

BEATRICE I wonder that you will still be talking, Signior
Benedick: nobody marks you.

Red = subtext Why are you still talking? No one bothers to listen to you. They all hate you like I do.

BENEDICK What, my dear Lady Disdain! are you yet living?

BEATRICE Is it possible disdain should die while she hath
such meet food to feed it as Signior Benedick?
Courtesy itself must convert to disdain, if you come
in her presence.

BENEDICK Then is courtesy a turncoat. But it is certain I
am loved of all ladies, only you excepted: and I
would I could find in my heart that I had not a hard
heart; for, truly, I love none.

All the women love me except you, because I am great. I don't love any of them, and I will never be hurt again.

BEATRICE A dear happiness to women: they would else have
been troubled with a pernicious suitor. I thank God
and my cold blood, I am of your humour for that: I
had rather hear my dog bark at a crow than a man
swear he loves me.

BENEDICK God keep your ladyship still in that mind! so some
gentleman or other shall 'scape a predestinate
scratched face.

BEATRICE Scratching could not make it worse, an 'twere such a face as yours were.

BENEDICK Well, you are a rare parrot-teacher.

BEATRICE A bird of my tongue is better than a beast of yours.

BENEDICK I would my horse had the speed of your tongue, and so good a continuer. But keep your way, i' God's name; I have done.

BEATRICE You always end with a jade's trick: I know you of old.

You always fight unfairly and hurt me just as you did before when I loved you.

1. During the first part of the play, why were Beatrice and Benedick always saying unpleasant things to each other?
2. The witty banter of Beatrice and Benedick shows that they are both very intelligent. Why were they unable to see that they cared for each other? How could people as smart as Beatrice and Benedick not realize their affection for each other and then permit themselves to be brought together by a transparent deception?