

Much Ado

ABOUT
NOTHING

Summary via SparkNotes:

Leonato, a respectable politician, lives in the Italian town of Messina (*Seattle, Washington in our production*). Leonato shares his house with his lovely young daughter, **Hero**, his playful, clever niece, **Beatrice**, and his brother, **Antonio**. As the play begins, Leonato prepares to welcome some friends home from a war. The friends include **Don Pedro**, a colonel who is a close friend of Leonato, and two fellow soldiers: **Claudio**, a well-respected young soldier, and **Benedick**, a clever man who constantly makes witty jokes, often at the expense of his friends. **Don John**, Don Pedro's illegitimate sister, is part of the crowd as well. Don John is moody and bitter, and makes trouble for the others.

When the soldiers arrive at Leonato's home, Claudio quickly falls in love with Hero. Meanwhile, Benedick and Beatrice resume the war of witty insults that they have carried on with each other in the past. Claudio and Hero pledge their love to one another and decide to be married.

To pass the time in the week before the wedding, Hero, Claudio and their friends decide to play a game. They want to get Beatrice and Benedick, who are clearly meant for each other, to stop arguing and fall in love. Their tricks are successful, and Beatrice and Benedick soon fall secretly in love with each other.

But Don John has decided to disrupt everyone's happiness. She has her companion **Borachio** flirt with **Margaret**, Hero's friend, at Hero's window in the darkness of the night, and she brings Don Pedro and Claudio to watch. Believing that he has seen Hero cheating on him, Claudio gets angry. He humiliates Hero by suddenly accusing her of being unfaithful to him on the day of their wedding and abandoning her at the altar. In the aftermath of the rejection, Benedick and Beatrice finally confess their love to one another. Hero's upset family members decide to pretend that she died suddenly of shock and grief and to hide her away while they wait for the truth about her innocence to come to light.

Fortunately, the night watchmen **Hugh Oatcake** and **George Seacole** overhear Borachio bragging about his crime. **Dogberry** and **Verges**, the heads of the local police, arrest both Borachio and Conrad, another of Don John's followers, and **the Sexton** gets their confessions. Everyone learns that Hero is really innocent, and Claudio, who believes she is dead, grieves for her.

Leonato tells Claudio that, as punishment, he wants Claudio to tell everybody in the city how innocent Hero was. He also wants Claudio to marry Leonato's "niece"—a girl who, he says, looks much like the dead Hero. Claudio goes to church with the others, preparing to marry the mysterious, masked woman he thinks is Hero's cousin. When Hero reveals herself as the masked woman, Claudio is overwhelmed with joy. Benedick then asks Beatrice if she will marry him, and after some arguing they agree. The joyful lovers all have a merry dance before they celebrate their double wedding.

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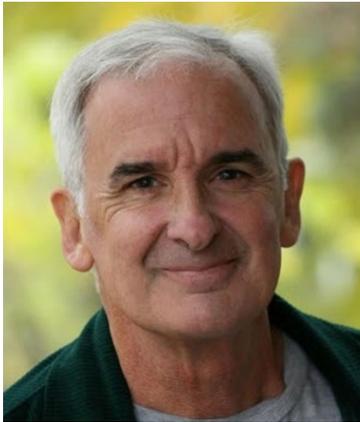
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Who are the characters in

?

Leonato

Governor of Messina (Washington) and Hero's father. He is well-respected.



Hero

Leonato's daughter who is in love with Claudio. She is sweet and honest.



Beatrice

Leonato's niece, Hero's cousin, and Benedick's ex-girlfriend. She is smart and funny.



Don Pedro

Prince of Aragon (Colonel) who is friends with Leonato. He is helpful and cares about his friends.



Claudio

Soldier serving Don Pedro who is in love with Hero. He is shy, but can get very jealous.



Benedick

Soldier serving Don Pedro, and Beatrice's ex-boyfriend. He is funny and likes to show off.



Don John

Don Pedro's disgraced half-sister. She is moody and likes to cause trouble.



Margaret

Hero's friend and Borachio's girlfriend. She is outspoken and a good friend.



Borachio

Margaret's boyfriend. He is lazy and likes music.



Antonio

Leonato's brother and Borachio's father. *He is played by the same actor who plays Dogberry.*



Ursula

Hero's friend. She is silly and likes music. *She is played by the same actor who plays the Sexton.*



Balthazar

A soldier who serves Don Pedro. He likes music. *He is played by the same actor who plays Verges.*



Friar Francis

A local priest. She is serious and helpful.

She is played by the same actor who plays Huah Oatcake.



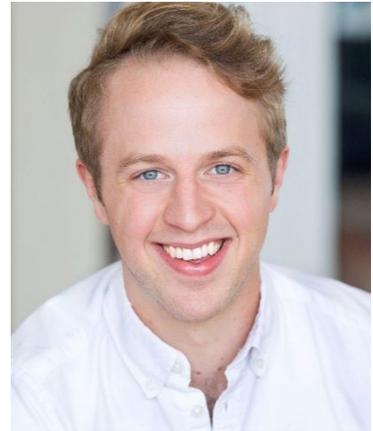
Dogberry

Local police officer (or constable). He is serious, but he mixes up his words a lot.



Verges

Dogberry's second-in-command. He is loyal and serious but silly.



Conrade

Don John's friend. He is very loyal to Don John.



The Sexton

A member of the local watch. She is helpful and a little frustrated.



Hugh Oatcake & George Seacole

Two members of the local
watch. They are not sure they
want to be part of the watch.

