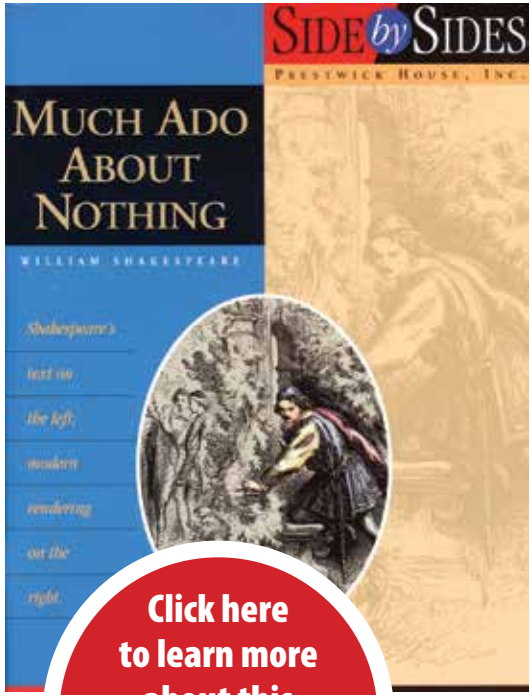




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## DRAMATIS PERSONAE

DON PEDRO, Prince of Arragon  
DON JOHN, his bastard brother  
CLAUDIO, a young lord of Florence  
BENEDICK, a young lord of Padua  
LEONATO, Governor of Messina  
ANTONIO, an old man, his brother  
BALTHASAR, attendant on Don Pedro  
BORACHIO, follower of Don John  
CONRADE, follower of Don John  
    FRIAR FRANCIS  
    DOGBERRY, a Constable  
    VERGES, a Headborough  
    A Sexton  
    A Boy  
  
HERO, daughter to Leonato  
BEATRICE, niece to Leonato  
MARGARET, gentlewoman attending to Hero  
URSULA, gentlewoman attending to Hero

155 **BENEDICK:** Is't come to this? In faith, hath not the world one man but he will wear his cap with suspicion? Shall I never see a bachelor of threescore again? Go to, i' faith! An thou wilt needs thrust thy neck into a yoke, wear the print of it and sigh away Sundays. Look; Don Pedro is returned to seek you.

[Re-enter Don Pedro.]

160 **DON PEDRO:** What secret hath held you here, that you followed not to Leonato's?

**BENEDICK:** I would your Grace would constrain me to tell.

**DON PEDRO:** I charge thee on thy allegiance.

165 **BENEDICK:** You hear, Count Claudio. I can be secret as a dumb man, I would have you think so; but, on my allegiance—mark you this—on my allegiance! he is in love. With who? Now that is your Grace's part. Mark how short his answer is: With Hero, Leonato's short daughter.

**CLAUDIO:** If this were so, so were it uttered.

170 **BENEDICK:** Like the old tale, my lord: 'it is not so, nor 'twas not so; but indeed, God forbid it should be so!'

**CLAUDIO:** If my passion change not shortly, God forbid it should be otherwise.

**DON PEDRO:** Amen, if you love her; for the lady is very well worthy.

175 **CLAUDIO:** You speak this to fetch me in, my lord.

**DON PEDRO:** By my troth, I speak my thought.

**BENEDICK:** *Has it come to this? Does every man want to worry about an unfaithful wife? Will I never see a sixty-year-old bachelor again? Come on! Will you wear the yoke of marriage, bear its weight and pine away on Sundays? Look! Here comes Don Pedro to see you.*

[Re-enter Don Pedro.]

**DON PEDRO:** *What secret has kept you from following us to Leonato's?*

**BENEDICK:** *I wish your lordship would force me to tell you.*

**DON PEDRO:** *I bid you tell me by your oath of loyalty.*

**BENEDICK:** *You hear, Claudio. I can keep a secret as well as a mute. Really. But by my loyalty, notice, by my loyalty—Claudio is in love! With whom? Your grace can take this part. Notice how short his answer is. He's in love with Hero, Leonato's short daughter.*

**CLAUDIO:** *If this is so, let him say it.*

**BENEDICK:** *Like the old tale, my lord, "It is not so, nor was it not so, but indeed, God forbid that it should be so!"*

**CLAUDIO:** *I hope to God my passions do not change.*

**DON PEDRO:** *Amen, if you love her, for the lady is very deserving of your love.*

**CLAUDIO:** *You say this to make sport of me, my lord.*

**DON PEDRO:** *No, on my word, I say what I think.*

5 CONRADE: You should hear reason.

DON JOHN: And when I have heard it, what blessings brings it?

CONRADE: If not a present remedy, at least a patient sufferance.

DON JOHN: I wonder that thou being, as thou say'st thou art, born  
 10 under Saturn, goest about to apply a moral medicine to a  
 mortifying mischief. I cannot hide what I am: I must be sad  
 when I have cause, and smile at no man's jests; eat when I  
 have stomach, and wait for no man's leisure; sleep when I  
 am drowsy, and tend on no man's business; laugh when I am  
 merry, and claw no man in his humour.

15 CONRADE: Yea, but you must not make the full show of this till you  
 may do it without controlment. You have of late stood out  
 against your brother, and he hath ta'en you newly into his  
 grace, whereit is impossible you should take true root but by  
 the fair weather that you make yourself. It is needful that you  
 20 frame the season for your own harvest.

DON JOHN: I had rather be a canker in a hedge than a rose in his  
 grace, and it better fits my blood to be disdained of all than  
 to fashion a carriage to rob love from any. In this, though I  
 cannot be said to be a flattering honest man, it must not be  
 25 denied but I am a plain-dealing villain. I am trusted with a  
 muzzle and enfranchised with a clog; therefore I have decreed  
 not to sing in my cage. If I had my mouth, I would bite; if I  
 had my liberty, I would do my liking. In the meantime let me  
 be that I am, and seek not to alter me.

30 CONRADE: Can you make no use of your discontent?

DON JOHN: I make all use of it, for I use it only. [Enter Borachio.]  
 Who comes here? What news, Borachio?

BORACHIO: I came yonder from a great supper. The prince your  
 35 brother is royally entertained by Leonato, and I can give you  
 intelligence of an intended marriage.

CONRADE: You should hear logic.

DON JOHN: What good news would hearing logic bring?

CONRADE: If not a cure, at least an endurable pain.

DON JOHN: I wonder if you, [being born under an ill-disposed planet]  
 mean to apply philosophy to my deadly disease. I cannot hide what  
 I am. I must be sad when I have reason, smile at no man's jokes, eat  
 when I am hungry, and wait on no man; sleep when I am drowsy,  
 do no one else's job; laugh when I am happy, and flatter no man  
 in his conceits.

CONRADE: Yes, but you must hide your feelings until you can do some-  
 thing openly about it. You recently were in rebellion against your  
 brother, and he has taken you back into his good graces where  
 you can prosper only by appearing docile. You must choose your  
 revenge carefully.

DON JOHN: I would rather be a weed in the bushes than a rose in his gar-  
 den. I'm happier as an outcast than in someone's favor. Although  
 I cannot be called an honest man, it can't be denied that I am  
 honestly a villain. I am shackled for now, but I won't sing in my  
 captivity. If my mouth were free I would bite him, if I had my free-  
 dom I would do as I please. Meanwhile, leave me alone and don't  
 try to change me.

CONRADE: Can't you find use for your unhappiness?

DON JOHN: I make all use of it since it is all I use. [Enter Borachio.] Who's  
 there? What news do you bring, Borachio?

BORACHIO: I come from a great feast where your brother is royally enter-  
 tained by Leonato; and I can tell you of an intended marriage.

HERO: O god of love! I know he doth deserve  
 50 As much as may be yielded to a man:  
 But Nature never framed a woman's heart  
 Of prouder stuff than that of Beatrice.  
 Disdain and scorn ride sparkling in her eyes,  
 Misprizing what they look on; and her wit  
 55 Values itself so highly, that to her  
 All matter else seems weak. She cannot love,  
 Nor take no shape nor project of affection,  
 She is so self-endear'd.

URSULA: Sure I think so;  
 60 And therefore certainly it were not good  
 She knew his love, lest she'll make sport at it.

HERO: Why, you speak truth. I never yet saw man,  
 How wise, how noble, young, how rarely featured,  
 But she would spell him backward. If fair-faced,  
 65 She would swear the gentleman should be her sister;  
 If black, why, Nature, drawing of an antique,  
 Made a foul blot; if tall, a lance ill-headed;  
 If low, an agate very vilely cut;  
 If speaking, why, a vane blown with all winds;  
 70 If silent, why, a block moved with none.  
 So turns she every man the wrong side out  
 And never gives to truth and virtue that  
 Which simpleness and merit purchaseth.

URSULA: Sure, sure, such carping is not commendable.

HERO: No, not to be so odd, and from all fashions,  
 75 As Beatrice is, cannot be commendable.  
 But who dare tell her so? If I should speak,  
 She would mock me into air; O, she would laugh me  
 Out of myself, press me to death with wit!  
 80 Therefore let Benedick, like covered fire,  
 Consume away in sighs, waste inwardly.  
 It were a better death than die with mocks,  
 Which is as bad as die with tickling.

HERO: *Sweet Cupid! I know he deserves as much as any man. But nature never gave a woman's heart more pride than that of Beatrice. Scorn and pride sparkle in her eyes, contemptuous of everything they see; and her humor values itself so highly, that nothing else really matters. She can't love, nor give forth any signs of affection since she values herself so much.*

URSULA: *Yes, I think you're right; so certainly it wouldn't be good that she knew of his love since she'd just tease him.*

HERO: *This is true. I never yet saw a man, no matter how wise, noble, young, or good looking that she wouldn't find fault with. If he would be fair-faced, she would swear he should be her sister. If darker, why then nature made a dark blot. If he were well spoken, she would complain he is windy; if he were quiet, then he is like a block of silent wood. Thus, she turns every man inside out, never admitting virtues and sincerity.*

URSULA: *Yes, yes, such fault-finding is not commendable.*

HERO: *No, to be so removed from accepted practice is wrong. But who would dare to tell her? If I would try, she would abuse me mightily. She would laugh at me so much that I would die under the weight of her wit. Therefore, let Benedick consume away in sighs like a covered pot sputtering. It's a better death than to be killed with sarcasm, which is as bad as dying from tickles.*

30 DOGBERRY: True, and they are to meddle with none but the prince's subjects. You shall also make no noise in the streets; for for the watch to babble and to talk is most tolerable, and not to be endured.

35 SECOND WATCHMAN: We will rather sleep than talk. We know what belongs to a watch.

DOGBERRY: Why, you speak like an ancient and most quiet watchman, for I cannot see how sleeping should offend. Only have a care that your bills be not stolen. Well, you are to call at all the alehouses and bid those that are drunk get them to bed.

40 SECOND WATCHMAN: How if they will not?

DOGBERRY: Why then, let them alone till they are sober. If they make you not then the better answer, you may say they are not the men you took them for.

SECOND WATCHMAN: Well, my lord.

45 DOGBERRY: If you meet a thief, you may suspect him, by virtue of your office, to be no true man; and for such kind of men, the less you meddle or make with them, why, the more is for your honesty.

50 SECOND WATCHMAN: If we know him to be a thief, shall we not lay hands on him?

DOGBERRY: Truly, by your office you may; but I think they that touch pitch will be defiled. The most peaceable way for you, if you do take a thief, is to let him show himself what he is, and steal out of your company.

*DOGBERRY: True, and you are to meddle with only the prince's subjects. You should be quiet in the streets, for you to gossip and talk is most tolerable and should not be endured.*

*SECOND WATCHMAN: We would rather sleep than talk. We know how our job works.*

*DOGBERRY: You speak like an old and quiet watchman, for I can't see how sleeping should disturb anyone. Only be careful that your weapons aren't stolen. Further, you are to stop at the taverns and ask the drunks to go to bed.*

*SECOND WATCHMAN: What if they won't go home to bed?*

*DOGBERRY: Then let them alone until they become sober. If they can't give you a good answer then, you can say they were not the men you thought they were.*

*SECOND WATCHMAN: Good, my lord.*

*DOGBERRY: Further, if you meet a thief, you may suspect him by your duty not to be an honest man; and with that kind the less you deal with them the better will be your honesty.*

*SECOND WATCHMAN: If we know him to be a thief, shouldn't we grab him?*

*DOGBERRY: Indeed you may by your duty, but I think that those who handle tar will become dirty. The easiest thing for you to do if you seize a thief is to let him show his true nature by stealing out of your company.*

BORACHIO: Thou shouldst rather ask if it were possible any villainy should not be so rich; for when rich villains have need of poor ones, poor ones may make what price they will.

100 CONRADE: I wonder at it.

BORACHIO: That shows thou art unconfirmed. Thou knowest that the fashion of a doublet, or a hat, or a cloak, is nothing to a man.

[Several obscure lines regarding fashion and male sexuality are deleted here.]

105 CONRADE: All this I see; and I see that the fashion wears out more apparel than the man. But art not thou thyself giddy with the fashion too, that thou hast shifted out of thy tale into telling me of the fashion?

110 BORACHIO: Not so neither. But know that I have to-night wooed Margaret, the Lady Hero's gentlewoman, by the name of Hero. She leans me out at her mistress' chamber window, bids me a thousand times good night—I tell this tale vilely; I should first tell thee how the prince, Claudio and my master, planted and placed and possessed by my master Don John, saw afar off in the orchard this amiable encounter.

115 CONRADE: And thought they Margaret was Hero?

120 BORACHIO: Two of them did, the prince and Claudio; but the devil my master knew she was Margaret; and partly by his oaths, which first possessed them, partly by the dark night, which did deceive them, but chiefly by my villainy, which did confirm any slander that Don John had made, away went Claudio enraged; swore he would meet her, as he was appointed, next morning at the temple, and there, before the whole congregation, shame her with what he saw o'ernight and send her home again without a husband.

*BORACHIO: You should ask if it is possible for any evil work not to be so costly. For when rich villains need poor villains, then poor villains may set whatever price they want.*

*CONRADE: I'm amazed.*

*BORACHIO: That shows you are not knowledgeable.*

*[Several obscure lines regarding fashion and male sexuality are deleted here.]*

*CONRADE: I see this and I also see that fashion wears out clothing faster than a man can. But are you not giddy with this fashion business? You have shifted from telling me the tale and are lecturing me on fashion.*

*BORACHIO: Neither one of those is so. But, know you that tonight I have wooed Margaret, Hero's servant, calling her by the name of Hero. As I do, she leans out of Hero's bedroom window, bidding me good night a thousand times—but I tell this tale poorly. I need to first tell you how the prince and Claudio were led to a hiding spot in the orchard by Don John, and from afar the three saw this lovers' encounter.*

*CONRADE: And they thought Margaret was Hero?*

*BORACHIO: Two of them did, the prince and Claudio. But that devil, my master, knew she was really Margaret. Partly by his lies which he first told them, and partly by the darkness of night which did deceive them—but mainly by my villainy which confirmed all which Don John had spoken—Claudio left enraged; he swore he would meet her at church tomorrow morning and humiliate her in front of all those gathered and send her home without a husband.*

DON JOHN: Fie, fie! they are not to be named, my lord—  
 Not to be spoke of;  
 There is not chastity, enough in language  
 100 Without offence to utter them. Thus, pretty lady,  
 I am sorry for thy much misgovernment.

CLAUDIO: O Hero! what a Hero hadst thou been  
 If half thy outward graces had been placed  
 About thy thoughts and counsels of thy heart!  
 105 But fare thee well, most foul, most fair! Farewell,  
 Thou pure impiety and impious purity!  
 For thee I'll lock up all the gates of love,  
 And on my eyelids shall conjecture hang,  
 To turn all beauty into thoughts of harm,  
 110 And never shall it more be gracious.

LEONATO: Hath no man's dagger here a point for me?

[Hero swoons.]

BEATRICE: Why, how now, cousin? Wherefore sink you down?

DON JOHN: Come let us go. These things, come thus to light,  
 Smother her spirits up.

[Exeunt Don Pedro, Don John, and Claudio.]

115 BENEDICK: How doth the lady?

BEATRICE: Dead, I think. Help, uncle!  
 Hero! why, Hero! Uncle! Signior Benedick! Friar!

LEONATO: O Fate, take not away thy heavy hand!  
 Death is the fairest cover for her shame  
 120 That may be wished for.

BEATRICE: How now, cousin Hero?

DON JOHN: *Shame, shame, lord, these are not to be named, not to be  
 spoken of. There is not enough purity in language to cover these  
 words. Pretty lady, I am sorry for your misfortune.*

CLAUDIO: *Oh, Hero! What a Hero you would have been if your heart  
 could have been as controlled as well as your outward appear-  
 ances! But good-bye most foul, most fair, Hero. Farewell to your  
 pure impurity, your impure purity. Because of you, I'll never love  
 again, and my eyes will always question and view beauty with  
 suspicion. And never again shall my love be gracious*

LEONATO: *Doesn't anyone have a dagger's point for me?*

*[Hero faints.]*

BEATRICE: *Good God, cousin. Why do you fall down?*

DON JOHN: *Let us go. These discovered evils crush her spirit.*

*[Exit Claudio, Don John, Don Pedro.]*

BENEDICK: *How is the lady?*

BEATRICE: *Dead. I think. Hero, oh Hero! Help me, uncle! Benedick! Friar!*

LEONATO: *Fate, do not take away your heavy hand. Death is the fairest  
 cover for her shame that could be hoped for.*

BEATRICE: *Oh, Hero?*



**Scene ii**  
**A Prison**

[Enter Dogberry, Verges, the Sexton, and the Watch, with Conrade and Borachio.]

DOGBERRY: Is our whole dissembly appeared?

VERGES: O, a stool and a cushion for the sexton.

SEXTON: Which be the malefactors?

DOGBERRY: Marry, that am I and my partner.

5 VERGES: Nay, that's certain. We have the exhibition to examine.

SEXTON: But which are the offenders that are to be examined? Let them come before master constable.

DOGBERRY: Yea, marry, let them come before me. What is your name, friend?

10 BORACHIO: Borachio.

DOGBERRY: Pray write down Borachio. Yours, sirrah?

CONRADE: I am a gentleman, sir, and my name is Conrade.

DOGBERRY: Write down master gentleman Conrade. Masters, do you serve God?

**Scene ii**  
**A Prison**

*[Enter Dogberry, Verges, the Sexton, and the Watch, with Conrade and Borachio.]*

*DOGBERRY: Is our entire dissembly here?*

*VERGES: Oh, get a stool and a cushion for the sexton.*

*SEXTON: Which ones are the malefactors?*

*DOGBERRY: Well, that would be me and my partner.*

*VERGES: That's certain. We have the exhibition to examine.*

*SEXTON: But which are the offenders that I am to cross-examine? Bring them before the Master Constable.*

*DOGBERRY: Yes, indeed, let them come before me. What is your name, friend?*

*BORACHIO: Borachio.*

*DOGBERRY: Pray, write down—Borachio. And yours, sir?*

*CONRADE: I am a gentleman, sir, and my name is Conrade.*

*DOGBERRY: Write down master gentleman Conrade. Masters, do you serve God?*

BENEDICK: Friar, I must entreat your pains, I think.

FRIAR: To do what, signior?

20 BENEDICK: To bind me, or undo me—one of them.  
Signior Leonato, truth it is, good signior,  
Your niece regards me with an eye of favour.

LEONATO: That eye my daughter lent her. 'Tis most true.

BENEDICK: And I do with an eye of love requite her.

25 LEONATO: The sight whereof I think you had from me,  
From Claudio, and the prince; but what's your will?

BENEDICK: Your answer, my lord, is enigmatical;  
But, for my will, my will is, your good will  
May stand with ours, this day to be conjoined  
30 In the state of honourable marriage;  
In which, good friar, I shall desire your help.

LEONATO: My heart is with your liking.

FRIAR: And my help. Here comes the prince and Claudio.

[Enter Don Pedro and Claudio and two or three other.]

DON PEDRO: Good morrow to this fair assembly.

35 LEONATO: Good morrow, prince; good morrow, Claudio.  
We here attend you. Are you yet determined  
To-day to marry with my brother's daughter?

CLAUDIO: I'll hold my mind, were she an Ethiopian.

LEONATO: Call her forth, brother. Here's the friar ready.  
[Exit Antonio.]

BENEDICK: Friar, I must seek your assistance, I think.

FRIAR: To do what, Signior?

BENEDICK: To either bind me or undo me. Signior Leonato, the truth is  
that your niece looks favorably upon.

LEONATO: My daughter helped form that opinion. That's most true.

BENEDICK: And I, with an eye of love, return her love.

LEONATO: Your eyes, I think, were focused by me, by Claudio, and by the  
prince. But, what do you want?

BENEDICK: Your answer, sir, is puzzling; but, for my will, my will is  
that your good will might join with ours; that this day to be  
joined in the state of matrimony. In which, good friar, I shall  
desire your help.

LEONATO: My heart feels the same way.

FRIAR: And I will give my help. Here comes the prince and Claudio.

[Enter Don Pedro, Claudio and two or three others.]

DON PEDRO: Good morning to the wonderful gathering.

LEONATO: Good morning, prince; good morning, Claudio. We are  
here to serve you. Are you still determined to wed my niece  
today?

CLAUDIO: I'd do it even if she were an Ethiopian.

LEONATO: Call her here, brother. The friar is ready.  
[Exit Antonio.]

## Study Guide

### ACT I, Scene i

1. The messenger tells Leonato, governor of Messina, that the men are returning from battle. What information does the messenger give about Claudio, Benedick and Don Pedro?
2. Why does Leonato feel it necessary to explain to the messenger Beatrice's comments?  
"You must not, sir, mistake my niece. There is a merry war betwixt Signior Benedick and her. They never meet but there's a skirmish of wit between them."
3. How would you describe Beatrice? What feelings about marriage do both Beatrice and Benedick share?
4. What is learned about Don John?
5. What does Claudio ask Benedick?
6. Why does Benedick seem opposed to marriage? When Benedick says he will stay a bachelor, what does Don Pedro predict?
7. One theme of the play is that things are not as they seem. What action takes place that night which is also not as it seems?

### ACT I, Scene ii

8. What misinformation does Antonio give to his brother? Where has Antonio received this information?

### ACT I, Scene iii

9. How does Don John explain his depression to Conrade?
10. What does Conrade suggest?
11. How does Don John describe himself?
12. Explain Don John's remark about Claudio: "That young start-up hath all the glory of my overthrow."
13. When a bastard half-brother appears in a Shakespearean play, he usually is a resentful, angry villain. Explain how the law of primogeniture in the 16<sup>th</sup> century might have been a cause of this resentment.
14. How does Don John's personality and behavior contrast with every other character's thus far?

### ACT II, Scene i

1. In what way is Beatrice like Benedick? What does Beatrice have against marriage?
2. How does Beatrice insult Benedick? A little later, how does the reader know that Benedick is upset?
3. As the people enter the ballroom, how do they pair off? Don John sees his brother speaking of love to Hero. Then, he sees one man with his mask still on, and Borachio tells Don John that the masked man is Claudio. Why does Don John ask Claudio if he is Benedick?
4. When he is alone, what is Claudio's response to the news that Don John has just given him?
5. To what does Benedick compare Claudio? What is being suggested about Claudio?