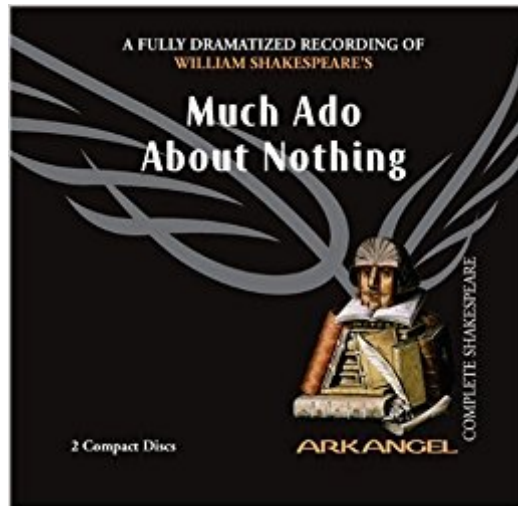




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# Much Ado About Nothing (Arkangel Shakespeare)



## Synopsis

[Full-Cast Audio Theater Dramatization. Beatrice is played by Saskia Reeves, while Samuel West plays Benedick. Paul Jesson is Don Pedro, Jason O'Mara is Claudio, and Abigail Docherty is Hero. Dogberry is played by Bryan Pringle.]Central to the play, one of Shakespeare's best-loved comedies, are Beatrice and Benedick, masters of wit and sworn foes to marriage - until a plot is hatched to bring them together. Young Claudio has fallen for the lovely heiress Hero, who also loves him. Their path to the altar looks smooth, until the evil Don John intervenes. All ends happily, thanks to his incompetent assassins and the lucky discoveries of the bungling constable Dogberry.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Kittredge's admirably full notes, supplemented by Peter Kanelos's user-friendly introduction and references to film and television versions of the play, add up to a very accessible edition. I particularly liked the discussion of "How to read *Much Ado* as performance", which opens up a lot of possibilities for the student and teacher.- Lois Potter, Ned B. Allen Professor Emeritus, University of Delaware

Even as the New Kittredge Shakespeare series glances back to George Lyman Kittredge's student editions of the plays, it is very much of our current moment: the slim editions are targeted largely at high school and first-year college students who are more versed in visual than in print culture. Not only are the texts of the plays accompanied by photographs or stills from various stage and cinema performances: the editorial contributions are performance-oriented, offering surveys of contemporary film interpretations, essays on the plays as performance pieces, and an annotated filmography. Traditional editorial issues (competing versions of the text, cruxes, editorial

emendation history) are for the most part excluded; the editions focus instead on clarifying the text with an eye to performing it. There is no disputing the pedagogic usefulness of the New Kittredge Shakespeare's performance-oriented approach. At times, however, it can run the risk of treating textual issues as impediments, rather than partners, to issues of performance. This is particularly the case with a textually vexed play such as *Pericles: Prince of Tyre*. In the introduction to the latter, Jeffrey Kahan notes the frequent unintelligibility of the play as originally published: "the chances of a reconstructed text matching what Shakespeare actually wrote are about 'nil'" (p. xiii). But his solution — to use a "traditional text" rather than one corrected as are the Oxford and Norton *Pericles* — obscures how this "traditional text," including its act and scene division, is itself a palimpsest produced through three centuries of editorial intervention. Nevertheless, the series does a service to its target audience with its emphasis on performance and dramaturgy. Kahan's own essay about his experiences as dramaturge for a college production of *Pericles* is very good indeed, particularly on the play's inability to purge the trace of incestuous desire that *Pericles* first encounters in Antioch. Other plays' cinematic histories: Annalisa Castaldo's edition of *Henry V* contrasts Laurence Olivier's and Branagh's film productions; Samuel Crowl's and James Wells's edition of (respectively) 1 and 2 *Henry IV* concentrate on Welle's *Chimes at Midnight* and Gus Van Sant's *My Own Private Idaho*; Patricia Lennox's edition of *As You Like It* offers an overview of four Hollywood and British film adaptations; and John R. Ford's edition of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* provides a spirited survey of the play's rich film history. The differences between, and comparative merits of, various editorial series are suggested by the three editions of *The Taming of the Shrew* published this year. Laury Magnus's New Kittredge Shakespeare edition is, like the other New Kittredge volumes, a workable text for high school and first year college students interested in film and theater. The introduction elaborates on one theme — Elizabethan constructions of gender — and offers a very broad performance history, focusing on Sam Taylor's and Zeffirelli's film versions as well as adaptations such as *Kiss Me Kate* and *Ten Things I Hate About You* (accompanied by a still of ten heartthrobs Heath Ledger and Julia Stiles). The volume is determined to eradicate any confusion that a first time reader of the play might experience: the *dramatis personae* page explains that "Bianca Minola" is "younger daughter to Baptista, wooed by Lucentio-in-disguise (as Cambio) and then wife to him, also wooed by the elderly Gremio and Hortensio-in-disguise (as Licio)" (p.1). Other editorial notes, based on Kittredge's own, are confined mostly to explaining individual words and phrases: additional footnotes discuss interpretive choices made by film and stage productions. Throughout, the editorial emphasis is on the play less as text than as performance piece, culminating in fifteen largely performance-oriented "study questions" on

topics such as disguise, misogyny, and violence. *Studies in English Literature, Tudor and Stuart Drama*, Volume 51, Spring 2011, Number 2, pages 497-499. --This text refers to the Paperback edition.

Webster's paperbacks take advantage of the fact that classics are frequently assigned readings in English courses. By using a running English-to-Spanish thesaurus at the bottom of each page, this edition of *Much Ado About Nothing* by William Shakespeare was edited for three audiences. The first includes Spanish-speaking students enrolled in an English Language Program (ELP), an English as a Foreign Language (EFL) program, an English as a Second Language Program (ESL), or in a TOEFL<sup>®</sup> or TOEIC<sup>®</sup> preparation program. The second audience includes English-speaking students enrolled in bilingual education programs or Spanish speakers enrolled in English speaking schools. The third audience consists of students who are actively building their vocabularies in Spanish in order to take foreign service, translation certification, Advanced Placement<sup>®</sup> (AP<sup>®</sup>) or similar examinations. By using the Webster's Spanish Thesaurus Edition when assigned for an English course, the reader can enrich their vocabulary in anticipation of an examination in Spanish or English. TOEFL<sup>®</sup>, TOEIC<sup>®</sup>, AP<sup>®</sup> and Advanced Placement<sup>®</sup> are trademarks of the Educational Testing Service which has neither reviewed nor endorsed this book. All rights reserved. --This text refers to the Paperback edition.

My problem with the Kindle Bantam Classic edition of *Othello* is that there are no footnotes at the bottom of each page. This means no immediate vocab definitions or comprehension aids. I bought the Kindle edition because my old Signet paperback *Othello* is yellow with age, plus tiny font. (I'm rereading *Othello* before watching the live performance starring Blair Underwood and Richard Thomas.) Not being a scholar of Elizabethan English, I do need annotative help with the vocab and idioms. So unfortunately, it's back to the old, barely readable but annotated Signet print version for me.

This book is in awesome shape and arrived just in the nick of time. It even has footnotes to help you to understand the old english in the book which is great help to further understand the book.

Really helpful to read the contemporary English version next to the Shakespeare text; allows you to understand the play so much better and consequently appreciate the old English wording so much more completely!!

If a man do not erect in this age his own tomb ere he dies, he shall live no longer in monument than the bell rings and the widow weeps.

These are good to have if you are teaching Shakespeare to students who are first time readers. It is a good companion piece to the real-thing, but in no way replaces a proper reading of the Bard.

I love this book. I am currently using it to teach my students Othello. It makes the translation much easier; its a blessing. The book also seems very sturdy and the pages are extremely white so you see the words clearly. The book provides a side by side translation that accompanies the original Othello script. Who wouldn't want this?

This is a Shakespearean Comedy of Manners from before the genre was even really a fully developed thing, featuring love affairs, a revenge plot, some humorous incompetence, a faked death, and much more. I'm not a big comedy fan, but this is certainly a good example of the genre at the time from which it came, and I actually quite enjoyed it. When it comes to the works of Shakespeare as a whole, I would say that this is a less memorable example, but definitely has some positives going for it as well. For one, it's far less well-known than many of his more famous works, so it doesn't feel familiar as you read it. The characters and plot also tend to grow on you, even as the language isn't quite so memorable, and the plotting and mistaken identities aspects are always good plot points, whether you're speaking of today or centuries ago. As to the edition itself, I found it to be greatly helpful in understanding the action in the play. It has a layout which places each page of the play opposite a page of notes, definitions, explanations, and other things needed to understand that page more thoroughly. While I didn't always need it, I was certainly glad to have it whenever I ran into a turn of language that was unfamiliar, and I definitely appreciated the scene-by-scene summaries. Really, if you want to or need to read Shakespeare, an edition such as this is really the way to go, especially until you get more accustomed to it.

Christ I mean seriously who the hell am I to critique Shakespeare? If I had a way to "skip reviews" this would probably be one of those I'd hit. Anything I could say about the work would feel woefully contrived and without merit. The "brass tacks" on this from a lay-mans perspective is it's fantastic but seriously it's Shakespeare and while I haven't read the breadth of his work I haven't regretted reading one yet. The translation/interpretation was fine for me (not an English major ergo haven't

read another translation to compare it to).Honestly it's a safe bet and solid read if you have time

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