

CHARACTERS

Beatrice—The niece of Leonato and cousin of Hero. Beatrice is extremely quick-witted and verbally adept, frequently amusing her relatives and friends with elaborate stories and jokes, often at her own expense. Though she is generous and good-hearted, she has a tendency to use her wit to mock and tease other people. Benedick is the target of her harshest mockery.

Benedick—A gentleman soldier who has recently been fighting under Don Pedro, and a close friend of Don Pedro and Claudio. Like Beatrice, Benedick is very witty and fond of mocking other people with elaborate jokes, comparisons, and puns. He swears he will never marry, as he is very critical of women and does not trust any of them not to cheat on him.

Claudio—A young soldier who has won great acclaim fighting under Don Pedro during the recent wars. Claudio falls in love with Hero upon his return to Messina. Though he is valiant and loving, he is unfortunately gullible, quick to believe nasty rumors and to feel that he's been betrayed by those close to him.

Hero—The beautiful young daughter of Leonato, and cousin to Beatrice. Hero is lovely, gentle, and innocent.

Don Pedro—A very important nobleman from Aragon, often referred to simply as “the Prince.” Don Pedro is a longtime friend of Leonato, Hero’s father, and is also close to the soldiers who have been fighting under him—the younger Benedick and the very young Claudio. Don Pedro is generous, courteous, intelligent, and loving to his friends, but he is also quick to believe evil of others and hasty to take revenge. He is the most politically and socially powerful character in the play.

Leonato—The father of Hero and the uncle of Beatrice. Leonato is the governor of Messina and a respected, well-to-do, elderly nobleman. The action of the play takes place in his home. Leonato is second in status only to Don Pedro.

Don John—Don Pedro's illegitimate half brother, sometimes referred to simply as "the Bastard." Don John is melancholy and sullen by nature, and he creates a dark scheme to ruin the happiness of Hero and Claudio. He is the villain of the play, his evil actions motivated mainly by his envy of his brother's power and authority.

Margaret—Hero's serving woman, who unwittingly helps Borachio and Don John deceive Claudio into thinking that Hero is unfaithful. Unlike Ursula, Hero's other lady-in-waiting, Margaret is lower class. Though she is honest, she does have some dealings with the villainous world of Don John: her lover is the mistrustful and easily bribed Borachio. Also unlike Ursula, Margaret loves to break decorum, especially with bawdy jokes and teasing.

Borachio—An associate of Don John, and the lover of Margaret, Hero's serving woman. Borachio conspires with Don John to trick Claudio and Don Pedro into thinking that Hero is unfaithful to Claudio. His name means "drunkard" in Italian.

Conrad—One of Don John's intimate associates, entirely devoted to Don John and his schemes.

Dogberry—The chief policeman of Messina, in charge of the watch. Dogberry is very sincere and takes his job seriously, but he has a habit of using exactly the wrong word to convey his meaning. Dogberry is one of the few middle-class characters in the play, though his desire to speak formally and elaborately like the noblemen becomes an occasion for parody.

Verges—The deputy to Dogberry, chief policeman of Messina.

Antonio—Leonato's elderly brother, and Hero and Beatrice's uncle.

Balthasar—A waiting man in Leonato's household, and a musician. Balthasar flirts with Margaret at the masked party and helps Leonato, Claudio, and Don Pedro trick Benedick into falling in love with Beatrice. Balthasar sings the song "Sigh no more, ladies, sigh no more," which encourages women to accept men's infidelity as natural.

Ursula—One of Hero's waiting women.

ADDITIONAL SPEAKING ROLES:

Messenger - appears at the start of the play, announcing the imminent arrival of Don Pedro and his company.

Friar Francis - wedding officiant (*spoiler alert!*).

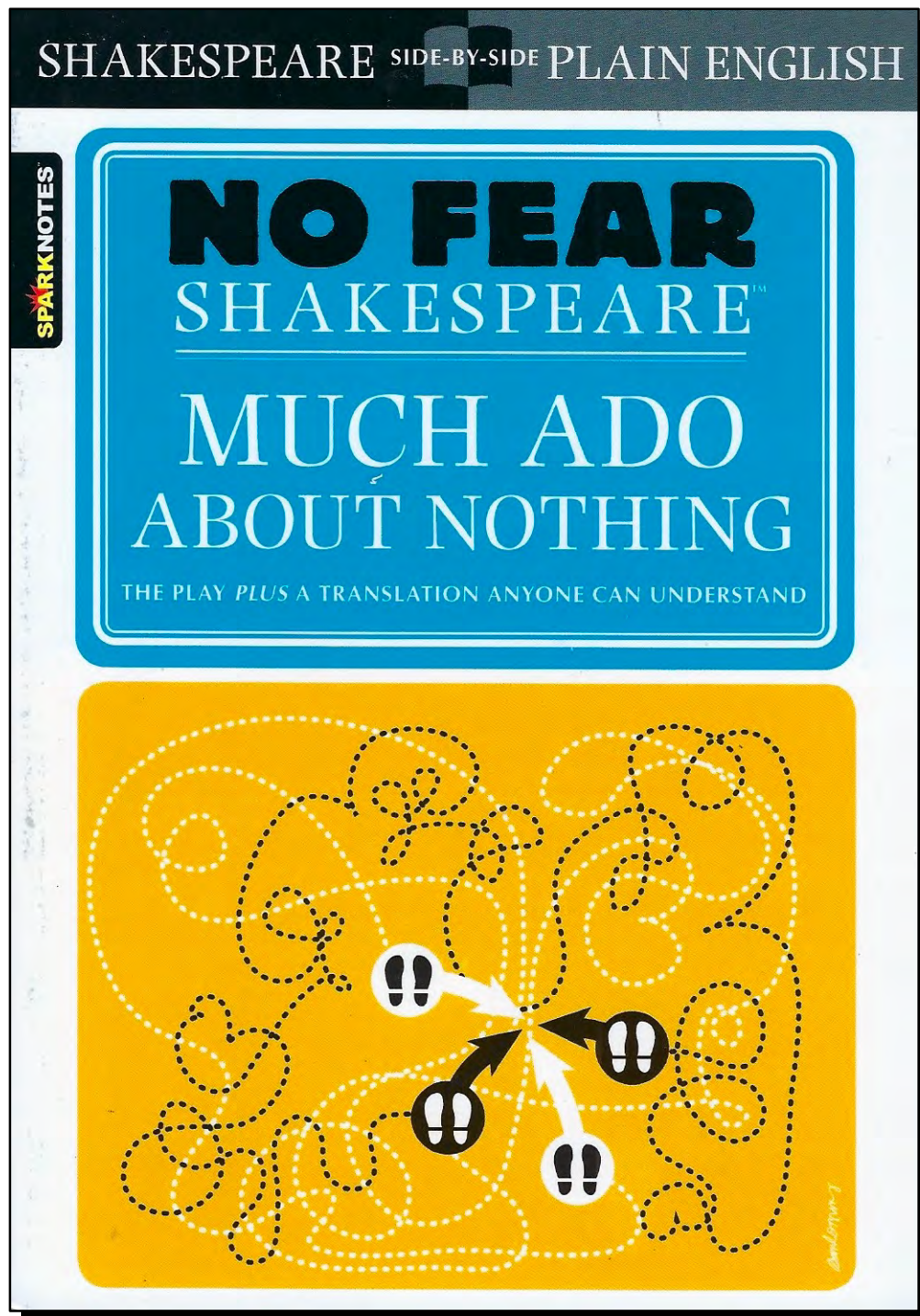
Sexton - the local magistrate.

ADDITIONAL NON-SPEAKING ROLES:

Members of the Watch

Ladies' maids

THIS IS THE VERSION OF THE SCRIPT
WE WILL BE USING



FOR THOSE WHO LIKE TO PREPARE
EARLY, THIS BOOK IS CAN EASILY BE
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