

# Shakespeare's treatment of contrasting views about love in "much ado about nothin..."

[Life](#), [Love](#)



## **Shakespeare's Treatment of Contrasting views about Love in "Much Ado About Nothing" Essay Sample**

William Shakespeare is one of the most famous playwrights of all time. He is well known for his plays such as, "Macbeth", "Romeo and Juliet" and "Midsummer Nights Dream" but maybe one of his least known plays, "Much Ado About Nothing" is the best of the lot. "Much Ado About Nothing" was written in 1598 and has all the main ingredients for a very good play.

There are a number of types of love and William Shakespeare wrote the play in such a way that he incorporated many of them. He included love such as family, brotherly, unrequited and, of course, romantic

Beatrice is the niece of the governor of Messina. She has a very strong attitude and is quite spiteful towards her former lover, Benedick.

"...he will hang upon him like a disease" (I, I, 19, pg25)

At this point in the play Beatrice is telling Leonato, the governor, how Benedick holds onto his friends and doesn't leave them alone.

Benedick feels the same way in return about Beatrice.

"I would my horse had the speed of your tongue" (I, I, 9-10, pg27)

Benedick tells that she has a quick and always answers back. The pair may argue, but they do agree on one thing and that is that they will never love and marry anyone.

Beatrice says:

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“ I had rather hear my dog bark at a crow than a man swear he loves me”

(I, I, 31-33, pg26)

And Benedick:

“ Shall I never see a bachelor of threescore again?” (I, I, 29-30, pg28)

Their friends are amused by the fighting and decide to have some with them. Claudio, Hero, Leanato and Don Pedro, planned to bring them together by dropping hints that the other loves them.

“ What was it you told me of today that your niece Beatrice was in love with seignior Benedick?” (II, III, 1-3, pg52)

This scene in which Benedick is tricked into believing that Beatrice loves him, was beautifully rein acted in the Royal Shakespeare Company's production of 2002. There is Benedick shuffling about behind trees and bushes trying to hide, but also trying to hear into his tormentors' conversation. Don Pedro, Claudio and Leanato know that he is there which adds to the farce like structure of the scene.

“ Bait the hook well, the fish will bite” (II, III, 19, pg52)

Here Shakespeare used a very good metaphor to describe the in which Benedick is being tricked. Claudio describes Benedick as a fish and the lies they tell are bait.

The same scheme is plotted for Beatrice by Hero and Ursula. In this scene Beatrice also hide like Benedick, but she conceals herself behind a trellis so she cannot be seen. Comedy is also brought into this scene, when Hero decides to water the plants on the trellis, which Beatrice is hiding behind. Hero is aware that she is there but continues to drench her.

“ But who dares tell he so? if I should speak,

She would mock me into air, O she would laugh me

Out of myself...”

Hero explains to Ursula, in a way so that Beatrice will overhear, how she couldn't tell her how much Benedick loves her.

At the end of these two scenes both Benedick and Beatrice have obviously been deceived. Benedick tells the audience how he will be “ horribly in love with her”. Beatrice says something very similar:

“...Benedick, love on I will requite thee”

This is very ironic because only the scene before was Benedick and Beatrice telling their friends how they were never to get married.

Another type of love and probably the most commonly recognised form would be romantic love.

Romantic love is clearly displayed between Hero and Claudio. Shakespeare uses various types of descriptive writing in the way that Hero and Claudio describe each other.

" In mine eye she is the sweetest lady that ever I look'd on" (I, I, 18-19, pg28)

In these early stages of the play Hero and Claudio are yet to be engaged. Claudio tells Benedick exactly what he feels about Hero, but Benedick, being himself, was rude about it.

" I can see yet without spectacles, and I see no such matter"

But Don Pedro comes to the rescue. He agrees that he will try to woo Hero into loving Claudio. He tells him that he will "...tell fair Hero I am Claudio" at the masked ball.

In the Elizabethan era, arranged marriages were very much the norm. Hero has very little choice whether or not to marry Claudio and her father, Leonato, clearly states this.

" If the Prince do solicit you in that kind, you know your answer"

(II, I, 23-25, pg37)

Hero was put under great pressure to say yes to a marriage proposal.

Soon after their engagement Claudio's love for his fiancée is flawed after Don John tricks him into believing that Hero was having an affair.

" I came hither to tell you...the lady is disloyal" (III, II, 31-33, pg63)

Don John had previously planned to fool Claudio into believing that Margaret was Hero who would then sleep with a friend of his, Borachio.

Claudio was furious by what he saw.

" If I see anything tonight, why I should not marry her tomorrow in the congregation where I should wed, there I will shame her" (III, I, 18-20, pg64)

Claudio was very quick to accept what he was seeing which is very strange for he was soon to become a husband and he didn't trust the woman he loved. But then he had no reason to doubt it.

Claudio did stick to his word and at the wedding he refused to be wed to " this rotten orange" to which he called Hero. This scene from an audience's point of view, is a pivotal part of the play, for this is where Hero is downtrodden by her fiancé for reasons, which are slander. Only the audience know that Claudio in actual fact saw Margaret at the window with Borachio.

This scene also brings in other types of love, for example fraternal or brotherly love which Don Pedro demonstrates by taking Claudio's side against Hero.

" I stand dishonour'd that have gone about,

To link my dear friend to a common stale"

Leonato, father of Hero, stood by her daughter up until the wedding but when he heard the words that were spoken of by Claudio and Don Pedro, he was furious. Hero logically denied all the accusations but Leonato was to have none of it.

“ Would the two princes lie...”

It took some persuading on the friars behalf to get Leonato to change his perspective of the situation.

“ There is some misprision in the princes”

The confusion throughout the play is finally resolved when two watch men announce the news that they overheard Borachio's conversation about how he had wronged Hero and Claudio.

The good news is spread and Claudio is deeply ashamed of what he has done for he believes that Hero died because of shock at the wedding. In fact the friar and Leonato planned to hide Hero away to teach Claudio a harsh lesson.

Claudio agrees that as Hero is dead, he must have the hand of Leonato's niece who looks exactly like her. The wedding day comes and the veil is removed by Claudio to show the face of his love, Hero.

Beatrice and Benedick announce more love somewhat awkwardly as they become very embarrassed in front of everyone. This becomes very comical to the audience as well as the characters.

Benedick asks, "Do not you love me?" for Beatrice to only reply, "Why no, no more than reason". Leaving the pair of them in a sticky situation, but with a bit of persuading, they finally come clean with the admitting for their attraction to one another.