

Much Ado About Nothing – Act 1 Scene 1

SCENE I. Before LEONATO'S house.

Enter LEONATO, HERO, and BEATRICE, with a Messenger

LEONATO

I learn in this letter that Don Peter of Aragon comes this night to Messina.

Messenger

He is very near by this: he was not three leagues off when I left him.

LEONATO

How many gentlemen have you lost in this action?

Messenger

But few of any sort, and none of name.

LEONATO

A victory is twice itself when the achiever brings home full numbers. I find here that Don Peter hath bestowed much honour on a young Florentine called Claudio;

Messenger

Much deserved on his part and equally remembered by Don Pedro: he hath borne himself beyond the promise of his age, doing, in the figure of a lamb, the feats of a lion: he hath indeed better bettered expectation than you must expect of me to tell you how.

LEONATO

He hath an uncle here in Messina will be very much glad of it.

Messenger

I have already delivered him letters, and there appears much joy in him; even so much that joy could not show itself modest enough without a badge of bitterness.

LEONATO

Did he break out into tears?

Messenger

In great measure.

LEONATO

A kind overflow of kindness: there are no faces truer than those that are so washed. How much better is it to weep at joy than to joy at weeping!

BEATRICE

I pray you, is Signior Mountanto returned from the

Shakespeare's inspiration may have been one of the tales from Matteo Bandello's *Novelle*, set around 1283. Aragon or Arragon was a Kingdom in what is now northern Spain.

The trip would have taken him from the northernmost Spanish port to the tip of the Italian boot. In those days traveling the coastline would have taken about four days.

Though the league evolved as a unit of length (anywhere from 2.4 to 4.6 miles in Europe), it was standardized in Britain during Shakespeare's lifetime to 3 miles.

We learn that nobody of the upper class or nobility has died in the battle. Status is a key theme that runs throughout the play, reflecting the importance of class in Elizabethan society.

Here we are introduced to the theme of reputation. We hear about Claudio's reputation before he is introduced, however the events and themes explored within the play serve to show the audience that reputation is founded on social perceptions, which are predictably flawed.

The juxtaposition between his youth ("a lamb") and his courage ("a lion") highlight the positive reputation of Claudio. It also illustrates the significance of bravery for men in Elizabethan society.

Joy, in order not to look too joyous, had to express itself partly through a sign of sadness.

The messenger suggests that there's this connection between honesty and grief, that someone who expresses the emotion of grief, that in a way is a sign of their trustworthiness. The continuous use of juxtaposition throughout this opening scene hints at the conflicting feelings and opinions of the characters explored throughout the play.

Beatrice's reference to Benedick has multiple connotations, firstly "mountanto" is an upward thrust movement in fencing, which is used to suggest that Benedick is trying to climb above his social station. It could also have sexual connotations, regarding sexually thrusting upwards. Her use of a nickname to refer to Benedick informs the audience that they are acquainted with each other, and perhaps that Beatrice holds some kind of affection towards Benedick.

Much Ado About Nothing Annotated

William Shakespeare



Much Ado About Nothing Annotated:

Decoding **Much Ado About Nothing Annotated**: Revealing the Captivating Potential of Verbal Expression

In a time characterized by interconnectedness and an insatiable thirst for knowledge, the captivating potential of verbal expression has emerged as a formidable force. Its ability to evoke sentiments, stimulate introspection, and incite profound transformations is genuinely awe-inspiring. Within the pages of "**Much Ado About Nothing Annotated**," a mesmerizing literary creation penned by way of a celebrated wordsmith, readers set about an enlightening odyssey, unraveling the intricate significance of language and its enduring effect on our lives. In this appraisal, we shall explore the book's central themes, evaluate its distinctive writing style, and gauge its pervasive influence on the hearts and minds of its readership.

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