

Shakespeare's villains

Dieser Vorschlag bezieht sich auf Shakespeare: Othello.

Aufgaben

Der vorliegende Vorschlag enthält in Aufgabe 3 alternative Arbeitsanweisungen.

- 1 Outline Don John's motivation and the plan to cause mischief. (Material) **(30 BE)**

- 2 Compare Don John (Material) and Iago from Shakespeare's "Othello". **(40 BE)**

- 3 Choose one of the following tasks:

- 3.1 "A friend asked me last night [...] 'So what I want to know is what does it feel like being the only African-American and also playing the villain?' "
- Bob Devin Jones, African-American actor playing Don John in a production in Florida in 2005
- Taking the quotation as a starting point and with reference to both Don John and Iago, assess the two plays' possible receptions if only the actors playing the villains were black.

or

- 3.2 As a student of Theatre Studies you are working as an intern at the English Theatre Frankfurt to gain some work experience. An American director coming to Frankfurt in a few weeks' time wants to do a student production of "Othello". He has asked you and the other students assigned to assist him to send him some ideas for the production beforehand. Having studied "Othello" at school, you actually see the main focus of the play on Iago and thus want to use your artistic freedom and name the production after him.

Write an email to the director, explaining why this production of the play should be named "Iago".

(30 BE)

Material**William Shakespeare: Much Ado about Nothing (excerpt from the play, 1598/99)***LEONATO – a respectable nobleman**CLAUDIO – a well-respected young nobleman and soldier**DON PEDRO – the Prince of Aragon**DON JOHN – Don Pedro's illegitimate brother**CONRADE and BORACHIO – Don John's companions**HERO – Leonato's daughter**MARGARET – waiting gentlewoman attendant on Hero*

LEONATO welcomes some of his friends coming home from a war. Among them are CLAUDIO, DON PEDRO and his illegitimate brother DON JOHN with his companions CONRADE and BORACHIO. As the illegitimate brother, DON JOHN is the black sheep of the family.

Act I Scene 3: Outside LEONATO's house.

DON JOHN is in a very bad mood about the conflict with his brother. He is looking for some remedy to lighten his mood.

CONRADE You have of late stood out against your brother, and he hath ta'en you newly into his grace, where it is impossible you should take true root, but by the fair weather that you make yourself: it is needful that you frame the season for your own harvest¹.

5 DON JOHN I had rather be a canker² in a hedge, than a rose in his grace, and it better fits my blood to be disdained of all, than to fashion a carriage to rob love³ from any. In this (though I cannot be said to be a flattering honest man) it must not be denied but I am a plain-dealing villain. I am trusted with a muzzle, and enfranchised with a clog⁴, therefore I have decreed not to sing in my cage. If I had my mouth, I would bite: if I had my liberty, I would do my liking. In the mean time, let me be that I am, and seek not to alter me.

10 CONRADE Can you make no use of your discontent?

DON JOHN I make all use of it, for I use it only. Who comes here?

Enter BORACHIO

What news, Borachio?

BORACHIO I came yonder from a great supper, the prince your brother is royally entertained by Leonato, and I can give you intelligence of an intended marriage.

15 DON JOHN Will it serve for any model to build mischief on? What is he for a fool that betroths himself to unquietness?

BORACHIO Marry, it is your brother's right hand.

DON JOHN Who, the most exquisite Claudio?

¹ it is needful that you frame the season for your own harvest – you have to wait for the appropriate time to act

² canker – a plant disease, *here*: a source of corruption or debasement

³ to fashion a carriage to rob love – to put on a fancy show and trick sb. into loving sb.

⁴ I am trusted with a muzzle, and enfranchised with a clog – my brother trusts me as much as a master trusts a dog he muzzles or a peasant he sets "free" by chaining a big weight around his foot

BORACHIO Even he.

20 DON JOHN A proper squire! And who, and who, which way looks he?

BORACHIO Marry, on Hero, the daughter and heir of Leonato.

DON JOHN A very forward March-chick⁵. [...] Come, come, let us thither, this may prove food to my displeasure, that young start-up [Claudio] hath all the glory of my overthrow⁶: if I can cross him any way, I bless myself every way. You are both sure, and will assist me?

25 CONRADE To the death, my lord. [...]

Act II Scene 2: LEONATO's house

DON JOHN It is so, the Count Claudio shall marry the daughter of Leonato.

BORACHIO Yea, my lord, but I can cross it.

30 DON JOHN Any bar, any cross, any impediment, will be medicinable to me, I am sick in displeasure to him, and whatsoever comes athwart his affection, ranges evenly with mine⁷. How canst thou cross this marriage?

BORACHIO Not honestly, my lord, but so covertly, that no dishonesty shall appear in me.

DON JOHN Show me briefly how.

BORACHIO I think I told your lordship a year since, how much I am in the favour of Margaret, the waiting gentlewoman to Hero.

35 DON JOHN I remember.

BORACHIO I can at any unseasonable instant⁸ of the night, appoint her to look out at her lady's chamber window.

DON JOHN What life is in that to be the death of this marriage?

40 BORACHIO The poison of that lies in you to temper; go you to the prince your brother, spare not to tell him, that he hath wronged his honour in marrying the renowned Claudio, whose estimation do you mightily hold up, to a contaminated stale⁹, such a one as Hero.

DON JOHN What proof shall I make of that?

BORACHIO Proof enough, to misuse the prince, to vex Claudio, to undo Hero, and kill Leonato; look you for any other issue?

45 DON JOHN Only to despise them I will endeavour anything.

BORACHIO Go then, find me a meet hour to draw Don Pedro and the Count Claudio alone, tell them that you know that Hero loves me, intend a kind of zeal¹⁰ both to the prince and Claudio (as in love of your brother's honour who hath made this match, and his friend's reputation, who is thus like

⁵ March-chick – A chicken hatched in March is said to have a good start in life and to be very lively.

⁶ he hath all the glory of my overthrow – *here*: Don John holds a grudge against Claudio for the part he played in Don John's recent downfall.

⁷ whatsoever comes athwart his affection, ranges evenly with mine – whoever ruins his affection/happiness has my affection/makes me happy

⁸ at any unseasonable instant – at any indecent hour

⁹ contaminated stale – tainted prostitute

¹⁰ intend a kind of zeal – pretend to be concerned

- 50 to be cozened with the semblance of a maid¹¹) that you have discovered thus: they will scarcely believe this without trial: offer them instances¹² which shall bear no less likelihood, than to see me at her chamber window, hear me call Margaret Hero, hear Margaret term me Claudio¹³, and bring them to see this the very night before the intended wedding, for in the mean time, I will so fashion the matter, that Hero shall be absent, and there shall appear such seeming truth of Hero's disloyalty, that jealousy shall be called assurance, and all the preparation¹⁴ overthrown.
- 55 DON JOHN Grow this to what adverse issue it can, I will put it in practise: be cunning in the working this, and thy fee is a thousand ducats.

(724 Wörter)

William Shakespeare: Much Ado about Nothing, Cambridge 1998 [1598/99], S. 21–47.

¹¹ who is thus like to be cozened with the semblance of a maid – who will be ruined by this woman who pretends to be a virgin

¹² instance – proof

¹³ term me Claudio – call me Claudio (as if Hero were mocking Claudio while with another man)

¹⁴ preparation – refers to the preparations for the wedding