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# Much Ado about Nothing

## **Introduction**

These materials have been compiled in order to help intermediate EAL students, who are currently at Stage 3, prepare for their KS3 SATS paper by providing support for the set Shakespeare text - ***Much Ado About Nothing***.

## **Contents**

### **PART 1**

- **Summary of the Plot**
- **The Main Characters**
- **The Minor Characters**
- **Useful Words and Phrases**
  
- **Key Scene - Act 1 Scene 1**
- **Synopsis**
- **Glossary**
- **Useful Quotations**
  
- **Key Scene - Act 2 Scene 3**
- **Synopsis**
- **Glossary**
- **Useful Quotations**
  
- **Two Important Themes**
- **Women In Elizabethan Society**

### **PART 2**

- **Activities 1-5**

## *Much Ado About Nothing*

### **The Setting**

The events in the play take place either in or near the **Palace of Messina** in Italy and the action occurs over several days.

### **Summary of the Plot**

There are three main storylines running through the play. The first is concerned with bringing **Claudio**, a young officer, together with **Hero**, the daughter of **Leonato**. The second storyline splits them up and the final storyline centres on the relationship between **Beatrice**, who is Hero's cousin, and **Benedick** who is another officer.

A group of soldiers - **Don Pedro**, Claudio, and Benedick - arrive to spend a holiday with Leonato, the Governor of Messina. Also at Messina are Hero, Leonato's daughter, his niece Beatrice and his brother, **Antonio**. The soldiers have just returned from Don Pedro's principality where they have put down a rebellion led by Don Pedro's half-brother, **Don John** - the villain of the play. Upon arriving in Messina, Claudio declares his love for Hero but is reluctant to woo her himself. Instead, it is decided that Don Pedro will woo Hero on behalf of Claudio and this starts on the night of the masked ball.

Later that night, Don John, who is angry because his rebellion was defeated, becomes jealous of Don Pedro's friendship with Claudio. He decides he is going to split up Claudio and Hero and he plots this with **Borachio** and **Conrad** who are his followers. Don John's first action is to tell Claudio that Don Pedro is planning to keep Hero for himself. This intrigue is, however, short lived and a date for the couple's wedding is soon arranged.

The focus now shifts to Beatrice and Benedick. These two characters maintain a love/hate relationship and usually indulge in a war of words when they meet. Secretly, however, the couple have strong feelings for each other and, knowing this, their friends hatch a plan to bring Benedick and

Beatrice together. This involves the characters overhearing staged conversations revealing how much each is loved by the other.

Meanwhile, Don John once more plots to divide Hero and Claudio. He shows Claudio and Don Pedro what seems to be evidence of Hero's unfaithfulness. What Don Pedro and Claudio really see is **Margaret** and Borachio together at Hero's window but in the darkness they mistake Margaret for Hero. Claudio now decides he cannot marry Hero. Later that night, **Dogberry** (a comical policeman) and his night watchman arrest Borachio as they have heard him boasting about being well paid for his part in tricking Claudio.

In church next day, the wedding is halted as the stories of Hero's unfaithfulness are told. Hero faints from shock and Leonato looks for evidence to prove the accusations are untrue. Beatrice, who shares a bedroom with Hero, cannot provide an alibi which would prove her cousin's innocence. Leonato is persuaded that it would be better if he tells everyone that Hero has died.

Beatrice tells Benedick that if he really loves her he must kill Claudio as revenge for the terrible thing he has done to Hero. Claudio refuses challenges from Leonato and Antonio for duels but he accepts one from Benedick. Before the fight, Borachio confesses the plot to discredit Hero. Claudio is remorseful and agrees to the punishment of a night's mourning at Hero's tomb but he also agrees to marry Antonio's daughter

The next day, the wedding gets underway. Antonio's masked daughter is revealed as Hero and Benedick proposes to Beatrice. Both couples are reconciled. The play ends happily with Benedick suggesting that they all dance before the weddings take place. Don John tries to escape but is recaptured.



## The Main Characters

### **Leonato**

He is the Governor of Messina in Italy. He is also Hero's father and Beatrice's uncle. He is gullible and can be fooled by appearances

### **Beatrice**

She is Leonato's niece and lives in his palace. She is also Hero's cousin. She is a lively and witty character who has a war of words with Benedick before she eventually marries him.

### **Benedick**

He is a young, single man who is loyal to Don Pedro and fought for him against Don John. He has a similar personality to Beatrice and the two have many verbal fights. His views on life and love change during the play and this confirmed bachelor ends up marrying Beatrice.

### **Don Pedro**

He is the Prince of Aragon and much respected. He has just returned to Messina after defeating a rebellion led by his illegitimate brother, Don John. Don Pedro is quite an arrogant character and he enjoys interfering in the other characters' business.

### **Don John**

He is Don Pedro's illegitimate brother and the villain of the play. He started a rebellion against Don Pedro but was defeated by his half-brother. He plots and schemes throughout the play and causes problems for Hero.

### **Hero**

Hero is Leonato's daughter and she falls victim to Don John's schemes. She is a sweet and honest character and Claudio falls in love with her.

### **Claudio**

He is a brave soldier who fought against Don John. He is a member of Don Pedro's court and people admire him. Claudio is, however, gullible, and he is tricked in the play.





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Se precisar de mais informações, contacte-nos.

若你需要更多資料，請與我們聯絡。

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