Act II, Scene 2

DON JOHN
It is so. The Count Claudio shall marry the daughter of Leonato.

BORACHIO
Yea, my lord, but I can cross it.

DON JOHN
Any bar, any cross, any impediment will be med’cinable to me...How canst thou cross this marriage?

BORACHIO
Not honestly, my lord, but so covertly that no dishonesty shall appear in me.

DON JOHN
Show me briefly how.

BORACHIO
I think I told your Lordship a year since, how much I am in the favor of Margaret, the waiting gentlewoman to Hero.

DON JOHN
I remember.

BORACHIO
I can, at any unseasonable instant of the night, appoint her to look out at her lady’s chamber window.

DON JOHN
What life is in that to be the death of this marriage?

BORACHIO
The poison of that lies in you to temper. Go you to the Prince your brother; spare not to tell him that he hath wronged his honor in marrying the renowned Claudio, whose estimation do you mightily hold up, to a contaminated stale, such a one as Hero.

DON JOHN
What proof shall I make of that?

BORACHIO
Proof enough to misuse the Prince, to vex Claudio, to undo Hero, and kill Leonato. Look you for any other issue?

DON JOHN
Only to despite them I will endeavor anything.

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 cozened with the semblance of a maid, that you have discovered 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, hear me call Margaret “Hero,” hear Margaret term me “Claudio,” and bring them to see this the very night before the intended wedding, for in the meantime 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 called assurance and all the preparation overthrown.

DON JOHN
Grow this to what adverse issue it can, I will put it in practice. Be cunning in the working this, and thy fee is a thousand ducats.

BORACHIO
Be you constant in the accusation, and my cunning shall not shame me.

DON JOHN
I will presently go learn their day of marriage.