

Much Ado About Nothing

SYNOPSIS

Much Ado About Nothing

Don Pedro, Prince of Aragon, the commander of the troops stationed in the country, with his fellow-officers Benedick and Claudio, visits Leonato, the governor of Messina. While Claudio falls in love with Leonato's daughter Hero, his niece Beatrice engages in ironic battles of wit with Benedick. They appear to hate each other.

Don Pedro offers to woo Hero for Claudio during a masked ball, but Don Pedro's illegitimate and resentful brother Don John hopes to cause trouble by making Claudio think Don Pedro has stolen Hero for himself. However, the misunderstandings are resolved, and the wedding arranged. While waiting for the day, Don Pedro suggests trying to make Benedick and Beatrice fall in love with one another. They will make both of them think they are overhearing conversations suggesting that the other is desperately in love.

Meanwhile Don John seeks the help of his men Borachio and Conrade in a malicious deception to make Claudio and the Prince believe that Hero is having an affair. Their plan succeeds and Claudio rejects Hero during the marriage service. He believes the shock has killed her. Leonato and his brother Antonio challenge Claudio to a duel. Beatrice and Benedick confess their love to each other, and Beatrice demands that Benedick should prove it by killing Claudio.

The incompetent watch (the police force) has, however, arrested Conrade and Borachio, and gradually and with difficulty they make the Prince and Leonato understand what has happened. The repentant Claudio promises to marry the 'dead' Hero's cousin, whom he has not seen. When it is revealed that Hero is alive, she and Claudio will marry at the same time as Beatrice and Benedick. Don John is arrested and brought back to Messina.

Media:

DVD:

Much Ado About Nothing (BBC TV Shakespeare 1984), dir. Stuart Burge

Much Ado About Nothing (1983), dir. Kenneth Branagh (set in Tuscany)

Dil Chahta Hai (2001), dir. Farhan Akhtar, with Aamir Khan (a story about some friends in Mumbai with some parallels)

Shakespeare Retold: *Much Ado About Nothing* (2005) dir. Brian Percival (the adaptation, by David Nicholls, is set in a local television studio)

Not yet available:

Much Ado About Nothing (2012), dir. Joss Whedon (featuring the cast of *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*)

CD Audio:

Much Ado About Nothing (BBC)

Much Ado About Nothing (Arkangel Complete Shakespeare)

Béatrice et Bénédicte, opera by Hector Berlioz

"Sigh No More", song by Mumford and Sons

[Michael Mitchell]