

Sweet Tea Shakespeare

Middle Grades Study Guide, *Much Ado About Nothing*

The Setting: Messina, Italy in the 1940s

The Characters:

Beatrice, niece of Leonato and cousin to Hero. She likes to engage in “skirmishes of wit” with Signior Benedick.

Benedick, a gentleman soldier who works with Don Pedro. He swears he will never marry. He enjoys sparring with words with Beatrice.

Claudio, a young soldier who is desperately in love with Hero.

Hero, the beautiful, innocent daughter of Leonato and Antonia.

Don Pedro, an important nobleman from Aragon. He wants to fool Beatrice and Benedick into thinking they are in love with each other.

Leonato, uncle to Beatrice and father to Hero. The action of the play takes place at his house. He is highly respected in Messina.

Antonia, Leonato’s wife, aunt to Beatrice and mother to Hero. She is not afraid to speak her mind!

Don John, Don Pedro’s half-brother. He tries to ruin the happiness of Claudio and Hero.

Margaret, Hero’s serving woman. She gets mixed up with Borachio and unwittingly causes a lot of grief!

Borachio, who conspires with Don John to make it look like Hero has been unfaithful to Claudio.

Conrade, who is in cahoots with Don John and supports all of his schemes!

Dogberry, a neighborhood watch coordinator who takes his job too seriously. He has a habit of using the wrong word to convey his meaning.

Verges, Dogberry’s bumbling sidekick.

Balthasar, a waiting man at Leonato’s house and a musician.

Ursula, one of Hero’s waiting women.

Suggestions for Alignment with Standards

Standard	Discussion Questions & Things to Look For
RL.1 Making Inferences	<p>What can you infer about the character's backgrounds?</p> <p>What evidence do you base these assumptions on?</p> <p>What can you conclude about the city of Messina?</p> <p>What details from the play support your conclusion?</p>
RL.2 Theme or Central Idea	<p>What does this play suggest about life in general?</p> <p>How does William Shakespeare convey such messages in <i>Much Ado About Nothing</i>?</p>
RL.3 Plot Development	<p>What drives the plot in this play?</p> <p>Who or what creates the most conflict, and why?</p> <p>Is there a clearly defined climax?</p> <p>If so, when does it occur?</p>
RL.4 Figurative Meanings	<p>Which figurative expressions used by the characters in their speech seem strange or unfamiliar?</p> <p>Why do idioms change over time and place?</p>
RL.5 Scene vs. Overall Structure	<p>Which scenes seem most critical to plot development and why?</p> <p>Which scenes are geared more towards character development?</p> <p>How do the subplots connect to the larger story?</p>
RL.6 Point of View	<p>Whose point of view is the story presented from?</p> <p>How does the point of view change throughout?</p>
RL.7 Reading vs. Viewing	<p>How is the experience of viewing a live performance of a play different from reading a dramatic text?</p> <p>What are the pros and cons of each?</p>