

Much Ado About Nothing

William Shakespeare

Act 1

- 1 Don Pedro had won the war and very few of his men had been killed. Young Count Claudio had fought very bravely.
- 2 They always began to argue and make witty and scornful remarks about each other as soon as they met.
- 3 Benedick did not want to get married because he thought that no woman was good enough for him. He also believed that a woman would be unfaithful and make a fool of him.
- 4 Don Pedro, when everyone was wearing masks, was going to pretend to be Claudio and tell Hero that he loved her. If Hero returned that love, Don Pedro planned to tell Leonato, Hero's father, so that he would be ready to accept Claudio.
- 5 Don John was a bad, angry man – a villain. He was very sad and cared for no one.
- 6 Don John hated Claudio because he had turned Don Pedro against him. He wanted his revenge.

Act 2

- 1 Beatrice could not see a good reason to be married. She did not want a husband who would tell her what to do. She was happy to stay unmarried.
- 2 Beatrice told Benedick that everyone thought he was a fool, was not witty and told lies. Don John told Claudio that Don Pedro loved Hero and wanted to marry her.
- 3 Claudio gave up the idea of marrying Hero and wanted to be alone. Benedick wanted to get his revenge on Beatrice and stay as far away from her as possible.
- 4 Don Pedro explained that both Hero and her father now knew that Claudio loved Hero and that their marriage could take place very soon.
- 5 Don Pedro's plan was to trick Beatrice and Benedick into thinking that they loved each other. Leonato, Hero and Claudio all agreed to help him.

Act 3

- 1 Borachio would pretend to be courting Hero at her bedroom window on the night before the wedding. Margaret, Hero's gentlewoman, would act the part of Hero herself. Don John would make sure that Claudio saw everything.
- 2 Because he knew Margaret well and he thought that Claudio would easily become jealous and believe what he saw.
- 3 They said that Beatrice had written Benedick a love letter, but had then torn it up. She spent the time crying and saying how much she loved Benedick.
- 4 Because his friends had heard these things from Hero herself. Because he thought that Beatrice loved him, he was willing to love her too. He decided that he wanted to marry her.
- 5 Beatrice felt that she had behaved badly. Because she now knew that Benedick loved her, she was ready to love and marry him.
- 6 Benedick had shaved off his beard. He was wearing smarter clothes and he was using perfume and make-up. He was sad too and enjoyed listening to sad music. All these things meant that he was in love.

- 7 Claudio believed Don John because he said he could prove that Hero was false. Claudio also thought that Don John was now his friend. Claudio was easily made jealous too.
- 8 The Watch overheard Borachio telling Conrad about the plot against Hero. They heard the friends call Don John a villain who had paid Borachio money to trick Claudio.
- 9 Hero felt very sad, even though it was her wedding day. Beatrice had a bad cold and she felt very ill. Margaret was very happy and excited.

Act 4

- 1 Leonato, Hero's father, believed what Claudio said about Hero. So did Don Pedro. Don John was happy to agree with them but Friar Francis did not believe that Hero had been unfaithful. Beatrice refused to believe it too. Hero told her father that she had done nothing wrong. When he did not believe her, she fainted.
- 2 Friar Francis's plan was to let everyone think that Hero had died. Only Leonato, Benedick and Beatrice would know the truth. Claudio would feel very sorry and he would love the 'dead' Hero more than he had loved the living one.
- 3 Beatrice was so angry that she told Benedick to kill Claudio. Because she made this a test of his love, Benedick agreed to challenge his friend.
- 4 Dogberry and the Watch brought Borachio and Conrad before Don Pedro at last. Borachio told Don Pedro about Don John's plan and proved that Hero had done nothing wrong.

Act 5

- 1 Antonio told Leonato not to be so sad and to use his sadness to fight back and get revenge.
- 2 Borachio explained to everyone that it had been Don John's idea to shame Hero, and how he had asked Borachio to help him.
- 3 Leonato asked Claudio to write a sad song and put it on Hero's tomb to show everyone how sorry he was. Leonato told Claudio that he should marry his niece, instead of the 'dead' Hero. Claudio agreed.
- 4 Beatrice and Benedick both tried to say that they were not in love at all. No one believed them because they had both written down their true feelings. They were made to kiss and they agreed to marry.
- 5 There were going to be two weddings and the villain, Don John, who had left Messina, had been caught.