

MUCH ADO ABOUT NOTHING (Folger)

LIVING LITERATURE SERIES

WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE

A PERMA-BOUND PRODUCTION

TEACHER'S GUIDE

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SYNOPSIS

Act I, Scene 1: According to a messenger, after ending the rebellion led by his half-brother John, Don Pedro, the congenial Prince of Aragon, rides to the country estate of Leonato, the white-bearded governor of Messina, where the Don's soldiers will remain for a month as guests. The company arrives in high spirits and includes Don John and Benedick of Padua, sometime wooer of Beatrice, Leonato's feisty, quarrelsome niece. The wordy strife between Benedick and Beatrice amuses Leonato and Don Pedro.

A younger soldier, Claudio of Florence, confides to Benedick that he loves Hero, the governor's petite daughter. Benedick scorns matrimony, but Don Pedro offers to court Hero for the shy young man during the evening's masked revelry. If Hero agrees to the suit, Don Pedro promises to speak to Leonato of Claudio's honorable intent.

Act I, Scene 2: Leonato's brother, Antonio, reports that he overheard Don Pedro's intent to court Hero. Leonato, pressed by the duties of hosting so many guests, intends to tell Hero of the prince's love for her.

Act I, Scene 3: Flanked by Conrade and Borachio, Don John, a cunning, envious malcontent, mulls over the opportunity to humiliate Don Pedro and Claudio, who performed well during the prince's quelling of the rebellion.

Act II, Scene 1: Beatrice enlarges on her cynical notions of the ideal suitor and the failure of marriage. Antonio approves of her wit, but Leonato fears that such bold rhetoric will influence Hero, who is immature and inexperienced in the ways of men. After the company dons masks for a courtyard dance, Beatrice denounces Benedick without recognizing him and chides him for being the prince's fool.

Meanwhile, Don John stirs up trouble by divulging to Claudio that the prince courts Hero for himself. Don Pedro sets the matter straight and successfully secures Hero's hand for Claudio for a wedding to take place a week hence. Leonato and Don Pedro conspire to make a match between Benedick and Beatrice.

Act II, Scene 2: To Don John, Borachio claims that he can subvert the engagement between Claudio and Hero by meeting with the servant Margaret in the bedchamber window and posing as Hero with a lover. Don John offers Borachio a thousand ducats as reward.

Act II, Scene 3: Benedick ponders the change in Claudio, who was once jolly and free-spirited. In an arbor, he overhears Balthasar performing a madrigal for Don Pedro, Leonato, and Antonio. Claudio and Don Pedro discuss aloud Beatrice's love for Benedick. The ruse fools Benedick, who seriously considers marriage. Beatrice, unaware of his change of heart, calls him to dinner. Benedick construes her acid wit as proof of love for him.

Act III, Scene 1: A parallel arrangement lures Beatrice into the orchard, where she overhears Margaret and another servant, Ursula, discussing Benedick's love for Beatrice. The speakers list his virtues. When they depart, Beatrice appears snagged by the same trick that provoked love in Benedick.

Act III, Scene 2: While Benedick complains of toothache, Claudio assures Don Pedro that the ache is love. Claudio believes that the two prospective mates will admit their love. Don John interrupts Claudio and imparts slander on Hero. He invites Claudio to go to the bedchamber window that night to see for himself. Claudio and Don Pedro are amazed at the turn of events.

Act III, Scene 3: Constable Dogberry, a self-important buffoon accompanied by assistant Verges, questions the night watch about their readiness and dispatches them to guard Leonato's quarters. After they depart, Borachio boasts to Conrade of his plot to earn a thousand ducats by besmirching Hero's honor. Seacoal and the watch intercede and arrest the plotters.

Act III, Scene 4: At five o'clock on the nuptial morning, Hero and Margaret prepare the wedding garments. Beatrice comes to help. The men arrive to escort the women to church.

Act III, Scene 5: Verges and Dogberry report to Leonato the night's two arrests. Leonato leaves the matter to them, demands a written statement, and departs to give the bride away.

Act IV, Scene 1: Friar Francis begins the ceremony; Leonato gives the bride to Claudio. To the consternation of the group, Claudio rejects his bride-to-be and accuses her of fornication. He claims to have seen her with "a ruffian" at her bedroom window between midnight and one o'clock. Leonato spurns his daughter and ponders suicide; Hero faints. Beatrice attends Hero and fears that she is dead. Deeply shamed, Leonato repudiates her. Beatrice admits that she was not with Hero the previous evening.

The friar intends to find out the truth or else send Hero to a nunnery. Benedick suspects "John the Bastard." Friar Francis concocts a fake funeral to give Hero time to clear her name. Benedick and Beatrice talk alone. He admits he loves her. As proof of love, she bids him kill Claudio. Benedick leaves on his mission; Beatrice goes to comfort her cousin.

Act IV, Scene 2: Before the sexton, Verges and Dogberry present Seacoal and the watch, who accuse Borachio of taking a bribe from Don John to sully Hero's reputation. The sexton realizes the importance of the testimony and has the plotters bound and transferred to Leonato. Conrade accuses Dogberry of mishandling the arrest.

Act V, Scene 1: Antonio tries to sooth his grieving brother, who regrets the wrong done to his family's reputation. He accuses Claudio of trickery. Both Don Pedro and Claudio claim to have proof that Hero is unfaithful. The brothers angrily depart.

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Benedick approaches. Don Pedro and Claudio tease him for his pale-faced lovesickness. Before leaving them, Benedick announces that Don John has fled the city. He claims that Claudio has wronged a "sweet and innocent lady." Dogberry presents Borachio, who confesses that he slandered Hero to earn a bribe from Don John.

Leonato learns of the treachery. Claudio offers to undergo any penance. Leonato instructs him to hang an epitaph on the tomb and mourn her passing that night. Then Claudio must marry Antonio's daughter, a double of Hero. Leonato awards money to Dogberry and takes charge of Borachio. Claudio and Leonato depart to interview Margaret.

Act V, Scene 2: Meanwhile, Margaret helps Benedick write a sonnet. He muddles the verse. Beatrice arrives and rejects an offer of a kiss until Benedick kills Claudio. Beatrice discloses that she and Hero are suffering for the debacle. Benedick promises to intervene. Ursula enters with news that Hero has been falsely accused.

Act V, Scene 3: That night, Claudio reads a paean and hangs the scroll at Hero's tomb in the family vault. Balthasar sings a suitable dirge. Don Pedro and Claudio anticipate the wedding the next morning.

Act V, Scene 4: Friar Francis rejoices in Hero's innocence. Leonato and Antonio insist on a veiled bride. Claudio accepts the girl willingly. Hero un.masks and surprises him. She guarantees her virginity.

Before the party leaves, Benedick calls Beatrice before the friar. Claudio and Hero produce written evidence that the two are in love. The two couples end their animosity. Before the double nuptial, Benedick calls for a dance. A messenger announces that Don John has been arrested and returned to Messina. Benedick promises to punish him.

TIME LINE

- 1137 Aragon is united with Catalonia.
- 1282 Spanish occupy Sicily.
- 1469 Ferdinand of Aragon marries Isabella of Castile.
- 1479 Aragon and Castile are united.
- 1558 Elizabeth I becomes queen of England.
- 1564 **April 23** Shakespeare is born, the son of John and Mary Shakespeare.
- 1570 Shakespeare attends a Latin grammar school.
- 1576 London's first theatre is built.
- 1577 John Shakespeare suffers failing finances.
- 1582 **Nov. 28** Shakespeare marries Anne Hathaway of Shottery.
- 1583 **May** Susanna Shakespeare is born.
- 1586 **February** The twins, Judith and Hamnet, are born.
- 1587 Shakespeare moves to London.
- 1588 The Spanish Armada is defeated.
- 1592 Shakespeare receives critical acclaim.
- 1596 Hamnet dies.
- 1597 Shakespeare builds New Place, a country estate.
- 1598 *Much Ado About Nothing* is written.
- 1599 The Globe Theatre is built.
- 1600 Population of England and Ireland is estimated at 5.5 million.
Much Ado About Nothing is published.
- 1603 James VI of Scotland becomes King James I of England.
- 1605 Shakespeare buys real estate.
- 1606 A law forbids foul language on the English stage.
- 1607 Virginia Company founds colony at Jamestown.

- 1608 Shakespeare holds stock in Blackfriars Theatre. Mary Shakespeare dies.
- 1611 Shakespeare retires to Stratford.
- 1612 Shakespeare writes *Henry VIII*, his last play.
- 1613 The Globe Theatre burns.
Much Ado About Nothing is performed at the wedding of Princess Elizabeth.
- 1616 **late March** Shakespeare revises his will.
April 23 Shakespeare dies.
- 1623 The First Folio is published.

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

William Shakespeare (ca. April 23, 1564-April 23, 1616) attended a Latin grammar school in his hometown of Stratford-on-Avon. At eighteen, he married Anne Hathaway of Shottery, eight years his senior, and fathered a daughter, Susanna, and twins, Judith and Hamnet. He moved to London at the age of 23 or 24, joined the Lord Chamberlain's company, later known as the King's Men, and remained active in theater until 1611. Much about his early adulthood is a mystery, but it is clear that he obtained a thorough knowledge of his chosen field—acting—and was well-known by 1592.

Shakespeare gained the approval of Elizabeth I and James I, both regular theater-goers. His success as an actor-playwright enabled him to invest in real estate and to purchase a coat of arms for his father, John Shakespeare, a glover and bailiff in Stratford. Having written and produced thirty-seven plays, a sonnet sequence, and two long poems, Shakespeare retired to a large house in Stratford. As a country gentleman, he lived out his life in gentility and was buried in the chancel of Holy Trinity Church.

CRITIC'S CORNER

Written around 1598 and classified as a comedy of character, *Much Ado About Nothing* is based on the psychological changes in its key figures, notably Beatrice and Benedick, who carry out the same battling jests that Shakespeare popularized in *The Taming of the Shrew* (ca. 1589). The playwright created for Will Kempe the role of Dogberry and turned out such a popular drama that the comedy was often staged, several times at King James's court and also for King Charles I.

In the restoration era, the play underwent some alteration, as when William Davenant merged it with *Measure for Measure* and Charles Johnson used segments to augment *As You Like It*. A century later, James Miller combined *Much Ado* with a French comedy. Several stage notables, particularly David Garrick and Charles Kemble, starred as Benedick; Helen Terry was one of the great actresses to play Beatrice.

Even though the play lacks the great drama and sublime poetry of Shakespeare's better known work, *Much Ado About Nothing* is lively and engaging. It continues to delight audiences, including television viewers of the Franco Zeffirelli adaptation in 1967. In 1993, Kenneth Branagh reprised the film in a sun-hued Italian villa. Starring Branagh and Emma Thompson as Benedick and Beatrice, the film is rich in music, dance, color, action, and mummery. Emphasis on the battle of the sexes, fluid repartee concerning matrimony, and the comic relief provided by Officer Dogberry's antics and malapropisms are reason enough for the play to remain a stage favorite.

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GENERAL OBJECTIVES

1. To experience and read aloud from a Shakespearean comedy
2. To identify and explain dramatic conventions, particularly aside, comic relief, and soliloquy
3. To place *Much Ado About Nothing* in the Shakespearean canon of comedies
4. To envision the staging of a rollicking, complicated play
5. To assess the richness of Elizabethan ballads, love complaints, and blank verse
6. To isolate and explain examples of archaic language in context
7. To set the play in its social and geographical context
8. To comprehend the power of love, honor, and vengeance as

motivators

9. To evaluate constraints on females in a patriarchal society
10. To discuss the role of religion and inheritance in the settlement of domestic problems

SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES

1. To determine why Claudio is willing to marry a stranger to requite his wrong to Hero and her family
2. To analyze Beatrice's abrasive personality
3. To particularize the contrived scene that establishes Hero's fornication
4. To account for Don John's hatred of his half-brother
5. To discuss Shakespeare's concept of woman's place in marriage and society

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6. To analyze the trickery that brings Benedick and Beatrice together
7. To enumerate poetic devices that play a major role in the dialogue, such as parallelism, assonance, allusion, simile, metaphor, poetic justice, caesura, double entendre, euphony, cacophony, and alliteration
8. To explain why honesty and trust are significant factors to Dogberry, Leonato, Claudio, and Don Pedro
9. To list and explain circumstances that keep comedy on the brink of tragedy, particularly the slandering, rejection, and pretended death of Hero
10. To determine how the rural setting at Leonato's estate creates a microcosm with its own watch and judicial system

THE IMPORTANCE OF SETTING

The milieu of Shakespeare's *Much Ado About Nothing* makes use of jostling, power-mad Mediterranean families, who ruled petty fiefdoms with an eye toward enlarging their holdings and establishing long dynasties. Because Leonato has no sons, his support of Claudio as potential mate for Hero is a believable selection. The youth has displayed his courage and loyalty in battle and displays the manners and deportment that Leonato would prefer in a future lord of the estate that Hero will inherit. Benedick, a native of Padua, a learning center in northern Italy twenty miles from the Adriatic coast, is similarly skilled at warfare, well spoken, and feisty. His fealty to Don Pedro, a Spanish grandee from Aragon whom Shakespeare adapted from Matteo Bandello's *Novelle*, indicates how magnates amassed likely mercenaries as officers to lead their troops.

Shakespeare focuses on Aragon, a kingdom in northeastern Spain bounded by the Pyrenees and Iberian mountain chains. The Aragonese hungered for power from 1137 until late in the fifteenth century and occupied Sicily, Naples, and Sardinia as well as the Balearic Islands. The height of their ambitions reposed in Ferdinand, whose marriage to Isabella of Castile in 1469 precipitated Spain's golden age. It was Aragon's King Pedro III who overthrew the French and established Spanish rule in Sicily from 1282 to 1713.

The choice of Messina as a setting places Leonato's governorship in a likely spot. Located on the Strait of Messina and enhanced by a sickle-shaped harbor, the trading center became the crossing point of travelers, merchants, and armies moving from the southwestern toe of Italy to Sicily. The dramatic placement of peasant customs and charming country refinements in Messina is largely arbitrary. The hospitality, ballad singing, banquet, masque, and nuptial dance of the play's "great coil" are all elements of folk socializing throughout Europe and the British Isles. For authenticity, Shakespeare could easily draw on readings about the Middle Ages or insert details from his own hometown of Stratford.

LITERARY TERMS AND APPLICATIONS

For a better understanding of William Shakespeare's style, present the following terms and applications to the play:

comedy any work that entertains and amuses and ends happily. Shakespeare's *Much Ado About Nothing* contains elements of potential tragedy in the double repudiation of Hero by father and fiancé. The characters, overwhelmed by circumstantial evidence contrived by the evil Don John, must prove more resourceful than the villain to right multiple

wrongs against lord, host, family, and maid. The reversal of fortune at the heart of the play derives from the gullability of people who accept at face value faulty assertions. During the plot resolution, Claudio undergoes a change of heart toward himself and his future mate. Altering his behavior, he attains sympathy and achieves redemption by vowing to marry a substitute bride sight unseen, even if she is Ethiopian.

malapropism inappropriate use of diction, usually the substitution of a word for a similar term, as in "Thou wilt be condemned into everlasting redemption," an obvious misplacement of the verb "condemn" as preface to redemption. Dogberry's repeated misapprehensions of diction enhance the humor of "they should suffer salvation, body and soul," "who think you the most desartless man to be constable," and "bring away the plaintiffs." His comic errors call into question the estate's administration of justice, a serious imputation against the governor's rule of Messina.

motif a pattern or predictable arrangement of elements to express an abstract theme, for instance, the disguise motif and the ready acceptance of misinformation. These bump-tiously funny goings-on contribute to Shakespeare's superb handling of character confusion and general chaos. Because the tone is light, the action well paced, and the dialogue witty, the audience perceives the story as comedy and suffers no apprehension about the outcome to Hero, Claudio, Beatrice, or Benedick. As indicated from the beginning, both men are marked for marriage to likely local women.

CROSS-CURRICULAR SOURCES

For more information about Messina, Renaissance Sicily, *Much Ado About Nothing*, Shakespeare, and the new Globe Theatre, consult these sources:

Henry Barbera, *Medieval Sicily*

Olwen Hufton, *The Prospect Before Her*, a history of women's lives from 1500-1800

J. R. Mulryne, *Shakespeare's Globe Rebuilt*

Wolfgang Riehle, *Shakespeare, Plautus, and the Humanist Tradition*

Paul Robert Walker, *The Italian Renaissance*

Also, consult these websites for additional background data on Shakespeare, the text of the play, and the Globe Theatre: "The Globe Theatre,"

<http://home.earthlink.net/~feiffer/bard/content/globe.html>.

"The Globe Theatre," http://naples.net/ent_th/globe.htm.

"The Globe Theatre,"

<http://www.twingroves.district96.k12.il.us/renaissance/Globe/GlobeTheatre.html>.

"Messina," <http://www.sicily.infcom.it/uk/localita/ME/messina> "M^{uch} A^do A^bout N^othing,"

<http://www.nsuok.edu/livinglit/shakespeare/>

"Provincia Messina," http://www.provincia_messina.com/italia

"Search Shakespeare," <http://the-tech.mit.edu/Shakespeare/search.html>.

"William Shakespeare" (audio),

http://town.hall.org/Archives/radio/MS/Harper.Audio/020994_harp_1TH.html.

THEMES AND MOTIFS

A study of the central issues and situations in William Shakespeare's *Much Ado About Nothing* should include these aspects:

Themes

- enmity

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- deception
- intrigue
- young love
- slander
- miscommunication
- reconciliation
- marriage
- celebration

Motifs

- rebellion launched by an illegitimate son against his legitimate brother
- the evolution of mature love from surface squabbles
- intentional slight against a virtuous woman
- a father's abandonment of his maligned daughter
- a priest's intervention to save a failed love match

MEANING STUDY

Below are words, phrases, sentences, or thought units that have particular meaning in the play. Explain the meaning of each. Act, scene, line, and page numbers are given so that you can note the context from which the item is taken.

1. Then is courtesy a turncoat. (I, i, 119)
(Benedick makes his point via military language. The term turncoat entered the language in 1557 to indicate a person who trades sides and wears the uniform of the enemy. Such a person is the worst form of traitor, the type of man that a military hero like Benedick would scorn.)
2. Exeunt. Manent. (I, i, 154)
(Stage directions are customarily given in Latin. These verbs—they depart; they remain—indicate that all the players leave the stage except for Benedick and Claudio, who stand alone after the others are gone.)
3. For, hear me, Hero: wooing, wedding, and repenting is as a Scotch jig, a measure, a cinquepace. (II, i, 67-69)
(Beatrice employs an extended metaphor from the dance to warn her cousin that marriage has its pitfalls. The jig, a lively dance representing courtship, is "hot and hasty . . . and full as fantastical." It is followed by a slow and stately measure, "full of state and ancientry." Last comes the cinquepace or five-step, a complicated pattern which forces the repentant dancer "faster and faster, till he sink into his grave.")
4. Bid him bring his pen and inkhorn to the jail. (III, v, 56)
(Dogberry calls for Francis Seacoal to bring pen and an ink container, which at one time consisted of a hollow horn stoppered at one end. In subsequent uses, the adjective inkhorn came to refer to any learned or pedantic phrase.)
5. What a pretty thing man is when he goes in his doublet and hose and leaves off his wit! (V, i, 196-197)
(Don Pedro ponders how men can dress their bodies properly but slight their minds by omitting good sense from their affairs. He obviously disapproves of Benedick's challenge to Claudio.)
6. I'll hold my mind, were she an Ethiop. (V, iv, 37)
(To express his determination to amend the situation, Claudio vows that he would marry Leonato's niece, even if she were a black African. In Renaissance times, the most valued women were blue-eyed blondes, fair of hair and complexion. In stage comedy, suspicions fell on brunettes and dark-skinned people, like men with black

hats in Western movies.)

7. And some such strange bull leapt your father's cow and got a calf in that same noble feat much like to you, for you have just his bleat. (V, iv, 48-50)
(Wishing to humiliate Claudio for the harm he has done Hero, Benedick implies that he is not only a bastard, but as dastardly as his skulking, lowlife father.)
8. And surely as I live, I am a maid. (V, iv, 64)
(United at last with Claudio, Hero reveals her true identity and vows that she is still a virgin. In Renaissance times through the Victorian era, virginity was a major consideration in any marital arrangement, particularly among the gentry. Women not only maintained their virtue, but abstained from even the appearance of unchaste behavior, in word or deed. Had Hero remained alive without honor, she would have been obliged to withdraw from her family and enter a convent.)
9. She died, my lord, but whiles her slander lived. (V, iv, 65)
(Leonato indicates to Don Pedro that Hero's slandered reputation is now a thing of the past. The new Hero has no connection with her former ill repute.)
10. Dost thou think I care for a satire or an epigram? (V, iv, 100-101)
(Benedick refuses to be teased about changing his mind concerning matrimony. He ignores both jest and proverbs. As he explains, a person who falls prey to ridicule lacks quality in his character.)

COMPREHENSION STUDY

Answer the following questions in your own words. There is not always a right answer. Your judgment is important and you should be ready to defend your answers with quotations from the play.

Questions 1-5 Literal Level

1. Cite examples of archaic or out-of-date words and phrases used in the play, such as thee, thy, and thou for you and o'er for over. Explain the meaning of each archaic term.
(Throughout Shakespeare's work are words and expressions that reflect Elizabethan idiom and vocabulary. These terms give authenticity to his work by setting it in a time and place. They include the following:
victual—food (I, i, 47)
an—if (I, i, 75)
scape—escape (I, i, 129)
i'—in (I, i, 138)
methinks—I think (I, i, 164)
go to—you're kidding (I, i, 191)
'twas—it was (I, i, 208)
troth—pledge (I, i, 214)
nay—no (I, i, 259)
withal—entirely (I, i, 19)
peradventure—by chance (I, i, 20-21)
marry—indeed (I, iii, 46)
yea—yes (II, i, 242)
fain—gladly (II, i, 350)
forsooth—indeed (II, iii, 56)
lief—rather (II, iii, 84)
ay—yes (II, iii, 95)
ta'en—taken (II, iii, 125)

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vouchsafe—guarantee (III, ii, 3)
 good e'en—good evening (III, iii, 75)
 fie—an expression of contempt (III, iv, 27)
 heigh-ho—an expression of boredom (III, iv, 49)
 trow—I wonder (III, iv, 54)

2. Cite examples of poetic devices used in the play. Identify each.

(Shakespeare uses poetic devices with skill throughout his plays, often pointing up themes and details by means of clever and expressive arrangement of words and rhythms. For example:

- a. He hath borne himself beyond the promise of his age, doing, in the figure of a lamb, the feats of a lion. (I, i, 13-15) [hyperbole]
- b. A kind overflow of kindness. (I, i, 26) [repetition]
- c. How much better is it to weep at joy than to joy at weeping! (I, i, 27-28) [antithesis]
- d. O, Lord, he will hang upon him like a disease! (I, i, 81) [simile]
- e. No, not till a hot January. (I, i, 89) [paradox]
- f. What, my dear Lady Disdain! (I, i, 113) [epithet]
- g. That I love her, I feel.
That she is worthy, I know. (I, i, 118-119) [parallelism]
- h. let him be clapped on the shoulder and called Adam. (I, i, 246-247) [allusion]
- i. Nay, if Cupid have not spent all his quiver in Venice, thou wilt quake for this shortly. (I, i, 259-260) [pun]
- j. . . . I have decreed not to sing in my cage. (I, iii, 31-32) [metaphor]
- k. . . . then comes Repentance . . . (II, i, 72) [personification]
- l. Why, he is the Prince's jester, a very dull fool. (II, i, 131) [irony]
- m. Why, how now, Count? Wherefore are you sad? (II, i, 274-275) [caesura]
- n. The pleasant'st angling . . . of the dialogue. (III, i, 26-30) [extended metaphor]
- o. If it prove so, then loving goes by haps;
Some cupid kills with arrows, some with traps. (III, ii, 105-106) [rhymed couplet]
- p. She shall be buried with her face upwards. (III, ii, 64) [double entendre]
- q. O day untowardly turned! (III, iii, 125) [apostrophe]
- r. Tush, I may as well say the fool's the fool (III, iii, 122) [onomatopoeia]
- q. But fare thee well, most foul, most fair!
Farewell. . . (IV, i, 103) [alliteration]
- t. Thou wilt be condemned into everlasting redemption for this. (IV, ii, 56-57) [malapropism]

3. Describe how Shakespeare varies the standard iambic pentameter line. Explain the reason for the variance.

(Shakespeare, who stabilizes and unifies the language of both his plays and poems with iambic pentameter, emphasizes the five-beat line, which is the basis of English speech. This line reads - ' - ' - ' - ' - '. For example, consider the pattern of stresses in "I am your husband, if you like of me" (V, iv, 58). The natural pronunciation of the words falls into the poetic arrangement of iambic pentameter.

However, Shakespeare does not allow the rhythm of the standard line to dictate to every phrase. Where he

needs variety or stress, he abandons iambic pentameter in favor of straight prose, as in the opening scene of the play and throughout much of the text. These conversations emphasize ordinary language and, by contrast, point up the poetry of segments in blank verse.

Another major strength of the play are the romantic songs scattered about. For example, Benedick reveals his romantic state of mind in Act V, Scene 2 when he sings:

The god of love,
That sits above,
And knows me, and knows me,
How pitiful I deserve—.

The iambic dimeter against the repetition of line three, which extends the measures with paired stresses, indicates that Benedick truly feels the effects of budding romance, which he breaks off describing. Equally effective is the epitaph in Act V, Scene 3, which honors the pseudo-corpse of Hero in trochaic tetrameter, which reverses the stresses of iambic feet into long followed by short [' -].)

4. Explain Don John's plot.

(Disgruntled that Count Claudio is planning a wedding with Hero, Don John takes Borachio's suggestion of a way to "cross it" without bringing any suspicion on himself. He explains that he is "in the favor of" Margaret, Hero's servant. By having Margaret appear with a man at Hero's window and by poisoning Don Pedro's mind as to Hero's chastity, Don John can create the illusion that the Prince's honor is damaged. Borachio concludes that such a plot will be beneficial "to vex Claudio, to undo Hero, and kill Leonato.")

After Don John accepts the scheme to discredit Hero, Borachio supplies the particulars. He needs Don John to convince the Prince and Count Claudio that Borachio loves Hero. Then the plotters must set up a rendezvous between Borachio and what appears to be Hero. Don John is so taken with the deception that he offers a reward of a thousand ducats for Borachio's cunning.)

5. Describe the two weddings.

(When Hero first appears at the altar in Act IV, Friar Francis asks if she knows of any impediment to the marriage. Hero replies in the negative; Claudio, to her amazement, interjects, "O, what men dare do! What men may do! What men daily do, not knowing what they do!" His strongly worded alliteration shocks Benedick.

Claudio directs his challenge to Leonato and insists that Hero is damaged goods because she "knows the heat of a luxurious bed." Claudio insists that he has treated Hero with brotherly devotion and is not guilty of deflowering her. Hero, horrified that her wedding is turning into a nightmare, cries out, then faints. Leonato considers killing himself with a dagger. The wedding guests are thrown into confusion. Leonato recovers and denounces his daughter, who he wishes would die.

The second nuptial, a stark contrast to the first, reveals that Claudio is willing to accept second best by marrying Leonato's niece. The women arrive at the ceremony with masks hiding their identities. Hero accepts Claudio as husband before unmasking. Claudio is nonplussed to find "Another Hero!" In short order, Hero

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states, "One Hero died defiled, but I do live, and surely as I live, I am a maid.")

Questions 6 - 8 Interpretive Level

6. Why does Benedick make a suitable mate for Beatrice? (Both Benedick and Beatrice have a gift for words. Both love puns and wear the mask of the cynical single person. In some respects, the two have victimized themselves by too publicly declaring their disrespect for the institution of marriage. After they fall in love, they must reassure each other that they really are sincere.)

After Hero and Claudio are wed, Beatrice and Benedick balk at a double ceremony. Claudio, to help them along, produces a sonnet as evidence of Benedick's infatuation. Hero likewise pulls out Beatrice's paper "containing her affection unto Benedick." The two hesitating lovers jest about their reasons for declaring their love. Benedick, to stop the repartee that Beatrice usually carries on, kisses her on the mouth. In the end, Benedick is so taken with the idea of marriage, that he even encourages Don Pedro to get a wife.)

7. Delineate Shakespeare's concepts of the ideal man and the ideal woman.

(Companion passages in the play set out Shakespeare's ideal man and woman. In Act II, Scene 3, Benedick ponders over his expectations in the perfect mate. He wants a woman who is rich, wise, virtuous, fair, mild, noble, ready of wit, and musically inclined. If he can find all these qualities, he leaves her hair color up to God.)

In Act III, Hero replies in kind. She lists the best traits in a man as she bemoans Beatrice's sharpness to all comers. To Ursula, Hero remarks, "I never yet saw man, how wise, how noble, young, how rarely featured, but she would spell him backward." These two characterizations reflect the Elizabethan ideal, which balances physical with behavioral traits.)

8. Discuss Dogberry and Borachio's roles in the denouement.

(Act V brings together two incongruous characters—an evil plotter and a bumbling constable. Dogberry interrupts a melancholy exchange between Claudio and Don Pedro with important news. He has arrested Borachio and Conrade, whom Don Pedro recognizes as his rebellious brother's henchmen. Dogberry reports that "they are lying knaves." Without prompting, Borachio speaks up, confessing that he has slandered Hero and arranged the meeting in the orchard which led the Prince to believe that Hero was an unworthy mate for Claudio.)

The effect of the confession is instantaneous. Claudio sings out, "Sweet Hero! Now thy image doth appear in the rare semblance that I loved it first." Dogberry, his task complete, leads away "the plaintiffs" and reminds his betters that he is still miffed that he has been labeled an ass. Before they can leave the stage, Leonato arrives and hears a man-to-man admission of guilt from Borachio.

Dogberry inserts further comic relief by insisting that he has been wronged by being called an ass and by misstating the watch's evidence. Leonato good-naturedly thanks Dogberry for "thy care and honest pains." He rewards him with money. Dogberry departs with Verges, pointedly remarking that he wishes Leonato "to correct

yourself, for the example of others.")

Questions 9 - 10 Critical Level

9. What concepts and motifs does the playwright repeat in other works?

(Shakespeare echoes concepts and motifs in *Much Ado About Nothing* which have even more significance in stronger dramatic works. The battle of the sexes, complete with saucy badinage and witty repartee, has greater impact in the mouths of Kate and Petruchio in *The Taming of the Shrew*. The notion of the confirmed bachelor is even more humorous when demonstrated by Petruchio, who ultimately tames "Kate the cursed.")

A revealing motif is the meddling friar who proposes that the bride pretend to die. When applied to the tragic circumstances of *Romeo and Juliet*, however, the outcome is catastrophic in that both bride and groom die in the family monument. In contrast to a doomed mating, in *Much Ado About Nothing*, the names Beatrice and Benedick reflect a blessed union. From the point of view of comedy, they end the single life and, like Kate and Petruchio, find a lasting contentment. When the same elements of plot apply to tragedy, however, they produce a melancholy tableau of two young lovers who lose all because of a terrible blunder.)

10. What is Shakespeare's purpose in writing this play?

(Shakespeare's purpose in any of his works can only be determined by surmise, since he left no written commentary about his professional method or literary views. Certainly, as an actor and acting company official, he made a sincere effort to please the audience. Obvious among his methods are the inclusion of romantic plots and distant settings. To delight lovers of low comedy, he offsets the more serious moments of *Much Ado About Nothing* with raucous humor, as exemplified by the bumbling officiousness of Dogberry and Verges.)

Like Shakespeare's entire canon, the play establishes a workable theme with which playgoers can easily identify. The lurking evil of Don John comes to a halt through local justice from an unlikely source, two buffoonish law officers. Claudio and Hero, kept apart for reasons not really pertinent to either, surmount the moment and look toward a bright future. Leonato is pleased that his heir is safely wed and his estate promised a subsequent generation of family owners.

The match of Beatrice and Benedick, for a separate set of reasons, is equally positive. These strong-willed, vigorous young people deserve each other. Shakespeare brings them together to assert his belief in love and his wish to entertain an audience by wedding likeable characters. The overall atmosphere of good will carries through to the end, even when Don John must be apprehended in flight and brought to justice. Thus, goodness prevails, and the playgoers can feel content with a just and beneficent outcome.)

Questions 11 - 16 Creative Level

11. Make some sketches of Hero's wedding dresses and veils. Consult histories of costume for details about hairstyles, flowers, accessories, materials, sleeves, ruffs, and skirts.
12. Act out examples of different types of humor—low comedy, high comedy, black comedy, satire, repartee, invective.

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tive, burlesque, mumming, masque, caricature, and parody.

13. Arrange a double wedding to accommodate the engaged pairs at the end of the play. Include music, flowers, attendants, and a reception with food, a cake-cutting, photographs, dancing, and suitable toasts to the brides and grooms.
14. Contrast the conclusion of *Measure for Measure* with that of *The Taming of the Shrew*. Note the similarity of the pairings and the attitude that marriage is a solution, even when people are dissimilar or unwilling to wed.
15. Present some dances that date to the English Renaissance. Discuss how the varied rhythms and figures suit different moods.
16. Lead a panel discussion of the many proverbs that dot the text. For example, consider the significance of:
 - a. A victory is twice itself when the achiever brings home full numbers. (I, i, 8-9)
 - b. In time the savage bull doth bear the yoke. (I, i, 250)
 - c. If not a present remedy, at least a patient sufferance. (I, iii, 8-9)
 - d. God sends a curst cow short horns. (II, i, 20-21)
 - e. I can see a church by daylight. (II, i, 76-77)
 - f. Time goes on crutches till Love have all his rites. (II, i, 340-341)
 - g. When the age is in, the wit is out. (III, v, 33)
 - h. It is a world to see! (III, v, 34)
 - i. God's a good man. (III, v, 35)
 - j. An two men ride of a horse, one must ride behind. (III, v, 35-36)
 - k. Win me or wear me! (V, i, 82)
 - l. What a pretty thing man is when he goes in his doublet and hose and leaves off his wit! (V, i, 196-197)

ACROSS THE CURRICULUM

Language Arts

1. Explain why Shakespeare chose two Latin words for blessed—*beatus* and *benedictus*—as the source of character names. In what sense are the squabbling Benedick and Beatrice fated to enjoy a happy marriage? For whom is Hero named?
2. Choose a series of lines from the play to illustrate the playwright's skill with wit, as with "Man is a giddy thing, and this is my conclusion," "Thou wilt be condemned into everlasting redemption," "The gentleman is not in your books," "It keeps on the windy side of care," "What though care killed a cat, thou hast mettle enough to thee to kill care," "Sigh no more, ladies, sigh no more," and "O, that I had been writ down an ass!" Post the phrases on the bulletin board and lead a discussion of their humor and implication.
3. Make a chart of archaism such as yea, slops, ancient, by'r Lady, troth, fie, coz, trow, marry, 'twere, betwixt, belied, reft, sirrah, aught, arrant knave, buckler, vagrom, sevennight, wont, forsooth, ay, ta'en, and vouchsafe, which have changed or fallen out of common use since the English Renaissance. For definitions, refer to the *Oxford English Dictionary*.

Math and Economics

1. Compute the distances from Messina Aragon, Padua, and the Italian mainland.

2. Use historical data to determine the height, width, and depth of the Globe Theater. Include figures on how many people could stand or sit to view a play. Contrast these figures to copies of the Globe, particularly the Elizabethan stage in the Folger Library, Washington, D. C., and the rebuilt Globe Theatre in London.

Social Studies

1. Compose a list of Shakespeare's plays and long poems and their settings, as with *The Tempest* in Bermuda and *Macbeth* in Scotland. Note whether the places are real or imaginary, as with the home of Benedick of Padua and Leonato's estate in Messina. Locate real settings on a map along with the names of the plays. Place a star on Shakespeare's birthplace.
2. Propose humane punishment for Borachio, Margaret, and Don John, for example, jail sentence, house arrest, banishment, a fine, demotion, or execution. Give reasons why Don John deserves no mercy after rebelling against Don Pedro and contriving slander against Hero.
3. Research the political, economic, and religious implications of the Stuart line, which came about because Elizabeth I had no children or English heirs. How did English government change during Shakespeare's career? Why did he have reason to miss Elizabeth I and to fear the northern pretender to the throne, Mary, Queen of Scots?
4. Prepare a report on the kingdom of Aragon. What role did its leaders play in the formation of modern Spain?

Psychology

1. Discuss the psychological effect on the audience of Hero's exoneration and marriage. Explain why Shakespeare used such spectacle as processions, funereal recitation, weddings, feasting, masking, singing, and dancing in his performances.
2. Using Benedict and Beatrice as models, explain Shakespeare's concept of a healthy rivalry between mates. Apply information about the playwright's marriage to Anne Hathaway and their subsequent life apart. Note his creation of other battling mates, particularly Kate and Petruchio in *The Taming of the Shrew*.

Religion

Explain the role of Friar Francis. Compare his importance to the play's resolution with that of Friar Lawrence in *Romeo and Juliet*. Discuss Shakespeare's use of feigned death as a means of stalling for time while correcting an untenable situation.

Cinema

1. Make a list of dramatic scenes from the novel that would require intense use of lighting, costume, makeup, music, props, and stunts, particularly the arrival of Don Pedro's troops, masking, dancing, Hero's two wedding costumes, Borachio's trickery, the arrest of the plotters, and the bumbling actions of Dogberry and the nightwatch.
2. Describe movie and television versions of Shakespeare's plays that capture the sense of time, place, fashion, and historical events along with his poetry and character studies, notably *Romeo and Juliet*, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, *Much Ado About Nothing*, *Hamlet*, *As You Like It*, and *The Taming of the Shrew*. What does each film warn about unrequited love, mismatched couples, discontent, and wedlock?

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Science and Health

1. List, define, and illustrate on flash cards the play's references to nature, especially Claudio's claim that Hero is a rotten orange and Benedick's reference to the willow, a symbol of ill-fated love. Account for the mention of a flooding river, caged bird and bird snaring, drizzling rain, capon and woodcock, the lapwing, a March chick, and a spring thaw.
2. Comment on the custom of referring to love sickness as a toothache. What do the two maladies have in common?

Drama

Pantomime these mythological, literary, biblical, and historical allusions from the play: Hymen, our Lady, turned Turk, Dian, Mass, Lady Fame, Lady Tongue, the great Cham, the internale Ate, Hercules, Philemon, Saturn, Cupid, and Saint Peter.

Art and Music

1. Use desktop publishing or other artistic forms to create a handbill that will catch the eye of prospective audiences. Choose an illustration that intrigues the illiterate reader to see the comedy and learn how it ends. Emphasize action and contrast in your drawing, for example by depicting Don John's plotting, Leonato's grief after he spurns his daughter, the watch's arrest of Borachio, Beatrice insulting Benedick during the masque, Claudio's recitation at the tomb, Friar Francis's intervention, and Hero's triumphant unveiling at the second wedding.
2. Select music for a country masque. Vary styles and rhythms to accommodate circle dancing, jigs, ballads, and folk tunes.

STUDENT INVOLVEMENT ACTIVITIES

1. Sketch the layout of the last scene and complete a list of items necessary for a reenactment of the play's resolution. Emphasize the participants in the double wedding and the merging of the audience and principle players for a dance. Why does the arrival of the messenger seem secondary to the joining of two happy couples?
2. Write a report on Shakespeare's method of presenting comedy. Include the use of different stage levels and trapdoors, dancers, musical instruments, and special effects, such as moonrise, cannon fire, ghostly apparitions, and thunder. Comment on his use of young men to play the role of female characters and a children's company to play elves and fairies. Explain the purpose of the flag on top of the theater. Discuss how the producer would compensate for lack of curtains, sound systems, and sophisticated lighting devices.
3. Write a diary entry describing a presentation of *Much Ado About Nothing* as seen from the point of view of a Stratford tour guide, an orange-seller, stage guitarist, groundling, actor, rival playwright, or visitor from Italy. Stress the parts of the play that would impress a poorly educated but thoroughly experienced playgoer, especially a mourners' procession, courtship, wedding, masking, and dancing.
4. Compose a scene in which Don John returns for punishment. Record his comments about the double wedding that took place during his flight from Messina. Include Don Pedro's plans to halt his half-brother's plotting and

Leonato's anger that Don John threatened the order of the governor's household.

5. Write a paragraph in which you summarize Shakespeare's idea of the nature and purpose of comedy. Contrast his methods with those of contemporary romance novels, comic movies, television sitcoms, and cartoons.
6. Compose a short congratulatory telegram to Shakespeare from Ben Jonson, John Fletcher, James I, Richard Burbage, Thomas Middleton, Queen Elizabeth I, or Christopher Marlowe upon the success of this comedy. Contrast the action to other popular works of the day, for example, a domestic comedy, court masque, or mummer's play.
7. Write a note to Queen Elizabeth I in which you invite her to the opening night of *Much Ado About Nothing*. Narrate the highlights of the plot, especially the successful matchmaking that ends Beatrice's quarrels with Benedick and Hero's return from the dead.
8. Compose an extended definition of drama in which you explain the following aspects: character, setting, plot, theme, tone, mood, aside, soliloquy, monologue, climax, dilemma, compressed time, literary foils, comic relief, motivation, stereotype, villain, protagonist, melodrama, and denouement.
9. Apply the term "coming to knowledge" to the final scene. Explain how Claudio and Leonato both malign a virtuous young girl. Note the reaction of each to Hero's return.
10. Locate historical evidence that audiences from Shakespeare's time until the present have enjoyed *Much Ado About Nothing*, whether as stage play, ballet, tableau, or movie. Name actors and dancers who have ennobled the roles of Claudio, Hero, Benedict, and Beatrice.

ALTERNATE ASSESSMENT

1. List in chronological order and describe significant events connected with the play. Mention the successful war, Dogberry's placement of the watch, Beatrice's insult during the masque, Leonato's arrangement of a wedding and disposal of his property to his heir, Don John's hatred of his brother, Don Pedro's assistance in wooing Hero, Friar Francis's dismay at the ruined wedding, Hero's second appearance at the altar, and the governor's hospitality to visitors from Aragon.
2. Make a list of scenes from the play that express strong attitudes toward treachery, kinship, self-doubt, loss, grief, love, vengeance, chastity, deception, peace, mercy, and guilt. Indicate what you think is Shakespeare's personal philosophy on each subject.
3. Compose a brief definition of comedy as it applies to *Much Ado About Nothing*. What changes in the story would turn it into a tragedy, fantasy, or romance?
4. Express the implications of the title.

SHAKESPEARE'S OTHER WORKS

Titus Andronicus, ca. 1588-1594
Henry VI, Part 1, ca. 1589
Comedy of Errors, ca. 1580s-1594
The Taming of the Shrew, ca. 1589
Richard III, ca. 1589
King John, 1590
Henry VI, Part 2, ca. 1590-1591

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Henry VI, Part 3, ca. 1590-1591
Shakespeare's Sonnets, ca. 1592-1598
Venus and Adonis, 1593
A Midsummer Night's Dream, ca. 1593-1595
Romeo and Juliet, ca. 1593-1595
Love's Labours Lost, ca. 1593-1595
The Rape of Lucrece, 1594
Richard II, ca. 1595-1596
Henry IV, Part I, ca. 1596
The Merchant of Venice, 1596 to 1598
The Merry Wives of Windsor, ca. 1597
Henry IV, Part II, ca. 1597-1598
Much Ado About Nothing, ca. 1598
Henry V, 1599
Julius Caesar, ca. early 1599
As You Like It, ca. 1599
Hamlet, ca. 1599-1600
Twelfth Night, ca. 1599 to 1601
Troilus and Cressida, ca. 1602
Othello, ca. 1603-1604
King Lear, ca. 1603-1606
Measure for Measure, 1604
All's Well That Ends Well, ca. 1604
Macbeth, ca. 1603-1606
Antony and Cleopatra, ca. 1605
Coriolanus, ca. 1605-1609
Pericles, ca. 1606-1608
Timon of Athens, ca. 1606-1608
Cymbeline, ca. 1608-1610
The Winter's Tale, ca. 1610-1611
The Tempest, ca. 1610-1611
Henry VIII, ca. 1612-1613
Two Gentlemen of Verona, ca. 1613
Two Noble Kinsmen, possibly written by Shakespeare and John Fletcher in 1613

RELATED READING

Jane Austen, *Pride and Prejudice*
Bertolt Brecht, *The Three-Penny Opera*
Sandra Caruso, *The Actor's Book of Improvisation*
Moss Hart and George S. Kaufman, *You Can't Take It with You*
Joseph Papp, *Shakespeare Alive!*
Stefan Rudnicki, *Actor's Book of Classical Monologues* and
Actor's Book of Monologues for Women
Michael Schulman, *Actor's Scenebook*
Steven Sondheim, *A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to
the Forum*
Diane Stanley and Peter Vennema, *Bard of Avon*
James A. Steffenson, *Moving Parts: Monologues from Con-
temporary Plays and Great Scenes from the World The-
ater, Volumes I and II*
Thornton Wilder, *The Matchmaker*

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VOCABULARY TEST

In the sentences that follow, select terms from the list below to replace the underlined synonym. Write the correct answer in the blanks provided.

achiever	contrary	fantastical	kinsman	poniards	strain
alms	cunning	forswore	lief	quips	tedious
arbor	dotage	gentlewoman	orthography	remorse	trencherman
baldrick	doublet	hither	pestilence	reveling	troth
comparisons	endowed	intelligence	piety	semblance	villainy

1. I have known when he would have walked ten mile afoot to see a good armor, and now will he lie ten nights awake carving the fashion of a new vest _____.
2. I will hide me in the garden _____.
3. Moral? No, by my promise _____, I have no moral meaning, I meant plain holy-thistle.
4. Marry, this well carried shall on her behalf
Change slander to regret _____. That is some good.
5. No, thou villain, thou art full of devotion _____, as shall be proved upon thee by good witness.
6. For thy part, Claudio, I did think to have beaten thee, but in that thou art like to be my relative _____, live unbruised, and love my cousin.
7. I came here _____ to tell you, and, circumstances shortened, for she has been too long a-talking of, the lady is disloyal.
8. I know we shall have celebration _____ tonight;
I will assume thy part in some disguise
And tell fair Hero I am Claudio
9. He is sooner caught than the plague _____, and the taker runs presently mad.
10. A victory is twice itself when the victor _____ brings home full numbers.
11. My crimes _____ they have upon record, which I had rather seal with my death than repeat over to my shame.
12. I had as gladly _____ have heard the night raven, come what plague could have come after it.
13. Thus far can I praise him: he is of a noble family _____, of approved valor, and confirmed honesty.
14. But that I will have a recheat winded in my forehead or hang my bugle in an invisible belt _____, all women shall pardon me.
15. "That I believe," said she, "for he swore a thing to me on Monday night which he contradicted _____ on Tuesday morning."
16. I would scarce trust myself, though I had sworn the opposite _____, if Hero would be my wife.
17. She speaks swords _____, and every word stabs.
18. The Prince your brother is royally entertained by Leonato, and I can give you information _____ of an intended marriage.
19. I would not marry her, though she were gifted _____ with all that Adam had left him before he transgressed.
20. Give not this rotten orange to your friend;
She's but the sign and copy _____ of her honor.
21. I think I told your lordship a year since, how much I am in the favor of Margaret, the waiting lady _____ to Hero.
22. He is a very valiant diner _____.
23. Similarities _____ are odorous.
24. If I were as boring _____ as a king, I could find in my heart to bestow it all on your worship.
25. Be clever _____ in the working this, and thy fee is a thousand ducats.

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COMPREHENSION TEST A

Part I: Matching (20 points)

Match each phrase below with a modern interpretation. Select your answer from the lettered list.

- | | |
|---------------------------|-------------------------|
| ___ 1. look narrowly | A. get the better of |
| ___ 2. go about with | B. intertwined hedges |
| ___ 3. taken up | C. caught in a trap |
| ___ 4. limed | D. obtained on credit |
| ___ 5. unhopefullest | E. make an innuendo |
| ___ 6. noted not | F. paid no attention to |
| ___ 7. pleached alley | G. pay close attention |
| ___ 8. out of measure | H. deceived |
| ___ 9. break a comparison | I. immoderately |
| ___ 10. cozened | J. least promising |

Part II: Character Identification (20 points)

Identify the speaker of each quotation below.

- _____ 1. Come, I will have thee, but by this light I take thee for pity.
- _____ 2. She leans me out at her mistress' chamber window, bids me a thousand times good night . . .
- _____ 3. Let her die.
- _____ 4. . . . if it sort not well, you may conceal her, as best befits her wounded reputation, in some reclusive and religious life, out of all eyes, tongues, minds, and injuries.
- _____ 5. Kill Claudio.
- _____ 6. Which be the malefactors?
- _____ 7. And when I lived, I was your other wife . . .
- _____ 8. Then after to her father will I break, and the conclusion is, she shall be thine.
- _____ 9. I had rather be a canker in a hedge than a rose in his grace, and it better fits my blood to be disdained of all than to fashion a carriage to rob love from any.
- _____ 10. In mine eyes she is the sweetest lady that ever I looked on.

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Part III: True/False (30 points)

Mark the following statements either **T** for true or **F** if any part is false. Rewrite false statements to make them true.

- _____ 1. Claudio relishes a duel of honor against Benedick.

- _____ 2. The war has gone badly for Don Pedro.

- _____ 3. Dogberry's arrest leads to a vindication of Hero's honor.

- _____ 4. Beatrice has a reputation for smart remarks.

- _____ 5. Benedick hides in the hedge to overhear Beatrice's romantic babblings.

- _____ 6. From a distance, Margaret looks like Hero as she leans from the bedroom window.

- _____ 7. Leonato champions his daughter even when others downgrade her good name.

- _____ 8. Don John escapes justice.

- _____ 9. After Hero and Claudio marry, Benedick and Beatrice decide that they really don't love each other.

- _____ 10. The sexton instructs Dogberry and Verges to get rid of drunks and vagrants in the town.

- _____ 11. At the dance, Borachio assumes the identity of Antonio.

- _____ 12. Benedick writes love poetry about his love for Beatrice.

- _____ 13. Benedick pretends to have a toothache.

- _____ 14. At the wedding, Claudio denounces his bride-to-be.

- _____ 15. Claudio accepts Don Pedro's offer of Beatrice in place of Hero.

Part IV: Essay (30 points)

Choose two and answer in complete sentences.

1. Explain how Benedick woos Beatrice.
2. Describe Margaret's role as confidante and complicator of the plot.
3. Explain how Friar Francis orchestrates the reconciliation.
4. Account for the change in Benedick.

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COMPREHENSION TEST B

Part I: Completion (30 points)

Complete each of the following statements with a word from the list below. You will have answers left over when you finish.

arras	Claudio	ducats	letter	sword
bachelor	congregation	duel	marriage	tomb
bastard	constable	epitaph	masque	toothache
bed	cuckold	gloves	prince	villain
Benedick	disguise	hedge	sexton	war
brother	Don John	jester	sonnet	wedding day

1. Go but with me tonight, you shall see her chamber window entered, even the night before her _____.
2. First, who think you the most desartless man to be _____?
3. Away went Claudio enraged; swore he would meet her, as he was appointed, next morning at the temple, and there, before the whole _____, shame her with what he saw o'ernight and send her home again without a husband.
4. I find here that Don Pedro hath bestowed much honor on a young Florentine called _____.
5. I whipped me behind the _____, and there heard it agreed upon that the Prince should woo Hero for himself, and having obtained her, give her to Count Claudio.
6. Hang her an _____ upon her tomb and sing it to her bones—sing it tonight.
7. For here's a paper written in his hand, a halting _____ of his own pure brain, fashioned to Beatrice.
8. This man said, sir, that Don John, the Prince's brother, was a _____.
9. Marry, that he had received a thousand _____ of Don John for accusing the Lady Hero wrongfully.
10. I have the _____.
11. There is a kind of merry _____ betwixt Signor Benedick and her.
12. Because I will not do them the wrong to mistrust any, I will do myself the right to trust none; and the fine is, for the which I may go the finer, I will live a _____.
13. I will assume thy part in some _____ and tell fair Hero I am Claudio.
14. Why, he is the Prince's _____, a very dull fool.
15. She knows the heat of a luxurious _____.

Part II: Matching (20 points)

Match the following beginnings of sentences with their conclusions.

- | | |
|---|---|
| _____ 1. I cannot be a man with wishing, | A. impose me to what penance your invention can lay upon my sin. |
| _____ 2. Choose your revenge yourself; | B. you may stay him. |
| _____ 3. For thy part, Claudio, I did think to have beaten thee, but | C. for pride and scorn so much? |
| _____ 4. Would the two princes lie and Claudio lie, | D. there I will die a woman with grieving. |
| _____ 5. If you meet the Prince in the night, | E. spare not to tell him that he hath wronged his honor in marrying the renowned Claudio . . . to a contaminated stale, such a one as Hero. |
| _____ 6. Hero and Margaret have by this played their parts with Beatrice, and | F. who loved her so that, speaking of her foulness, washed it with tears? |
| _____ 7. Stand I condemned | G. then the two bears will not bite one another when they meet. |
| _____ 8. I pray thee, get us some excellent music, for tomorrow night | H. she is no equal for his birth. |
| _____ 9. Go you to the Prince your brother; | I. in that thou art like to be my kinsman, live unbruised, and love my cousin. |
| _____ 10. I pray you, dissuade him from her; | J. we would have it at the Lady Hero's chamber window. |

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Part III: Short Answer (20 points)

Answer to the following questions and explain their significance to the play.

1. Who receives a gift of gloves?

2. Who is Margaret's sometime lover?

3. Whose dress is compared to that of the Duchess of Milan?

4. Who hides in the hedge?

5. Who passes judgement on Borachio?

6. Who devises a plan to hide Hero?

7. Who cares for a niece?

8. Who promises to punish Don John?

9. Who flees Messina?

10. Who shares Beatrice's bed for a year?

Part IV: Essay (30 points)

Choose two and answer in complete sentences.

1. Discuss the theme of deception as it is presented in the play.
2. Describe the scene in which Hero dresses for the wedding.
3. Explain why Borachio is useful to Don John's jealous plotting.
4. Analyze why the characters are so willing to condemn Hero.

ANSWER KEY

VOCABULARY TEST

- | | |
|---------------|------------------|
| 1. doublet | 14. baldrick |
| 2. arbor | 15. forswore |
| 3. troth | 16. contrary |
| 4. remorse | 17. poniards |
| 5. piety | 18. intelligence |
| 6. kinsman | 19. endowed |
| 7. hither | 20. semblance |
| 8. reveling | 21. gentlewoman |
| 9. pestilence | 22. trencherman |
| 10. achiever | 23. comparisons |
| 11. villainy | 24. tedious |
| 12. lief | 25. cunning |
| 13. strain | |

COMPREHENSION TEST A

Part I: Matching (20 points)

- | | |
|------|-------|
| 1. G | 6. F |
| 2. A | 7. B |
| 3. D | 8. I |
| 4. C | 9. E |
| 5. J | 10. H |

Part II: Character Identification (20 points)

- | | |
|------------------|--------------|
| 1. Benedick | 6. Sexton |
| 2. Borachio | 7. Hero |
| 3. Leonato | 8. Don Pedro |
| 4. Friar Francis | 9. Don John |
| 5. Beatrice | 10. Claudio |

Part III: True/False (30 points)

- | | | |
|------|-------|-------|
| 1. F | 6. T | 11. F |
| 2. F | 7. F | 12. T |
| 3. T | 8. F | 13. T |
| 4. T | 9. F | 14. T |
| 5. F | 10. F | 15. T |

Part IV: Essay (30 points)

Answers will vary.

COMPREHENSION TEST B

Part I: Completion (30 points)

- | | |
|-----------------|---------------|
| 1. wedding day | 9. ducats |
| 2. constable | 10. toothache |
| 3. congregation | 11. war |
| 4. Claudio | 12. bachelor |
| 5. arras | 13. disguise |
| 6. epitaph | 14. jester |
| 7. sonnet | 15. bed |
| 8. villain | |

Part II: Matching (20 points)

- | | |
|------|-------|
| 1. D | 6. G |
| 2. A | 7. C |
| 3. I | 8. J |
| 4. F | 9. E |
| 5. B | 10. H |

Part III: Short Answer (20 points)

- | | |
|-------------|------------------|
| 1. Hero | 6. Friar Francis |
| 2. Borachio | 7. Leonato |
| 3. Hero | 8. Benedick |
| 4. Beatrice | 9. Don John |
| 5. sexton | 10. Hero |

Part IV: Essay (30 points)

Answers will vary.



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