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much ado about nothing is a comedy by william shakespeare thought to have been written in 1598 and 1599 the play was included in the first folio published in 1623 the play is set in messina and revolves around two romantic pairings that emerge when a group of soldiers arrive in the town nothing handsome about him in brief since i do purpose to marry i will think nothing to any purpose that the world can say against it and therefore never flout at me for what i have said against it for man is a giddy thing and this is my conclusion for thy part claudio i did think to have beaten thee but in that thou art like to be my one of shakespeare's most frequently performed comedies much ado about nothing includes two quite different stories of romantic love hero and claudio fall in love almost at first sight but an outsider don john strikes out at their happiness beatrice and benedick much ado about nothing was first printed in 1600 as a quarto this quarto is remarkable among early printed texts 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reconciles himself to his brother though he doesn t speak to him much and may merely be keeping him close to keep an eye on him though a bachelor himself he has a high enough regard for marriage to help claudio in asking for hero s see in text act iv scene i an wonderful example of paradox a statement that seems to lead to an illogical conclusion in literal terms if hero dies she cannot live in metaphorical terms she must die as a sinner in order to live as an honorable woman the friar s plot then leads to hero s resurrection something the friar would know a much ado about nothing is a casual self deprecating phrase that has entered the language it means a lot of fuss about very little indeed it s enough of a cliché as to be almost lost as a quotation but in shakespeare s mind it has another meaning and this second sense is central to the play enjoy a sparkling sun drenched spectacle time out in the globe theatre this summer and feel pure joy the times with shakespeare s timeless 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