

Kids Love Shakespeare's MUCH ADO ABOUT NOTHING - Quick Summary for Kids

This story takes place in Messina, Italy at the palace of Governor Leonato. Leonato has one daughter who is named Hero. He is also raising Beatrice, his niece. These two young ladies are the main female characters in the play. Hero is younger, quiet and sweet. Beatrice is outspoken, clever, and doesn't ever want to get married.

When the story starts, Don Pedro and his soldiers have just won a great war and everyone is excited. Leonato invites all of the soldiers to eat and rest at his palace. Two of the soldiers are named Claudio and Benedick. They are the main male characters in the play. Benedick is loud, funny and brags a lot. Claudio is quiet, shy and a war hero.

When Claudio meets Hero the first night they fall instantly in love. However, Claudio is too shy to talk to Hero or Leonato about his feelings. Don Pedro promises to help Claudio by talking to Leonato about his love for Hero later that night. Don Pedro says he will ask Leonato if Claudio can marry Hero.

The villain in the play is named Don John. He is the brother of Don Pedro and he is jealous of Claudio for being the hero of the war. His sidekicks are named Conrad and Borachio. Don John spends most of the play trying to ruin Claudio's life. For example, Don John tells Claudio that Don Pedro was actually trying to woo Hero for himself. That plan doesn't work for too long, however, because Leonato and Hero soon arrive to accept Claudio's marriage proposal.

Hero and Claudio are happy and decide the only thing that could make them happier is if their good friend (Benedick) and cousin (Beatrice) were to fall in love. This is quite a challenge because Benedick and Beatrice are always mean to each other. Claudio and Hero decide to trick them into loving one another by spreading rumors about them being in love. All the men help spread rumors about Beatrice and all the women help spread rumors about Benedick. When Benedick and Beatrice hear the rumors about each other, the plan works and they fall in love!

Eventually Don John and his sidekicks come up with another plan. They decide to trick Claudio into thinking that Hero loves somebody else so that their wedding will be ruined. Don John tells Borachio to stand at the bottom of Hero's window and woo her maid Margaret. Because it is nighttime, Claudio thinks Margaret is Hero telling another man that she loves him. Don John's plan works. Claudio is furious and swears to deny Hero the next day at their wedding.

The funniest character in the play is named Dogberry. He is the leader of The Watch (or the guards) at Leonato's palace. Leonato asks Dogberry and his watch to be on the look out for evil around the palace. Dogberry is so funny because he mixes up his words and confuses things all the time. Nobody thinks Dogberry is very smart, so they don't listen to him when he tries to tell them of Don John's evil plan.

On the day of the wedding, Claudio accuses Hero of loving another man. Hero is so shocked that she faints. Leonato sends everyone away from the church. Beatrice is angry that anyone would accuse Hero of such a terrible thing. She insists that Claudio must be wrong and ask Benedick to fight him. Friar Francis comes up with a plan to find out the truth. They decide to announce that Hero has fainted to death. They hope the person who started the rumor will feel so guilty that they'll tell the truth. When Claudio hears that Hero has died he feels terrible, but the truth doesn't come out until Dogberry forces everyone to listen to him. Once they know of Don John's plan, all is forgiven. Leonato shows that Hero is actually alive and the wedding continues.