

SHAKESPEARE

MONOLOGUE & SCENE

CONTEST



PITTSBURGH
PUBLIC
THEATER

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WELCOME!

Dear teachers, parents, and participants:

Pittsburgh Public Theater's Shakespeare Monologue & Scene Contest is a time-honored tradition that began over 20 years ago with just 75 students. Now, over 1,000 students participate from nearly 100 schools and groups annually!

At the heart of the Shakespeare Contest remains a dedication to instilling a love for the theater and appreciation for Shakespeare into the lives of young people.

I hope that this handbook helps to simplify and demystify participation in the Contest. In the following pages you'll find the rules, tips & tricks, information about many of Shakespeare's plays, and more. That said, please don't hesitate to reach out with any questions that may arise.

Pittsburgh Public Theater looks forward to welcoming you and your students to the O'Reilly Theater for another great year of the Shakespeare Monologue & Scene Contest. Thank you, in advance, for your dedication & support as none of this would be possible without you.

See you at the theater!

Shaun

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COMEDIES

All's Well That Ends Well

In All's Well That Ends Well, a woman is given in marriage to the man she longs for, but, because she is of lower rank, he refuses to accept the marriage. It becomes her challenge to win his acceptance.

Helen, the daughter of a dead physician, secretly loves Bertram, the Count of Rosillion's son. When the count dies, Bertram becomes a ward of the French king, who is dying of a fistula. Helen heals the ailing king, and he grants her wish to marry his ward. Bertram refuses to consummate the marriage and goes off to war, sending Helen a list of seemingly impossible conditions to be met before he will consider her his wife.

To meet his conditions, Helen substitutes herself for a woman whom Bertram desires, and sleeps with him. When false news comes that Helen is dead, Bertram faces the charge that he has killed her. Helen, now pregnant, reappears, saving Bertram and demonstrating that she has met his conditions. Bertram then acknowledges her.

Characters

Helena - The play's heroine. The orphan daughter of a great doctor, she is the ward of the Countess of Rousillon, and hopelessly in love with the Countess' son, Bertram.

Bertram - The Count of Rousillon since the death of his father, and the Countess' only son. A handsome, well-liked young man, he proves to be an excellent soldier, but a cad in his relationship with Helena, who he unwillingly marries and quickly abandons.

Countess - The mother of Bertram, the mistress of Rousillon, and Helena's guardian, she is a wise, discerning old woman who perceives Helena's worth and rejoices when she marries Bertram.

King of France - Bertram's liege lord.

Lafew - An old French nobleman, who offers advice to the King and is friendly with the Countess.

Parolles - A companion of Bertram, he is a coward, a liar and a braggart, who pretends to be a great soldier when he is nothing of the sort.

First Lord - A genial French nobleman named Dumaine, he serves in the Florentine army and becomes friends with Bertram.

Second Lord - The First Lord Dumaine's brother, similar in character and also a friend to Bertram.

Diana - A young virgin in Florence, who Bertram attempts to seduce.

Widow - Diana's mother.

Mariana - A woman of Florence.

Duke of Florence - The ruler of Florence, many French lords (including Bertram, Parolles, and Dumaine) volunteer to fight for him.

Clown - An old servant of the Countess, who serves as a messenger and enjoys adult humor
Steward - Another servant of the Countess.

Suggested Scenes

Act I, Scene iii

Start: Helena: "What is your pleasure, Madam?"

End: Countess: "Helena: I love your son."

As You Like It

In *As You Like It*, witty words and romance play out against the disputes of divided pairs of brothers. Orlando's older brother, Oliver, treats him badly and refuses him his small inheritance from their father's estate; Oliver schemes instead to have Orlando die in a wrestling match. Meanwhile, Duke Frederick has forced his older brother, Duke Senior, into exile in the Forest of Arden.

Duke Senior's daughter, Rosalind, and Duke Frederick's daughter, Celia, meet the victorious Orlando at the wrestling match; Orlando and Rosalind fall in love. Banished by her uncle, Rosalind assumes a male identity and leaves with Celia and their fool, Touchstone. Orlando flees Oliver's murderous plots.

In the Forest of Arden, Rosalind, in her male disguise, forms a teasing friendship with Orlando. Oliver, searching for Orlando, reforms after Orlando saves his life. Rosalind reveals her identity, triggering several weddings, including her own with Orlando and Celia's with Oliver. Duke Frederick restores the dukedom to Duke Senior, who leaves the forest with his followers.

Characters

Rosalind - The daughter of Duke Senior. Rosalind, considered one of Shakespeare's most delightful heroines, is independent minded, strong-willed, good-hearted, and terribly clever.

Orlando - The youngest son of Sir Rowland de Bois and younger brother of Oliver. Orlando is an attractive young man who, under his brother's neglectful care, has languished without a gentleman's education or training.

Duke Senior - The father of Rosalind and the rightful ruler of the dukedom in which the play is set.

Jaques - A faithful lord who accompanies Duke Senior into exile in the Forest of Ardenne.

Celia - The daughter of Duke Frederick and Rosalind's dearest friend.

Duke Frederick - The brother of Duke Senior and usurper of his throne.

Touchstone - A clown in Duke Frederick's court who accompanies Rosalind and Celia in their flight to Ardenne.

Oliver - The oldest son of Sir Rowland de Bois and sole inheritor of the de Bois estate.

Silvius - A young, suffering shepherd, who is desperately in love with the disdainful Phoebe.

Phoebe - A young shepherdess, who disdains the affections of Silvius.

Lord Amiens - A faithful lord who accompanies Duke Senior into exile in the Forest of Ardenne. Lord Amiens is rather jolly and loves to sing.

Charles - A professional wrestler in Duke Frederick's court.

Adam - The elderly former servant of Sir Rowland de Bois.

Sir Rowland de Bois - The father of Oliver and Orlando, friend of Duke Senior, and enemy of Duke Frederick.

Corin - A shepherd. Corin attempts to counsel his friend Silvius in the ways of love, but Silvius refuses to listen.

Audrey - A simpleminded goatherd who agrees to marry Touchstone.

William - A young country boy who is in love with Audrey.

Suggested Monologues

Act I, Scene i (Orlando, lines 1-27)

Start: "As I remember, Adam, it was upon..."

End: "...how to avoid it."

Act II, scene vii (Jaques, lines 12-34)

Start: "A fool, a fool!"

End: "Motley's the only wear." LD

Act III, scene v (Rosalind, lines 35-63)

Start: "And why, I pray you? Who might be your mother..."

End: "Fare your well."

Act III, scene V (Phebe, lines 109-139)

Start: "Think not I love him, though I ask for him..."

End: "Go with me, Silvius."

Suggested Scenes

Act III, scene ii (Rosalind and Orlando, lines 289-410)

Start: Rosalind: "I will speak..."

End: Rosalind: "If you would but call me Rosalind." M

Act IV, scene i (Rosalind and Orlando, lines 39-106)

Start: Orlando: "My fair Rosalind..."

End: Orlando: "Then love me Rosalind."

Comedy of Errors

Set in the city of Ephesus, *The Comedy of Errors* concerns the farcical misadventures of two sets of identical twins. Many years earlier, the Syracusan merchant Egeon had twin sons, both named Antipholus. At their birth, he bought another pair of newborn twins, both named Dromio, as their servants. In a shipwreck, Egeon lost his wife, one of his sons, and one of the Dromios.

Egeon's remaining son, Antipholus of Syracuse, and his servant, Dromio of Syracuse, come to Ephesus, where—unknown to them—their lost twins now live. The visitors are confused, angered, or intrigued when local residents seem to know them.

Similarly, Antipholus and Dromio of Ephesus run into puzzling reactions from the people they know—who have been dealing, unwittingly, with the Syracusans. Antipholus of Ephesus's wife bars him from his house; he is jailed after a jeweler claims he owes money on a gold chain he never received. When the four twins come together, all is finally resolved. In one last twist, their parents reunite as well.

Characters

Antipholus of Syracuse - The twin brother of Antipholus of Ephesus and the son of Egeon; he has been traveling the world with his slave, Dromio of Syracuse, trying to find his long-lost brother and mother.

Antipholus of Ephesus - The twin brother of Antipholus of Syracuse and the son of Egeon; he is a well-respected merchant in Ephesus and Adriana's husband.

Dromio of Syracuse - The bumbling, comical slave of Antipholus of Syracuse. He is the twin brother of Dromio of Ephesus.

Dromio of Ephesus - The bumbling, comical slave of Antipholus of Ephesus. He is the Syracusan Dromio's twin brother.

Adriana - The wife of Antipholus of Ephesus, she is a fierce, jealous woman.

Luciana - Adriana's unmarried sister and the object of Antipholus of Syracuse's affections.

Solinus - The Duke of Ephesus; a just but merciful ruler.

Egeon - A Syracusan merchant, husband of the Abbess (Emilia), and the father of the two Antipholi.

Abbess - Emilia, the long-lost wife of Egeon and the mother of the two Antipholi.

Balthasar - A merchant in Syracuse.

Angelo - A goldsmith in Syracuse and a friend to Antipholus of Ephesus.

Merchant - An Ephesian friend of Antipholus of Syracuse.

Second Merchant - A tradesman to whom Angelo is in debt.

Doctor Pinch - A schoolteacher, conjurer, and would-be exorcist.

Luce - Also called Nell. Antipholus of Ephesus' prodigiously fat maid and Dromio of Ephesus' wife.

Courtesan - An expensive gigolo and friend of Antipholus of Ephesus.

Suggested Monologues

Act II, scene ii (Adriana, lines 109-145)

Start: "Ay, ay, Antipholus, look strange, and frown..."

End: "...thou, undishonored."

Act III, scene ii (Antipholus, lines 29-52)

Start: "Sweet mistress, what your name is else, I know not..."

End: "Let love, being light, be drowned if she sink."

Act III, scene I (Luciana, lines 1-27)

Start: "And may it be that you have quite forgot..."

End: "When the sweet breath of flattery conquers strife."

Act V, scene i (Antipholus E. lines 214- 254)

Start: "My liege, I am advised what I say..."

End: "For these deep shames and great indignities."

Suggested Scenes

Act II, scene i (Adriana and Luciana OR Andria, Luciana and Dromio, lines 1-43 OR 1- 80)

Start: Adriana: "Neither my husband..."

End: Luciana: "Here comes your husband nigh." OR Dromio: "I shall have a holy head."

Act III, scene ii (Dromio S. and Antipholus S. lines 71-164)

Start: Anti. S.: "Why, how now Dromio..."

End: Anti. S.: "...the mermaid's song."

Cymbeline

Cymbeline, which takes place in ancient Britain, is filled with hidden identities, extraordinary schemes, and violent acts. Long ago, the two sons of King Cymbeline were abducted, leaving Cymbeline with a daughter, Imogen. Cymbeline's stepson, Cloten, is now his heir, and Cymbeline expects Imogen to marry him. She secretly marries Posthumus Leonatus instead.

Banished from court, Posthumus makes a foolish bet on Imogen's chastity, which leads to false evidence that she has betrayed him. He plots to have her killed, and starts by sending her on a journey. Meanwhile, still angry about Imogen's marriage, Cloten plans to find and rape her.

Imogen—now disguised as a boy, "Fidele"—unwittingly encounters her brothers, who have grown up in a mountain cave unaware of their princely origins. The brothers kill Cloten, but Imogen, horrified, believes they have slain Posthumus.

Cymbeline, meanwhile, refuses to pay a tribute to the Romans, who invade Britain. After the Romans are repelled in battle, Cymbeline agrees to the tribute, his sons are restored, and Imogen and Posthumus are reconciled.

Characters

Imogen - Cymbeline's daughter, the British princess. Wise, beautiful, and resourceful, she incurs her father's displeasure when she chooses to marry the lowborn Posthumus instead of Cymbeline's oafish stepson, Cloten.

Posthumus - An orphaned gentleman, he is adopted and raised by Cymbeline, and he marries Imogen in secret, against her father's will. He is deeply in love with her but is nevertheless willing to think the worst of her when she is accused of infidelity.

Cymbeline - The king of Britain and Imogen's father. A wise and gracious monarch, he is led astray by the machinations of his wicked Queen.

Queen - Cymbeline's wife and Imogen's stepmother. A villainous woman, she will stop at nothing—including murder—to see her son Cloten married to Imogen and, thus, made the eventual king of Britain.

Pisanio - Posthumus's loyal servant, he is left behind in Britain when his master goes into exile, and he acts as a servant to Imogen and the Queen.

Cloten - The Queen's son, he was betrothed to Imogen before her secret wedding to Posthumus. Her unwillingness to marry him is understandable, since he is an arrogant, clumsy fool. Iachimo - A clever and dishonest Italian gentleman. He makes a wager with Posthumus that he can seduce Imogen, and when his attempt at seduction fails, resorts to trickery to make Posthumus believe that he has succeeded.

Belarius - A British nobleman, unjustly banished by Cymbeline. He kidnapped Cymbeline's infant sons to revenge himself on the king, and, under the name of Morgan, he has raised them as his own sons in the Welsh wilderness.

Guiderius - Cymbeline's eldest son and Imogen's brother, he was kidnapped and raised by Belarius under the name of Polydore.

Arviragus - Cymbeline's younger son and Imogen's brother, he was kidnapped and raised by Belarius under the name of Cadwal.

Philario - An Italian gentleman. Posthumus stays at his home during his exile from Britain.

Caius Lucius - The Roman ambassador to Britain and, later, the general of the Roman invasion force.

Cornelius - A doctor at the court of Cymbeline

Soothsayer - A seer, in the service of Caius Lucius

Jupiter - The thunder-god and king of Olympus in Roman myth

Suggested Monologues

Act III, scene iv (Imogen, lines 1-18)

Start: "Thou told'st me, when we came from horse..."

End: "Would be even mortal to me."

Measure for Measure

Human nature and the law often collide in Measure for Measure. As the play begins, the duke of Vienna announces he is going away and puts his deputy Angelo in charge of the state. Angelo immediately enforces a law prohibiting intercourse outside of marriage, sentencing Claudio to death for sleeping with Juliet, Claudio's now-pregnant fiancée.

Claudio's sister Isabella, a novice nun, appeals to Angelo to save her brother. But the supposedly pure Angelo demands that Isabella sleep with him to save Claudio. To Claudio's dismay, Isabella refuses.

The duke, who has remained in Vienna disguised as a friar, suggests that Angelo's jilted fiancée, Mariana, could take Isabella's place. Although the trick succeeds, Angelo orders Claudio beheaded anyway. The duke saves Claudio, but he tells Isabella that Claudio is dead.

The duke, resuming his identity, sentences Angelo to wed Mariana and then be put to death. But Mariana and Isabella plead for Angelo's life. Revealing that Claudio is alive, the duke pardons Angelo and proposes to Isabella.

Characters

Isabella - The main character, Isabella, is a very virtuous and chaste young woman who faces a difficult decision when her brother is sentenced to death for fornication. Isabella does not approve of her brother's actions at all, but she pleads for his life out of loyalty and sisterly devotion.

The Duke - The other central figure is the Duke, who spends most of his time dressed as a friar in order to observe what is happening in his absence.

Claudio - Isabella's brother Claudio is a young man sentenced to death for impregnating an unmarried woman.

Lord Angelo - Angelo is the villain of the play, a man who rules strictly and without mercy.

Escalus - Escalus is a wise lord who advises Angelo to be more merciful.

Lucio - Lucio, described by Shakespeare as a "fantastic," is a flamboyant bachelor who provides much of the play's comedic content. He is a friend of Claudio's and tries to help him.

Mariana - Mariana was supposed to marry Angelo, but he called the wedding off when she lost her dowry in a shipwreck that killed her brother.

Mistress Overdone - Mistress Overdone runs a brothel in Vienna.

Pompey - Pompey is a clown who also works for Mistress Overdone.

Provost - The provost runs the prison and is responsible for carrying out all of Angelo's orders.

Elbow - Elbow is a dim-witted constable who arrests people for misconduct

Barnadine - A long-term prisoner in the jail, Barnadine is sentenced to be executed together with Claudio.

Juliet - Claudio's lover, she is pregnant with his baby.

Suggested Scenes

Act II, scene iv (Angelo and Isabella, lines 30-107)

Start: Angelo: "How now fair maid?"

End: Isabella: "Should die forever."

Act III, scene i (Claudio and Isabella, lines 53-107 OR 138)

Start: Claudio: "Now sister, what's the comfort?"

End: Isabella: "Be Ready Claudio, for your death tomorrow." OR "Wilt thou be made a man out of my vice?"

Merchant of Venice

Antonio, the merchant in *The Merchant of Venice*, secures a loan from Shylock for his friend Bassanio, who seeks to court Portia. Shylock, a Jewish moneylender, recalls past insults from Antonio and, instead of asking interest on the loan, asks instead—in what he calls a "merry sport"—that if the loan is not repaid, Antonio will owe a pound of his own flesh.

Bassanio sails to Belmont, where the wealthy heiress Portia is being courted by suitors from around the world. Her father's will requires, that the successful suitor solve a riddle involving chests of gold, silver, and lead. Where others have failed, Bassanio succeeds by selecting the right chest. Portia marries Bassanio; her waiting woman, Nerissa, marries his friend Gratiano.

Shylock's daughter, Jessica, has eloped with Bassanio's friend Lorenzo, taking her father's money with her. Shylock is devastated. When Antonio cannot repay the loan, Shylock demands the pound of flesh. When the news reaches Belmont, Bassanio returns to Venice. Portia and Nerissa also travel to Venice, disguised as a lawyer and his clerk. Portia uses the law to defeat Shylock and rescue Antonio.

Characters

Shylock - A Jewish moneylender in Venice. Angered by his mistreatment at the hands of Venice's Christians, particularly Antonio, Shylock schemes to eke out his revenge by ruthlessly demanding as payment a pound of Antonio's flesh.

Portia - A wealthy heiress from Belmont. Portia's beauty is matched only by her intelligence.

Antonio - The merchant whose love for his friend Bassanio prompts him to sign Shylock's contract and almost lose his life.

Bassanio - A gentleman of Venice, and a kinsman and dear friend to Antonio.

Gratiano - A friend of Bassanio's who accompanies him to Belmont.

Jessica - Although she is Shylock's daughter, Jessica hates life in her father's house, and elopes with the young Christian gentleman, Lorenzo. Lorenzo - A friend of Bassanio and Antonio, Lorenzo is in love with Shylock's daughter, Jessica.

Nerissa - Portia's lady-in-waiting and confidante.

Launcelot Gobbo - Bassanio's servant.

The prince of Morocco - A Moorish prince who seeks Portia's hand in marriage.

The prince of Arragon - An arrogant Spanish nobleman who also attempts to win Portia's hand by picking a casket.

Salarino - A Venetian gentleman, and friend to Antonio, Bassanio, and Lorenzo. Salarino escorts the newlyweds Jessica and Lorenzo to Belmont, and returns with Bassanio and Gratiano for Antonio's trial.

Solanio - A Venetian gentleman, and frequent counterpart to Salarino.

The duke of Venice - The ruler of Venice, who presides over Antonio's trial.

Old Gobbo - Launcelot's father, also a servant in Venice.

Tubal - A Jew in Venice, and one of Shylock's friends.

Doctor Bellario - A wealthy Paduan lawyer and Portia's cousin.

Balthasar - Portia's servant, whom she dispatches to get the appropriate materials from Doctor Bellario.

Suggested Monologues

Act III, scene I (Shylock, lines 50-67)

Start: "To bait fish withal..."

End: "...I will better the instruction." LD

Act III, scene ii (Bassanio, lines 73-105)

Start: "So may the outward shows be least themselves;"

End: "And here choose I. Joy be the consequence!"

Act III, scene ii (Portia, lines 149-174)

Start: "You see me, lord..."

End: "And be my vantage to exclaim on you."

Act IV, scene i (Shylock, lines 35-62)

Start: "I have possessed your grace of what I purpose,"

End: "A losing suit against him. Are you answered?"

Suggested Scenes

Act I, scene ii (Portia and Nerissa, lines 1-102)

Start: Portia: "By my troth..."

End: Portia: "...manner of my father's will." LD

Act II, scene ii (Old Gobbo and Launcelot Gobbo, lines 31-105)

Start: Old Gobbo: "Master young man..."

End: Launcelot: "...famish'd in his man..."

Act III, scene i (Salerio, Solanio, Shylock and Tubal, lines 21-110)

Start: Solanio: "How now Shylock!"

End: Tubal: "One of them showed me a ring that he had of your daughter for a monkey."

Merry Wives of Windsor

In *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, fat, disreputable Sir John Falstaff pursues two housewives, Mistress Ford and Mistress Page, who outwit and humiliate him instead. Meanwhile, three suitors seek the hand of Anne Page, Mistress Page's daughter.

Falstaff hopes to win over the wives so he can gain access to their husbands' wealth. Ford learns of Falstaff's approaches and is consumed by jealousy. In disguise, he befriends Falstaff to learn about Mistress Ford's behavior. The wives, however, trick Falstaff and Ford. As Falstaff visits Mistress Ford, Mistress Page announces that Ford is coming. Falstaff hides in a basket of dirty laundry and is thrown in the river.

Another visit ends similarly: Falstaff disguises himself as "the fat woman of Brentford," whom Ford hates. Ford beats "her" in anger. Finally, Falstaff is lured to a comical nighttime rendezvous where all of Windsor comes together, Falstaff is publicly humiliated, and Ford admits his folly. Two of Anne Page's suitors elope with boys in disguise while Anne marries her chosen suitor, Fenton.

Characters

Mistress Ford - A resident of Windsor, married to Ford and a friend of Mistress Page.

Mistress Page - A resident of Windsor, married to Page and is a friend of Mistress Ford.

Falstaff - Falstaff is a knight, but he is also a scoundrel and occasionally a thief.

Ford - Husband of Mistress Ford. Ford is very jealous of his wife.

Page - Husband of Mistress Page.

Sir Hugh Evans - Sir Hugh Evans is the local clergyman.

Caius - The local doctor, Caius is Mistress Quickly's master.

Anne Page - Daughter of Page and Mistress Page, sought for marriage by an array of idiots, including Caius and Slender.

Fenton - A suitor for Anne Page's hand, Page denies his suit because he fears that Fenton's interest is purely financial, being high-born but poor.

Slender - The third suitor for Anne Page's hand, Slender is urged on by Shallow, but he is unable to speak anything but nonsense to Anne.

Shallow - figure of the law, but nevertheless a foolish character of misplaced authority.

Mistress Quickly - Caius's servant, Mistress Quickly is everyone's messenger.

Bardolph - One of Falstaff's men, Bardolph takes over as the bartender of the Garter Inn in order to pay for Falstaff's entourage's room and board.

Nim - One of Falstaff's men, Nim wants to stay honest, and he refuses to deliver Falstaff's friendly letters to Mistress Page and Mistress Ford. Instead, he and Pistol decide to let the husbands know of Falstaff's scheme.

Pistol - One of Falstaff's men, refuses to deliver Falstaff's letters to Mistress Page and Ford.

Host - Host of the Garter Inn, makes fun of Evans and Caius's broken and accented English, so they decide to get back at him by tricking him.

William Page - Page's son, he meets Evans, who gives him an impromptu Latin lesson which Mistress Quickly entirely mishears as overly friendly innuendo.

Simple - Slender's servant.

Suggested Monologues

Act III, scene v (Falstaff, lines 88-112)

Start: "Nay, you shall hear."

End: "Think of that- hissing hot-think of that, Master Brook!"

Suggested Scenes

Act II, scene i (Ms. Ford and Ms. Page, lines 30-102)

Start: Ms. Ford: "Mistress Page!"

End: Ms. Page: "Come Hither."

A Midsummer's Night Dream

In A Midsummer Night's Dream, residents of Athens mix with fairies from a local forest, with comic results. In the city, Theseus, Duke of Athens, is to marry Hippolyta, queen of the Amazons. Bottom the weaver and his friends rehearse in the woods a play they hope to stage for the wedding celebrations.

Four young Athenians are in a romantic tangle. Lysander and Demetrius love Hermia; she loves Lysander and her friend Helena loves Demetrius. Hermia's father, Egeus, commands Hermia to marry Demetrius, and Theseus supports the father's right. All four young Athenians end up in the woods, where Robin Goodfellow, who serves the fairy king Oberon, puts flower juice on the eyes of Lysander, and then Demetrius, unintentionally causing both to love Helena.

Oberon, who is quarreling with his wife, Titania, uses the flower juice on her eyes. She falls in love with Bottom, who now, thanks to Robin Goodfellow, wears an donkey's head.

As the lovers sleep, Robin Goodfellow restores Lysander's love for Hermia, so that now each young woman is matched with the man she loves. Oberon disenchant's Titania and removes Bottom's donkey's head. The two young couples join the royal couple in getting married, and Bottom rejoins his friends to perform the play.

Characters

Puck - Also known as Robin Goodfellow, Puck is Oberon's jester, a mischievous fairy who delights in playing pranks on mortals. Though A Midsummer Night's Dream divides its action between several groups of characters, Puck is the closest thing the play has to a protagonist.

Oberon - The king of the fairies, Oberon is initially at odds with his wife, Titania, because she refuses to relinquish control of a young Indian prince whom he wants for a knight.

Titania - The beautiful queen of the fairies, Titania resists the attempts of her husband, Oberon, to make a knight of the young Indian prince that she has been given.

Lysander - young man of Athens, in love with Hermia.

Demetrius - young man of Athens, initially in love with Hermia, ultimately in love with Helena.

Hermia - Egeus's daughter, a young woman of Athens.

Helena - A young woman of Athens, in love with Demetrius.

Egeus - Hermia's father, who brings a complaint against his daughter to Theseus: Egeus has given Demetrius permission to marry Hermia, but Hermia, in love with Lysander, refuses to marry Demetrius.

Theseus - The heroic duke of Athens, engaged to Hippolyta. Theseus represents power and order throughout the play.

Hippolyta - The legendary queen of the Amazons, engaged to Theseus.

Nick Bottom - The overconfident weaver chosen to play Pyramus in the craftsmen's play for Theseus's marriage celebration.

Peter Quince - A carpenter and the nominal leader of the craftsmen's attempt to put on a play for Theseus's marriage celebration.

Francis Flute - The bellows-mender chosen to play Thisbe in the craftsmen's play for Theseus's marriage celebration.

Suggested Monologues

Act I, scene I (Helena, lines 226-251)

Start: "How happy...."

End: "To have his sight thither and back again." LD

Act II, scene I (Titania, lines 82-117)

Start: "These are the forgeries of jealousy,"

End: "We are their parents and original."

Act II, scene I (Oberon, lines 146-174)

Start: "Well, go thy way..."

End: "Ere the leviathan can swim a league." LD

Act III, scene ii (Puck, lines 6-34) *Uses mature language

Start: "My mistress with a monster is in love."

End: "Titania waked, and straightway loved....." M

Act III, scene ii (Helena, lines 192-218)

Start: Lo, she is one of this confederacy.”

End: “Our ... as well as I, may chide you for it, though I alone do feel the injury.” LD

Act IV, scene I (Oberon, lines 45-69)

Start: “Welcome, good Robin....”

End: “But first I will release the Fairy Queen.”

Suggested Scenes

Act II, scene i (Puck and Fairy, lines 1-59)

Start: Puck: “How now, spirit!”

End: Fairy: “Would that he were gone!”

Act II, scene i (Demetrius and Helena, lines 188-244)

Start: Demetrius: “I love thee not...”

End: Helena: “... I love so well.”

Act III, scene i (Titania and Bottom, lines 114-156)

Start: Bottom: “I see their knavery...”

End Titania: “Peaseblossom, Cobweb, Moth, and Mustardseed!” LD

Act III, scene ii (Lysander, Helena, Demetrius and Hermia, lines 123-219)

Start: Lysander “Why should you think that I should woo in scorn?”

End: Helena: “... Though I alone do feel the injury.”

Act III, scene ii (Demetrius and Hermia, lines 43-81)

Start: Demetrius: “O why rebuke you...”

End: Demetrius: “If for his tender here I make some stay.”

Much Ado About Nothing

The primary plot of *Much Ado About Nothing* turns on the courtship and scandal involving young Hero and her suitor, Claudio, but the witty war of words between Claudio's friend Benedick and Hero's cousin Beatrice often takes center stage. Set in Messina, the play begins as Don Pedro's army returns after a victory.

Benedick, a gentleman soldier, resumes a verbal duel with Beatrice, the niece of Messina's governor, Leonato. Count Claudio is smitten with Leonato's daughter, Hero. After Don Pedro woos her in disguise for Claudio, the two young lovers plan to marry in a week. To fill in the time until the wedding, Don Pedro and the others set about tricking Benedick and Beatrice into falling in love with each other. Meanwhile, Don Pedro's disgruntled brother, Don John, plots to ruin Hero and halt her wedding. Claudio believes Don John's deception, is convinced Hero has a lover, and, at the wedding, brutally rejects her.

With Hero in hiding and falsely reported dead, Beatrice persuades Benedick to fight Claudio. Tragedy is averted when the bumbling city watch, having discovered Don John's treachery, arrives and clears Hero's name. With Claudio forgiven, both couples are ready to get married.

Characters

Beatrice - Leonato's niece and Hero's cousin. Beatrice is "a pleasant-spirited lady" with a very sharp tongue. She is generous and loving, but, like Benedick, continually mocks other people with elaborately tooled jokes and puns.

Benedick - An aristocratic soldier who has recently been fighting under Don Pedro, and a friend of Don Pedro and Claudio. Benedick is very witty, always making jokes and puns.

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.

Hero - The beautiful young daughter of Leonato and the cousin of Beatrice. Hero is lovely, gentle, and kind. She falls in love with Claudio when he falls for her, but when Don John slanders her and Claudio rashly takes revenge, she suffers terribly.

Don Pedro - An important nobleman from Aragon.

Leonato - A respected, well-to-do, elderly noble at whose home, in Messina, Italy, the action is set.

Don John - The illegitimate brother of Don Pedro; sometimes called “the Bastard.”

Margaret - Hero’s serving woman, who unwittingly helps Borachio and Don John deceive Claudio into thinking that Hero is unfaithful.

Borachio - An associate of Don John.

Conrad - One of Don John’s more intimate associates, entirely devoted to Don John.

Dogberry - The constable in charge of the Watch, or chief policeman, of Messina.

Verges - The deputy to Dogberry, chief policeman of Messina.

Antonio - Leonato’s elderly brother and Hero's uncle. He is Beatrice’s father.

Balthasar - A waiting man in Leonato’s household and a musician.

Ursula - One of Hero’s waiting women.

Suggested Monologues

Act II, scene iii (Benedick, lines 7-33)

Start “I do much wonder that one man...”

End: “I will hide me in the arbor.” LD

Act II, scene iii (Benedick, lines 210-236)

Start: “This can be no trick.”

End: “I do spy some marks of love in her.”

Act V, scene I (Leonato, lines 3-32)

Start: “I pray thee cease thy counsel,”

End: My griefs cry louder than advertisement.”

Suggested Scenes

Act III, scene i (Hero, Ursula and Beatrice, lines 37-116)

Start: Ursula: “But are you sure that Benedick...”

End: Beatrice: “Believe it better than reportingly.”

Act IV, scene i (Benedick and Beatrice, lines 254-333)

Start: Benedick: “Lady Beatrice, have...”

End: Benedick: “...and so farewell.”

Taming of the Shrew

The Taming of the Shrew begins with an "induction" in which a nobleman plays a trick on a beggar, Christopher Sly, treating Sly as if he is a nobleman who has lost his memory. A play is staged for Sly—the play that we know as The Taming of the Shrew.

In the play, set in Padua, Lucentio and other suitors pursue Bianca, but are told by her father, Baptista, that her bad-tempered older sister, Katherine, must marry first. They encourage Petruchio, who has come to Padua to find a wealthy wife, to court Katherine and free Bianca to marry.

Petruchio negotiates marriage terms with Baptista, then has a stormy meeting with Katherine, after which he assures Baptista that the two have agreed to marry. Petruchio arrives late to their wedding dressed in strange clothes; he behaves rudely and carries Katherine away before the wedding dinner. At his home, he embarks on a plan to "tame" Katherine as one would tame a wild hawk. Starved and kept without sleep, Katherine eventually agrees with everything Petruchio says, however absurd. He takes her back to Padua, where they attend Bianca's wedding. There Katherine proves more obedient to her husband than the other wives, whom she chastises before she and Petruchio go off to consummate their marriage.

Characters

Katherine - The "shrew" of the play's title, Katherine, or Kate, is the daughter of Baptista Minola, with whom she lives in Padua. She is sharp-tongued, quick-tempered, and prone to violence, particularly against anyone who tries to marry her.

Petruchio - Petruchio is a gentleman from Verona. Loud, boisterous, eccentric, quick-witted, and frequently drunk, he has come to Padua "to wive and thrive."

Bianca - The younger daughter of Baptista. The lovely Bianca proves herself the opposite of her sister, Kate, at the beginning of the play: she is soft-spoken, sweet, and unassuming.

Baptista - Minola Baptista is one of the wealthiest men in Padua, and his daughters become the prey of many suitors due to the substantial dowries he can offer.

Grumio - Petruchio's servant and the fool of the play—a source of much comic relief.

Lucentio - A young student from Pisa, the good-natured and intrepid Lucentio comes to Padua to study at the city's renowned university, but he is immediately sidetracked when he falls in love with Bianca at first sight.

Tranio - Lucentio's servant. Tranio accompanies Lucentio from Pisa.

Gremio and Hortensio - Two gentlemen of Padua. Gremio and Hortensio are Bianca's suitors at the beginning of the play.

Biondello - Lucentio's second servant, who assists his master and Tranio in carrying out their plot.

Christopher Sly - The principal character in the play's brief Induction, Sly is a drunken tinker, tricked by a mischievous nobleman into thinking that he is really a lord.

Suggested Monologues

Act IV, scene i (Petruccio, lines 177-200)

Start: "Thur have I politicly begun my reign,"

End: "Now let him speak: tis charity to show."

Act V, scene ii (Katherina, lines 142-185)

Start: "Fie, fie unknit that threat'ning unkind brow..."

End: "My hand is ready, may it do him ease."

Suggested Scenes

Act II, scene i (Petruccio and Kate, lines 183-265)

Start: Petruccio: "Good morrow, Kate..."

End: Petruccio: "... I will marry you."

The Tempest

A story of shipwreck and magic, *The Tempest* begins on a ship caught in a violent storm with Alonso, the king of Naples, on board. On a nearby island, the exiled Duke of Milan, Prospero, tells his daughter, Miranda, that he has caused the storm with his magical powers. Prospero had been banished twelve years earlier when Prospero's brother, Antonio—also on the doomed ship—conspired with Alonso to become the duke instead. Prospero and Miranda are served by a spirit named Ariel and by Caliban, son of the island's previous inhabitant, the witch Sycorax.

On the island, castaways from the wreck begin to appear. First is Alonso's son Ferdinand, who immediately falls in love with Miranda. Prospero secretly approves of their love, but tests the pair by enslaving Ferdinand. After secretly watching Miranda and Ferdinand exchange vows, Prospero releases Ferdinand and consents to their marriage.

Other castaways who appear are Trinculo and Stephano, Alonso's jester and butler, who join forces with Caliban to kill Prospero and take over the island. The nobles from the ship search for Ferdinand and are confronted with a spectacle including a Harpy, who convinces Alonso that Ferdinand's death is retribution for Prospero's exile.

Having all his enemies under his control, Prospero decides to forgive them. Alonso, joyously reunited with his son, restores Prospero to the dukedom of Milan and welcomes Miranda as Ferdinand's wife. As all except Caliban and Ariel prepare to leave the island, Prospero, who has given up his magic, bids farewell to the island and the audience.

Characters

Prospero - The play's protagonist, and father of Miranda. Twelve years before the events of the play, Prospero was the duke of Milan. His brother, Antonio, in concert with Alonso, king of Naples, usurped him, forcing him to flee in a boat with his daughter.

Miranda - daughter of Prospero, brought to the island at an early age and has never seen any men other than her father and Caliban, dimly remembers being cared for by female servants as an infant. Because she has been sealed off from the world for so long, Miranda's perceptions of other people tend to be naïve and non-judgmental.

Ariel - Prospero's spirit helper. Ariel is referred to often as he, but gender is ambiguous

Caliban - Another of Prospero's servants. Caliban, the son of the now-deceased witch Sycorax, acquainted Prospero with the island when Prospero arrived.

Ferdinand - Son and heir of Alonso, seems in some ways to be as pure and naïve as Miranda.

Alonso - King of Naples, father of Ferdinand, aided Antonio in unseating Prospero as Duke of Milan twelve years before.

Antonio - Prospero's brother.

Sebastian - Alonso's brother. Like Antonio, he is both aggressive and cowardly.

Gonzalo - An old, honest lord, helped Prospero and Miranda to escape

Trinculo & Stephano - Trinculo, a jester, and Stephano, a drunken butler, are two minor members of the shipwrecked party.

Boatswain - Appearing only in the first and last scenes, vigorously good-natured.

Suggested Monologues

Act III, scene iii (Ariel, lines 53-82)

Start: "You are three men of sin, whom Destiny..."

End: "And a clear life ensuring."

Act V, scene i (Prospero, lines 33-57)

Start: "Ye elves of hills, brooks, standing lakes..."

End: "I'll drown my book."

Suggested Scenes

Act I, scene ii (Ariel and Prospero, lines 189-284)

Start: Ariel: "All hail, great master!"

End: Prospero: "A human shape."

Act III, scene i (Ferdinand and Miranda, lines 1-91)

Start: Ferdinand: "There be some..."

End: Miranda: "Til half an hour hence."

Twelfth Night

After the twins Sebastian and Viola survive a shipwreck, neither knows that the other is alive. Viola goes into service with Count Orsino of Illyria, disguised as a young man, "Cesario." Orsino sends Cesario to woo the Lady Olivia on his behalf, but Olivia falls in love with Cesario. Viola, in the meantime, has fallen in love with Orsino.

At the estate of Lady Olivia, Sir Toby Belch, Olivia's kinsman, has brought in Sir Andrew Aguecheek to be her suitor. A confrontation between Olivia's steward, Malvolio, and the partying Toby and his cohort leads to a revenge plot against Malvolio. Malvolio is tricked into making a fool of himself, and he is locked in a dungeon as a lunatic.

In the meantime, Sebastian has been rescued by a sea captain, Antonio. When Viola, as Cesario, is challenged to a duel, Antonio mistakes her for Sebastian, comes to her aid, and is arrested. Olivia, meanwhile, mistakes Sebastian for Cesario and declares her love. When, finally, Sebastian and Viola appear together, the puzzles around the mistaken identities are solved: Cesario is revealed as Viola, Orsino asks for Viola's hand, Sebastian will wed Olivia, and Viola will marry Count Orsino. Malvolio, blaming Olivia and others for his humiliation, vows revenge.

Characters

Viola - young woman of aristocratic birth, and the play's protagonist. Washed up on the shore of Illyria when her ship is wrecked in a storm, Viola decides to make her own way in the world. She disguises herself as a young man, calling herself "Cesario," and becomes a page to Duke Orsino. She ends up falling in love with Orsino—even as Olivia, the woman Orsino is courting, falls in love with Cesario.

Orsino - A powerful nobleman in the country of Illyria. Orsino is lovesick for the beautiful Lady Olivia, but becomes more and more fond of his handsome new page boy, Cesario, who is actually a woman—Viola. Orsino is a vehicle through which the play explores the absurdity of love: a supreme egotist, Orsino mopes around complaining how heartsick he is over Olivia, when it is clear that he is chiefly in love with the idea of being in love and enjoys making a spectacle of himself.

Olivia - A wealthy, beautiful, and noble Illyrian lady, courted by Orsino and Sir Andrew Aguecheek, but insists that she is in mourning for her brother, who has recently died, and will not marry for seven years.

Sebastian - Viola's lost twin brother.

Malvolio - The straitlaced steward—or head servant—in the household of Lady Olivia. Malvolio is very efficient but also very self-righteous, and he has a poor opinion of drinking, singing, and fun.

Feste - The clown, or fool, of Olivia's household, Feste moves between Olivia's and Orsino's homes.

Sir Toby - Olivia's uncle. Olivia lets Sir Toby Belch live with her, but she does not approve of his rowdy behavior, practical jokes, heavy drinking, late-night carousing, or friends (specifically the idiotic Sir Andrew). Sir Toby also earns the ire of Malvolio.

Maria - Olivia's clever, daring young waiting-gentlewoman. Maria is remarkably similar to her antagonist, Malvolio, who harbors aspirations of rising in the world through marriage.

Sir Andrew Aguecheek - friend of Sir Toby's; attempts to court Olivia, but he doesn't stand a chance.

Antonio - A man who rescues Sebastian after his shipwreck.

Suggested Monologues

Act II, scene ii (Viola, lines 17-41)

Start: "I left no ring with her..."

End: "It is too hard a knot for me t' untie." LD

Act II, scene v (Malvolio, lines 131-151)

Start: "M, O, A, I; this simulation is not as the former..."

End: "The Fortunate Unhappy."

Suggested Scenes

Act I, scene iii (Sir Andrew, Sir Toby, and Maria, lines 44-137)

Start: Andrew: "Sir Toby Belch!"

End: Toby: "Ha, ha, excellent."

Act I, scene v (Olivia and Viola, lines 163-282)

Start: Viola: "The honorable lady..."

End: Viola: "Farewell, fair cruelty."