*Much Ado About Nothing* Character Synopsis

**Leonato:**Governor of Messina, a city in Renaissance Italy. Most of the play takes place in and around Leonato's home and estate. He is father to Hero, uncle and guardian to Beatrice, and host to Don Pedro and his entourage. Friendly and unsophisticated, influenced by appearances and opinions of others, Leonato is a unifying figure, linking the play's plot lines to one another from first scene to last.

**Beatrice**: Orphaned niece of Leonato, raised in his household as a second daughter, she is Leonato’s niece and Hero’s cousin. Strong-willed, opinionated, and outspoken, Beatrice is “a pleasant-spirited lady” with a very sharp tongue. She is generous and loving, but, like Benedick, continually mocks other people with elaborate 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. She is a sassy, independent and attractive. She is basically a thinner, smarter Wife of Bath.

**Benedick**: An aristocratic soldier who has recently been fighting for Don Pedro, and a friend of Don Pedro and Claudio. Benedick is very witty, always making jokes and puns. He is witty and often sarcastic, independent in spirit, loyal to friends — and not really the misogynist (woman hater) he appears to be. He carries on a “merry war” of wits with Beatrice. At the beginning of the play he swears he will never fall in love or marry. He the single, bachelor and a pimpplayahustla #bro. He is basically a smarter, more attractive, braver Nick from “The Miller’s Tale.”

**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. He seems immature and easily misled by the suggestions and actions of others, including Don Pedro, Don John, and Leonato. His affections are mercurial — back and forth between infatuation and rejection. He is a young, naïve, hot-tempered brave soldier. He is basically a younger version of Laertes.

**Hero**: The beautiful young daughter of Leonato and the cousin of Beatrice. Hero is lovely, gentle, quiet, traditional, obedient, naive, and kind. She falls in love easily and believes pretty much everything that men tell her: her dad, Don Pedro, Don John. She is pretty much Ophelia.

**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. He is the noble “good” guy that acts like a big brother and makes sure everybody gets what they deserve. He is a more modern, less pagan version of Beowulf.

**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. He is the whiny step-child that is mopey all the time. He is a shadier, whinier version of Hamlet.