









SIGNIOR "MOUNTANTO" p.14: Beatrice

(Act 1, Scene 1) Beatrice's first reference to Benedick is also the opening salvo in the 'merry war' of wits between them. She refers to him by a nonsense nickname that implies a fancy piece of fencing (the Italian term montanto is an upward thrust of a fencer's sword), as well as his 'mounting' ambition as a social climber; and, in a dirtier joke, his sexual appetite (Signior Mount-on-to!). The title 'Signior' is the English version of the Italian Signor, indicating a gentleman.



p.15: Leonato (Act 1, Scene 1) 'criticize', 'censure'













FOUR OF HIS FIVE WITS WENT HALTING OFF. AND NOW IS THE WHOLE MAN **GOVERNED WITH ONE.**

p.16: Beatrice (Act 1, Scene 1) Beatrice imagines a battle in which she so wounds four of Benedick's five senses (or mental faculties) so badly, that they retreat limping from the battlefield ('went halting off').

IN YOUR BOOKS

p.16: Messenger (Act 1, Scene 1) i.e., as we would say, 'not in your good books'.

AN p.17: Beatrice (Act 1, Scene 1) 'if' (and see p.72)

STUDY p.17: Beatrice (Act 1, Scene 1) 'library'

TROUBLE p.18 Don Pedro (Act 1, Scene 1) i.e., 'the burden of hospitality'

FATHERS HERSELF p.19: Don Pedro (Act 1, Scene 1) 'silently declares who her father is by so strongly resembling him'



STOMACH... p.15: Beatrice

HE HATH AN EXCELLENT

(Act 1, Scene 1) 'Stomach' can mean both 'appetite for glory', and therefore 'courage' (so that Beatrice can pretend to agree with the Messenger that Benedick 'hath done good service . . . in these wars'), and 'appetite for food' (so that Beatrice can sneak in another barbed comment about his beer belly). (See also p.64.)

MISTAKE

p.16: Leonato (Act 1, Scene 1) 'misunderstand'









YOU ALWAYS END WITH A JADE'S TRICK.

p.21: Beatrice (Act 1, Scene 1) 'You always finish our conversations like a stubborn horse - stopping abruptly and throwing me off.'

NOTE . . . NOTED HER NOT p.22: Claudio and Benedick (Act 1, Scene 1) 'notice . . . didn't pay her much attention'

LOW ... BROWN ...

'short . . . sun-tanned . . . unremarkable'. (For Elizabethan

complexions, see p.194 below.)

views on fair or dark

WITH A SAD BROW

p.22: Benedick

(Act 1, Scene 1)

'with serious intent'

LITTLE p.22: Benedick (Act 1, Scene 1)



I WILL DIE IN IT AT THE STAKE . . . THOU WAST **EVER AN OBSTINATE HERETIC IN THE DESPITE OF BEAUTY**

p.27: Benedick and Don Pedro (Act 1, Scene 1)

Benedick likens himself to a martyr who refuses to change his mind, even when being burnt at the stake; Pedro continues the comparison, telling him he has always been a stubborn infidel ('heretic') when it comes to the gentlemanly duty of always honouring female beauty.

NOTABLE ARGUMENT

p.28: Don Pedro (Act 1, Scene 1) 'significant talking-point'

"IN TIME THE SAVAGE **BULL DOTH BEAR THE** YOKE"

p.28: Don Pedro (Act 1, Scene 1) A proverbial saying about marriage: 'Even the wildest bull eventually submits to pulling a cart or plough.' (A 'yoke' is the wooden collar worn by beasts of burden.) So to say, 'Even the most confirmed of lady's men eventually settles down.'

EMBASSAGE

p.28: Benedick (Act 1, Scene 1) 'errand', 'mission'

p.29: Don Pedro (Act 1, Scene 1) 'love', 'fancy'

p.24: Benedick (Act 1, Scene 1) i.e., 'an unmarried man in his sixties'









A BACHELOR OF THREESCORE

IF THIS WERE SO, SO WERE IT UTTERED

p.25: Claudio (Act 1, Scene 1) Claudio is being deliberately evasive: 'Well, were that to be the case, that would be the way to describe the situation'

AFFECT











HOLD p.33: Leonato (Act 1, Scene 2)



OUT OF MEASURE

p.34: Conrad

'excessively'

(Act 1, Scene 3)





THERE IS NO MEASURE IN THE OCCASION THAT

p.34: Don John (Act 1, Scene 3) 'There is no moderation in the circumstances that gave rise to it . . .'

THIS ENDED ACTION p.30: Claudio (Act 1, Scene 1) 'these last wars'

FIT THEE

p.31: Don Pedro (Act 1, Scene 1)

'supply you', 'furnish you'

ASSUME THY PART p.31: Don Pedro











WITHOUT CONTROLMENT

ACT ONE

p.35: Conrad (Act 1, Scene 3) 'unhindered', 'unrestrained'

CANKER p.35: Don John (Act 1, Scene 3) 'weed'

I USE IT ONLY p.36: Don John (Act 1, Scene 3) 'do nothing else but cultivate it' (i.e., 'I am never anything but discontented')

THAT YOUNG START-UP HATH ALL THE GLORY OF **MY OVERTHROW**

p.39: Don John (Act 1, Scene 3) 'That young upstart has gained all the benefits I have lost by falling out of favour [with my brother]'

CROSS

p.39: Don John (Act 1, Scene 3) 'thwart', 'prevent' (and see also p.65)



(Act 1, Scene 1) 'impersonate you'

SHREWD

p.41: Leonato (Act 2, Scene 1)

'sharp', 'critical'

IN GOOD TIME

(a) 'quickly'; (b) 'at a brisk

p.42: Beatrice (Act 2, Scene 1)

musical tempo'

WALK A BOUT









BREAK A COMPARISON OR TWO ON ME, WHICH NOT MARKED. OR LAUGHED AT . . .

p.47: Beatrice (Act 2, Scene 1) 'attempt one or two witty putdowns of me, which when they go unnoticed, or else are ridiculed for their feebleness . . .'

LEADERS

p.47: Beatrice (Act 2, Scene 1) i.e., the 'leading couple in the dance'













HURT FOWL ... CREEP **INTO SEDGES** p.52: Benedick

ACT TWO

(Act 2, Scene 1) 'wounded bird . . . crawl for protection into marsh-reeds'

SHE MISUSED ME PAST THE ENDURANCE OF A BLOCK!

p.54: Benedick (Act 2, Scene 1) 'She abusively tested my patience beyond that of any inert block of wood!'

PONIARDS

p.55: Benedick (Act 2, Scene 1) 'daggers'

ALL THAT ADAM HAD BEFORE HE TRANSGRESSED

p.55: Benedick (Act 2, Scene 1) A reference to the Biblical Garden of Eden, where Adam, the first man, was lord of all creation - before he and Eve (the first woman) were banished from Paradise for their disobedience.

HARPY

p.56: Benedick (Act 2, Scene 1) In classical mythology, a monstrous beast with the face and body of a woman, and the wings and claws of a rapacious bird.

WITH FALSE DICE

p.57: Beatrice (Act 2, Scene 1) i.e., 'by deception'. This is an intriguing reference to Beatrice and Benedick's 'back-story': these two go way back – they have a past – and share the awkwardness we many of us feel in the company of our 'ex' . . .





(Act 2, Scene 1) 'mask'

p.44: Don Pedro (disguised as Claudio) (Act 2, Scene 1) 'take a turn on the dance-floor'







'TIS YOUR CUE

COMPLEXION ... CONCEIT

'temperament . . . understanding'

p.59: Beatrice

(Act 2, Scene 1)

p.59: Beatrice (Act 2, Scene 1) i.e. 'It's your turn to speak' (as if in a theatrical script)









ONE OF HERCULES' LABOURS

p.63: Don Pedro (Act 2, Scene 1) In classical mythology, Hercules successfully performed twelve impossibly difficult tasks, or 'labours': Don Pedro here imagines a thirteenth – to make Benedick and Beatrice love one another.

OUEASY STOMACH

p.64: Don Pedro (Act 2, Scene 1) i.e. 'small appetite' (for marriage): and see p.15.

COMES ATHWART ... **RANGES EVENLY**

p.65: Don John (Act 2, Scene 2) 'runs counter to . . . runs parallel'

COVERTLY p.66: Borachio (Act 2, Scene 2) 'secretly'

MEET p.68: Borachio (Act 2, Scene 2) 'appropriate', 'fit'

MONSIEUR LOVE p.70: Benedick (Act 2, Scene 3) Benedick is sarcastically referring to the lovelorn Claudio.



BORN IN A MERRY HOUR ... NO, SURE MY LORD. **MY MOTHER CRIED**

p.61: Don Pedro and Beatrice (Act 2, Scene 1) The Prince comments that Beatrice's witty ('merry') character has been predetermined as such by astrology; to which she replies that her mother certainly didn't think so when she was crying out in pain when giving birth to her.

PUT HIM DOWN p.57: Don Pedro (Act 2, Scene 1) 'cast him into depression'; 'got the better of him'











DOTE UPON THE **EXCHANGE** p.60: Claudio (Act 2, Scene 1)

'dearly love the transaction'

HERALD p.60: Claudio

(Act 2, Scene 1) 'messenger'





[Act 2, Scene 3] 'shaded alleyway', 'bower'

ARBOUR

p.70: Benedick

STALK ON!

p.73: Claudio

(Act 2, Scene 3)

THE FOWL SITS.

Claudio comically refers to

Benedick as the bird (or sitting duck) that they are creeping up on in their hunt. (He supplies a variation on the idea on p.75: 'Bait the hook well – this fish

will bite!'; on p.82 Don Pedro

suggests that 'the same net [be] spread' for Beatrice; and Hero

lays the same 'false sweet bait'

for Beatrice on p.89.)







WEAR IT OUT WITH GOOD COUNSEL

p.81: Claudio (Act 2, Scene 3) 'survive and endure it by steady resolution'

ON A KNIFE'S POINT

p.86: Beatrice (Act 2, Scene 3) i.e., when threatened with an unsheathed dagger

THERE'S A DOUBLE **MEANING IN THAT** p.86: Benedick (Act 2, Scene 3)

Erm . . . there isn't.



p.80: Don Pedro (Act 2, Scene 3)

i.e., 'shared my life equally with her by marrying her'

ERE p.80: Claudio (Act 2, Scene 3) 'before . . .

BATE ONE BREATH OF HER ACCUSTOMED CROSSNESS

p.80: Claudio (Act 2, Scene 3) 'modify a single word of her usual contrariness'





SE p.9 (Ac 'in l



MISPRIZING

(Act 3, Scene 1)

'under-valuing'

'disdaining', 'condemning',

p.91: Hero

(Act 3, Scene 1) 'in love with herself'







BEAR IT COLDLY ... ISSUE p.103: Don John

HOBBY-HORSES

p.98: Benedick

(Act 3, Scene 2) 'buffoons', 'jokers'

, *(Act 3, Scene 2)* 'Stay calm about it . . . result'

WATCH p.104: Dogberry (Act 3, Scene 3) 'police patrol'

CHARGE p.104: Verges (Act 3, Scene 3) 'orders'

NEIGHBOUR SEACOAL . . . A GOOD NAME

p.104: Dogberry (Act 3, Scene 3) Dogberry notes that Seacoal has an appropriate surname for carrying the lantern at the head of the night-patrol, since 'seacoal' (rather like our modern North Sea Gas) was particularly prized as a fuel.

YOU ARE TO BID ANY MAN Stand, in the prince's Name

p.105: Dogberry (Act 3, Scene 3) 'You must order anyone you see to halt, in the name of the Prince'



I NEVER YET SAW MAN, HOW WISE ... BUT SHE WOULD SPELL HIM BACKWARD p.92: Hero

(Act 3, Scene 1) This is a complicated way of saying that, however marvellous their qualities may be, Beatrice has only ever criticized or disparaged men.

CUPIDS

p.94: Hero (Act 3, Scene 1) In classical mythology, Cupid (a.k.a. Eros) was the blindfolded god of love whose arrows randomly struck the hearts of lovers.

MAIDEN PRIDE

p.95: Beatrice *(Act 3, Scene 1)* i.e. 'the pride I take in remaining single'







CHARM p.98: Benedick (Act 3, Scene 2) 'remedy'



ACT THREE

ACT THREE







VIGITANT

p.105: Dogberry

(Act 3, Scene 3) Constable Dogberry is

enormously stupid, as partly

shown by his impressive

ignorance of words. In this

'auspicious' (i.e. 'favourable')

'securely bound'). His grasp of numbers is equally dodgy on

for 'suspicious' p.117), and 'opinoned' for 'pinioned' (i.e.

case, he means to say 'vigilant' (i.e. 'attentive', 'watchful'); later on he confuses 'discerns' with 'concerns' p.116), 'comprehended' for 'apprehended' p.117),

p.105: Dogberry (Act 3, Scene 3) 'wretch', 'rascal'









NOT A FALSE GALLOP

p.114: Margaret (Act 3, Scene 4) A 'false gallop' was the technical term for a horse's rate of movement (a strolling canter midway between a 'snail's gallop' and a 'full gallop'), but Margaret uses this expression to mean 'However quickly I may be speaking, I'm still telling you the truth'.

COZ

p.115: Hero *(Act 3, Scene 4)* i.e., 'cousin'

EXAMINED EXAMINATION

p.117: Leonato and Dogberry (Act 3, Scene 5) 'interrogated . . . interrogation'

INKHORN p.117: Dogberry (Act 3, Scene 5) 'inkwell', 'bottle of ink'



DEAR

p.164.

p.106: Conrad (Act 3, Scene 3) 'well-paid', 'lucrative'





A GOODLY COMMODITY ... A COMMODITY IN OUESTION

p.111: Borachio and Conrad (Act 3, Scene 3) 'a very useful pair . . . subject to due legal process'

CARDUUS BENEDICTUS

p.112: Margaret (Act 3, Scene 3) A herbal remedy (literally 'holy thistle'), said to be effective against disease (but here punning, of course, on Benedick's name).









COUNTERPOISE

'supply an equal weight to'

p.118: Claudio (Act 4, Scene 1)

SEMBLANCE

(Act 4, Scene 1)

'superficial appearance'

p.119: Claudio











WIDE p.120: Hero (Act 4, Scene 1) 'inaccurately', 'mistakenly' (as in 'wide of the mark')





COMMON STALE p.121: Don Pedro (Act 4, Scene 1) 'cheap whore'





CATECHIZING p.122: Hero (Act 4, Scene 1) 'questioning', 'cross-examination'



REVERENCE, CALLING OR DIVINITY

p.129: Friar Francis [Act 4, Scene 1] 'venerable status, spiritual vocation, or godliness'

BITING p.129: Friar Francis (Act 4, Scene 1) 'sharp', 'harsh'

MISPRISION p.130: Friar Francis (Act 4, Scene 1) 'misunderstanding'

WHOSE SPIRITS TOIL **IN VILLAINIES** p.130: Friar Francis (Act 4, Scene 1)

'whose energies are given over to work mischief'

PUBLISH p.131: Friar Francis (Act 4, Scene 1) 'publicly announce'

OUT OF p.131: Friar Francis (Act 4, Scene 1) 'beyond the reach of'





BEING THAT I FLOW IN GRIEF, THE SMALLEST TWINE MAY LEAD ME

p.135: Benedick (Act 4, Scene 1) 'Since I am almost swimming in tears, even the weakest thread may pull me along'

STAYED ME IN A HAPPY HOUR

PROTEST

p.160.)

p.141: Beatrice (Act 4, Scene 1)

p.139: Beatrice (Act 4, Scene 1) 'interrupted me at a favourable moment'







TARRY

p.144: Benedick (Act 4, Scene 1) 'wait', 'hang on'

CHALLENGE p.144: Benedick (Act 4, Scene 1) i.e., to a duel. (See also p.153.)

RENDER ME A DEAR ACCOUNT p.145: Benedick (Act 4, Scene 1) 'pay me back at a costly rate'



IS HE NOT APPROVED A VILLAIN . . .

p.142: Beatrice (Act 4, Scene 1) i.e., 'Has he not been proved to be a villain . . .'

'swear', 'assert', 'avow'. (And see

MUCH ADO ABOUT NOTHING GLOSSARY



SECOND GRIEF AGAINST YOURSELF p.150: Antonio (Act 5, Scene 1) 'augment your misery by blaming yourself'



BUT NO MAN'S VIRTUE BE SO MORAL WHEN HE SHALL ENDURE THE LIKE HIMSELF

p.151: Leonato (Act 5, Scene 1) 'but no one who suffers the same grief himself can trot out those easy moral sentiments'





ACT FIVE

ADVERTISEMENT p.151: Leonato (Act 5, Scene 1)

'instruction', 'counsel', 'advice'

BEND p.152: Antonio (Act 5, Scene 1) 'aim', 'direct'







IN A TOMB WHERE NEVER SCANDAL SLEPT

p.153: Leonato (Act 5, Scene 1) 'in a family grave, all of whose dead occupants were beyond reproach'

APES, BRAGGARTS, JACKS, MILKSOPS!

p.156: Antonio (Act 5, Scene 1) 'fools, boasters, rascals, feeble infants!'











WE HAD LIKE TO HAVE HAD ... p.158: Leonato (Act 5, Scene 1) 'We were in danger of having . . .'

WE ARE HIGH-PROOF

'We are in the utmost misery'

MELANCHOLY

p.159: Claudio

(Act 5, Scene 1)







PLUCK UP

p.163: Don Pedro (Act 5, Scene 1) 'rouse yourself', 'pull yourself together'

CUNNING p.164: Don Pedro (Act 5, Scene 1) 'ingenious', 'clever'

INCENSED p.165: Borachio (Act 5, Scene 1) 'incited', 'persuaded'

SEMBLANCE p.168: Claudio (Act 5, Scene 1) 'likeness'

OUR SEXTON p.168: Dogberry (Act 5, Scene 1) i.e., the church official who has previously written down the evidence (and whom we have met on p.147).

PENANCE

p.170: Claudio (Act 5, Scene 1) 'punishment', 'restitution'





FOR MY LORD LACKBEARD THERE ...

p.161: Benedick (Act 5, Scene 1) 'And as for that arrogant boy over there . . .' (Compare Beatrice's reference to Benedick as Signior 'Mountanto' on p.14, and Benedick's reference to her as 'Lady Disdain' p.20 and 'Lady Tongue' on p.57.)







PENANCE ... INVENTION p.170: Claudio, (Act 5, Scene 1) 'punishment ... imagination'

ENJOIN ME TO

p.171: Don Pedro

(Act 5, Scene 1)

'impose on me'

POSSESS

'inform'

p.172: Leonato

(Act 5, Scene 1)







PACKED IN p.174: Leonato (*Act 5, Scene 1*) 'party to', 'implicated in'

SONNET

p.176: Margaret

(Act 5, Scene 2)







TO HAVE NO MAN COME OVER ME?... WHY, SHALL I ALWAYS KEEP BELOW STAIRS?

p.176: Margaret (Act 5, Scene 2) Margaret picks up and returns Benedick's pun (see previous note): if the poem Benedick pretends to be writing about her will keep off all other rivals, she says, does this mean she will always remain a mere servant ('keep below stairs'), and so always be denied suitors of a higher social rank?

THE FENCER'S FOILS, WHICH HIT BUT HURT NOT

p.177: Margaret (*Act 5, Scene 2*) i.e. the rapiers in a fencing-match that are tipped or blunted to avoid any real injury.

INNOCENT . . . HARD . . . BABBLING

p.178: Benedick (Act 5, Scene 2) 'simple, idiotic'... 'unsophisticated, injudicious'... 'drivelling'

BORN UNDER A RHYMING PLANET

p.178: Benedick (Act 5, Scene 2) 'destined to be a poet by my star-sign'

O, BUT STAY TILL THEN! / "THEN" IS SPOKEN. FARE YOU WELL NOW.

p.179: Benedick and Beatrice (Act 5, Scene 2) Beatrice takes Benedick literally, pretending to obey him by leaving when he speaks the word "then".



'love-song', 'poem about love'



IN SO HIGH A STYLE ... That no man ... Shall Come over it.

p.176: Benedick (Act 5, Scene 2) Benedick promises that the literary 'style' of his poem will be so sophisticated ('high') that no other writer could surpass ('come over') it; at the same time, his words form a simple pun on the country-gate (or 'stile') that will be built so 'high' as to keep all his rivals out.

ONLY FOUL WORDS...

p.180: Benedick and Beatrice

Benedick means that he and Claudio have had a guarrelsome argument; Beatrice replies with a version of the proverbial saying that all words, sine they

are composed of breath, are as

transient as the wind.

SUBSCRIBE

p.180: Benedick

(Act 5, Scene 2)

EPITHET

p.181: Beatrice (Act 5, Scene 2) 'turn of phrase'

'proclaim', 'declare'

BREATH

(Act 5, Scene 2)

FOUL WORDS IS BUT BAD









TRUMPET p.183: Benedick (Act 5, Scene 2) 'herald', 'announcer'













HYMEN

p.188: Claudio (Act 5, Scene 3) i.e., in classical mythology, the god of marriage.

RECKONING

p.190: Benedick (Act 5, Scene 4) 'settlement of accounts' (whether concerning a financial debt, or the honourable dispute of a challenge)

OFFICE p.191: Leonato (Act 5, Scene 4) 'task', 'rôle', 'part'

TO BIND ME... OR UNDO ME.

p.192: Benedick (Act 5, Scene 4) Benedick is awkwardly asking the Friar to marry him to Beatrice, but his old bachelor ways result in a final piece of word-play, their marriage either joining him to her ('bind me') - or resulting in his ruin ('undo me').

ENIGMATICAL

p.193: Benedick (Act 5, Scene 4) 'mysterious', 'puzzling' (because, of course, he doesn't yet realize the trick that has been played on him and Beatrice)



IN GUERDON OF **HER WRONGS**

p.187: Claudio (Act 5, Scene 3) 'in recompense of the wrongs done to her'

ACT FIVE







DETERMINED p.194: Leonato

(Act 5, Scene 4) 'resolved', 'decided'

ETHIOPE

DEFILED

p.197: Hero

(Act 5, Scene 4) 'polluted', 'sullied'

p.194: Claudio

(Act 5, Scene 4)

Because Elizabethan fashion valued a fair skin over the dark

one (and to be sun-tanned was considered particularly ugly, probably because it implied physical out-door labour), an African complexion ('Ethiope')

was a by-word for ugliness.







p.202: Benedick (Act 5, Scene 4) 'taunt', 'mock', 'jeer at'

FLOUT AT

GIDDY p.203: Benedick (Act 5, Scene 4) 'inconsistent', 'rash', 'foolish', 'inconstant'

CUDGELLED p.203: Claudio (Act 5, Scene 4) 'beaten'



I'LL THINK NOTHING TO ANY PURPOSE THAT

p.202: Benedick (Act 5, Scene 4) 'I will consider as superfluous nonsense anything that . . .'



BRAVE p.205: Benedick (Act 5, Scene 4) 'fine', 'impressive'

ACT FIVE