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Literature Teaching Unit

Chapter-by-Chapter Study Guide



Much Ado About Nothing

by William Shakespeare

- Learning objectives
- Study Guide with short-answer questions
- Background information
- Vocabulary in context
- Multiple-choice test
- Essay questions
- Literary terms



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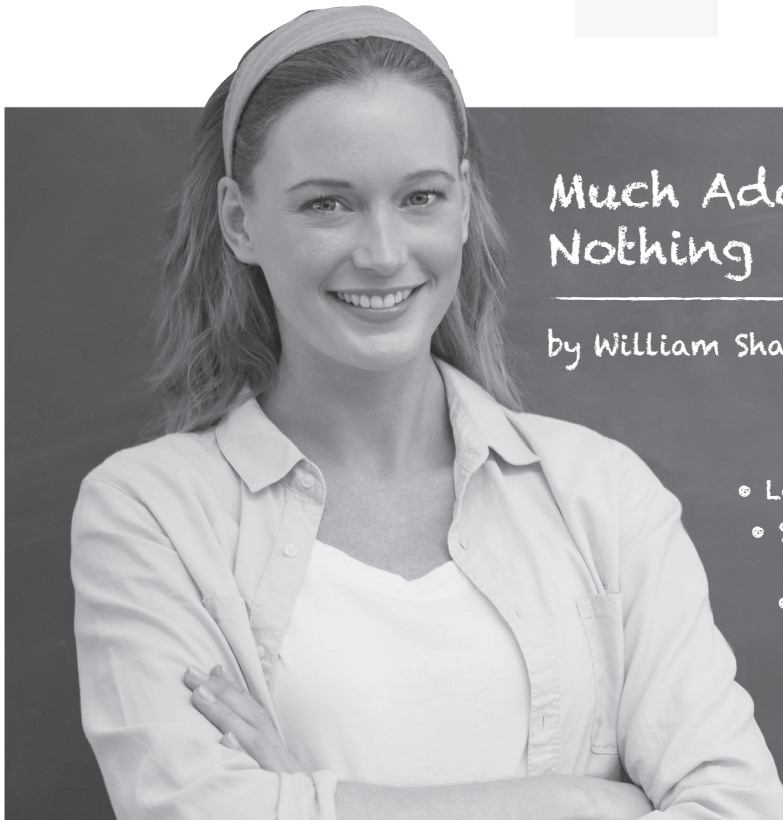
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P.O. Box 658, Clayton, DE 19938
www.prestwickhouse.com
800.932.4593

ISBN: 978-1-58049-069-6

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Item No: 300721

Objectives

By the end of this Unit, the student will be able to

1. to figure out the meaning of difficult passages.
2. identify the role of “the commoner” in this play and explain how his language is different from the language of the heroes and heroines in the play.
3. define comic relief and cite examples of it in this play.
4. demonstrate how the theme “Reality versus Appearance” is developed in this play.
5. write a paragraph which discusses the significance of the play’s title.
6. write a one paragraph character sketch for each of these characters:
 - Beatrice
 - Claudio
 - Don Pedro
 - Leonato
 - Benedick
 - Hero
 - Don John
 - the Friar
7. trace these motifs in the play:
 - A. taking note of someone or something, or purposely not taking note;
 - B. harmony and disruption;
 - C. deception by others and self-deception;
 - D. perceiving of things correctly, and perceiving incorrectly.
8. summarize each of these plot threads:
 - A. the Beatrice and Benedick romance;
 - B. the Claudio and Hero romance;
 - C. the Don Pedro / Don John plot line.
9. discuss Shakespeare’s view of women and his concept of the “battle of the sexes.”
10. discuss the following plot contrivances found in Shakespeare’s comedies:
 - A. multiple marriages;
 - B. boy gets girl, boy loses girl, boy is reunited with girl;
 - C. use of masks and disguises;
 - D. use of a comic figure.

Questions for Essay and Discussion

1. In one of his sonnets, Shakespeare begins:

Let me not to the marriage of true minds
Admit impediments. Love is not love
Which alters when it alteration finds,
Or bends with the remover to remove:
O, no! it is an ever-fixed mark,
That looks on tempests, and is never shaken;

In what sense do Beatrice and Benedick represent “a marriage of true minds”?

2. Unlike farces, which rely on visual humor and physical action, much of the humor in Shakespeare’s comedies comes from the way the characters use language. Define the following language devices and give examples of their use in the play:
- A. Malapropisms
 - B. Exaggeration and raillery
 - C. Puns
 - D. Double entendres
 - E. Sarcasm
 - F. Pomposity (overblown rhetoric)
3. The following plot contrivances are staples of much comedy. State how and where each of the following are used in *Much Ado About Nothing*.
- A. multiple marriages
 - B. boy gets girl; boy loses girl; boy is reunited with girl
 - C. the use of masks and disguises
 - D. the use of a comic figure
4. Identify wit as a comic element in the play
5. Write a one paragraph description of these characters:
- Hero
 - Claudio
 - Leonato
 - Don Pedro
 - Beatrice
 - Benedick
 - Don John

Much Ado About Nothing

ACT I, SCENE I

VOCABULARY

baldrick—belt-strap
complexion—appearance
embassage—errand
halting—limping
meet—suitable
modest—mild
musty—stale
predestinate—fated
recheate—hunting horn
salved—amended
temporize—grow milder
treatise—explanation
tuition—protection
victual—food
winded—blown

1. The messenger tells Leonato, governor of Messina, that the men are returning from battle. What information does he give him (and the reader) about the following?

Claudio

Benedick

Don Pedro

ACT I, SCENE II

VOCABULARY

peradventure—perhaps
thick-pleached—thick with hedges
withal—with it

1. What misinformation does Antonio give to Leonato?

2. Where has he gotten his information?

- 8. Explain Benedick's remarks: "Happy are they that hear their detractions and can put them to mending."

- 9. Explain Benedick's remarks: "but doth not the appetite alter? A man loves the meat in his youth, that he cannot endure in his age."

- 10. What does Benedick mean when he asks, "Shall quips and sentences, and these paper bullets of the brain, awe a man from the career of his humor?"

- 11. When Beatrice announces dinner to Benedick, what is his reaction to her comments?
