

Much Ado About Nothing

Read the following extract from Act 3 Scene 1 of *Much Ado About Nothing* and then answer the question that follows.

At this point in the play Beatrice is speaking. She has just overheard Hero and Ursula discussing Benedick's feelings towards her.

BEATRICE

[Coming forward]

What fire is in mine ears? Can this be true?
Stand I condemn'd 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.

Starting with this speech, explain how Shakespeare presents the theme of love through the characters of Beatrice and Benedick.

Write about:

- how Shakespeare presents the theme of love in this speech
- how Shakespeare presents the theme of love in the play as a whole.

[30 marks]

A04 [4 marks]