



**Such Stuff podcast**  
**Season 5, Episode 4: The Shakespeare diaries, Much Ado About Nothing**

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**Imogen Greenberg:** Hello and welcome to another episode of Such Stuff, the podcast from Shakespeare's Globe.

This episode we'll return to the Shakespeare Diaries. Our very own actor/artistic director Michelle Terry and actor Paul Ready discuss Shakespeare's plays from isolation.

This week they'll be delving into Much Ado About Nothing.

We asked you – our wonderful audience – to send in questions which we could put to Michelle and Paul, and you sent us some brilliant ones. Thank you to everyone who contributed, and if you'd like to ask a question in a future episode, you can get in touch using the #SuchStuff. The next play Michelle and Paul will be discussing is As You Like It. We'll be putting some calls on social media so do keep an eye on all our channels.

Now, without further ado, I'll hand over to Michelle and Paul, to talk Beatrice and Benedick, why they're such a relatable pairing, the importance of prose in the play and how Shakespeare casts shadow and pain into this riotous, much loved comedy.

**Michelle Terry:** Hello, my name's Michelle Terry.

**Paul Ready:** My name's Paul Ready.

**MT:** And we are going to talk to you about Much Ado About Nothing. I played Beatrice in the RSC's production of Much Ado in 2014.

**PR:** And I played Benedict at the Royal Exchange in Manchester also in 2014.



**MT:** Oh yeah. Is it Benedict or Benedick?

**PR:** It's Benedick.

**MT:** [Laughs]

**PR:** No, but I played Benedict.

**MT:** [Laughs]

**PR:** Which is a [laughs]...

**MT:** The lesser known character!

**PR:** The lesser known character, yeah...

**MT:** In Much Ado. So, the first question we have been asked is: 'what are our memories of playing Beatrice and Benedick'. [Laughs] Have you got any?

**PR:** Yeah...

**MT:** Go on then, you go.

**PR:** Well I didn't remember his name...

**MT:** [Laughs]

**PR:** No, I loved playing this character. I loved, I love the play. I mean I remember it as a really heart expanding time. And maybe that's because I find the play bittersweet and so there's sadness and joy. I don't know if it's equal measure but certainly like, it goes to both places in the heart and I find that great to be around, actually.

**MT:** When you say both place in the heart what do you mean?

**PR:** Don't question too much what I say...



**MT:** OK [laughs].

**PR:** No, no, I'm joking, I'm joking. Well, both places like sadness and joy being in the heart and they're... at the same time and they are extremes, but they're also the flip side of each other. And I feel like it's really clear in this play. Discuss.

**MT:** Yeah, I think similarly I have really huge, epic memories of this play and the time I was doing the play. It's hard not to talk about a question that comes in later where we get asked about the darkness and the sadness and the joy of the piece. But I definitely felt like I was walking that tightrope between those two worlds and they're so rich and they're so dense. For Beatrice, it felt so, it's quite clear in the way that she exists in those two worlds and that as a character that speaks mostly prose in the play she's asked to live in her head for such a lot of the time.

I know that I'm about to make really crude distinctions about what prose is and what poetry is and this isn't a generalisation but just something that was quite specific to Beatrice was that she almost didn't, whatever the history is between Beatrice and Benedick, did not want to go to the place of the heart, it wasn't a place that she wanted to sit in even after declaring their love for each other. And I just remember - certainly in rehearsals - realising that the only time that she speaks in verse and the only time she speaks to the audience is after the trick with Ursula and Hero. And for Benedick who flits between both and has so many soliloquies and has such a relationship with the audience... I just remember that, that feeling of... that the heart was a fragile thing that needed to be protected. And it's quite hard, maybe we talked about it when we talked about Macbeth, but you, you live with these people or live with the portal with which you choose to experience them and yeah, I found her really fragile. It's that Blake quote of 'joy and woe are woven fine' and certainly if it's true what you're saying about Benedick, I definitely felt similarly with Beatrice that those two side of that... the two sides of the heart were constantly beating.



**PR:** It is interesting like how much they speak in prose, both of them. You said you don't want to speak in generalisations, but there was something useful in the thought at least, whether it is a generalisation or not, for me, that... the idea that prose can be used to cover the heart. I don't what you think about that... in the sense that iambic pentameter, the heartbeat. It's like the rhythm which...

**MT:** De-dum de-dum de-dum de-dum.

**PR:** Yeah, which is you know, potentially the language of the heart. Or at least at the time, I was thinking of it in these terms. So that heartbeat, the iambic pentameter which has a certain rhythm to it. Beyond it, potentially, is when it can't be contained anymore, but how often they speak in prose and I certainly was really feeling that Benedick was constantly covering his heart as well, and was wanting to hide his heart. Because of the fragility of it and I think that's potentially where, potentially where the two of them meet.

**MT:** And the thing that will save us from generalisations is, as ever, those things, certainly for an actor and I think they do land on the ear of the audience, even if you're not conscious that you're now listening to prose or you're now listening to verse, there is a different resonance when in you speak in those forms. And it is the job of the actor to note them, even if you just ignore them, but they are indicators aren't they? Again, I'm just thinking in the same play, Dogberry speaks a lot of prose, but I think we can assume that the genius of Shakespeare is dexterous enough that how he uses it for different people will have different feelings, like is it true that Dogberry is covering up his heart? That's probably not the reason that Shakespeare has given him prose. But I think it is... there is something revealing however you choose to interpret it about these two people that speak in... when they speak in the heartbeat and when they don't.

And the speed at which they speak it! Like I think playing Beatrice reminded me of Rosalind, that there are so few full stops, there are so few moments to pause, that the agility, the mental agility of these characters and I think like, again the memories of playing them, are



you have to be absolutely pinpoint on your concentration, your presence, 'cause otherwise they'll just run away with you won't they? I remember thinking that quite a lot.

**PR:** [Laughs] What I was just thinking about as you were saying that was like... 'cause I'm looking at one of the questions here which is about the darkness so... 'Much Ado is often seen as a riotous comedy but like all Shakespeare's plays there is darkness there too. Where do you find darkness in this play?' And part of the darkness in the play is I think what people do... covering sadness, covering what's in the house, I think there's darkness in that? I'd say darkness rather than joy, I would say darkness like...

**MT:** Yeah, or shadow.

**PR:** Yeah, shadow that's the word.

**MT:** There's shadow to all of them isn't there? And how those shadows play out, we know, is different for different characters.

**PR:** And that the play starts waiting for the men to come back from war and that is already dark. There's already a sense that means lives have been lost. It says...

**MT:** Yeah, he numbers them doesn't he, straight away.

**PR:** He does number them from the off, so already it starts on a note where there is excitement that the war is over and people are returning but what are they returning to? What world are they returning to? Yeah, as I say there's also been loss of life, there has been war.

**MT:** The destruction and the chaos has happened and then now what? What do you do when you come out of that destruction and out of that chaos, 'because I was just thinking about our production was so clearly set at the end of the First World War, but that's just a way of entering the play, because what seems to be more interesting, how do you come out of fracture? And I suppose one



question, certainly in our production, Beatrice and Benedick very clearly had had a past relationship so the sadness wasn't just the trauma of war but it was the trauma of personal heartbreak as well as political turmoil and they were already overshadowed by what they had been. Did you and Beatrice have a history in your production?

**PR:** Yeah. 'I know you of old'.

**MT:** Yeah, exactly. It's there isn't it.

**PR:** It's like one of those... like Macbeth, 'I have given suck'. That have those clues to the history, some kind of history. Which you then, it's not necessarily investigated in depth it's just put out there and then you know they have a history.

**MT:** Yeah, I think they've destroyed each other. I think they've been through something, they have broken each other's hearts, and, and I suppose... or that's, sorry, destroyed each other is an interpretation but knowing each other, I think there is heartbreak. There seems to be an intimate knowledge of each other that is in comparison to other couples, even in that play, in comparison to Hero and Claudio who we know absolutely don't know each other, there's not the innocence of Rosalind and Orlando or Viola and Orsino, there's, there is a history. I mean it doesn't surprise me that at the RSC we partnered it with Love's Labour's Lost where clearly there's a relationship between Berowne and Rosalind or a history between the two of them. Likewise, they say, I knew you at Brabant once. Or even sometimes people think that The Taming of the Shrew was Love's Labour's Won, don't they, that these couples who seem to have a depth to them, like Petruchio and Katerina, Rosalind and Berowne. But Beatrice and Benedick seem the most fully formed and most recognisable maybe? Or most domestic, I don't know.

**PR:** Yeah, I think... I remember having the feeling that, yes certainly they had burnt each other. Heartbreak... one of the things, I feel like



somehow, in my memory, he hadn't been able to go through with something. I don't think he was...

**MT:** Is that in the play? Is there something in there, there must...

**PR:** Well yeah, there is. Like firstly that thing about always throwing things away with humour, 'you always end with a jade's trick'. Doesn't she say something about him having played, played with her heart? It's like he can't... Right I'm gonna find it...

[Performance, Act 1 Scene 1]

**MT:** I wonder that you will still be talking, Signor Benedick. Nobody marks you.

**PR:** What, my dear Lady Disdain! Are you yet living?

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

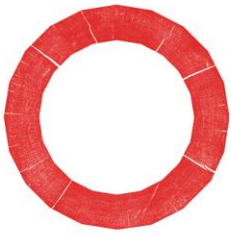
**PR:** Then is courtesy a turncoat. But it is certain I am loved of all ladies, only you excepted. And I would I could find in my heart that I had not a hard heart, for truly I love none.

**MT:** 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

**PR:** God keep your Ladyship still in that mind, so some gentleman or other shall 'scape a predestinate scratched face.

**MT:** Scratching could not make it worse an 'twere such a face as yours were.

**PR:** Well, you are a rare parrot-teacher.



**MT:** A bird of my tongue is better than a beast of yours.

**PR:** 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.

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

[Music plays]

**MT:** In Act 2 Scene 1, when I think they have a little spat in front of Don Pedro and Leonato, and Don Pedro says.

[Performance Act 2, Scene 1]

**PR:** Come, lady, come, you have lost the heart of Signior Benedick.

**MT:** Indeed, my lord, he lent it me awhile, and I gave him use for it, a double heart for his single one. Marry, once before he won it of me with false dice. Therefore your Grace may well say I have lost it.

**MT:** And that thing of her double heart for his single one? That she had invested twice as much and only got his single heart back. As you said before, there's like these little shards of history that you can choose to interpret as you will, but there is a depth to their relationship that would be hard to, hard to avoid I think.

**PR:** Yeah, I certainly felt that first off, there was a dropping away of persona and bravado that was required in order to be true to themselves or certainly be true to Benedick's self. I think one of the things that Beatrice does so well is constantly pierce Benedick's bravado.

**MT:** But with her own. She's just as guilty of... well, the encasement, we talked about it before, she's totally ensconced in her own persona.





**PR:** Whatever happened to them before, like where they pick up and where they end up throughout the play is some kind of reparation for that, isn't it? Like I felt, when I was thinking about what happened for the backstory for the production in 2014, that idea that somehow he wasn't mature enough to go through with a relationship and he let, partly on his side, he let her down is you know...

**MT:** Yeah.

**PR:** ... is one idea. I mean the reason why I'm saying that is I felt part of the thing about growing out is being able to drop bravado and be honest and I think... and also to drop ideals? I think Benedick has that whole speech about who will be the woman that he loves...

[Performance, Act 2 Scene 3]

PR: I do much wonder that one man, seeing how much another man is a fool when he dedicates his behaviours 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. I have known when there was no music with him but the drum and the fife, and now had he rather hear the tabor and the pipe. I have known when he would have walked ten mile afoot to see a good armour, and now will he lie ten nights awake carving the fashion of a new doublet. He was wont to speak plain and to the purpose, like an honest man and a soldier, and now is he turned orthography; his words are a very fantastical banquet, just so many strange dishes. May I be so converted and see with these eyes? I cannot tell; I think not

I will not be sworn but love may transform me to an oyster, but I'll take my oath on it, till he have made an oyster of me, he shall never make me such a fool. 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 Monsieur Love! I will hide me in the arbor.

**PR:** He's talking about an ideal, something that is not earthly, really. And you can't have that kind of love. And I think they are, ultimately, ultimately they have something they see in each other. They're not, neither of them are ideal, I would say, probably, for each other and I think that realisation and that acceptance is quite beautiful.

[Music plays]

**MT:** Beatrice throws the test at Benedick but again, it's such a...

**PR:** Name the test?

**MT:** Kill Claudio.

**PR:** Oh, that one!

**MT:** [Laughs] Yeah. *The* test. The ultimate, yeah. But her ideal of what it means to be a man, this warrior, this if you are a man, if you really love me, then you will do this ultimate test. And I don't know what happened in your production, but hands down every night 'Kill Claudio' got a laugh. And not because I think people found the idea funny, but just the enormity of the gesture to prove that you love someone. Quite quickly people would laugh and then it would go silent because she absolutely meant it and for me, I think about the darkness of the play that that wedding scene is so painful for everybody. And again, I know we've talked about it but often I think of that moment when Claudio tears an absolute strip off Hero and the genius of Shakespeare, knowing that you cannot have shadow unless you have light, that he has to put that amazing line in from Benedick. The idea that mid that scene he would say 'This looks not



like a nuptial'. And again, allowing an audience to laugh at someone in the play's moment of crisis.

**PR:** Again, one of those big questions. Like in Macbeth, we were talking about like 'What would you do? What is your ambition and what would you do to achieve it? How far would you go?' One of the questions is, 'What would you do for love? What would you do to prove your love?' In this case, I suppose. What does it mean to love?

**MT:** And more specifically what would you do for me? Not just general love, out there, it's like do you love me, like it's just so personal between the two of them.

**PR:** It is totally personal. You know that idea of like drawing yourself closer to the material, what would you do, asking that question when you're...

**MT:** Oh yeah, I see, yeah.

**PR:** When you're kind of preparing it.

**MT:** Yup.

**PR:** And also, the question that could hang in the audience is 'What would you do for love?' and that's why you know, maybe that laugh comes on 'Kill Claudio', I mean it does take the breath away that, it comes in so fast.

**MT:** I was just thinking that then, one of the questions is 'What's one of your favourite moments or favourite quotes?' There are quite a lot of moments that take the breath away! Like one of my favourites is... and I think someone mentions it, there's another question about 'Do you think that Don Pedro is really in love with Beatrice or is that scene a joke?'

Beatrice says...



[Performance Act 2 Scene 1]

**MT:** Thus goes everyone to the world  
but I, and I am sunburnt. I may sit in a corner and cry,  
“Heigh-ho for a husband!”

**PR:** Lady Beatrice, I will get you one.

**MT:** I would rather have one of your father’s getting. Hath your  
grace ne’er a brother like you? Your father got excellent  
husbands, if a maid could come by them.

**PR:** Will you have me, lady?

**MT:** No, my lord, unless I might have another for working days.  
Your Grace is too costly to wear every day. But I beseech  
your Grace pardon me. I was born to speak all mirth and no  
matter.

**PR:** Your silence most offends me, and to be merry best  
becomes you, for out o’ question you were born in a merry  
hour.

**MT:** No, sure, my lord, my mother cried, but then there was a  
star danced, and under that was I born.

**MT:** That moment for me, it always felt certainly when we played it,  
that there was the reality of two, two lonely people. Everyone is  
going to get married but her, so already in the air is this idea of  
loneliness and Don Pedro, we know, is also lonely. So, two lonely  
people going well one solution to our loneliness is that we could be  
together. So, I don’t think it’s a joke, I think it’s just a very serious  
offer between two lonely people saying, ‘is mutual loneliness a good  
enough reason to be together?’ and for Beatrice, it doesn’t feel like  
quite enough. And again, only just a few lines before, you’ve heard  
her say she gave her double heart for his single one, she’s loved so  
entirely, the idea of being someone now for any reason other than  
love just feels like it’s not a possibility. Then of course she covers it



up with you're a count or you're a little bit too costly for me, you're such a precious jewel, but the reality is she says 'no, sir' before she does all the covering up. And for me that just felt like such a, again these little shards that could go for nothing but are just cosmic.

**PR:** Don Pedro's, he's a bittersweet character, isn't he? Certainly, I think and that's part of the, part of the sorrow at the end...

**MT:** Yeah, yeah.

**PR:** Because he's left on his own and he's, I agree with you, I think it is a serious offer. But it's not born out of a place that Beatrice is interested in, really I think. That is one of my favourite quotes: 'but then there was a star danced, and under that was I born'. I mean I think that's incredible.

**MT:** I mean that's, that's part of the reason why we've given our child the middle name of Beatrice. There was the star danced on the night...

**PR:** Yes.

**MT:** ... she was born.

**PR:** Very. Benedict Beatrice. Very strange.

**MT:** [Laughs]

**PR:** No, that's not her first name.

**MT:** [Laughs]. Yeah there's a sadness around him isn't there.

**PR:** But for now, let's be happy.

**MT:** Yeah, exactly.

**PR:** And actually, I think that goes...



**MT:** Yeah.

**PR:** ... goes throughout the play doesn't it?

**MT:** Yeah.

**PR:** But for now, let's be happy, we'll deal with the sorrow tomorrow but for now let's be happy. It starts in the same place really. We'll deal with what it means to the fallout of war, the loss of life, but for now let's be happy.

[Music plays]

**MT:** One of the other questions is: 'What do we think of Beatrice and what did I most enjoy about playing this independent woman?'

It's interesting because I don't know if I see her as an independent woman? I think she's so dependent, I think she's so dependent on the narrative that she's told about herself, about Benedick, I think she's so dependent on this triangle of her and Hero and Leonato. Certainly, in comparison to Benedick, she's never or she's rarely on her own, it seems like someone who needs to be in company. So, I think there is an independence to her thought, but I don't see her as an independent woman.

And then there's another question about 'Do I think that Hero and Ursula, do they have an influence on Beatrice and do I think she's already in love with Benedick before the trap is set?'

I think she's, again just what we've said before, I think she's already in love with Benedick before the play begins, she has loved Benedick, maybe once you've loved someone you don't stop loving them? But I think the idea of whether that love can be realised in a relationship is partly what the play is about. So, I think she needs nudging from Hero and Ursula and they know that because the case around her, as we've talked about, the case of wit and the persona and maybe the persona of the independent woman, is so watertight that it's going to take something... well, actually, for them



it takes cruelty for her to get to the heart of how she feels. But it's interesting that Hero and Ursula know they have to use cruelty to be kind. But that isn't true for Benedick is it? They bang on about how much Beatrice is in love with him, like Benedick gets to hear all the really lovely stuff and Beatrice gets completely torn apart? It might be interesting to just compare their two monologues? Hero and Ursula just bang on about her pride and her scorn...

**PR:** Oh yeah, that's right, that's right.

**MT:** And that she's like, poor Benedick to be in love with someone like that. What Benedick overhears is Don Pedro and Claudio say things like...

[Performance Act 2 Scene 3]

**MT:** Down upon her knees she falls, weeps, sobs, beats her heart, tears her hair, prays, curses: "O sweet Benedick! God give me patience!"

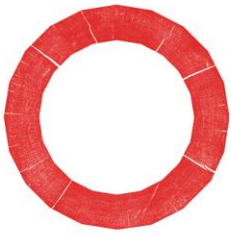
Hero thinks surely she will die, for she says she will die if he love her not, and she will die ere she make her love known, and she will die if he woo her rather than she will bate one breath of her accustomed crossness.

**MT:** So, they sort of say she's not going to change who she is, she has to keep up her pretence of being this cross, scornful person, they talk about her crossness. And only at the end do they say, 'That I love Benedick well and could wish that he would modestly examine himself to see how much he is unworthy so good a lady'. But that's it, like I hope he has a quiet word with himself about it. But what Hero and Ursula say about Beatrice...

[Performance Act 3 Scene 1]

**PR:**

'O god of love! I know he doth deserve



As much as may be yielded to a man,  
But Nature never framed a woman's heart  
Of prouder stuff than that of Beatrice.  
Disdain and scorn ride sparkling in her eyes,  
Misprizing what they look on, and her wit  
Values itself so highly that to her  
All matter else seems weak. She cannot love  
Nor take no shape nor project of affection  
She is so self-centred...

[Laughs], that's not right. It's not quite right.

**MT:** [Laughs]

**PR:** She is so self-endearred.

**Both:** [Laugh].

**PR:** But it's what they're saying.

**MT:** But it is what, yeah.

**PR:** She's so self-centred.

**MT:** They do really lay it on... there is a cruelty to Hero and Ursula  
which isn't quite laid on quite as thick with Benedick...

[Performance Act 3 Scene 1]

**MT:** What fire is in mine ears? Can this be true?  
Stand I condemned for pride and scorn so much?  
Contempt, farewell, and maiden pride, adieu!  
No glory lives behind the back of such.  
And Benedick, love on; I will requite thee,  
Taming my wild heart to thy loving hand.  
If thou dost love, my kindness shall incite thee  
To bind our loves up in a holy band.  
For others say thou dost deserve, and I





Believe it better than reportingly.

**PR:** It's like what is the hook that will make Benedick fight against what's been said of him? And what's the hook that will get Beatrice to prove something else of herself as well, you know? But they do lay it on thicker for Beatrice, don't they?

**MT:** There was definitely a pressure in ours that Shakespeare's put this really hilarious scene between Shakespeare and everybody, I mean it is just a funny scene.

**PR:** Yeah, very funny.

**MT:** And then it's just not quite as funny with the women. I remember feeling this pressure, like must do something funny because we're the scene that follows the really funny scene so we've gotta be even more funny with a scene that feels inherently cruel and actually we just went completely the other way and ours was actually really cruel, I couldn't do anything funny. I was completely trapped in a tower and all I could do was hear these awful things. It's a character assassination but the reason it works is because it's true, isn't it? She understands the truth in it somewhere, that she does know that this persona that she's put on, ultimately is the thing that will get in the way of her being with Benedick or being with the person that she loves. But yeah, there's a definite imbalance [laughs].

**PR:** Yeah. And there is an imbalance. And we had the same thing. Definitely. I don't know how there cannot be the same thing because the gulling scene they give, Shakespeare's gives to Benedick, there's so much potential for laughter in that, so much potential for humour and physical gags and it just isn't the same, it isn't. And you're right, it's the content and who they're doing it to as well. Because certainly in our production, 'because I did think Benedick was a bit of a clown, I thought. Clown, not clown in a red nose, big shoes, but there was something a little bit hopeless about him I thought, because it was easy to see through his bravado, I



thought. Or at least in our version you could see when you hurt Benedick and that comes from the text.

**MT:** Mmm.

**PR:** He wears his vulnerability on his sleeve.

[Performance, Act 2 Scene 3]

**PR:** 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 railed 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 humor? 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.

**MT:** When you think about Benedick as the clown in terms of the mask that turns out to the audience, he's constantly seeking affirmation from the audience. You absolutely know that relationship with those groundlings, there's something beloved about Benedick because he's so open and with people and there's something



absolutely the opposite of Beatrice. Only once does she, she doesn't even speak with them, I think maybe she asks a couple of questions, 'Stand I condemned for pride and scorn so much?', like there's space for the audience to answer, but she's rarely in dialogue with them. Even that is revealing about the two of them. Certainly, knowing how participatory the audience would have been, it's quite a move from Beatrice to not want to even look them in the eye in a way. Lady Macbeth does it, Viola does it, Rosalind does it, there are other women that have very intimate relationships with the audience so it's not a male/female thing, but it's a Beatrice/Benedick thing, he absolutely needs the crowd and she needs an audience in a different way, doesn't she?

**PR:** Absolutely, I think that's right. One of the comments was about how we root for them.

**MT:** Yup.

**PR:** And that I think often you're rooting for those characters that share with the audiences. So, it's right, there's a total imbalance in this play between who shares with the audience, and so Benedick does all the sharing with the audience but he's the one who lets you in so you, you root for them both I think through that relationship with the audience. Whereas you don't have that with Hero and Claudio.

There's a question here saying: 'I've never been sold on the Claudio and Hero relationship. Do you think it's just a foil for Beatrice and Benedick's relationship? Why do you think Hero agrees to marry Claudio after his treatment of her? How do you approach the treatment of Hero's supposed infidelity for a modern audience?'. There're loads of questions in there, OK, so... But, but, but just one point, really, about Claudio and Hero, it's not the first time and not the only time that Shakespeare puts two different kinds of love in front of an audience so there's the relationship of Claudio and Hero, whatever that means, the hope, there's youthfulness about it and there's some kind of hope, a naivety, whatever that kind of love they



are working on is very different to the kind of love that Beatrice and Benedick are working on.

**MT:** These are characters that are figuring out how to love, whether that's a more mature love that you get with Beatrice and Benedick or a love with history or a love that's born out of as much pain as it is beauty. And then this love of innocents. And maybe, well, this is generalisation, but it's harder to root for innocence? Like I think maybe we do... do we root for Romeo and Juliet? I dunno if we do... I dunno, maybe we do.

**PR:** The reason why they stick around is for the wedding of Hero and Claudio, and then when it falls out, they're the reason why we're there. So, I saw them as a co-plot, they weren't the main characters, they weren't the main plot drivers.

**MT:** Beatrice and Benedick?

**PR:** Discuss. Yeah. Just because, just because I think whenever I see this play, because they are so relatable, for the many reasons that they are, they really stand out these characters, Beatrice and Benedick, in a way Hero and Claudio don't, they do a different job. But I suppose the job that Beatrice and Benedick, they are so relatable, they do something to an audience that Hero and Claudio don't. But like as far as plot goes, the plot centres on those I think.

**MT:** Yeah, like I think. It's quite hard to play those young lover parts. If you're trying to psychologise them, if you're trying to give them motive, but I think he gives us in the title that it's just Much Ado About Nothing. So, don't worry too much about the motive, what he's interested in is the exploration of love, testing love and then the outcome of that love, and if you look at Claudio and Hero as representations of love they're significance is equal.

It's quite hard to psychologise them into recognisable people, because actually they're probably parts of you you don't really want to recognise. Whereas it's quite appealing to recognise the sort of, the wit and the libertine, these are all parts of our psyche that we



quite happily entertain 'cause they're quite nice to hang about within our day to day life. But the scorned lover, they're not parts of our psyche, whatever their archetype, whatever they represent, these archetypes are not people that we necessarily want to linger too long with...

**PR:** Admit to.

**MT:** Or admit to, yeah.

**PR:** Yeah.

**MT:** Yeah.

[Music plays]

**IG:** That's it from us, but we'll be back with another Shakespeare Diaries soon – Michelle and Paul will be discussing *As You Like It*, so do send us your questions and we'll pass them along.

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