

If you are auditioning for...

BEATRICE – Read monologue provided below

BENEDICK – Read monologue provided below

HERO – Read monologues provided below

CLAUDIO – Read monologues provided below

PRINCE DON PEDRO – Read monologue provided below

LEONATO – Read monologues provided below

ANTONIO ~ Read monologue provided below

DON JOHN ~ Read monologue provided below

BORACHIO ~ Read monologues provided below

CONRADE – Read one BORACHIO monologue provided below

MARGARET – Read monologue provided below

URSULA – Read MARGARET monologue provided below

BALTHAZAR (and SEXTON) – Read one BORACHIO monologue provided below

FRIAR FRANCIS – Read monologue provided below

DOGBERRY – Read monologue provided below

VERGES – Read DOGBERRY monologue provided below

HUGH OATCAKE – Read DOGBERRY monologue provided below

GEORGE SEACOAL – Read DOGBERRY monologue provided below

BEATRICE.

Is he not approved in the height a villain, that hath
slander'd, scorn'd, dishonour'd my kinswoman?~ O that I were
a man!~ What, bear her in hand until they come to take
hands; and then, with public accusation, uncover'd 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 curtsies, valour
into compliment, and men are only turn'd 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.

PRINCE DON PEDRO.

Thou wilt be like a lover presently
And tire the hearer with a book of words.
If thou dost love fair Hero, cherish it;
And I will break with her and with her father,
And thou shalt have her. Was't not to this end
That thou began'st to twist so fine a story? 1/1/250

What need the bridge much broader than the flood?
Thou lovest;
And I will fit thee with the remedy.
I know we shall have revelling to-night:
I will assume thy part in some disguise, 1/1/260
And tell fair Hero I am Claudio;
And in her bosom I'll unclasp my heart,
And take her hearing prisoner with the force
And strong encounter of my amorous tale:
Then after to her father will I break;
And the conclusion is, she shall be thine.
In practice let us put it presently.

HERO.

Good Margaret, run thee to the parlour;
There shalt thou find my cousin Beatrice
Proposing with the prince and Claudio:
Whisper her ear, and tell her, I and Ursula
Walk in the orchard, and our whole discourse
Is all of her; say that thou overheard'st us;
And bid her steal into the pleached bower,
Where honeysuckles, ripen'd by the sun,
Forbid the sun to enter. There will she hide her,
To listen our purpose. This is thy office:
Bear thee well in it, and leave us alone.

3/1/1

Now, Ursula, when Beatrice doth come,
As we do trace this alley up and down,
Our talk must only be of Benedick.
When I do name him, let it be thy part
To praise him more than ever man did merit:
My talk to thee must be, how Benedick
Is sick in love with Beatrice. Of this matter
Is little Cupid's crafty arrow made,
That only wounds by hearsay. Now begin;
For look where Beatrice, like a lapwing, runs
Close by the ground, to hear our conference.

3/1/20

HERO.

They know that do accuse me; I know none:
If I know more of any man alive
Than that which maiden modesty doth warrant,
Let all my sins lack mercy!- O my father,
Prove you that any man with me conversed
At hours unmeet, or that I yesternight
Maintain'd the change of words with any creature,
Refuse me, hate me, torture me to death!

BENEDICK.

This can be no trick: the conference was sadly borne. They have the truth of this from Hero. They seem to pity the lady: it seems her affections have their full bent. Love me! why, it must be requited. I hear how I am censured: they say I will bear myself proudly, if I perceive the love come from her; they say too that she will rather die than give any sign of affection.~ I did never think to marry:~ I must not seem proud:~ happy are they that hear their detractions, and can put them to mending. They say the lady is fair,~ 'tis a truth, I can bear them witness; and virtuous,~ 'tis so, I cannot reprove it; and wise, but for loving me,~ by my troth, it is no addition to her wit, nor no great argument of her folly, for I will be horribly in love with her. I may chance have some odd quirks and remnants of wit broken on me, because I have rail'd so long against marriage: but doth not the appetite alter? a man loves the meat in his youth that he cannot endure in his age. Shall quips and sentences, and these paper-bullets of the brain, awe a man from the career of his humour? no, the world must be peopled. When I said I would die a bachelor, I did not think I should live till I were married.~ Here comes Beatrice. By this day, she's a fair lady: I do spy some marks of love in her.

MARGARET.

Moral! no, by my troth, I have no moral meaning; I meant, plain holy-thistle. You may think perchance that I think you are in love: nay, by'r lady, I am not such a fool to think what I list; nor I list not to think what I can; nor, indeed, I cannot think, if I would think my heart out of thinking, that you are in love, or that you will be in love, or that you can be in love. Yet Benedick was such another, and now is he become a man: he swore he would never marry; and yet now, in despite of his heart, he eats his meat without grudging: and how you may be converted, I know not; but methinks you look with your eyes as other women do.

CLAUDIO.

Sweet Prince, you learn me noble thankfulness.~
There, Leonato, take her back again:
Give not this rotten orange to your friend;
She's but the sign and semblance of her honor.~
Behold how like a maid she blushes here!
O, what authority and show of truth
Can cunning sin cover itself withal!
Comes not that blood as modest evidence
To witness simple virtue? Would you not swear,
All you that see her, that she were a maid,
By these exterior shows? But she is none:
She knows the heat of a luxurious bed;
Her blush is guiltiness, not modesty.

I know what you would say: if I have known her,
You will say she did embrace me as a husband,
And so extenuate the 'forehand sin:
No, Leonato,
I never tempted her with word too large;
But, as a brother to his sister, show'd
Bashful sincerity and comely love.

CLAUDIO.

Out on thee, seeming! I will write against it:
You seem to me as Dian in her orb,
As chaste as is the bud ere it be blown;
But you are more intemperate in your blood
Than Venus, or those pamper'd animals
That rage in savage sensuality.

O Hero, what a Hero hadst thou been,
If half thy outward graces had been placed
About thy thoughts and counsels of thy heart!
But fare thee well, most foul, most fair! farewell,
Thou pure impiety and impious purity!
For thee I'll lock up all the gates of love,
And on my eyelids shall conjecture hang,
To turn all beauty into thoughts of harm,
And never shall it more be gracious.

FRIAR FRANCIS.

Marry, this, well carried, shall on her behalf
Change slander to remorse;~ that is some good:
But not for that dream I on this strange course,
But on this travail look for greater birth.
She dying, as it must be so maintain'd,
Upon the instant that she was accused,
Shall be lamented, pitied, and excused
Of every hearer: for it so falls out,
That what we have we prize not to the worth
Whiles we enjoy it; but being lack'd and lost,
Why, then we rack the value, then we find
The virtue that possession would not show us
Whiles it was ours. So will it fare with Claudio:
When he shall hear she died upon his words,
Th'idea of her life shall sweetly creep
Into his study of imagination;
And every lovely organ of her life
Shall come apparell'd in more precious habit,
More moving~delicate and full of life,
Into the eye and prospect of his soul,
Than when she lived indeed; then shall he mourn
(If ever love had interest in his heart),
And wish he had not so accuséd her,~
No, though he thought his accusation true.
Let this be so, and doubt not but success
Will fashion the event in better shape
Than I can lay it down in likelihood.
But if all aim but this be levell'd false,
The supposition of the lady's death
Will quench the wonder of her infamy:
And if it sort not well, you may conceal her
(As best befits her wounded reputation)
In some reclusive and religious life,
Out of all eyes, tongues, minds, and injuries.

LEONATO.

Wherefore! Why, doth not every earthly thing
Cry shame upon her? Could she here deny
The story that is printed in her blood?~
Do not live, Hero; do not ope thine eyes:
For, did I think thou wouldst not quickly die,
Thought I thy spirits were stronger than thy shames,
Myself would, on the rearward of reproaches,
Strike at thy life. Grieved I, I had but one?
Chid I for that at frugal nature's frame?
O, one too much by thee! Why had I one?
Why ever wast thou lovely in my eyes?
Why had I not with charitable hand
Took up a beggar's issue at my gates,
Who smirched thus and mired with infamy,
I might have said, "No part of it is mine;
This shame derives itself from unknown loins"?
But mine, and mine I loved, and mine I praised,
And mine that I was proud on; mine so much
That I myself was to myself not mine,
Valuing of her; why, she- O, she is fall'n
Into a pit of ink, that the wide sea
Hath drops too few to wash her clean again,
And salt too little which may season give
To her foul-tainted flesh!

LEONATO.

I pray thee, cease thy counsel,
Which falls into mine ears as profitless
As water in a sieve. Give not me counsel;
Nor let no comforter delight mine ear
But such a one whose wrongs do suit with mine.
Bring me a father that so loved his child,
Whose joy of her is overwhelm'd like mine,
And bid him speak of patience;
If such a one will smile, and stroke his beard,
Bid sorrow wag, cry "hem" when he should groan,
Patch grief with proverbs, bring him yet to me,
And I of him will gather patience.
But there is no such man.
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. Therefore give me no counsel:
My griefs cry louder than advertisement.

DON JOHN.

I wonder that thou, being (as thou say'st thou art) born
under Saturn, goest about to apply a moral medicine to a
mortifying mischief. I cannot hide what I am: I must be sad
when I have cause, and smile at no man's jests; eat when I
have stomach, and wait for no man's leisure; sleep when I am
drowsy, and tend on no man's business; laugh when I am
merry, and claw no man in his humor.

I had rather be a canker in a hedge than a rose in his
grace; and it better fits my blood to be disdain'd of all
than to fashion a carriage to rob love from any: in this,
though I cannot be said to be a flattering honest man, it
must not be denied but I am a plain-dealing villain. I am
trusted with a muzzle, and enfranchised with a clog;
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 mean time let me be that I am, and seek not to alter me.

ANTONIO.

He shall kill two of us, and men indeed:
Sir boy, I'll whip you from your foining fence;
Nay, as I am a gentleman, I will.

Content yourself. God knows I loved my niece;
And she is dead, slander'd to death by villains,
That dare as well answer a man indeed
As I dare take a serpent by the tongue;
Boys, apes, braggarts, Jacks, milksops!

Scrambling, out-facing, fashion-monging boys,
That lie, and cog, and flout, deprave, and slander,
And speak off half a dozen dangerous words,
How they might hurt their enemies, if they durst;
And this is all.

BORACHIO.

Go, then; find me a meet hour to draw Don Pedro and the Count Claudio alone: tell them that you know that Hero loves me; intend a kind of zeal both to the Prince and Claudio, as,~ in love of your brother's honor, who hath made this match, and his friend's reputation, who is thus like to be cozen'd with the semblance of a maid,~ that you have discover'd thus. They will scarcely believe this without trial: offer them instances; which shall bear no less likelihood than to see me at her chamber-window; and hear me call Margaret, Hero; bring them to see this the very night before the intended wedding,~ for in the mean time I will so fashion the matter that Hero shall be absent, and there shall appear such seeming truth of Hero's disloyalty, that jealousy shall be call'd assurance, and all the preparation overthrown.

BORACHIO.

But know that I have tonight woo'd Margaret, the Lady Hero's gentlewoman, by the name of Hero: she leans me out at her mistress' chamber-window, bids me a thousand times good night,~ I tell this tale vilely:~ I should first tell thee how the Prince, Claudio, and my master, planted and placed and possess'd by my master Don John, saw afar off this amiable encounter.

Two of them did, the Prince and Claudio; but the devil my master knew she was Margaret; and partly by his oaths, which first possess'd them, partly by the dark night, which did deceive them, but chiefly by my villainy, which did confirm any slander that Don John had made, away went Claudio enraged; swore he would meet her, as he was appointed, next morning at the temple, and there, before the whole congregation, shame her with what he saw o'ernight, and send her home again without a husband.

BORACHIO.

Sweet Prince, let me go no further 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 to this one, how Don John your brother incensed me to slander the Lady Hero; how you were brought into the orchard, and saw me court Margaret in Hero's garments; how you disgraced her, when you should marry her: my villainy 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 accusations; and, briefly, I desire nothing but the reward of a villain.

DOGBERRY.

Yea, marry, let them come before me.- What is your name, friend?

Pray, write down- Borachio.- Yours...?

Write down- gentle one Conrade.- My friends, do you serve God?

Write down- that they hope they serve God:- and write God first; for God defend but God should go before such villains!- Now see here, it is proved already that you are little better than false knaves; and it will go near to be thought so shortly. How answer you for yourselves?

God's my life, where's the sexton? let him write down- the Prince's officer, coxcomb. Thou naughty varlet!

Dost thou not suspect my place? dost thou not suspect my years?~
O that he were here to write me down an ass!~ but, masters, 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 in Messina. Bring them away.- O that I had been writ down an ass!
