

Oregon Shakespeare Festival Exploring Word Play – Student Worksheet
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Much Ado about Nothing (Act I, scene i, lines 116-145)

Beatrice: I wonder that you will still be talking, Signor Benedick, nobody marks you.

Benedick: What, my dear Lady Disdain! Are you yet living? Disdain – contempt, scorn

Beatrice: Is it possible disdain should die while she hath such meet food to feed it as Signor Benedick? Courtesy itself must convert to disdain, if you come in her presence. meet – proper

Benedick: Then is courtesy a turncoat. But it is certain I am loved of all ladies, only you excepted; and I would I could find in my heart that I had not a hard heart, for truly I love none.

Beatrice: A dear happiness to women, they would else have been troubled with a pernicious suitor. I thank God and my cold blood, I am of your humor for that. I had rather hear my dog bark at a crow than a man swear he loves me. pernicious – mischievous

Benedick: God keep your ladyship still in that mind! So some gentleman or other shall scape a predestinate scratched face. scape – escape
predestinate – decreed by fate

Beatrice: Scratching could not make it worse, and 'twere such a face as yours were.

Benedick: Well, you are a rare parrot-teacher.

Beatrice: A bird of my tongue is better than a beast of yours.

Benedick: I would my horse had the speed of your tongue, and so good a continuer. But keep your way, a' God's name, I have done. continuer – one who is tireless

Beatrice: You always end with a jade's trick, I know you of old. jade – ill conditioned horse

Oregon Shakespeare Festival
Benedick's Speech – Student Worksheet

Much Ado About Nothing (Act II, scene iii, lines 6-35)

Benedick:

I do much wonder that one man, seeing how much another man is a fool when he dedicates his behaviors 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 he had rather hear the tabor and the pipe. I have known when he would have walked ten mile afoot to see a good armor, 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 color it please God. Hah!

orthography – correct spelling and speaking

Oregon Shakespeare Festival Beatrice's Speech – Student Worksheet
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Much Ado about Nothing (Act III, scene i, lines 107-116)

Beatrice:

What fire is in mine ears? Can this be true?

Stand I condemn'd for pride and scorn so much?

Contempt, farewell, and maiden pride, adieu!

No glory lives behind the back of such.

And, Benedick, love on, I will requite thee,

requite – reward

Taming my wild heart to thy loving hand.

If thou dost love, my kindness shall incite thee

incite – ignite, stir-up

To bind our loves up in a holy band;

band – bond of marriage

For others say thou dost deserve, and I

Believe it better than reportingly.

reportingly – hearsay