

Much About Ado Nothing

by William Shakespeare

Characters:

Don Pedro (Prince) – he is a powerful leader. He is also a leader in the army. He is very close to **Leonato** (Governor of Messina) – he is Hero's father and he very much loves his daughter.

Don Jon (The villain and Don Pedro's illegitimate brother) he is very jealous of his brother and also plots to ruin Claudio and Hero's relationship.

Claudio – Hero's love interest. Warm, loyal and reliable. One of the victorious soldiers.

Hero – Daughter of Leonato. She is very charming, pure and kind.

Benedick - Beatrice's love interest. He is very witty and sarcastic and doesn't easily admit to his feelings.

Beatrice – Leonato's niece. Beatrice is very witty and sarcastic too. She does not have her parents which makes her more of an independent female during the Elizabethan times.



Key plot points:

- Scene of celebration as the soldiers return from war and stay with Leonato
- Claudio falls in love with Leonato's daughter and they decide to get married
- Benedick and Beatrice continue their witty banter and exchange insults
- Everyone decides to have fun with Benedick and Beatrice and try and get them to fall in love with each other
- This works and Benedick and Beatrice do fall in love with each other
- Don John decides to make trouble and leads Don Pedro and Claudio to believe that Hero has had sexual relations with Borachio. (It was Margaret they had witnessed in a sexual relationship with Borachio)
- Claudio accuses Hero of being unfaithful to him on their wedding day
- Hero's family decide to pretend that Hero has died of shock and grief so that they can hide her away from the shame that follows her
- Dogberry and Verges arrest Borachio after they hear Borachio bragging of Don John's wicked plot
- People realise that Hero is innocent and Claudio begins grieving for her
- Leonato tells Claudio that his 'punishment' will be to marry another of Leonato's nieces who looks like the dead Hero
- Claudio agrees and on the wedding day he is presented with Hero again at the altar
- Benedick and Beatrice marry and everyone celebrates a double wedding.



Key quotes:

- 'there is a kind of merry war betwixt Signior Benedick and her; they never meet but there's a skirmish of wit between them' **Leonato**
- 'he wears his faith but as the fashion of his hat; it ever changes with the next block' **Beatrice**
- 'I cannot be said to be a flattering honest man, it must not be denied but I am a plain dealing villain' **Don John**
- 'he that is less than a man, I am not for him' **Beatrice**
- 'Well, as time shall try: in time the savage bull doth bear the yoke' **Benedick**
- 'till all graces be in one woman, one woman shall not come in my grace' **Benedick**
- 'I think that they that touch pitch will be defiled' **Dogberry**
- 'O she is fallen in to a pit of ink' **Leonato**
- 'Can the world buy such a jewel?' **Claudio**



Themes:

Marriage: Claudio wants to marry Hero and Benedick says he is anti-marriage and all females

Lies and Deceit: the villains spread lies and as a result unhappiness where there was once love and devotion

Love: the path of love is not smooth in the play. Love is rejected, comes with difficulty, is denied or is hidden and denied

Respect and Reputation: reputations are easily made and easily lost. This is especially true of Hero.

Gender: the characters are limited by the restrictions that their gender puts on them at this time. Hero is a doting daughter and then a doting wife. Beatrice is viewed as unusual as she has an unorthodox attitude towards men



Key words:

Soliloquy	Setting	Stage directions
Aside	Animalistic imagery	Puns
Shrewd	Disdain	Slander
Monologue	Honour	Elizabethan

Context:

- William Shakespeare was born in Stratford in 1564.
- he was the most famous writer of all time
- he had two daughters and a son (who died aged 11).
- *Much Ado* is considered to be Shakespeare's best comedy
- honour was very important to families at this time
- girls were expected to be virtuous, pure and chaste prior to marriage



