Audition Monologues

**LEONATA**

Bring me a mother that so loved her child, Whose joy of her is overwhelm'd like mine, And bid her speak of patience; Measure her woe the length and breadth of mine; bring her yet to me, And I of her will gather patience. But there is no such woman: for men Can counsel and speak comfort to that grief Which they themselves not feel; but, tasting it, Their counsel turns to passion, which before Would give preceptial medicine to rage, Fetter strong madness in a silken thread, Charm ache with air and agony with words: No, no; 'tis all men's office to speak patience To those that wring under the load of sorrow, But no man's virtue nor sufficiency To be so moral when he shall endure The like himself.

Yet I will bend not all the harm upon myself, Make those that do offend me suffer too.

My soul doth tell me Hero is belied; And that shall Claudio know; so shall the prince And all of them that thus dishonour her.

**BEATRICE**

You dare easier be friends with me than fight with mine enemy.

Is he not approved in the height a villain, that hath slandered, scorned, dishonoured my kinswoman? O that I were a man! What, bear her in hand until they come to take hands; and then, with public accusation, uncovered slander, unmitigated rancour, --O God, that I were a man! I would eat his heart in the market-place.

Princes and counties! Surely, a princely testimony, a goodly count, Count Comfect; a sweet gallant, surely! O that I were a man for his sake! or that I had any friend would be a man for my sake! But manhood is melted into courtesies, valour into compliment, and men are only turned into tongue, and trim ones too: he is now as valiant as Hercules that only tells a lie and swears it. I cannot be a man with wishing, therefore I will die a woman with grieving.

**HERO**

No, not to be so odd and from all fashions As Beatrice is, cannot be commendable: But who dare tell her so? If I should speak, She would mock me into air; O, she would laugh me Out of myself, press me to death with wit. Therefore let Benedick, like cover'd fire, Consume away in sighs, waste inwardly: It were a better death than die with mocks, Which is as bad as die with tickling. No; rather I will go to Benedick And counsel him to fight against his passion. And, truly, I'll devise some honest slanders To stain my cousin with: one doth not know How much an ill word may empoison liking.

**DON PEDRO**

Come, you shake the head at so long a breathing: but, I warrant thee, Claudio, the time shall not go dully by us. I will in the interim undertake one of Hercules' labours; which is, to bring Signior Benedick and the Lady Beatrice into a mountain of affection the one with the other. I would fain have it a match, and I doubt not but to fashion it, if you three will but minister such assistance as I shall give you direction. And Benedick is not the unhopefullest husband that I know. Thus far can I praise him; he is of a noble strain, of approved valour and confirmed honesty. I will teach you how to humour your cousin, that she shall fall in love with Benedick; and I, with your two helps, will so practise on Benedick that, in despite of his quick wit and his queasy stomach, he shall fall in love with Beatrice. If we can do this, Cupid is no longer an archer: his glory shall be ours, for we are the only love-gods. Go in with me, and I will tell you my drift.

**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. May I be so converted and see with these eyes? I cannot tell; I think not:

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 colour it please God. Ha! the prince and Mister Love! I will hide me in the arbour.

**DOGBERRY**

Dost thou not suspect my place? dost thou not suspect my years? O that he were here to write me down an ass! But, master, remember that I am an ass; though it be not written down, yet forget not that I am an ass. No, thou villain, thou art full of piety, as shall be proved upon thee by good witness. I am a wise fellow, and, which is more, an officer, and, which is more, a householder, and, which is more, as pretty a piece of flesh as any is in Hampton Roads, and one that knows the law, go to; and a rich fellow enough, go to; and a fellow that hath had losses, and one that hath two gowns and every thing handsome about him. Bring him away. O that I had been writ down an ass!

**BORACHIO**

Sweet prince, let me go no farther to mine answer: do you hear me, and let this count kill me. I have deceived even your very eyes: what your wisdoms could not discover, these shallow fools have brought to light: who in the night overheard me confessing how Don John your brother incensed me to slander the Lady Hero, how you saw me court Margaret in Hero's garments, how you disgraced her, when you should marry her: my villany they have upon record; which I had rather seal with my death than repeat over to my shame. The lady is dead upon mine and my master's false accusation; and, briefly, I desire nothing but the reward of a villain.

**DON JOHN**

I had rather be a canker in a hedge than a rose in his grace, and it better fits my blood to be disdained of all than to fashion a carriage to rob love from any: in this, it must not be denied but I am a plain-dealing villain. I am trusted with a muzzle; therefore I have decreed not to sing in my cage. If I had my mouth, I would bite; if I had my liberty, I would do my liking: in the meantime let me be that I am and seek not to alter me.

Come, come, let us thither: this may prove food to my displeasure. That young start-up hath all the glory of my overthrow: if I can cross him any way, I bless myself every way. Let us to the great supper: their cheer is the greater that I am subdued. Shall we go prove what's to be done?