



Macmillan Collector's Library

Why Read the Classics in Your Book Club?

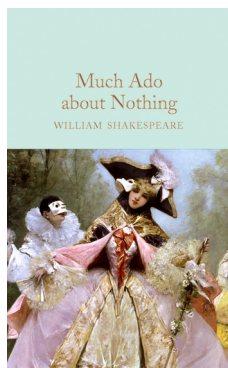
Throughout history, book clubs have served as a forum for great minds to come together to share and discuss literature, as well as current events and issues. The Socratic circles, Ben Franklin's Junto Club, Stratford-on-Odeon, The Algonquin Round Table, and Oprah's Book Club are just a few famous ones.

It doesn't matter if your book club is seriously academic, highly social, or anything in between, recommend reading a classic next time! Classic literature is filled with gorgeous writing, complex plots, unforgettable characters along-side social and political issues that are still relevant today, making them great options for both fun and meaningful discussions.

We're here to help your book club tackle the literary canon with our Macmillan Collectors Library Book Club Guides to the Classics.

About the Books

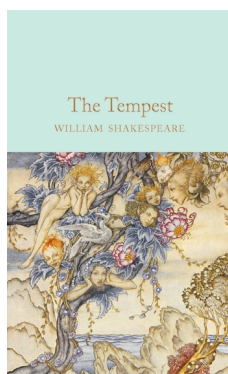
Much Ado About Nothing by William Shakespeare



Whilst Beatrice and Benedick both despise love, exchanging insults and mockery rather than vows, for Hero and Claudio it is love at first sight. But as their marriage preparations begin, so too do Don John's dirty tricks. Can his scheming get in the way of true love? And can an elaborate plan to bring fiery Beatrice and cynical Benedick closer together really come off? In *Much Ado About Nothing* one of Shakespeare's most popular plays, nothing is quite what it seems.

ISBN: 978-1-50-988977-8

The Tempest by William Shakespeare



Prospero has long been exiled from Italy and banished to a remote island with his daughter Miranda. He uses his magical powers to conjure up a fearsome storm, and his enemies, including his treacherous brother Antonio, are shipwrecked. There follows a play filled with murderous plots, drunken confusion, love and redemption. And along the way, the reader discovers an unmistakable message that this is Shakespeare's own farewell to the stage.

ISBN: 978-1-50-988976-1

About the Author

William Shakespeare was born in Stratford-upon-Avon, Warwickshire, in 1564. The date of his birth is not known but is traditionally 23 April, St George's Day. Aged 18, he married a Stratford farmer's daughter, Anne Hathaway. They had three children. Around 1585 William joined an acting troupe on tour in Stratford from London, and thereafter spent much of his life in the capital. A member of the leading theatre group in London, the Chamberlain's Men, which built the Globe Theatre and frequently performed in front of Queen Elizabeth I, Shakespeare wrote 36 plays and much poetry besides. He died in 1616.



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Much Ado About Nothing Book Club Discussion Points

- Who do you think the main characters of *Much Ado About Nothing* really are— Beatrice and Benedick or Hero and Claudio? Why?
- What do you think Shakespeare is saying about people in general when he wrote *Much Ado About Nothing*?
- Which of the characters in *Much Ado About Nothing* do you think you are most like? Why?
- Did you recognize any parts of this story from any modern movies or books or even from your own life? If so, tell your fellow book clubbers what you recognize and where its from.
- Which character do you think is the most admirable? Which one is the least admirable? Why?
- How does *Much Ado About Nothing* show the young fooling the old? What do you think Shakespeare is suggesting by including this?
- Point out 3 instances of deception in *Much Ado About Nothing*. Why do you think there is so much deception in the play?
- Do you think our modern mores, being different than Shakespeare's, make the foundation of *Much Ado About Nothing* outdated and boring? If a scandal like the one Hero faced occurred before a wedding today, do you think a similar uproar would occur? Is it fair to say that controversies like this really are "about nothing"?
- What is Shakespeare actually saying about love in this play? Do you think he undermines marriage, by saying it's not necessarily an indicator of true love? Do you think Claudio and Hero have true love? How about Beatrice and Benedick?

The Tempest Book Club Discussion Points

- Do you feel *The Tempest* is still relevant today? How and why? Does it say something about our current society, or about the world at large? If so, what?
- Why do you think that each character in *The Tempest* refers to art versus "real life" as some point in the play. Why is art so important in this play?
- Which character in *The Tempest* do you identify with the most? Why?
- What do you think is harder for most people in today's society to exercise—vengeance or virtue? Why? Give a recent example of a person using vengeance and a person being virtuous.
- Do you think Prospero deserved to be removed from office? Why? Can you think of a person alive today that reminds you of Prospero?
- Does Ariel have a gender, if yes, what gender do you think Ariel is? Why do you think this?
- Besides bringing the nobles to the island, what do you think the purpose of the storm in *The Tempest* is?
- How are the following characters: Prospero, Miranda, Ariel, and Caliban each enslaved in *The Tempest*? How do they liberate themselves?
- What do you think Prospero's book and staff represent? Why does he break them at the end of *The Tempest*? Do you agree with this action? Why or why not?

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