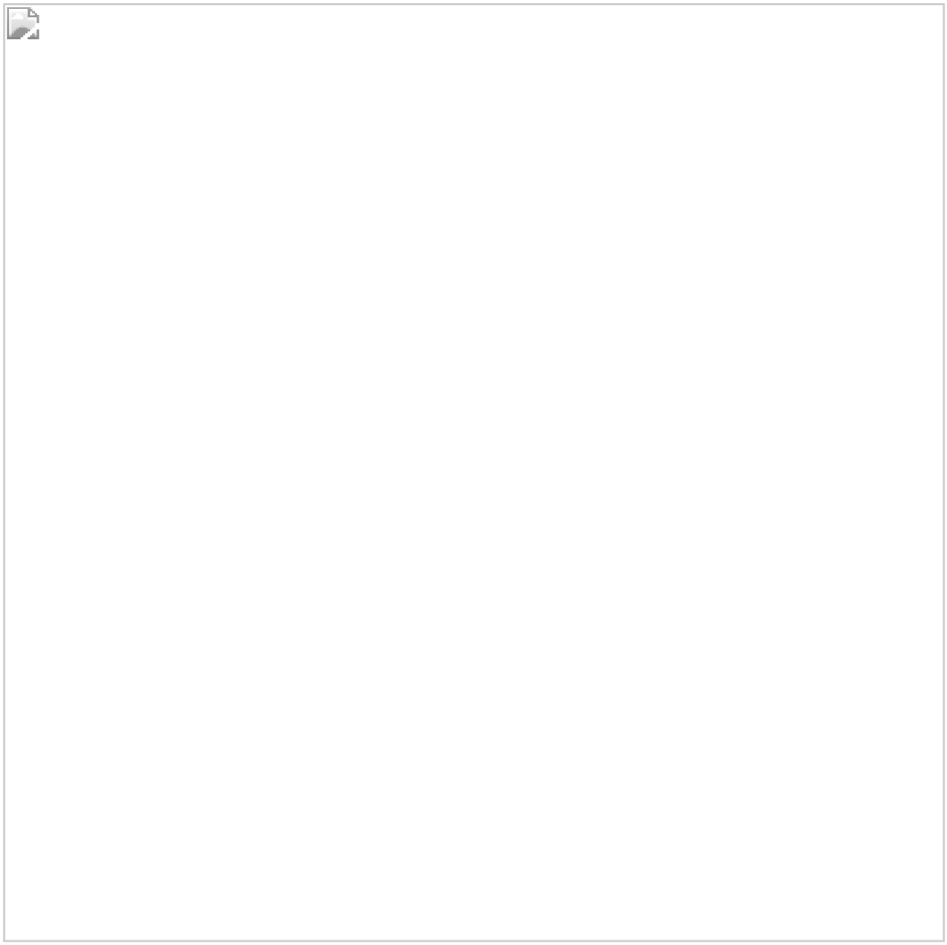
COLORING THE CLASSICS

Much Ado About Nothing

A Play by Shakespeare



In the sunny town of Messina, in Italy, long ago, a kind man named Leonato lived with his daughter Hero and his niece Beatrice.

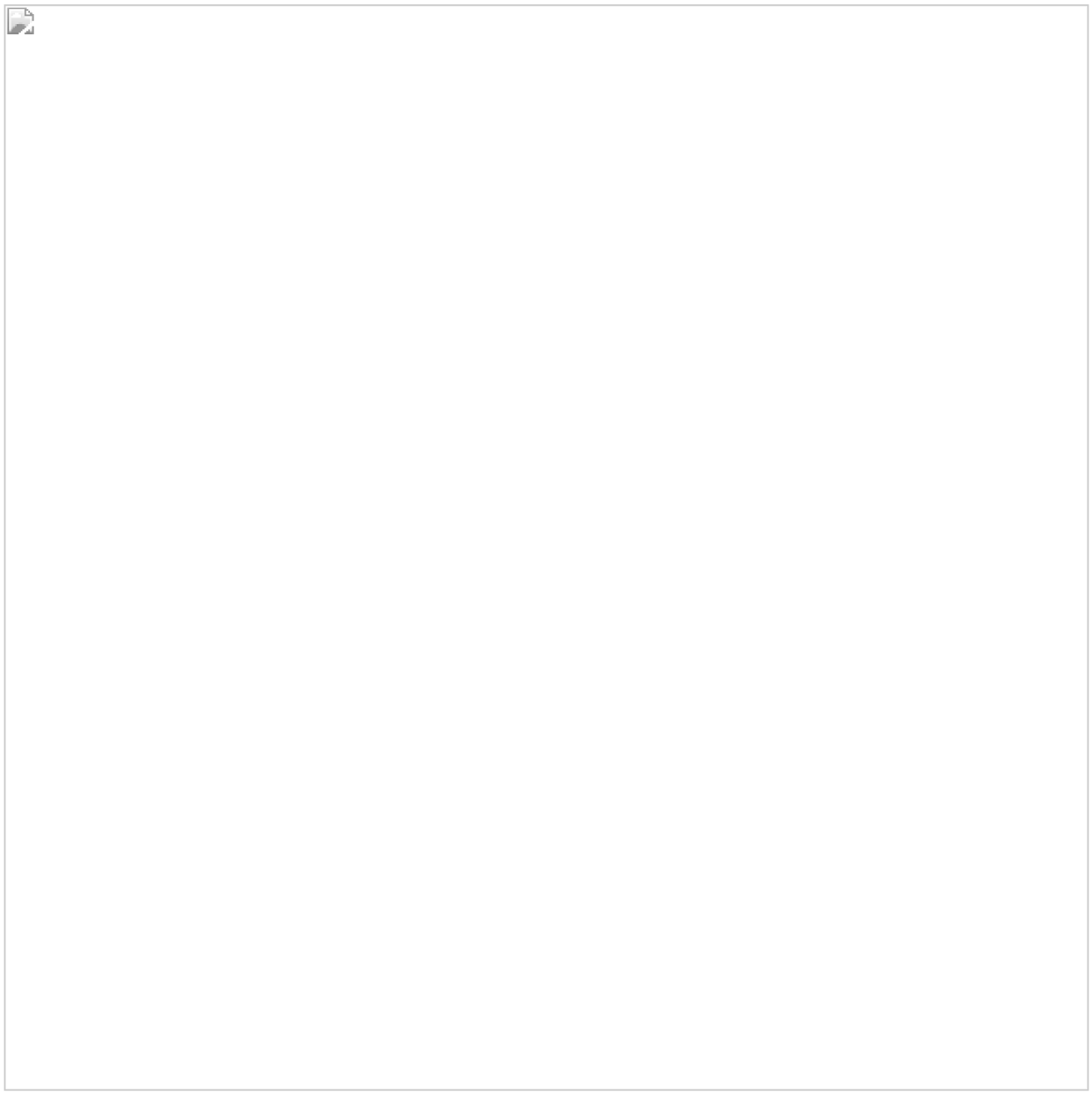
One day word came that Don Pedro, a prince, was coming home from the wars, and he was coming to stay at Leonato's house. With him came his friends, the young lords Claudio and Benedick, and his unhappy brother, Don John.

TALK ABOUT IT

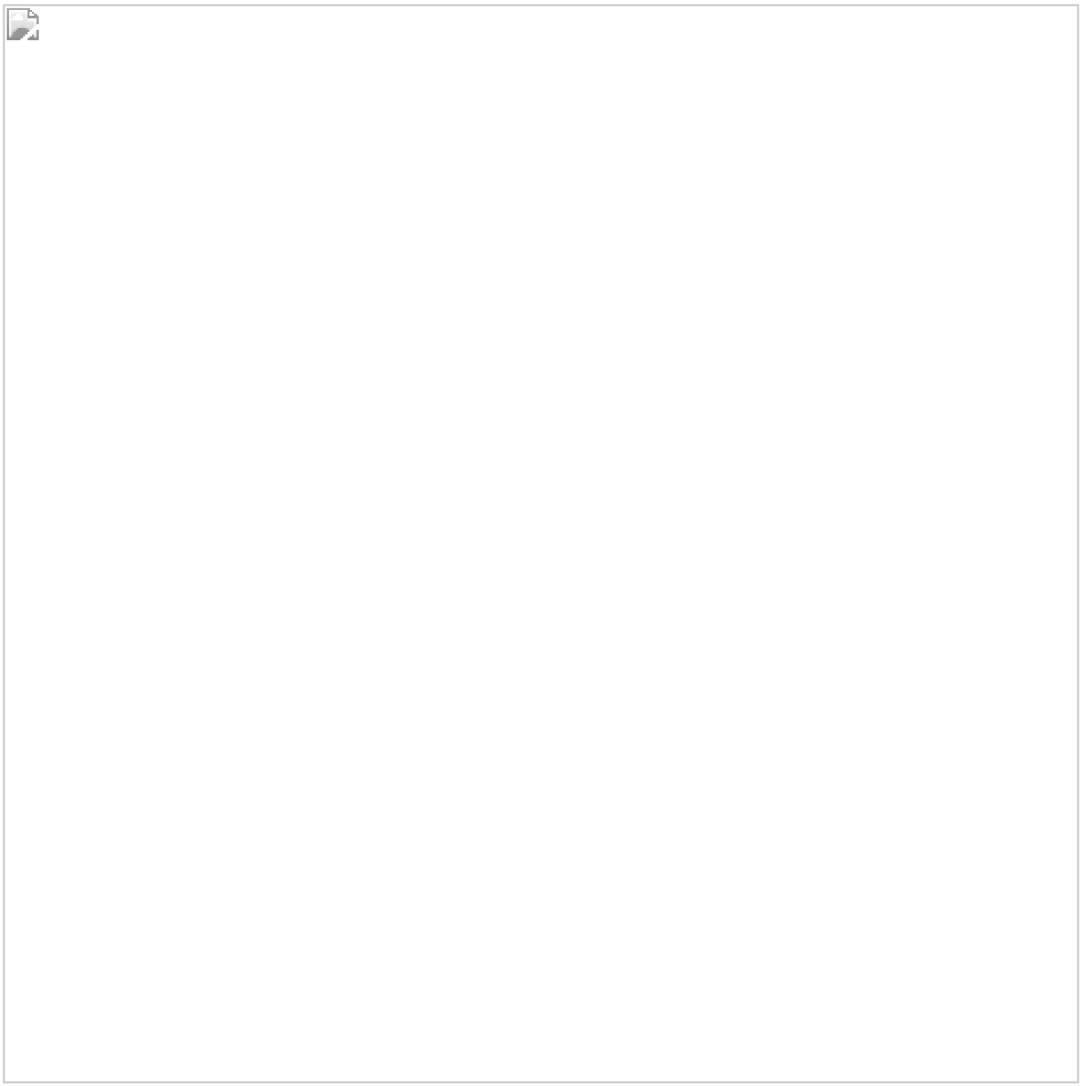
Visitors are coming to Leonato's house. What do you think will happen when so many people arrive?

This book belongs to _____

Much Ado About Nothing · another picture



A Merry War



Beatrice and Benedick had known each other for a long time, and whenever they met, they teased each other with quick, sharp words.

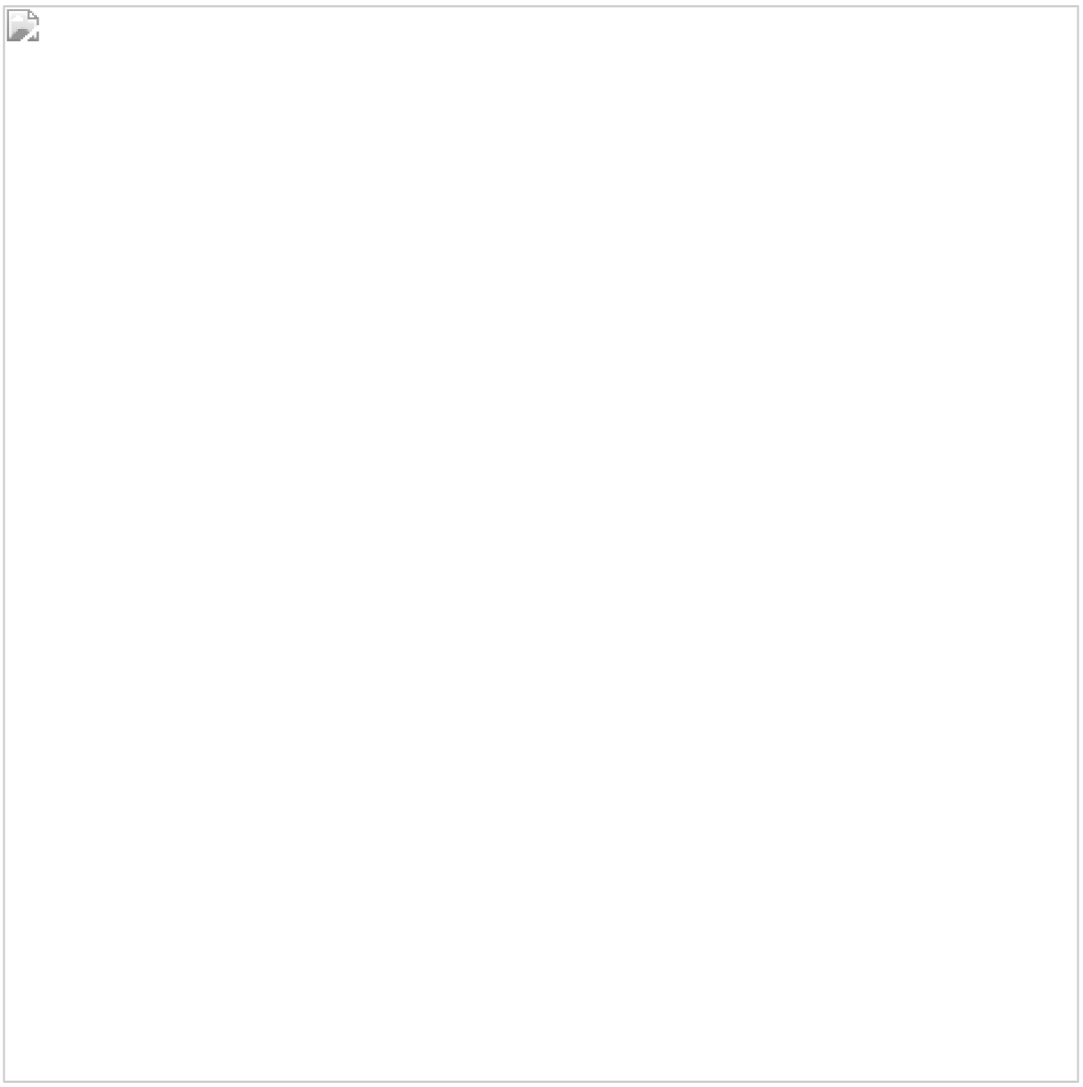
“What! my dear Lady Disdain, are you yet living?” said Benedick.

Beatrice answered that she would rather hear her dog bark at a crow than hear a man swear he loved her. Benedick said he loved nobody, and he never meant to marry.

Meanwhile, young Claudio took one look at Hero and thought she was wonderful. “In mine eye she is the sweetest lady that ever I looked on.” Benedick only laughed at him.

TALK ABOUT IT

Beatrice and Benedick teased each other all the time. When is teasing fun, and when does it stop being fun?



Think about it

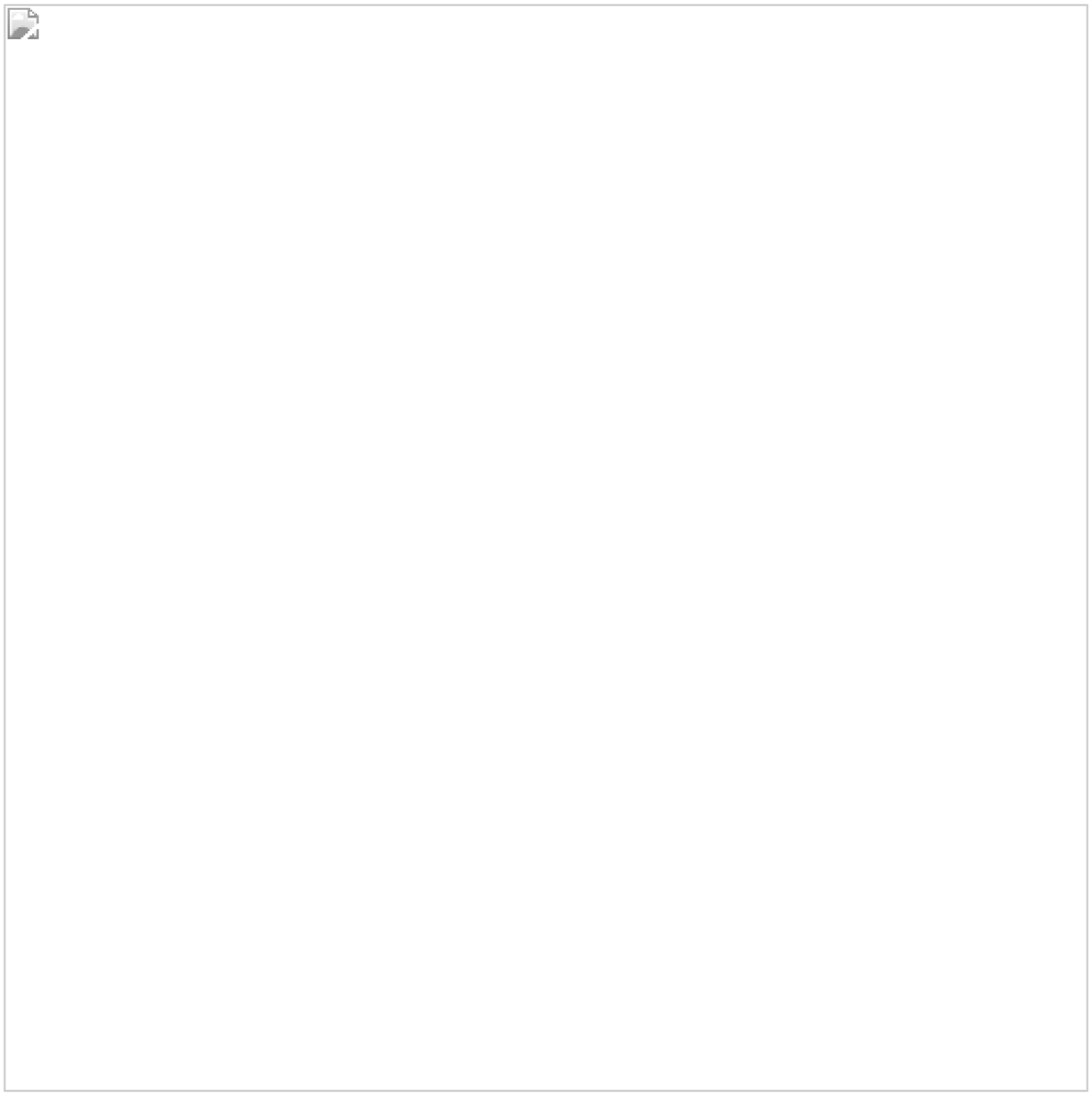
1. Who did Claudio think was the sweetest lady?

- ○ Beatrice
- ○ Hero
- ○ Margaret

2. What did Benedick say about getting married?

- ○ He wanted to marry soon
- ○ He never meant to marry
- ○ He had already married

The Masked Dance



Don Pedro wanted to help Claudio. “I know we shall have revelling tonight,” he said. At the masked dance he would wear a disguise and talk to Hero for Claudio, then speak to her father.

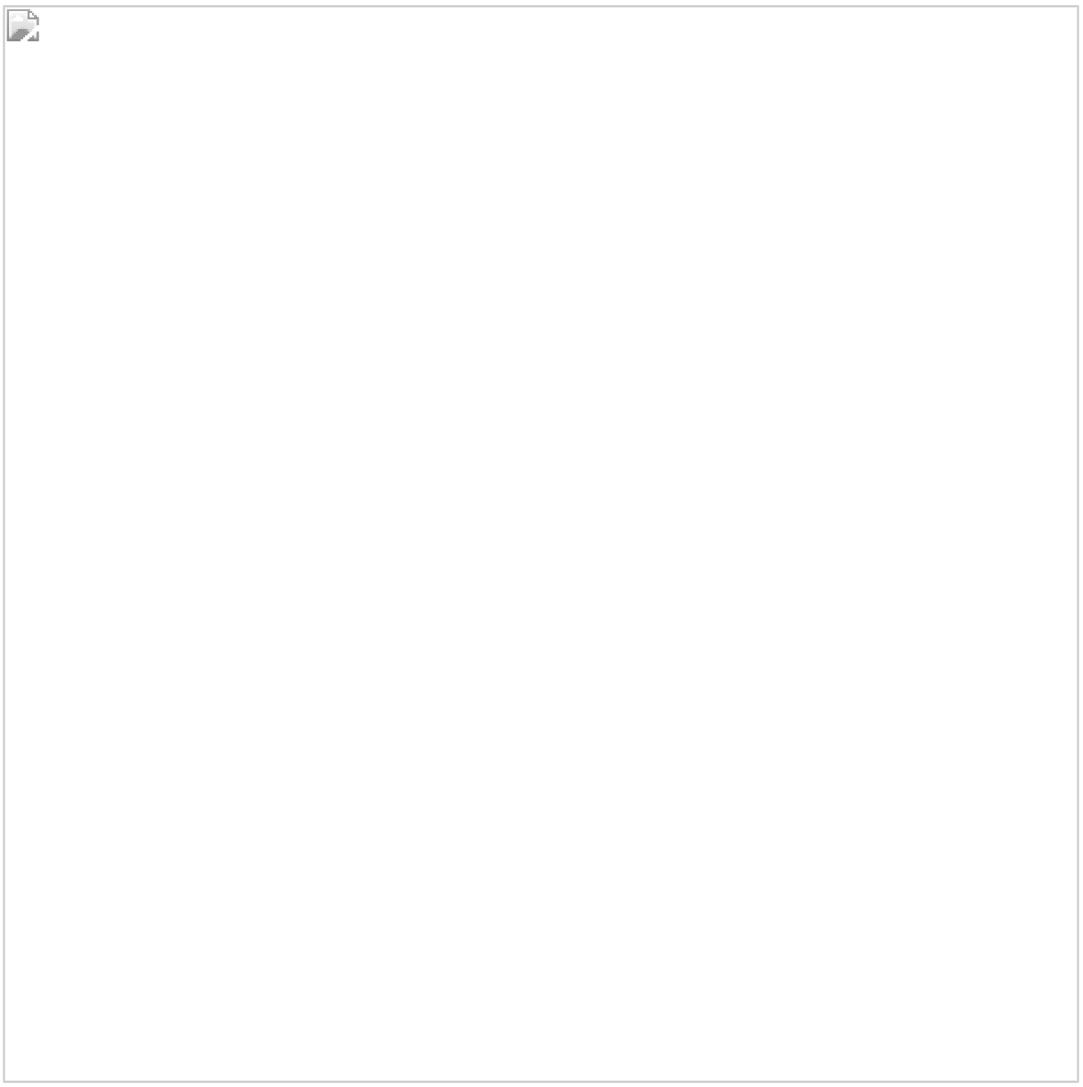
But Don John did not want anyone to be happy. He told Claudio, who was masked, that the Prince wanted Hero for himself. This was not true.

Claudio was very sad. But soon the truth came out: Don Pedro had won Hero for Claudio, and Leonato said yes. The wedding was set for a week away.

Don Pedro had another plan for that week: to bring Beatrice and Benedick together.

TALK ABOUT IT
Claudio believed Don John instead of asking his friend. What could he have done instead?

The Masked Dance · another picture

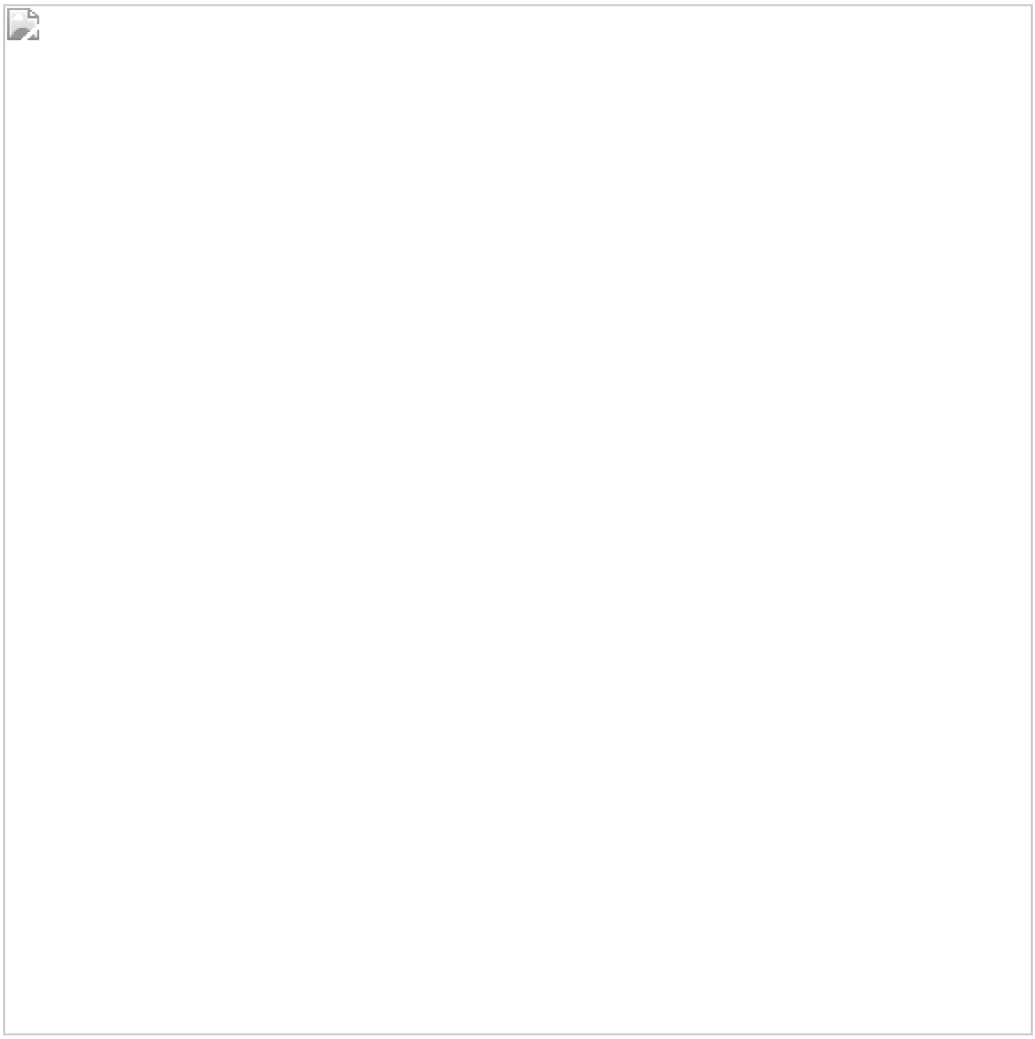


Think about it

1. Who did Don Pedro talk to for Claudio at the dance?

- ○ Hero
- ○ Beatrice
- ○ Margaret

A Plan for Two Friends



Don Pedro, Claudio, Leonato and Hero set out to play a friendly trick. First, they let Benedick overhear them in the garden. They talked as if Beatrice secretly loved him but was too proud to say so.

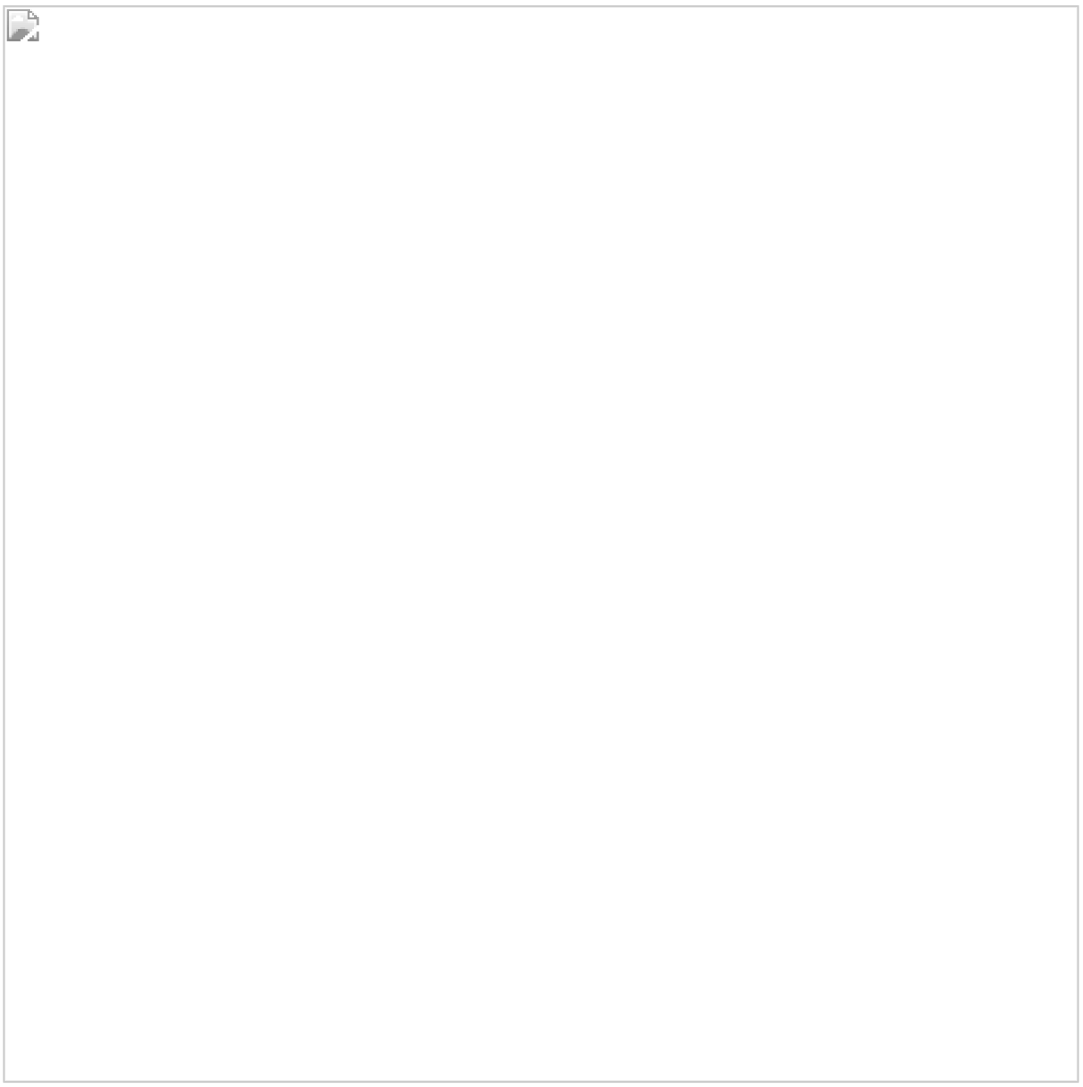
Benedick thought it over. “When I said I would die a bachelor, I did not think I should live till I were married.” Then he decided, “for I will be horribly in love with her.”

Next, Hero and her maid Ursula let Beatrice overhear them. They talked as if Benedick secretly loved her.

Beatrice stood very still in the leaves. Then she said, “Contempt, farewell! and maiden pride, adieu!”

TALK ABOUT IT

Their friends told a made-up story to bring them together. What do you think about helping two people in this way?

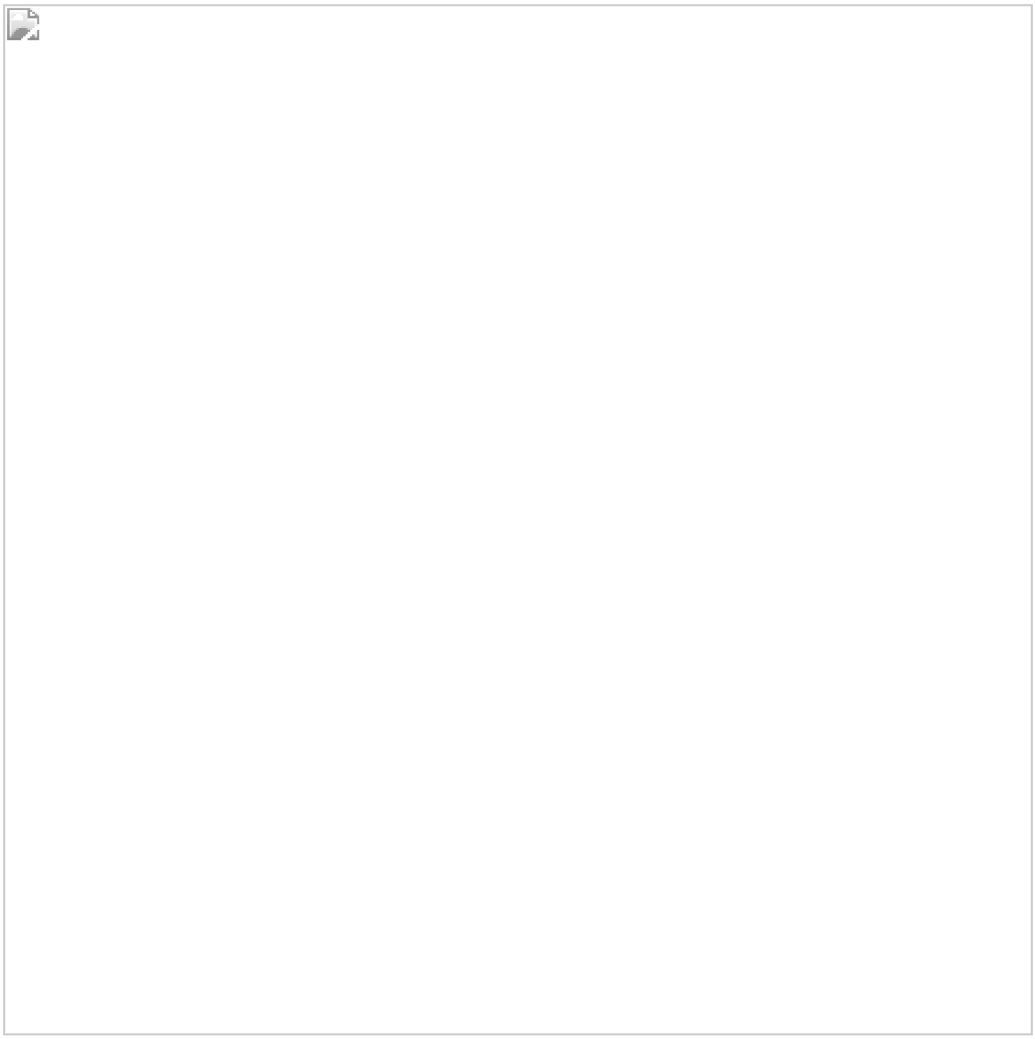


Think about it

1. Where did Benedick hide to listen?

- ○ In the garden
- ○ In a church
- ○ On a ship

Don John's Trick



Don John was still angry that Claudio was happy. His helper Borachio had a wicked idea.

Borachio would speak to Margaret, Hero's maid, at Hero's window at night, and call her "Hero." Margaret did not know what the plan was. Don John would bring Don Pedro and Claudio to watch.

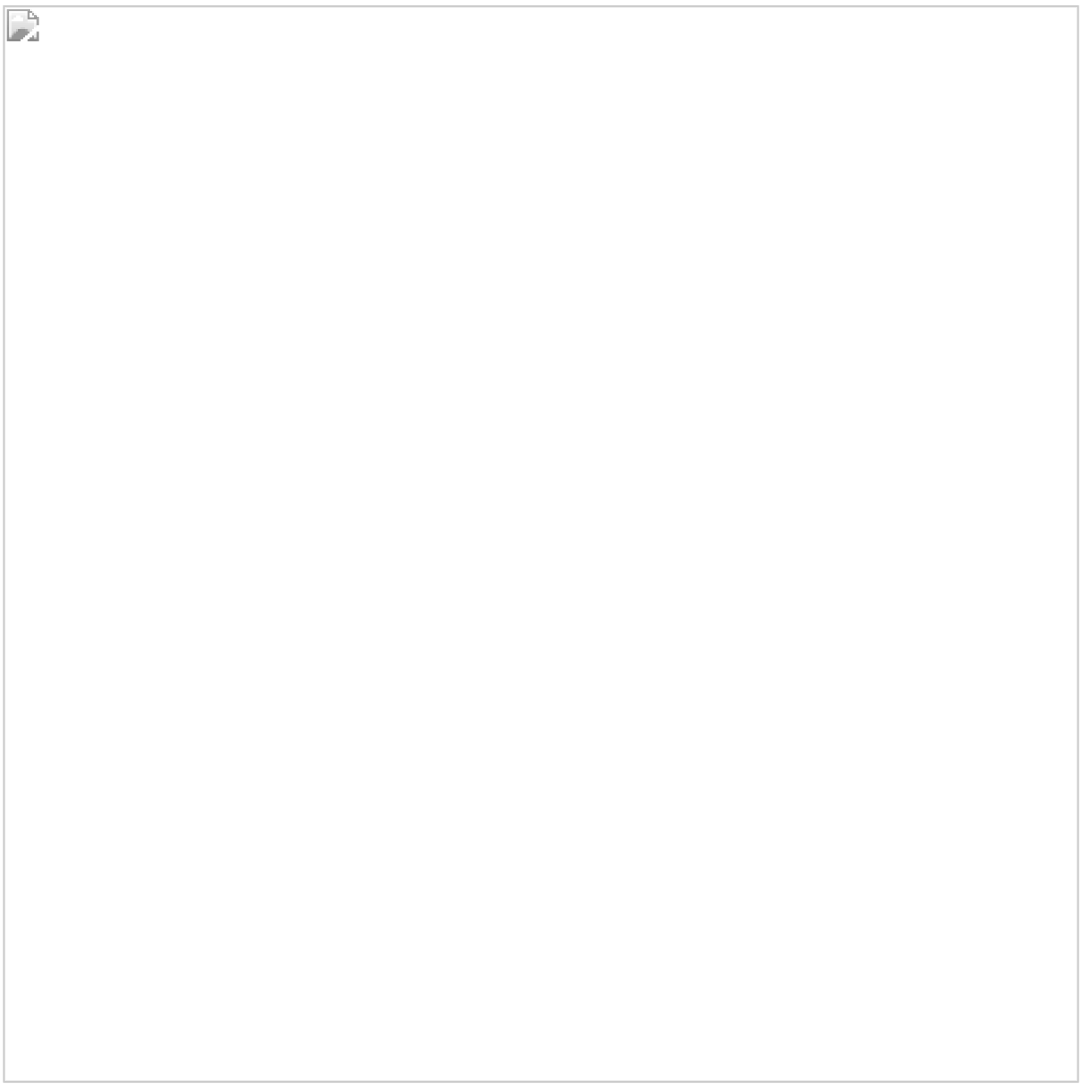
It worked. In the dark, Don Pedro and Claudio thought they saw Hero with another man. It was a trick to make Claudio believe that Hero had been untrue to him.

Claudio was full of anger and sorrow. He said that at the wedding, in front of everyone, he would say what he had seen.

TALK ABOUT IT

Don John and Borachio used a trick to hurt Hero and Claudio. Why do you think they wanted to do that?

Don John's Trick · another picture

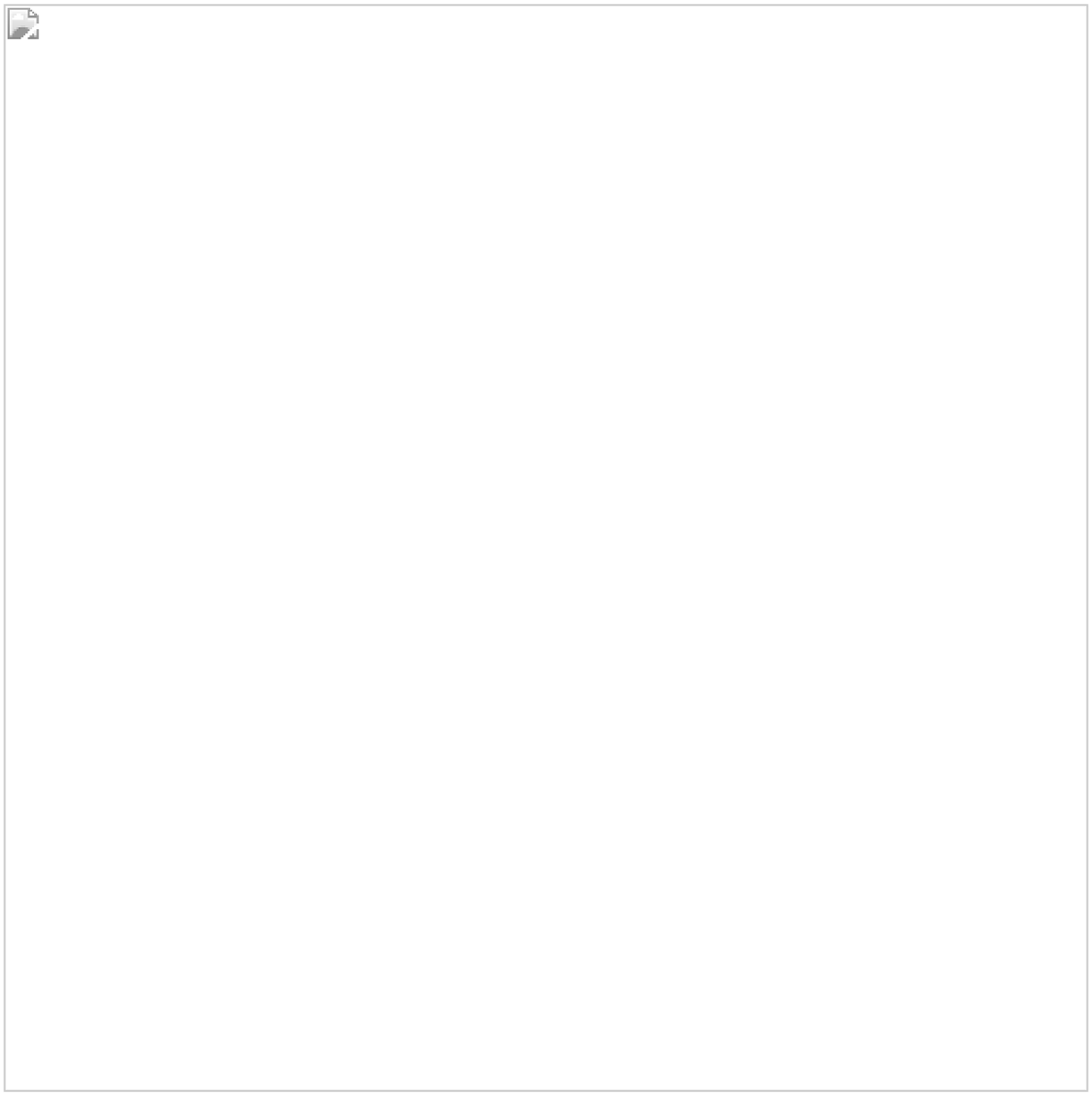


Think about it

1. Who was really at the window?

- ○ Hero
- ○ Margaret
- ○ Beatrice

The Night Watch



That night, the town watchmen were out. Their leader was Dogberry, a very important constable who loved long, grand words and often got them wrong. His helper was old Verges.

“Are you good men and true?” asked Dogberry. He told the watch to keep near Leonato’s door, and not to make a noise.

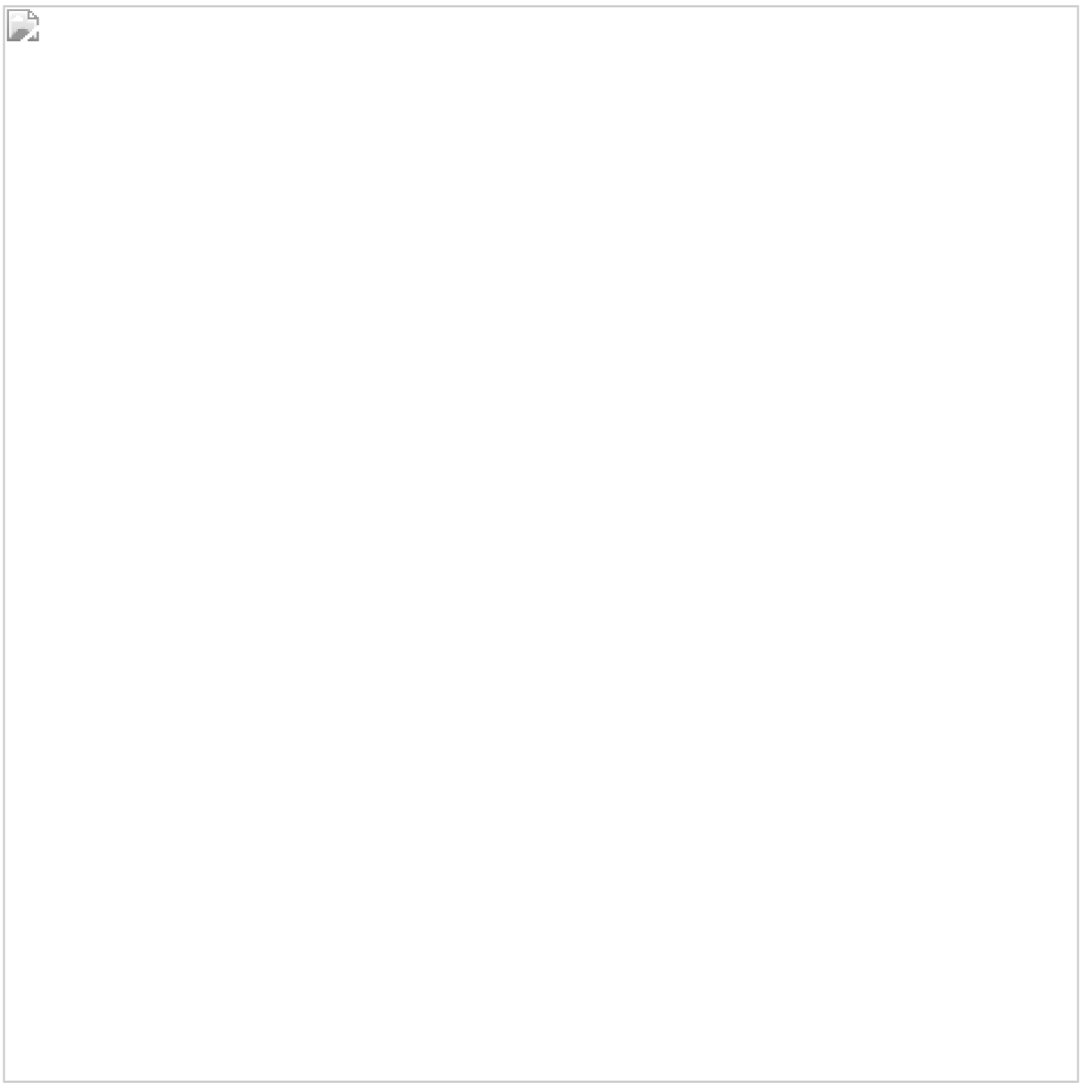
In the dark, the watchmen heard Borachio telling his friend Conrade about what he had done, and how much Don John had paid him.

“We charge you in the Prince’s name, stand!” cried the watch. They took both men away. The silly watchmen had found out the truth!

TALK ABOUT IT

The watchmen were not clever, but they listened. Why does listening matter?

The Night Watch · another picture



Think about it

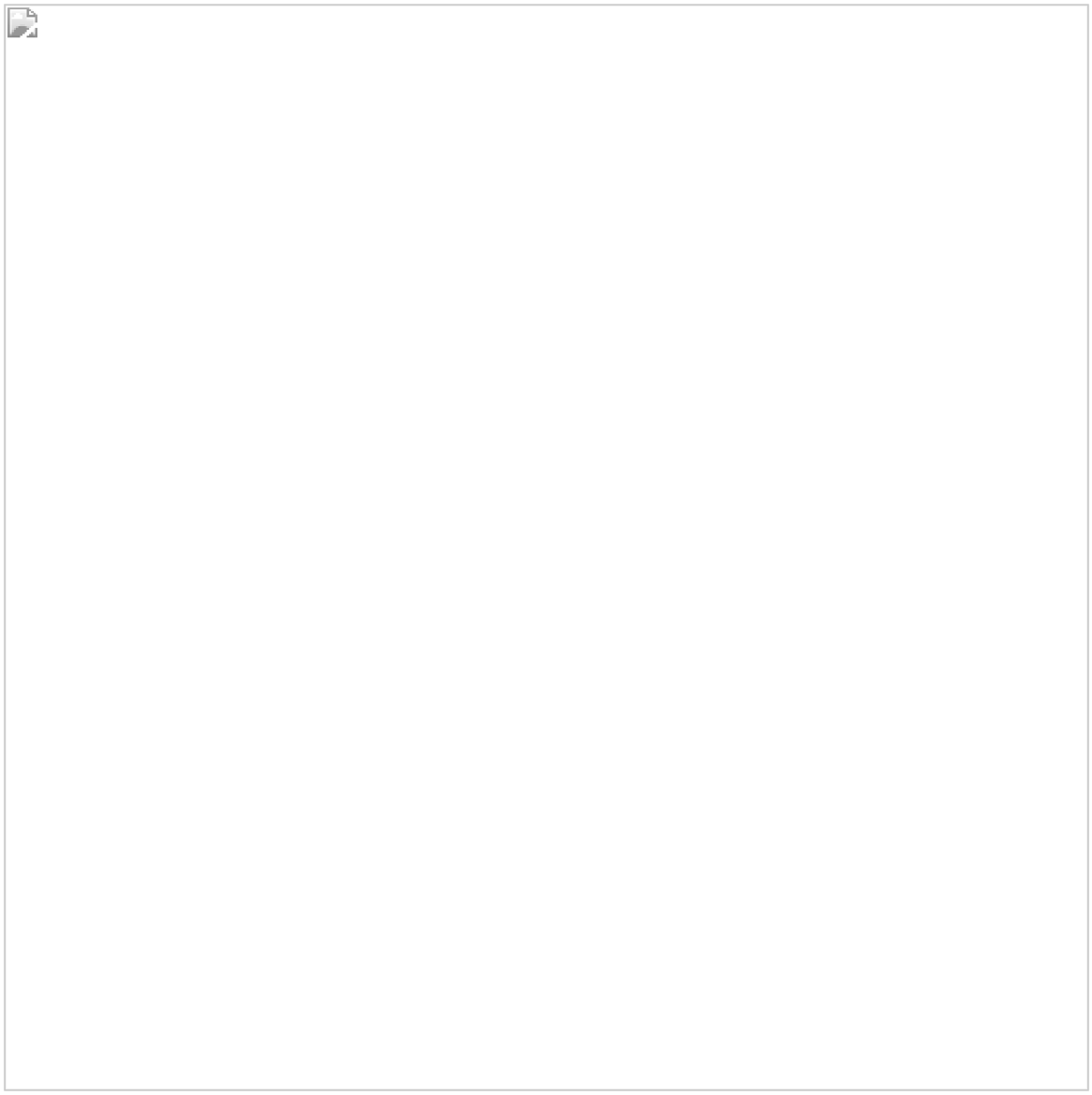
1. Who was in charge of the watch?

- ○ Dogberry
- ○ Benedick
- ○ Leonato

2. What did the watchmen hear?

- ○ A song
- ○ Borachio telling about the trick
- ○ A storm coming

The Morning of the Wedding



The next morning was the wedding day. Hero was getting dressed in her fine gown while Beatrice and the maids chatted.

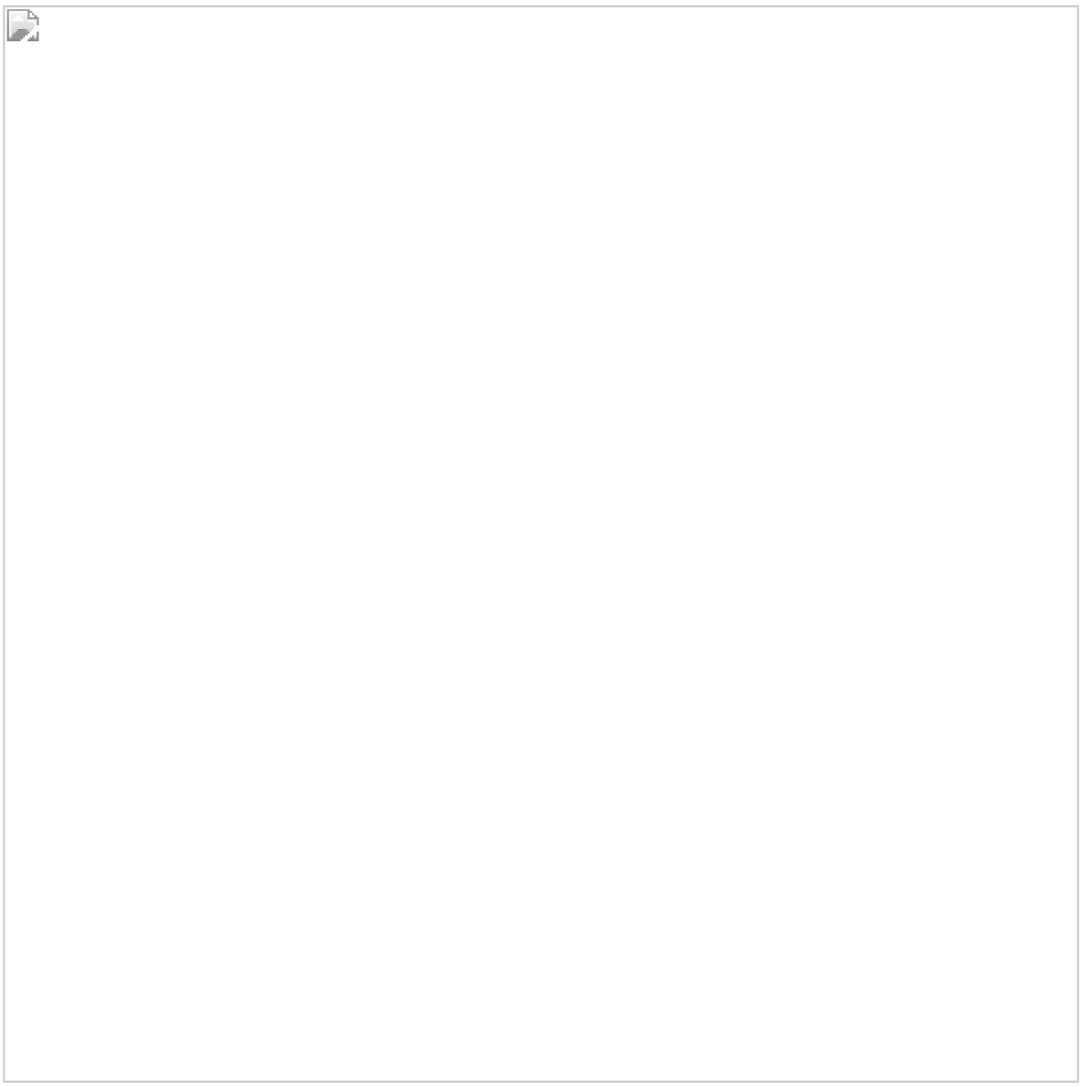
Dogberry hurried to Leonato's house with the news. But Dogberry and Verges talked and talked, and never quite got to the point.

"Neighbours, you are tedious," said Leonato. He was in a great hurry. "Take their examination yourself, and bring it me." Then a messenger came to say the wedding was waiting.

So Leonato went to church without hearing the truth.

TALK ABOUT IT

Dogberry had very good news but took too long to say it. What happened because he did?

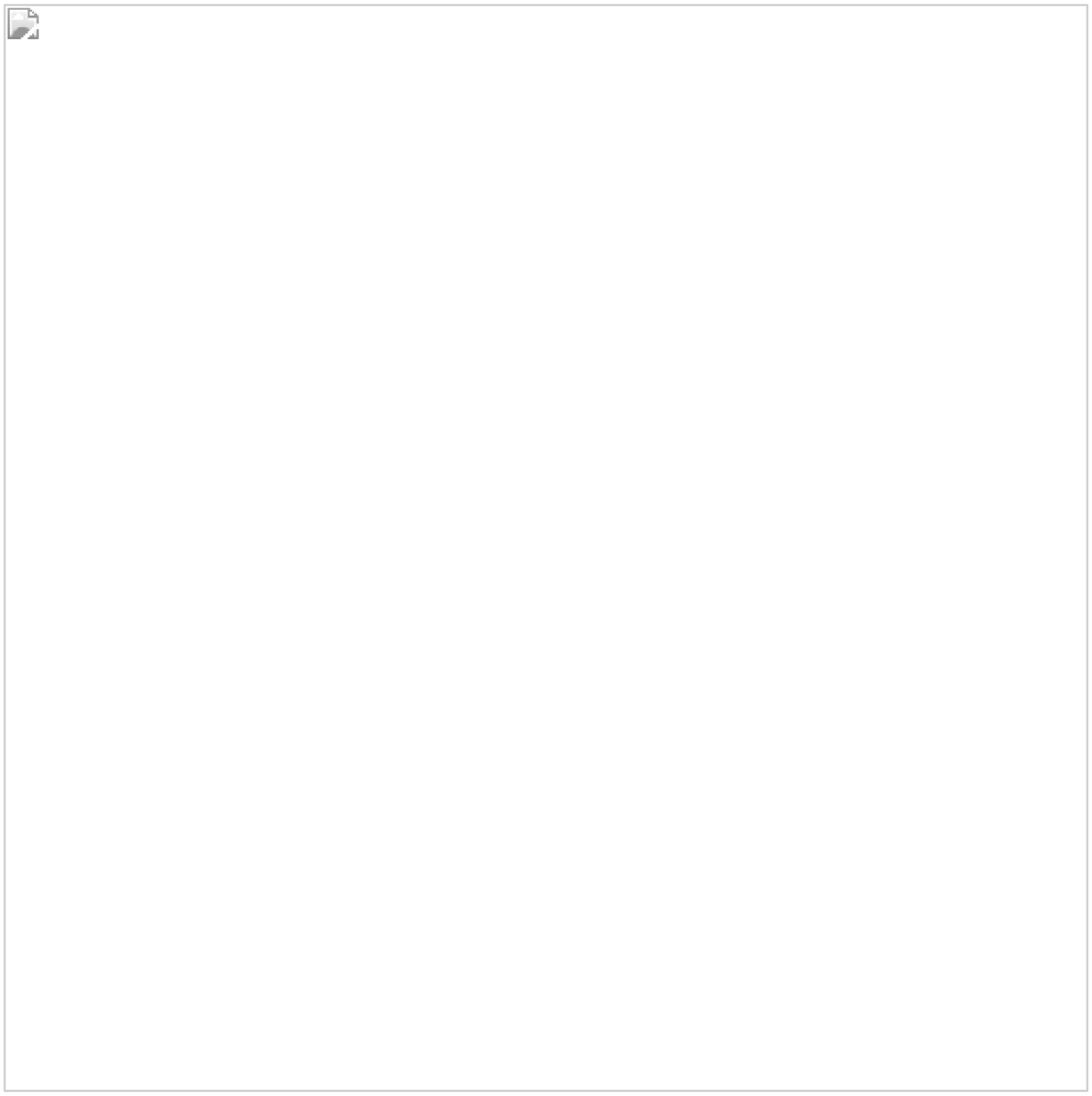


Think about it

1. Why did Leonato not hear the news?

- ○ He was in a great hurry
- ○ He was asleep
- ○ He was not at home

The Wedding That Went Wrong



In the church, the Friar was ready. But Claudio would not marry Hero. In front of everyone he said, “There, Leonato, take her back again,” and called her “this rotten orange.”

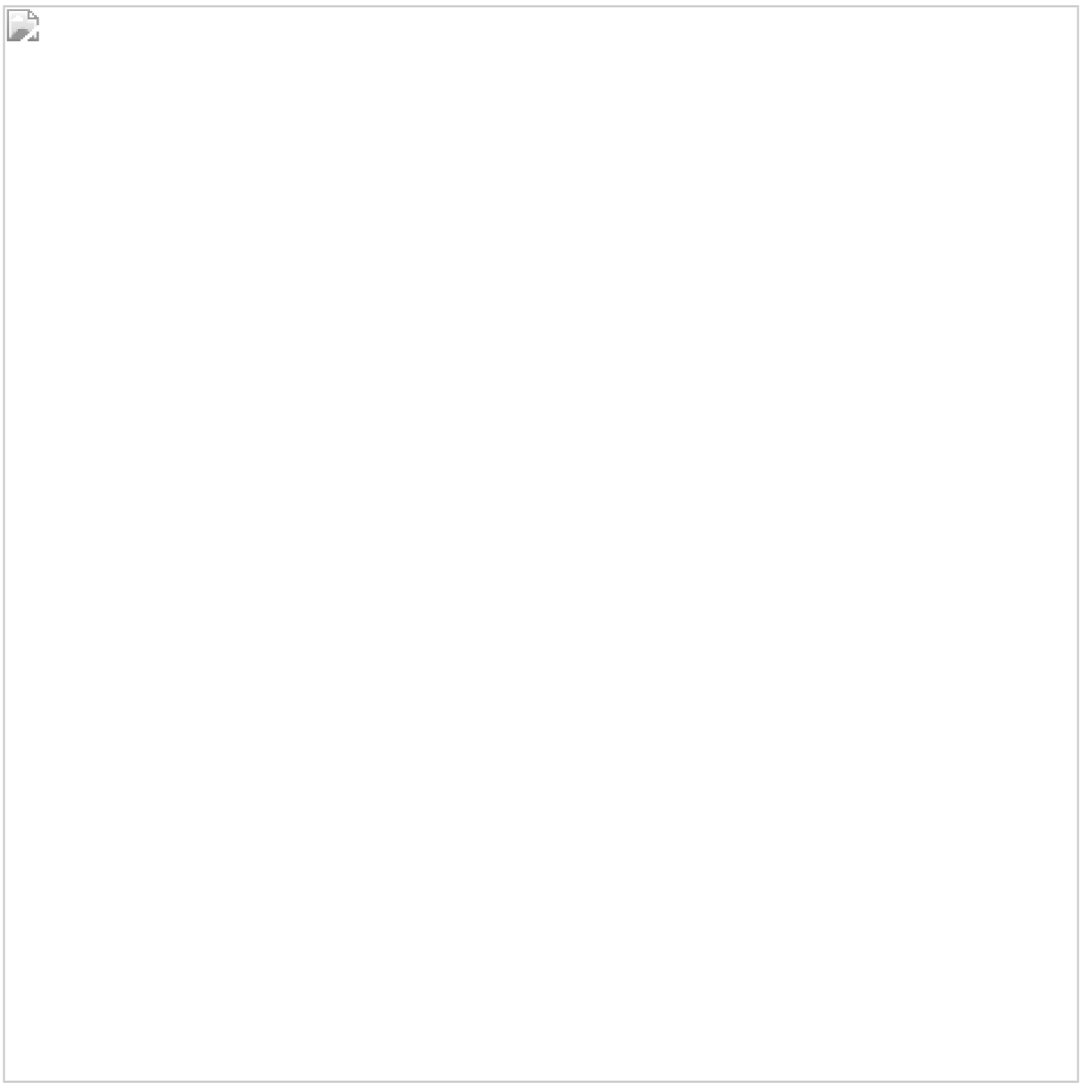
Hero did not know what he meant. “I talk’d with no man at that hour, my lord.” Don Pedro and Don John said they had seen her too.

Claudio, Don Pedro and Don John left the church. Hero fell down in a faint.

Beatrice stayed by her cousin’s side. “O! on my soul, my cousin is belied!” she cried. The Friar thought so too. Leonato was in terrible grief, and could hardly bear to listen.

TALK ABOUT IT

Hero said what was true, but the others did not believe her. What would you say to Hero?

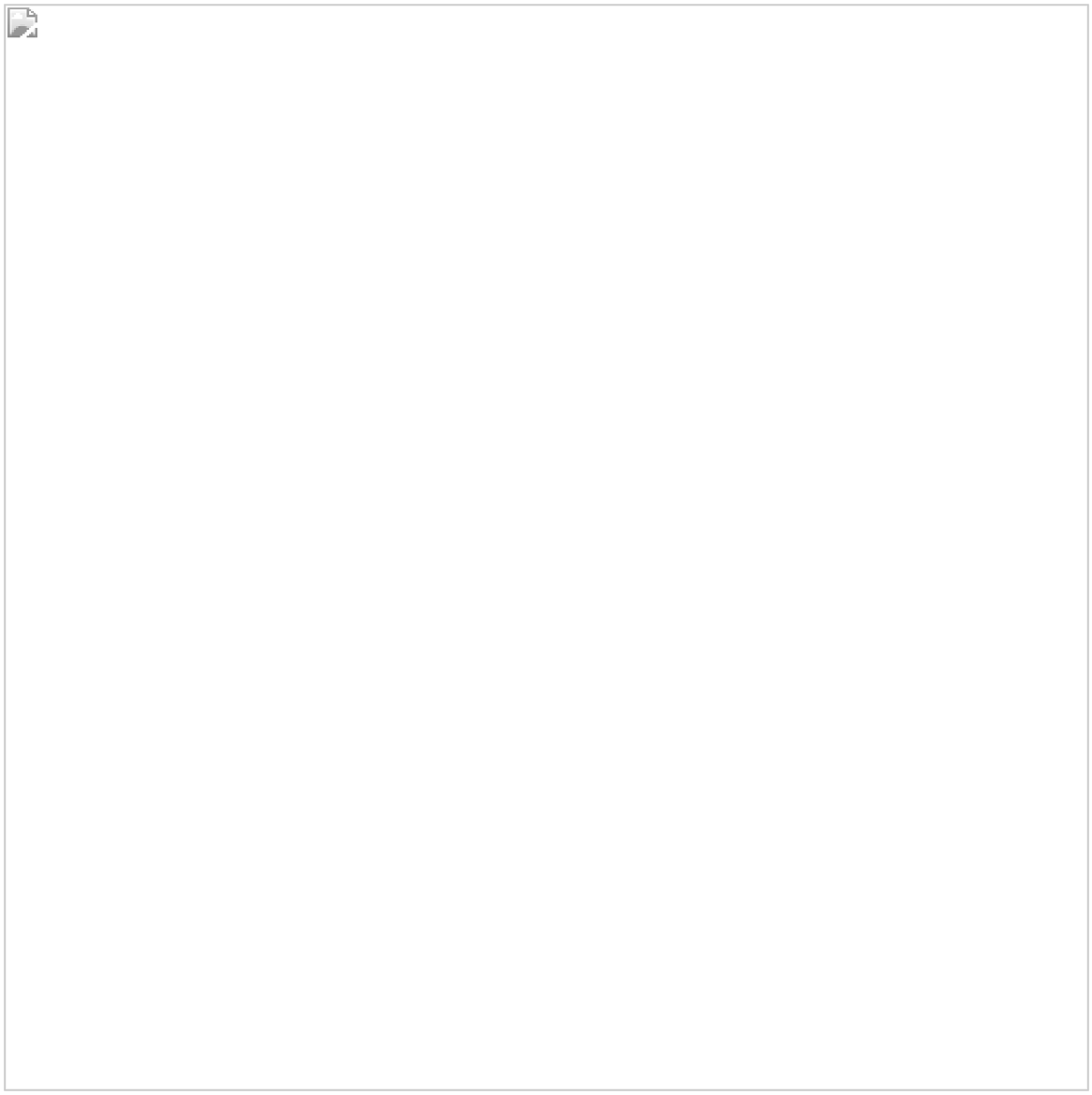


Think about it

1. Who stayed by Hero and said she was telling the truth?

- ○ Beatrice and the Friar
- ○ Don John
- ○ Claudio

The Friar's Plan



The Friar was a wise man. "There is some strange misprision in the princes," he said. He meant that Don Pedro and Claudio had made a terrible mistake.

He made a plan. Hero would hide, and everyone would be told that she had died. It was only pretend. Hero was safe and well, and only a few people knew.

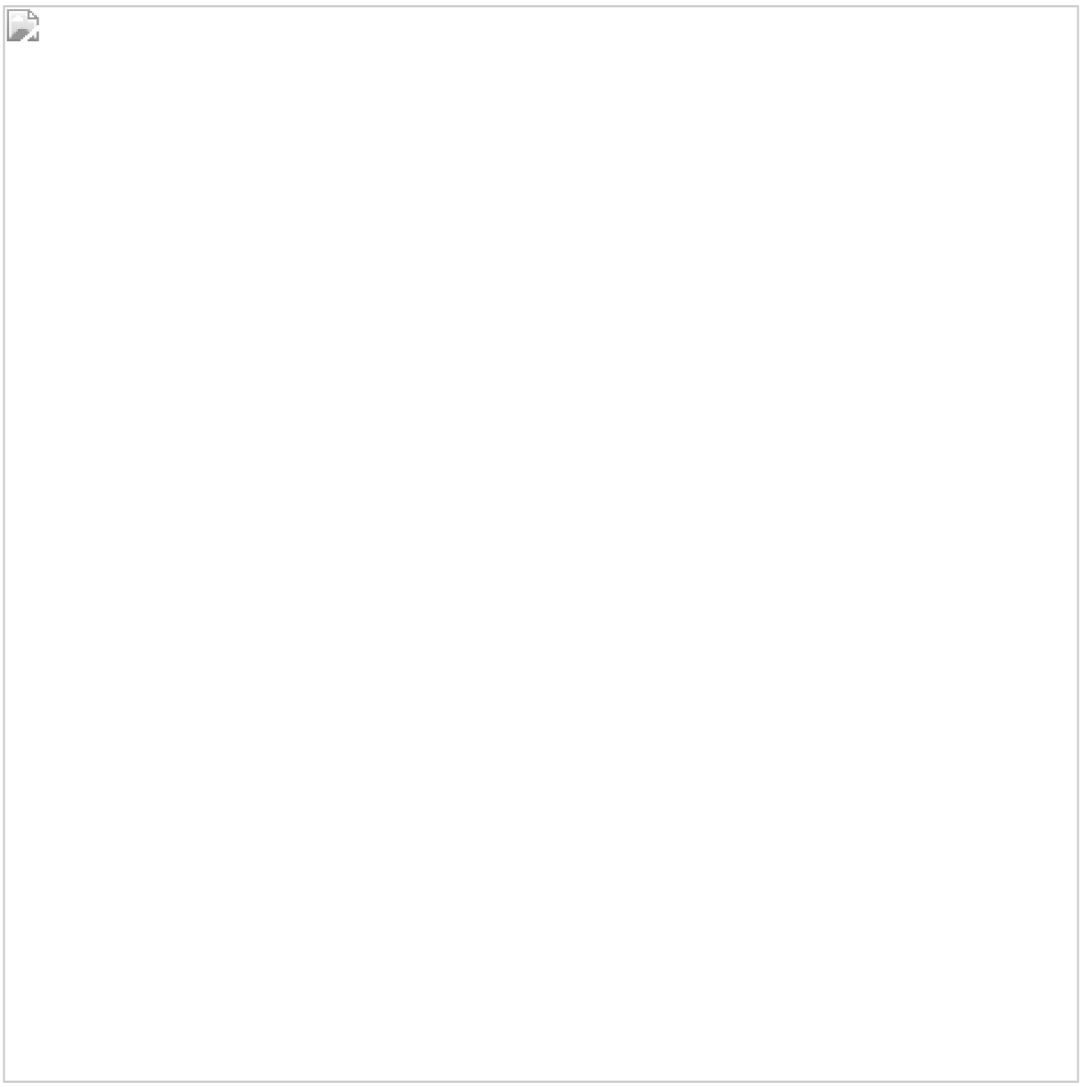
The Friar hoped that when Claudio heard she was gone, he would remember how good she was and be sorry. "Come, lady, die to live," he said.

Benedick promised to keep the secret. Leonato, in his grief, agreed. The whole town was told that Hero had died.

TALK ABOUT IT

Hero was not really dead. It was only pretend. Why do you think the Friar chose that plan?

The Friar's Plan · another picture

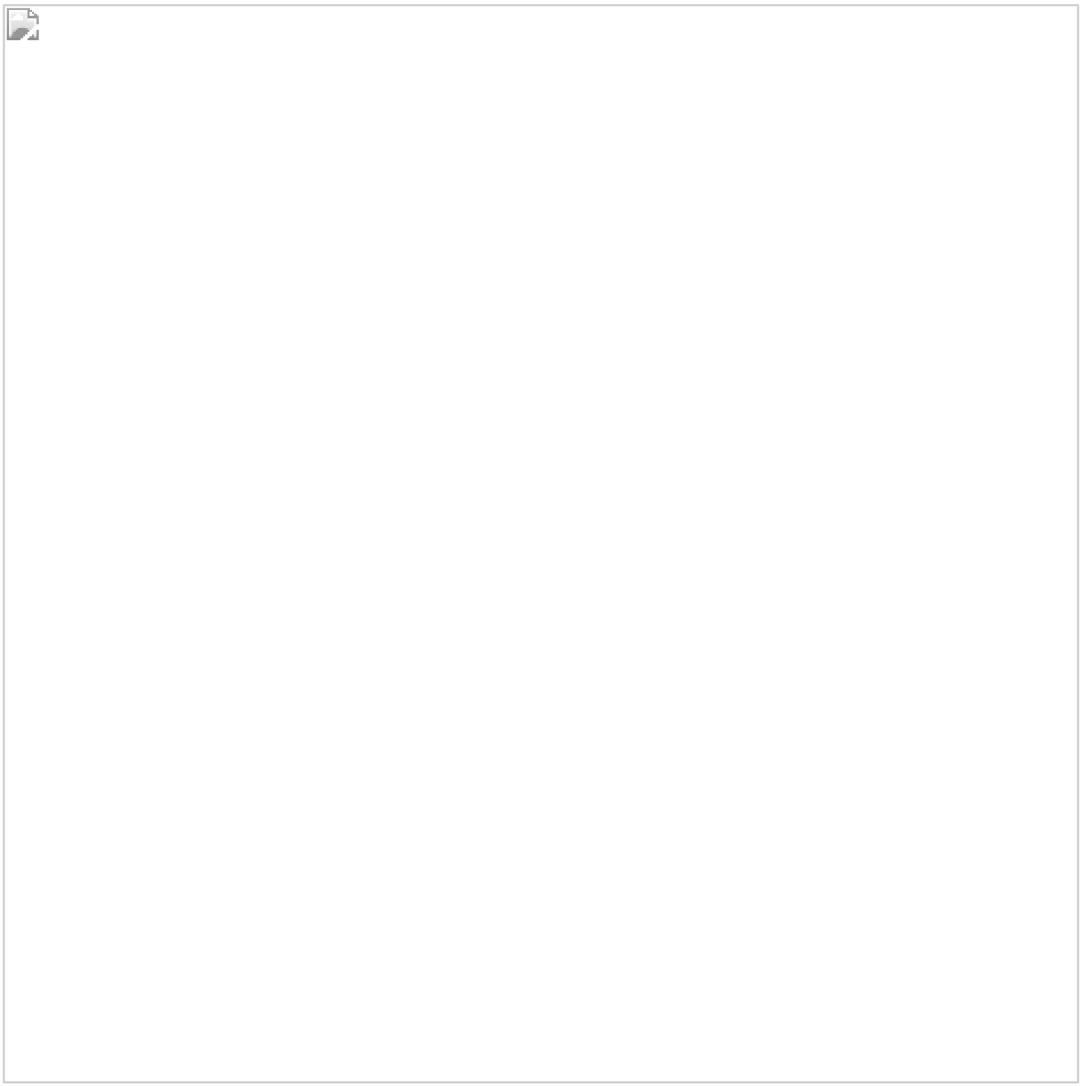


Think about it

1. Was Hero really dead?

- ○ Yes
- ○ No, it was only pretend
- ○ Nobody knows

Beatrice and Benedick



Beatrice was weeping for her cousin. Benedick stayed with her. “I do love nothing in the world so well as you: is not that strange?” he said.

And Beatrice told him, “I love you with so much of my heart that none is left to protest.”

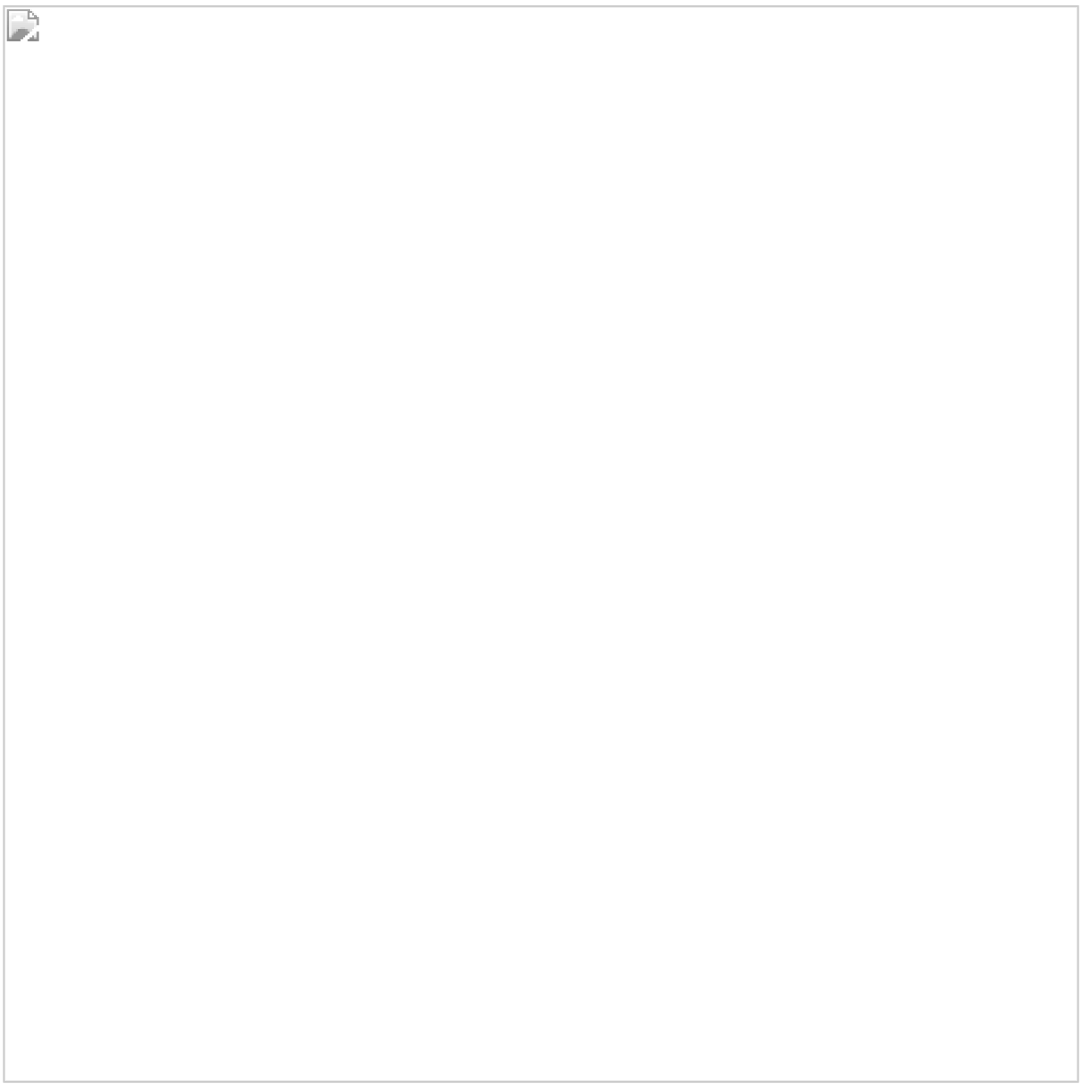
Then she asked him to do something for her. She wanted him to stand up for Hero against Claudio, and help set things right. “Sweet Hero! she is wronged,” she said.

Benedick thought about it. He believed Beatrice. “Enough! I am engaged, I will challenge him.” He would go to Claudio and tell him that he had done wrong.

TALK ABOUT IT

Beatrice asked Benedick to stand up for Hero. Why is it brave to speak up for someone who is not there?

Beatrice and Benedick · another picture

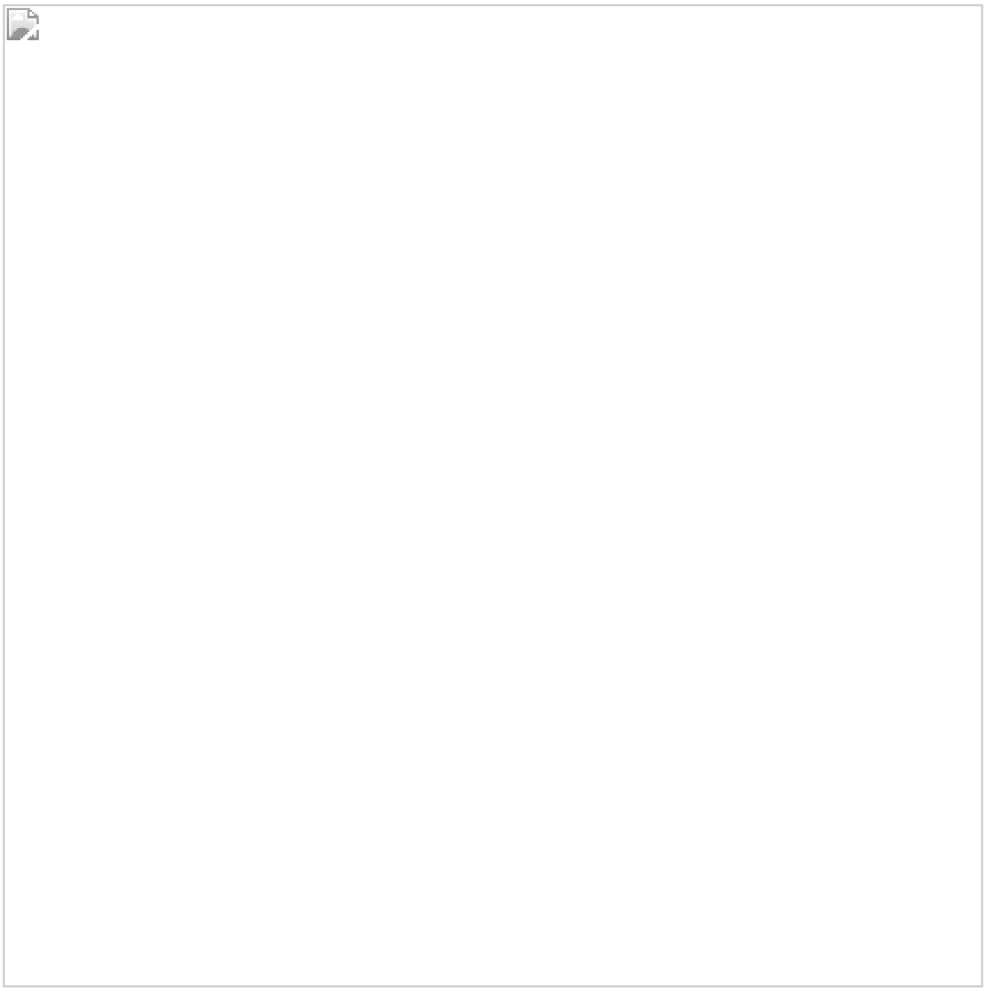


Think about it

1. What did Beatrice ask Benedick to do?

- ○ Stand up for Hero against Claudio
- ○ Run away with her
- ○ Say nothing

The Truth Comes Out



Meanwhile, Dogberry and the watch brought Borachio and Conrade for questioning. Dogberry mixed up his words, but the watchmen told what they had heard.

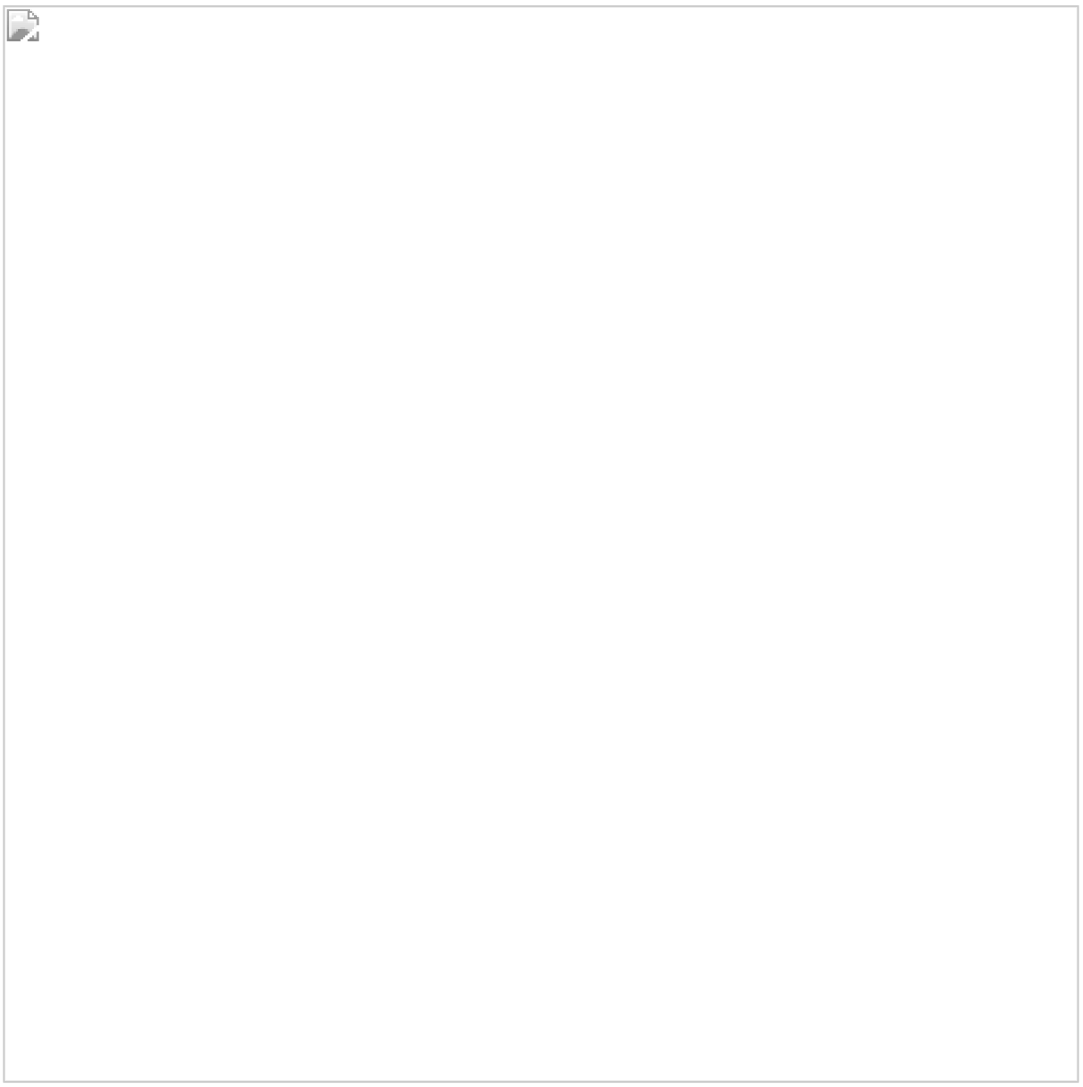
Conrade called Dogberry an ass, and Dogberry was very upset. “O that I had been writ down an ass!” he cried. But the watch had found the truth. Don John had run away.

Borachio told Don Pedro and Claudio everything. Don Pedro, Don John’s brother, asked, “But did my brother set thee on to this?” Borachio said, “Yea; and paid me richly for the practice of it.”

Claudio cried, “Sweet Hero! now thy image doth appear in the rare semblance that I lov’d it first.”

TALK ABOUT IT

The watchmen were silly, but they saved the day. Who helps in surprising ways where you live?



Think about it

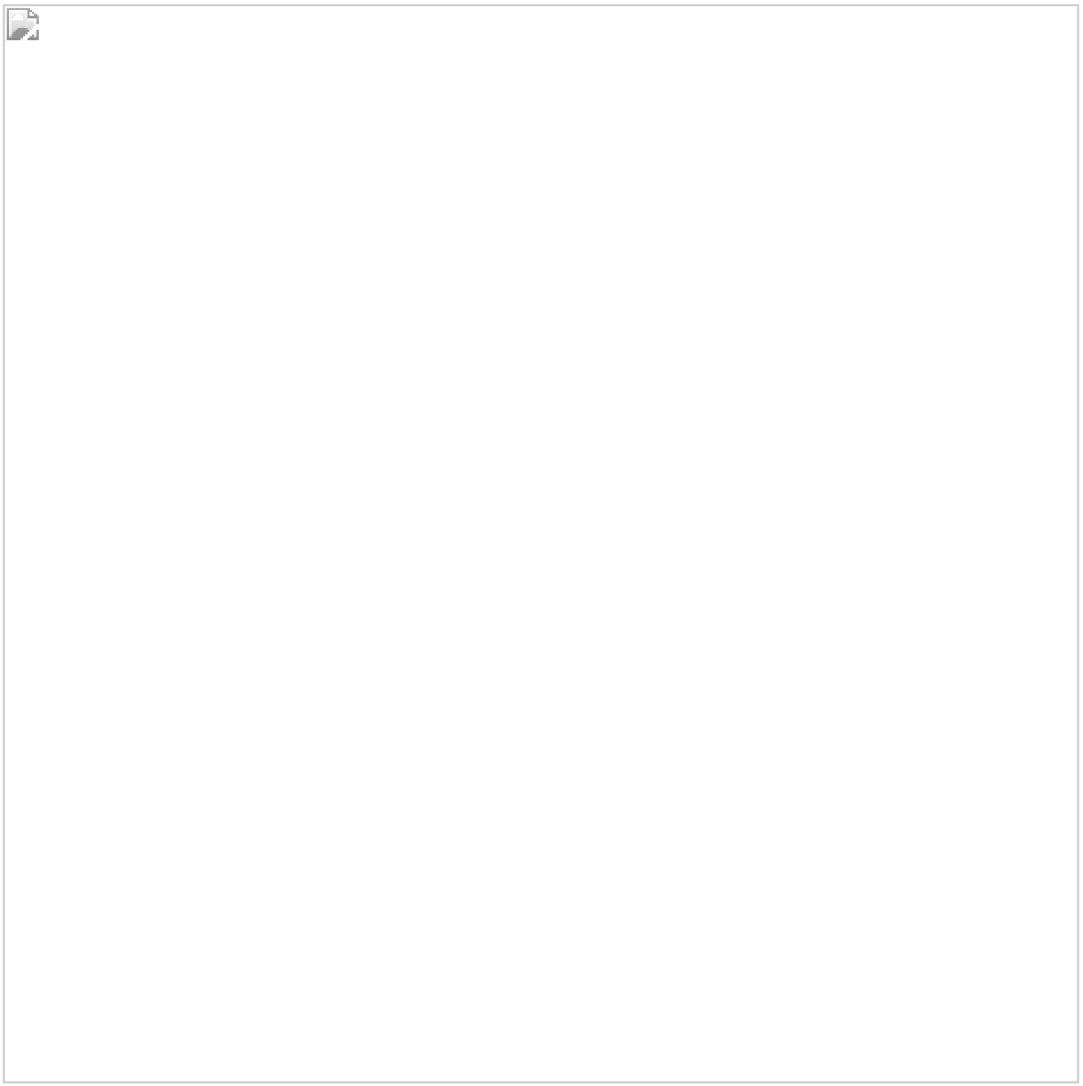
1. Who found out the truth about the trick?

- ○ The watchmen
- ○ The Prince
- ○ The Friar

2. Who had paid Borachio to do it?

- ○ Don John
- ○ Leonato
- ○ Benedick

Claudio Says Sorry



Claudio went to Leonato. “Choose your revenge yourself,” he said.

Leonato told him what he must do. Claudio must tell everyone in Messina that Hero had been innocent, and come to Leonato’s house in the morning. Leonato said his brother Antonio had a daughter, “almost the copy of my child that’s dead.” Claudio was to marry her.

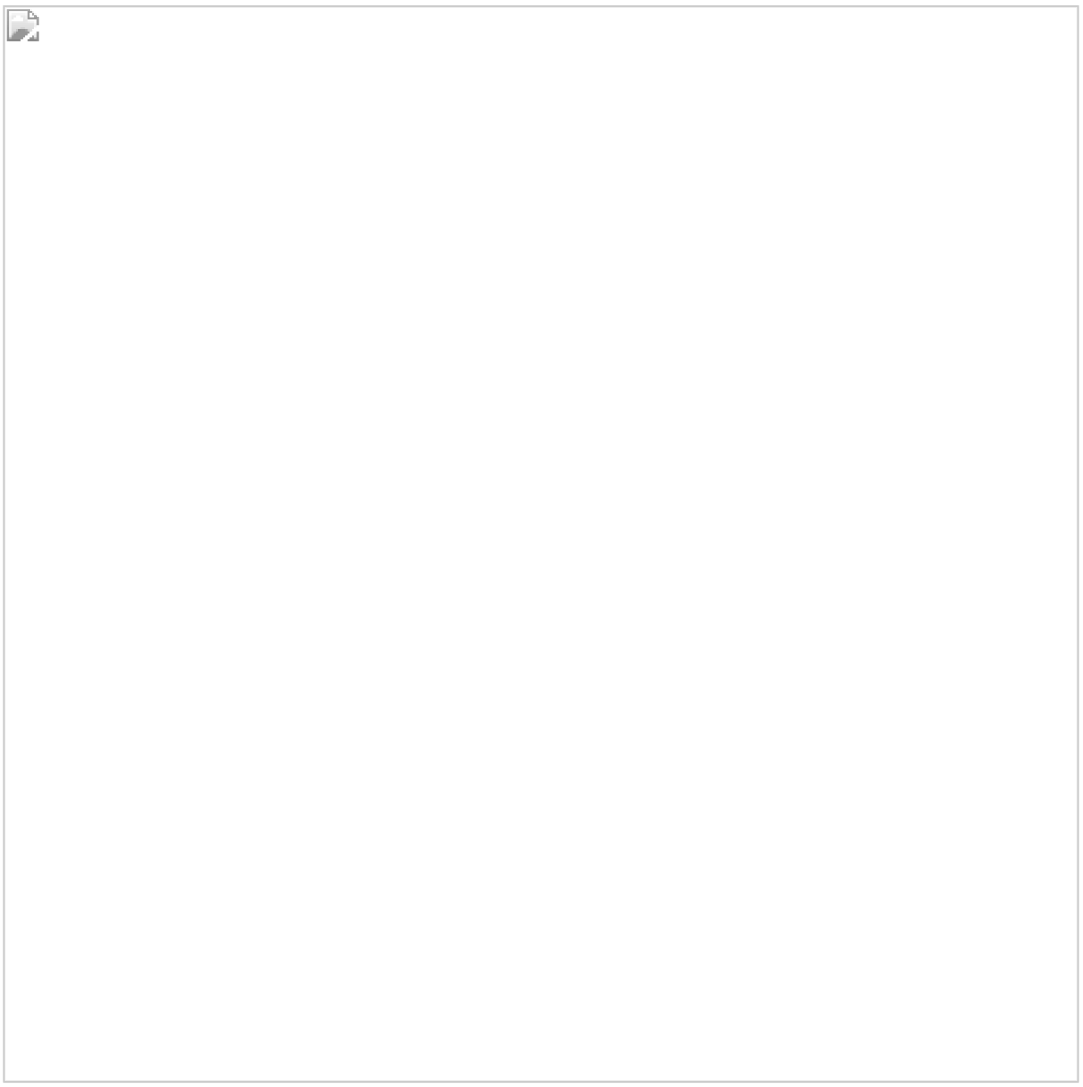
That night, Claudio and Don Pedro went to Hero’s tomb. Claudio hung up a poem on it: “Done to death by slanderous tongues was the Hero that here lies.”

He promised, “Yearly will I do this rite.” Then they went to Leonato’s house to meet the bride.

TALK ABOUT IT

Claudio did not make excuses. He asked what he could do to make things right. Why is this a good way to say sorry?

Claudio Says Sorry · another picture

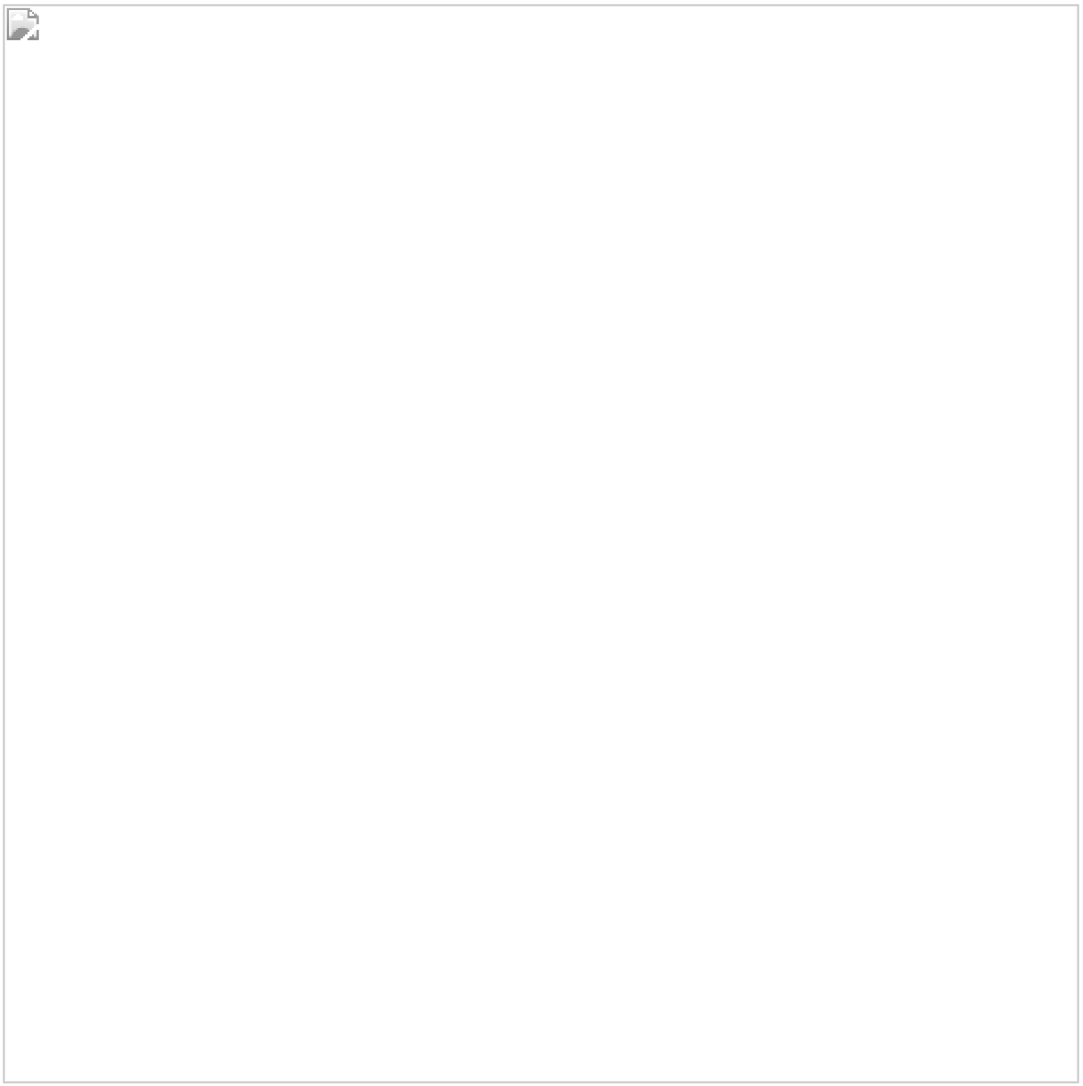


Think about it

1. What did Leonato ask Claudio to do first?

- ○ Tell everyone in Messina that Hero was innocent
- ○ Leave Italy
- ○ Fight Benedick

Strike Up, Pipers!



The next morning the ladies came in wearing masks. “This same is she,” said Antonio, “and I do give you her.”

“Give me your hand: before this holy friar, I am your husband, if you like of me.” The lady took off her mask. It was Hero! “Another Hero!” cried Claudio.

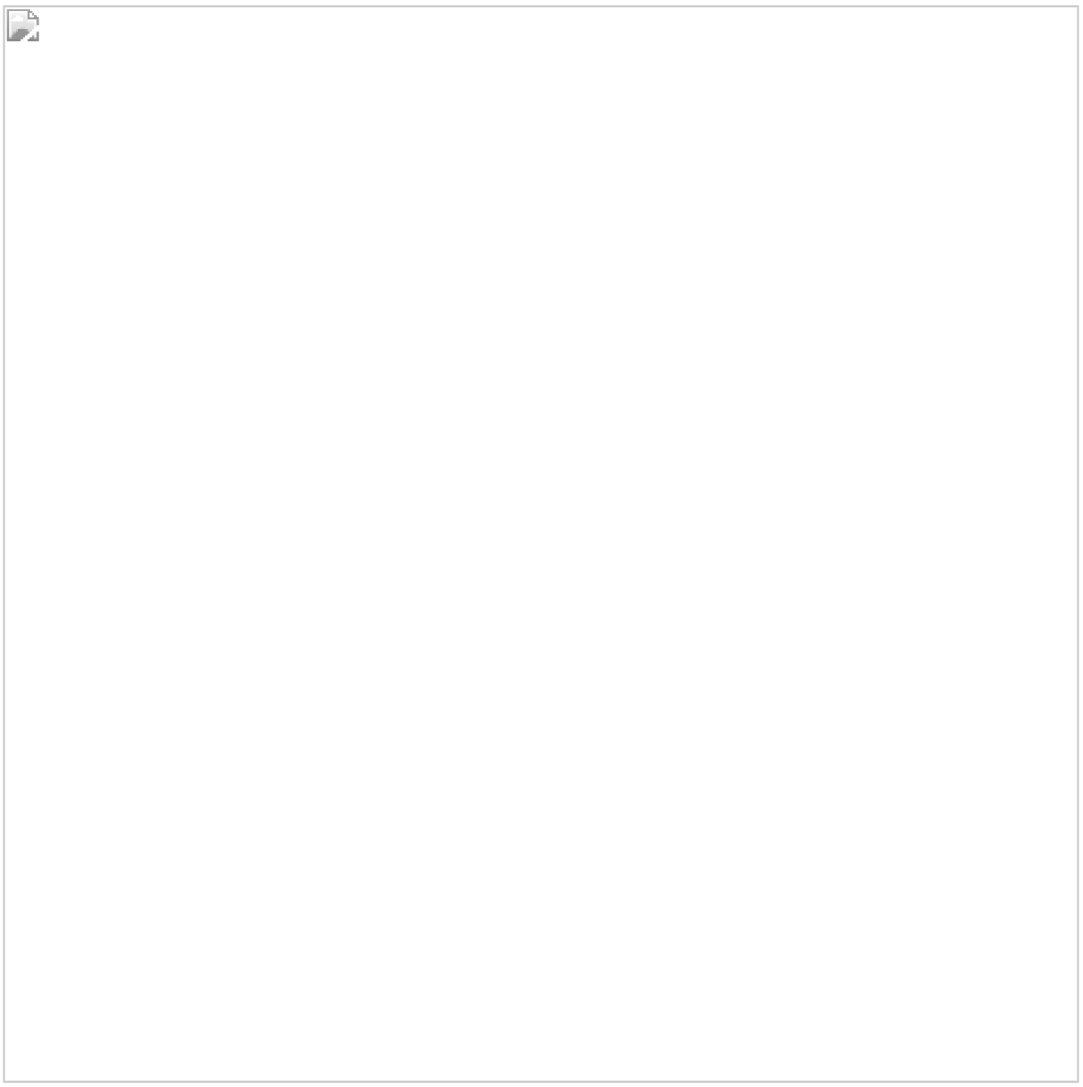
Beatrice and Benedick still said they did not love each other, until Claudio and Hero held up their love poems. “A miracle! here’s our own hands against our hearts,” said Benedick, and they agreed to marry.

News came that Don John had been caught. “Think not on him till tomorrow,” said Benedick. “Strike up, pipers!” And everyone danced.

TALK ABOUT IT

Hero came back and everyone danced. After all that went wrong, what helped the people of Messina make things right?

Strike Up, Pipers! · another picture



Think about it

1. Who was behind the mask?

- ○ Hero
- ○ Margaret
- ○ Ursula

2. How does the play end?

- ○ With a dance
- ○ With a storm
- ○ With a long trip

“There is no greater love than to lay down one’s life for one’s friends.”

— Yeshua HaMashiach

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