Activity 16.3 - Thou and you in Much Adoe About Nothing

DON PEDRO See see, heere comes the man we went to seeke.
CLAUDIO Now signior, what newes?

• Benedicke pointedly ignores Claudio by addressing Don Pedro

BENEDICKE (to Don Pedro) Good day my Lord.

• Don Pedro is “Prince of Aragon” and therefore the social superior of both Claudio and Benedicke. He welcomes Benedicke with you, but immediately after drops into the familiar thou.

DON PEDRO Welcome signior, you are almost come to parte almost a fray.
CLAUDIO Wee had likt to haue had our two noses snapt off with two old men without teeth.
DON PEDRO Leonato and his brother what thinkst thou? had we fought, I doubt we should haue beene too yong for them.

• Benedicke in reply uses you as the plural pronoun – he is addressing both men:

BENEDICKE In a false quarrell there is no true valour, I came to seeke you both.

• Claudio does not suspect any change in Benedicke’s attitude to him, and uses the familiar thou/thee as usual:

CLAUDIO We haue beene vp and downe to seeke thee, for we are high proofe melancholie, and would faine haue it beaten away, wilt thou vse thy wit?

BENEDICKE It is in my scabberd, shal I drawe it?

• Neither Don Pedro nor Claudio yet understand Benedicke’s mood and continue to joke:

DON PEDRO Doest thou weare thy wit by thy side?
CLAUDIO Neuer any did so, though very many haue been beside their wit, I will bid thee drawe, as wee doe the minstrels, draw to pleasure vs.
DON PEDRO As I am an honest man he lookes pale, art thou sicke, or angry?
CLAUDIO What, courage man: what though care kild a cartte, thou hast mettle enough in thee to kill care.

• Benedicke’s reply and his later responses are marked by his formal use of you/your:

BENEDICKE Sir, I shall meete your wit in the careere, and you charge it against me, I pray you chuse another subject.
CLAUDIO Nay then giue him another staffe, this last was broke crosse.
DON PEDRO By this light, he chaunges more and more, I thinke he be angry indeed.
CLAUDIO If he be, he knowes how to turne his girdle.
BENEDICKE (aside to Claudio) Shall I speake a word in your eare?
CLAUDIO God blesse me from a challenge.
BENEDICKE You are a villaine, I least not, I will make it good howe you dare, with what you dare, and when you dare: doe me right, or I will protest your cowardise: you haue killd a sweete Lady, and her death shall fall heauie on you, let me heare from you.
• Claudio has by now realised Benedicke’s antagonism, and replies with you.

CLAUDIO Well I wil meet you, so I may haue good cheare.

• Don Pedro partly overhears Benedicke’s “aside” to Claudio,

DON PEDRO What, a feast, a feast?
CLAUDIO I faith I thanke him he hath bid me to a calues head & a capon, the which if I doe not carue most curiously, say my kniffe’s naught, shall I not find a woodcoke too?
BENEDICKE Sir your wit ambles well, it goes easily.

• but has clearly not understood the changed relationship between the two other men, and continues to joke familiarly with and about Benedicke:

DON PEDRO Ile tell thee how Beatrice praisd thy witt the other day: I said thou hadst a fine witt, true said she, a fine little one: no said I, a great wit: right saies she, a great grosse one: nay said I, it hurts no body: nay said I, the gentleman is wise: certaine said she, a wise gentleman: nay said I, he hath the tongues: that I beleue said shee, for he swore a thing to me on munday night, which hee forswore on tuesday morning, theres a double tongue theirs two tongues, thus did shee an houre together trans-shape thy particular vertues, yet at last she cõcluded with a sigh, thou wast the properst man in Italy.
CLAUDIO For the which shee wept heartily and saide she cared not.
DON PEDRO Yea that she did, but yet for all that, and if she did not hate him deadly, she would loue him dearely, the old mans daughter told vs all.
CLAUDIO All all, and moreouer, God sawe him when he was hid in the garden.
DON PEDRO But when shall we set the sauage bulles hornes on the sensible Benedicks head?
CLAUDIO Yea and text vnder-neath, here dwells Benedick the married man.

• Benedicke has taken no part in the previous banter and takes his leave formally, with a dismissive reference to Claudio’s youth. He has used the formal you throughout the conversation.

BENEDICKE Fare you wel, boy, you know my minde, I wil leaue you now to your gossepp-like humor, you breake iests as braggers do their blades, which God be thanked hurt not: (to Don Pedro) my Lord, for your many courtisies, I thanke you, I must discontinue your company, your brother the bastard is fled from Messina: you haue among you, kild a sweet and innocent lady: for my Lord Lacke-beard there, hee and I shel meet, and till then peace be with him. (exit)

DON PEDRO He is in earnest.
CLAUDIO In most profound earnest, and ile warrant you, for the loue of Beatrice.
DON PEDRO And hath challengde thee.
CLAUDIO Most sincerely.
DON PEDRO What a pretty thing man is, when he goes in his dublet and hose, and leaues off his wit!