calling him "the prince's jester" and he cannot fight back and make a comment, as this would give his disguise away to her. Thus Beatrice wins this battle and Benedick starts to worry about his reputation. He lets out a huge cry of rage, which shows his dignity has suffered to admit there may be some truth in what Beatrice has said. He then goes on to say that "she speaks poniards" that every word is like a dagger. He asks Don Pedro if he can be sent away on a mission "rather than hold three words conference with this Harpy". A Harpy is a fierce bird like monster with a beautiful female face. Although he is insulting her he is still recognising her beauty.

He leaves the stage having thrown more bitter words in Beatrice's face and in public; "her breath would infect to the north star" and "Oh god here's a dish I love not" He makes it quite clear to all that he cannot stomach the sight or smell of her and such a vivid attack leaves an socially embarrassing vacuum for Beatrice to explain. It is here that she confesses they have loved before but Benedick was "false" to her, while she loved him "double". She admits to everyone that she prefers to attack him first before he can do the same to her. When she too has departed, Don Pedro comes up with the idea of rekindling their love, He asks his friends to help him trick them and thus he will play "Cupid" and at once entertain his friends.

At the start of the garden scene there is a soliloquy from Benedick where he talks about his dislike of men who say they are going to be bachelors but then marry. This is ironic as this is what Benedick is about to do.

Don Pedro and his friends deceive Benedick by pretending to have a private conversation about the love that Beatrice has for Benedick. They talk about the shock that she loves him:

“ For she'll be up twenty times a night, and there will she sit in her smock, till she have writ a sheet of paper”

They play as the double meaning suggesting she wants sexual relations with him between the sheets of her bed. Also to cover themselves the men say that she will never reveal her love for him. “ No, and she never will that's her torment” All these comments are used to persuade Benedick that they are telling the truth.

The women Hero and Ursula deceive Beatrice in the same way. They praise Benedick by claiming he is one of the finest in the country. They criticise Beatrice “ Disdain and scorn ride sparkling in her eyes” saying she is full of herself and self-endered. They criticise her for taking everyone the wrong way “ So turns every mean the wrong side out”. When the women leave she decides to return Benedicks love “ Benedick love on, I will requite thee.”, which is extremely amusing for the audience to see. A fiery woman who said she would not get married so quickly succumbs.

The chapel scene is the first time that Beatrice and Benedick exchange their true feelings to each other face to face. Benedick makes a simple confession to Beatrice of his love,

“ I do love nothing in the world so well as you”

This shows that he is not at battle with her. Beatrice becomes confused at this and is all muddled up. She then says, " Will you not eat your word?" what she is saying here is that Benedick has said this before and she wants to know if his confession is true. This scene is all about trust and she is putting a lot in him as she asks him to kill Claudio he believes her word and says that he will challenge him.

Love affects Benedick and Beatrice and makes them do uncharacteristic things. Benedick shaves off his beard and starts washing and smelling nice. He says, " I have the tooth ache." He is lovesick. Beatrice also has been affected by love she says, " I am out of all other tune" meaning she just does not feel right. Like Benedick she also feels sick and has a cold " by my troth I am sick" Margaret realises what Beatrice is sick for and has a laugh at her expense and says that she needs to take the medicine " Carduus benedictus, and lay it to your heart" Both Beatrice and Benedick are sick for each other and show signs of their personality which we have not seen in the play before.

Benedick asks Beatrice to declare her love for him in public. As she is embarrassed she denies her love for him to avoid declaring love for Benedick, which she has preached against all the way through the play. Benedick also denies his and they both use the same phraseology,

" Why no more than reason"

As Benedick and Beatrice become wise to the situation and the trick that was played Hero and Claudio reveal how they tricked the pair. All our forgiven and Benedick kisses Beatrice and they celebrate.

“ Strike up, pipers”

All the way through you can see that there is something between Beatrice and Benedick and the two fighting is their way of showing their love for each other. They both admit openly that that the other is beautiful but not to one and other. But in the end it is their quick wit and intelligence that fuels their arguments, which has helped them to uncover the trick played on them that brings them together.