

THE GRAPHIC SHAKESPEARE SERIES

**MUCH ADO
ABOUT NOTHING**

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READZONE

THE CHARACTERS IN THE PLAY

Leonato's Household

Signor Leonato	– Governor of Messina
Signor Antonio	– his brother
Hero	– Leonato's only daughter
Beatrice	– an orphan, Leonato's niece
Margaret	}– Hero's attendants
Ursula	
Friar Francis (The Friar)	– a priest

The Military

Don Pedro	– Prince of Arragon
Don John	– his bastard* brother
Count Claudio of Florence	}– young lords, companions of Don Pedro
Count Benedick of Padua	
Borachio	}– followers of Don John
Conrade	
Messenger	
Balthasar	– a singer

The Town

Dogberry	– Constable of Messina
Verges	– Deputy Constable
The Sexton	– Town Clerk
The Watch	– the night watchmen on duty

* In Shakespeare's time, a person whose parents were not married to each other was called a bastard.

PORTRAIT GALLERY



Hero



Leonato



Antonio



Beatrice



Claudio



Don Pedro



Don John



Benedick



Margaret



Ursula



Borachio



Conrade



Balthasar



The Friar



Dogberry



Verges

Much Ado About Nothing

ACT 1

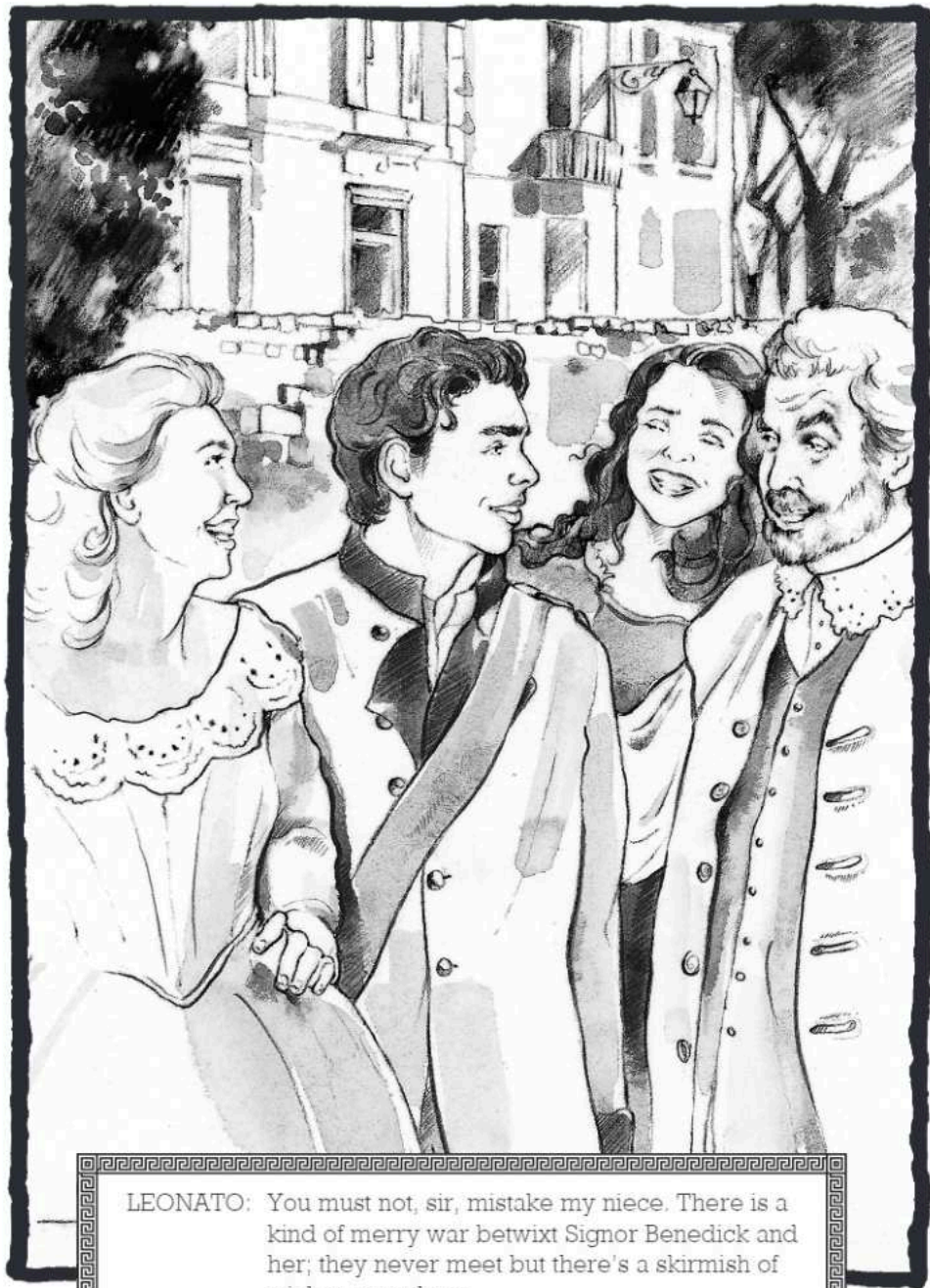
There was great excitement in the small Italian town of Messina. Don Pedro, Prince of Arragon, was to visit the town on his way home from war.

Leonato, the governor of the town, questioned the Prince's messenger. He learned that the Prince had defeated his enemies, with very few casualties among his officers and men. A young man named Claudio had surprised everyone with his bravery.

Leonato's niece, Beatrice, enquired about Benedick, one of Don Pedro's officers. She had a very sharp tongue¹ and made fun of Benedick, whom she clearly disliked. Leonato told the messenger that this was a playful game between Beatrice and Benedick, a kind of war of words. The messenger remarked that he would rather be Beatrice's friend than her enemy.

There was no time to prepare. The Prince had arrived.

¹a sharp tongue – she could be very sarcastic



LEONATO: You must not, sir, mistake my niece. There is a kind of merry war betwixt Signor Benedick and her; they never meet but there's a skirmish of wit between them.