

Much Ado About Nothing

Little Theatre of Owatonna

2016-2017 Season

Characters (listed alphabetically) with suggested ages

Antonio - Leonato's elderly brother and Hero's uncle. (AGE 50-70)

Beatrice - Leonato's niece and Hero's cousin. Beatrice is "a pleasant-spirited lady" with a very sharp tongue. She is generous and loving, but, like Benedick, continually mocks other people with elaborately tooled jokes and puns. She wages a war of wits against Benedick and often wins the battles. At the outset of the play, she appears content never to marry. (AGE 25-40)

Benedick - An aristocratic soldier who has recently been fighting under Don Pedro, and a friend of Don Pedro and Claudio. Benedick is very witty, always making jokes and puns. He carries on a "merry war" of wits with Beatrice, but at the beginning of the play he swears he will never fall in love or marry. (AGE 25-45)

Borachio - An associate of Don John. Borachio is the lover of Margaret, Hero's serving woman. He conspires with Don John to trick Claudio and Don Pedro into thinking that Hero is unfaithful to Claudio. His name means "drunkard" in Italian, which might serve as a subtle direction to the actor playing him. (AGE 25-40)

Butler - Not an actual character in Shakespeare's play, but a combination of several characters for the sake of the Little Theatre of Owatonna production. (AGE 30-70)

Claudio - A young soldier who has won great acclaim fighting under Don Pedro during the recent wars. Claudio falls in love with Hero upon his return to Messina. His unfortunately suspicious nature makes him quick to believe evil rumors and hasty to despair and take revenge. (AGE 20-35)

Conrad - One of Don John's more intimate associates, entirely devoted to Don John. Several recent productions have staged Conrad as Don John's potential male lover, possibly to intensify Don John's feelings of being a social outcast and therefore motivate his desire for revenge. (AGE 25-40)

Dogberry - The constable in charge of the Watch, or chief policeman, of Messina. Dogberry is very sincere and takes his job seriously, but he has a habit of using exactly the wrong word to convey his meaning. Dogberry is one of the few "middling sort," or middle-class characters, in the play, though his desire to speak formally and elaborately like the noblemen becomes an occasion for parody. (AGE 35-55)

Don John - The illegitimate brother of Don Pedro; sometimes called "the Bastard." Don John is melancholy and sullen by nature, and he creates a dark scheme to ruin the happiness of Hero and Claudio. He is the villain of the play; his evil actions are motivated by his envy of his brother's social authority. (AGE 30-50)

Don Pedro - An important nobleman from Aragon, sometimes referred to as “Prince.” Don Pedro is a longtime friend of Leonato, Hero’s father, and is also close to the soldiers who have been fighting under him—the younger Benedick and the very young Claudio. Don Pedro is generous, courteous, intelligent, and loving to his friends, but he is also quick to believe evil of others and hasty to take revenge. He is the most politically and socially powerful character in the play. (AGE 35-60)

Friar Francis – A Friar who will be performing the marriage between Claudio and Hero, and eventually between Benedick and Beatrice. He is the one who comes up with the plan to clear Hero’s name when she is accused of being unfaithful to Claudio. (AGE 30-65)

Hero - The beautiful young daughter of Leonato and the cousin of Beatrice. Hero is lovely, gentle, and kind. She falls in love with Claudio when he falls for her, but when Don John slanders her and Claudio rashly takes revenge, she suffers terribly. (AGE 18-25)

Leonato - A respected, well-to-do, elderly noble at whose home, in Messina, Italy, the action is set. Leonato is the father of Hero and the uncle of Beatrice. As governor of Messina, he is second in social power only to Don Pedro. (AGE 50-70)

Margaret - Hero’s serving woman, who unwittingly helps Borachio and Don John deceive Claudio into thinking that Hero is unfaithful. Unlike Ursula, Hero’s other lady-in-waiting, Margaret is lower class. Though she is honest, she does have some dealings with the villainous world of Don John: her lover is the mistrustful and easily bribed Borachio. Also unlike Ursula, Margaret loves to break decorum, especially with bawdy jokes and teases. (AGE 20-35)

Sexton – An official of the city/courts who guides, with pains, Dogberry and Verges through the legal procedures with Borachio and Conrade. Age 30-70)

Verges - The deputy to Dogberry, chief policeman of Messina. (AGE 40-60)

Ursula - One of Hero’s waiting women. (AGE 35-55)

Watch 1 – A member of the Watch underneath the command of Dogberry. (Age 25-60)

Watch 2 – A member of the Watch underneath the command of Dogberry. Also known as George Seacole. Distinguished because he can read and write. (Age 25-60)

In addition, there are several other possibilities for non-speaking roles, some of which may be involved with dance numbers. The ages may vary. These chorus members are likely to play several roles.

Leonato’s wife

Antonio’s son

Extra members of the Watch (Keystone Cops)

Flappers

Maids

Soldiers

Party-goers

Those attending the wedding
Extra “brides” for the final wedding

Source: Spark Notes