PEDRO   The Lady Beatrice hath a quarrel to you. The
gentleman that danced with her told her she is much
wronged by you.
BENEDICK   O, she misused me past the endurance of a
block! An oak but with one green leaf on it would have
answered her; my very visor began to assume life and
scold with her. She told me, not thinking I had been
myself, that I was the prince’s jester, that I was duller
than a great thaw, huddling jest upon jest with such
impossible conveyance upon me that I stood like a man
at a mark, with a whole army shooting at me. She
speaks poniards, and every word stabs. If her breath
were as terrible as her terminations, there were no liv-
ing near her; she would infect to the North Star. I
would not marry her though she were endowed with all
that Adam had left him before he transgressed. She
would have made Hercules have turned spit, yea, and
have cleft his club to make the fire too. Come, talk not
of her. You shall find her the infernal Ate in good ap-
pearance. I would to God some scholar would conjure her,
for certainly, while she is here, a man may live as quiet
in hell as in a sanctuary, and people sin upon purpose,
because they would go thither. So indeed all disquiet,
horror, and perturbation follows her.

Enter Claudio and Beatrice [, Leonato and Hero].
PEDRO   Look, here she comes.
BENEDICK   Will your grace command me any service to
the world’s end? I will go on the slightest errand now to
the Antipodes that you can devise to send me on, I will
fetch you a toothpick now from the furthest inch of
Asia, bring you the length of Preseter John’s foot, fetch
you a hair off the Great Cham’s beard, do you any em-
bachage to the Pygmies, rather than hold three words’
conference with this harpy. You have no employment
for me?
PEDRO   None, but to desire your good company.
BENEDICK   O God, sir, here’s a dish I love not! I cannot
endure my Lady Tongue.

210 flat plain  222 If... saying if it turns out as you say  226 wronged slandered  227 misused abused  232 thaw (when roads are impassable and one
must stay at home)  233 impossible conveyance incredible dexterity  234 at
a mark beside a target  235 poniards daggers  236 terminations terms (i.e.,
name-calling)  237 infest emit foul odors (supposed to carry infection)

240 Hercules... spit (The Amazon Omphale enslaved Hercules and set him
to spinning dressed as a woman. Turning a spit was an even more humble
care, assigned to a boy or even a dog.)  242 Ate goddess of discord  243
conjure her (scholars were supposed to have the power to call up or dismiss
evil spirits)  247 follows attends on  252 toothpick toothpick  253 Preseter
John a mythical Christian monarch of Ethiopia  254 Cham Khan of Tartary,
ruler of the Mongols  255 Pygmies a legendary race of dwarfs said to dwell
in Ethiopia or in the Far East  256 harpy a mythical predatory creature, with
a woman’s face and body and a bird’s wings and claws  264 use interest