Enter Beatrice.

Sweet Beatrice, wouldst thou come when I called thee? 92

BEATRICE  Yea, signor, and depart when you bid me.

BENEDICK  O, stay but till then!

BEATRICE  "Then" is spoken. Fare you well now. And yet, ere I go, let me go with that I came for, which is, with knowing what hath passed between you and Claudio.

BENEDICK  Only foul words, and thereupon I will kiss thee.

BEATRICE  Foul words is but foul wind, and foul wind is 50 but foul breath, and foul breath is noisome. Therefore I will depart unkissed.

BENEDICK  Thou hast frighted the word out of his right sense, so forcible is thy wit. But I must tell thee plainly, 54 Claudio undergoes my challenge, and either I must shortly hear from him or I will subscribe him a coward. 56 And I pray thee now tell me, for which of my bad parts didst thou first fall in love with me?

BEATRICE  For them all together, which maintained so politic a state of evil that they will not admit any good part to intermingle with them. But for which of my good parts did you first suffer love for me? 60

BENEDICK  Suffer love!—a good epithet. I do suffer love indeed, for I love thee against my will.

BEATRICE  In spite of your heart, I think. Alas, poor heart! If you spite it for my sake, I will spite it for yours, for I will never love that which my friend hates.

BENEDICK  Thou and I are too wise to woo peaceably.

BEATRICE  It appears not in this confession. There's not one wise man among twenty that will praise himself.

BENEDICK  An old, an old instance, Beatrice, that lived in the time of good neighbors. If a man do not erect in this age his own tomb ere he dies, he shall live no longer in monument than the bell rings and the widow weeps.

BEATRICE  And how long is that, think you?

BENEDICK  Question: why, an hour in clamor and a quarter in rheum. Therefore it is most expedient for the wise, if Don Worm (his conscience) find no impediment to the contrary, to be the trumpet of his own virtues, as I am to myself. So much for praising myself, who, I myself will bear witness, is praiseworthy. And now tell me, how doth your cousin?

BEATRICE  Very ill.

BENEDICK  And how do you?

BEATRICE  Very ill too.

BENEDICK  Serve God, love me, and mend. There will I leave you too, for here comes one in haste.

Enter Ursula.

URSULA  Madam, you must come to your uncle. Yonder's old coil at home. It is proved my Lady Hero hath been falsely accused, the prince and Claudio mightily abused, and Don John is the author of all, who is fled and gone. Will you come presently?

BEATRICE  Will you go hear this news, signor?

BENEDICK  I will live in thy heart, die in thy lap, and be buried in thy eyes, and moreover, I will go with thee to thy uncle's. 95

Exit [with Beatrice and Ursula].