



STUDENT INFORMATION PACKET

We hope that this list is helpful to teachers, parents/guardians, and students who are searching for material for PPT’s annual Shakespeare Contest. While we have worked hard to preview this material, **it is the participant’s responsibility to ensure that their performance meets the contest time requirements.** Also, feel free to select pieces regardless of gender, character type and obviously age. Explore beyond this list, and most importantly, have fun!

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SUGGESTED MONOLOGUES

M = contains mature content

LD = suggested for lower division students or those new to Shakespeare

*Please note: Line numbers may vary between editions

COMEDIES

As You Like It

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."

The Comedy of Errors

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."

Cymbeline

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." **M**

Love's Labour's Lost

Act III, scene i (Berowne, lines 170-202)

Start: "And I, forsooth, in love!"

End: "Some men must love my lady, and some Joan."

Act IV, scene iii (Berowne, lines 286-308)

Start: "Have at you..."

End: "A lover's eyes will gaze an eagle blind." **M**

The Merchant of Venice

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?"

The Merry Wives of Windsor

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

Start: "Nay, you shall hear."

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



A Midsummer Night's Dream

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." **LD**

Much Ado About Nothing

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."

The Taming of the Shrew

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."

The Tempest

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." **LD**

Twelfth Night

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." **LD**

Two Gentlemen of Verona

Act I, scene ii (Julia, lines 105-130)

Start: "Nay, would I were so anger'd with the same!"

End: "Now kiss, embrace, contend, do what you will." **M**

Act II, scene vi (Proteus, lines 1-30)

Start: "To leave my Julia, shall I be forsworn..."

End: "Aiming at Silvia as a sweeter friend."

Act IV, scene iv (Launce, lines 1-30)

Start: "When a man's servant shall play the cur with him..."

End: "...otherwise he had been executed."

The Winter's Tale

Act III, scene ii (Hermione, lines 21-53)

Start: "Since what I am to say must be but that..."

End: "Cry fie upon my grace!"

Act III, scene ii (Hermione, lines 90-114)

Start: "Sir, spare your threats..."



End: "Apollo be my judge!"

Act III, scene ii (Paulina, lines 173-190)

Start: "What studied torments, tyrant, hast for me?"

End: "Not dropped down yet."

Act III, scene iii (Antigonous lines- 17-45)

Start: "Come, poor babe..."

End: "Of its right father. Blossom, speed thee well."

HISTORIES

King John

Act II, scene I (Bastard, lines 561-597)

Start: "Mad world! Mad kings! Mad composition!"

End: "Gain, be my lord, for I will worship thee!"

Richard II

Act III, scene ii (King Richard, lines 144-176)

Start: "No matter where; of comfort no man speak..."

End: "How can you say to me I am a king?"

Act III, scene iii (King Richard, lines 72-100)

Start: "We were amazed..."

End: "Her pastor's grass with faithful English blood."

Act V, scene v (King Richard, lines 1-22)

Start: "I have been studying how I may compare..."

End: "And, for they cannot, die in their own pride."

Henry IV, Part 1

Act I, scene i (King Henry, lines 1-29)

Start: "So shaken as we are, so wan with care..."

End; "And bootless 'tis to tell you we will go."

Act I, scene iii (Hotspur, lines 29-68)

Start: "My liege, I did deny no prisoners..."

End: "Betwixt my love and your high majesty."

Act IV, scene ii (Falstaff, lines 11-46)

Start: "If I be not ashamed of my shoulders..."

End: "But that's all one; they'll find linen enough on every hedge."



Henry IV, Part 2

Act II, scene iii (Lady Percy, lines 9-32)

Start: "O, yet for God's sake...."

End: "That fashioned others. And him—O wondrous him!"

Act V, scene v (King Henry, lines 47-71)

Start: "I know thee not, old man..."

End: "To see performed the tenor of our word."

Henry V

Act III, scene I (King Henry, lines 1-34)

Start: "One more unto the breach, dear friends..."

End: "Cry "God for Harry, England, and Saint George!"

Act: IV, scene iii (King Henry lines 19-52)

Start: "What's he that wishes so? My cousin Westmoreland?"

End: "What feats he did that day."

Act V, scene ii (King Henry, lines 134-153)

Start: "Marry, if you would put me to verses..."

End: "I love thee too."

Henry VI, Part 2

Act III, scene i (Queen Margaret, lines 4-40)

Start: "Can you not see or will ye not observe...?"

End: "Or else conclude my words effectual."

Act III, scene I (King Henry, lines 198-222)

Start: "Ay, Margaret; my heart is drown'd with grief..."

End: "Say Who's a traitor? Gloucester, he is none."

Act III, scene ii (Queen Margaret, lines 94-120)

Start: "The pretty vaulting sea refused to drown me...."

End: "For Henry weeps that thou dost live so long."

Henry VI, Part 3

Act I, scene i (Queen Margaret, lines 231-259)

Start: "Enforced thee! art thou king, and wilt be forced?"

End: "Thus do I leave thee."

Act I, scene iv (Queen Margaret, lines 68-94)

Start: "Brave warriors, Clifford and Northumberland..."

End: "York cannot speak unless he wear a crown." **LD**



Richard III

Act I, scene i (Richard, lines 1-40)

Start: "Now is the winter of our discontent..."

End: "Dive, thoughts, down to my soul- here Clarence comes!"

Act I, scene ii (Lady Anne, lines 1-32)

Start: "Set down, set down your honourable load..."

End: "Rest you, whiles I lament King Henry's corpse."

Act I, scene iii (Margaret, lines 188-216)

Start: "What? Were you snarling all before I came..."

End: "But by some unlooked accident cut off."

Henry VIII

Act II, scene I (Buckingham, lines 100-132)

Start: "Let it alone; my state now will but mock me."

End: "Of my long weary life is come upon me. Farewell!" **LD**

Act II, scene iv (Katherine, lines 11-56)

Start: "Sir, I desire you do me right and justice..."

End: "Your pleasure be fulfilled!"

TRAGEDIES

Coriolanus

Act IV, scene V (Coriolanus, lines 69-105)

Start: "My name is Caius Martius, who hath done..."

End: "It be to do thee service."

Act V, scene iii (Volumnia, lines 132-156)

Start: "Nay, go not from us thus..."

End: "He cares not for your weeping. Speak thou, boy."

Hamlet

Act I, scene ii (Hamlet, lines 129-159)

Start: "O that this too too solid flesh would melt..."

End: "But break my heart, for I must hold my tongue."

Act I, scene v (Ghost, lines 42-72)

Start: "Ay, that incestuous, that adulterate beast..."

End: "All my smooth body."



Act III, scene I (Hamlet, lines 56-90)

Start: "To be, or not to be- that is the question..."

End: "Be all my sins remembered." **M**

Julius Caesar

Act I, scene ii (Cassius, lines 92-113)

Start: "I know that virtue to be in you, Brutus..."

End: "Caesar cried "Help me, Cassius or I sink!"

Act II, scene I (Brutus, lines 113- 138)

Start: "No, not an oath: if not the face of men..."

End: "Of any promise that hath passed from him."

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

Start: "Friends, Romans, countrymen, lend me your ears..."

End: "And men have lost their reason!"

Macbeth

Act I, scene v (Lady Macbeth, lines 1-29)

Start: "They met me in the day of success..."

End: "To have thee crowned withal."

Act I, scene vii (Macbeth, lines 1-28)

Start: "If it were done when 'tis done, then 'twere well..."

End: "How now? What news?"

Act II, scene i (Macbeth, lines 34-62)

Start: "Is this a dagger which I see before me..."

End; "Words to the heat of deeds too cold breath gives."

Othello

Act I, scene iii (Othello, lines 128-170)

Start: "Her father loved me; oft invited me..."

End: "Here comes the lady. Let her witness it."

Act II, scene i (Iago, lines 220-246)

Start: "Lay thy finger thus..."

End: "... And the woman hath found him already."

Romeo and Juliet

Act I, scene iii (Nurse, lines 16-48)

Start: "Even or odd, of all days in the year..."



End: "And, pretty fool, it stinted and said "Ay."

Act I, scene iv (Mercutio, lines 53-95)

Start: "O, then, I see Queen Mab hath been with you..."

End: "This is she- Thou talk'st of nothing." **M**

Act II, scene ii (Romeo, lines 2-25)

Start: "But, soft! what light through yonder window breaks?"

End: "That I might touch that cheek!" **LD**

Act III, scene ii (Juliet, lines 1-35)

Start: "Gallop apace, you fiery-footed steeds..."

End: "That Romeo bid thee fetch?"

Act III, scene ii (Juliet, lines 97-127)

Start: "Shall I speak ill of him that is my husband?"

End: "Where is my father and my mother, nurse?" **LD**

Act III, scene iii (Friar, lines 108-145)

Start: "Hold thy desperate hand..."

End: "Take heed, take heed, for such die miserable."

Act IV, scene iii (Juliet, lines 14-58)

Start: "Farewell! God knows when we shall meet again."

End: "Romeo, Romeo! Here's drink. I drink to thee." **M**

Act V, scene iii (Romeo, lines 74- 119)

Start: "In faith, I will. Let me peruse this face..."

End: Here's to my love! [drinks.] **M**

Timon of Athens

Act IV, scene I (Timon, lines 1-30)

Start: "O blessed breeding sun, draw from the earth..."

End: "Base noble, old young, coward valiant."

Titus Andronicus

Act I, scene i (Titus, lines 73-98)

Start: "Hail, Rome, victorious in thy mourning weeds!"

End: "Thou wilt never render to me more!"

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COMEDIES

All's Well That Ends Well

Act I, scene iii (Helena and Countess. lines 133-190)

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

End: Countess: "Helena: "I love Your Son."

As You Like It

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."

The Comedy of Errors

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."

Measure for Measure

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?" **M**

The Merchant of Venice

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."

The Merry Wives of Windsor

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

Start: Ms. Ford: "Mistress Page!"

End: Ms. Page: "Come Hither." **LD**

A Midsummer Night's Dream

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

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."

The Taming of the Shrew

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

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

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

The Tempest

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

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."

The Two Gentlemen of Verona

Act I, scene ii (Juliet and Lucetta, lines 1-104)

Start: Julia: "But say, Lucetta..."

End: Lucetta: "...with another letter."

Act III, scene i (Speed and Launce, lines 277-373)

Start: Speed: "How now..."

End: Launce: "...in the boy's correction." **LD**

TRAGEDIES

Othello

Act V, scene ii (Othello and Desdemona, lines 1-83)

Start: Othello: "It is the cause..."

End: Othello: "It is too late."

Romeo and Juliet

Act I, scene iv (Romeo, Mercutio and Benvolio, lines 1-96)

Start: Romeo: "What, shall this speech..."

End: Romeo: "Peace, peace, Mercutio, peace!"

Act II, scene v (Nurse and Juliet, lines 1-78)

Start: Juliet: "The clock struck nine..." **LD**

End: Juliet: "Honest Nurse, farewell."

Act III, scene v (Romeo and Juliet, lines 1-59)

Start: Juliet: "Wilt thou be gone?"

End: Romeo: "Adieu, adieu."

Macbeth

Act IV, scene iii (Macduff and Malcolm, lines 38-114)

Start: Malcolm: "Be not offended..."

End: Macduff: "Thy hope ends here!"

Act V, scene i (Doctor, Gentlewoman and Lady Macbeth, lines 1-79)

Start: Doctor: "I have two nights watch'd..."

End: Gentlewoman: "Good night, good doctor."

King Lear

Act I, scene v (Lear and Fool, lines 8-47)

Start: Fool: "If a man's brains..."

End: Lear: "...I would not be mad."

Act III, scene vi (Kent, Edgar, Fool and Lear, lines 6-74 or 6-79)

Start: Edgar: "Frateretto calls me..."

End: Edgar: "Poor Tom, thy horn is dry." OR Lear: "...but let them be changed." **M**

Hamlet

Act III, scene i (Hamlet and Ophelia, lines 88-162)

Start: Hamlet: "Soft you now, the fair Ophelia!"

End: Ophelia: "...see what I see." **M**

Act III, scene v (King Claudius and Queen Gertrude, lines 1-45)

Start: King: "There's matter in these sighs."

End: King: "Full of discord and dismay."

Anthony and Cleopatra

Act I, scene iii (Anthony and Cleopatra, lines 14-75 OR 14-107)

Start: Cleopatra: "I am sick and sullen."

End: Anthony: "An honorable trial." OR "Away!"

HISTORIES

King Henry V

Act V, scene i (Gower, Fluellen, Pistol, lines 1-85)

Start: Gower: "Nay, that's right."

End: Pistol: "In the Gallia Wars."

Act V, scene ii (King and Katherine, lines 168-255)

Start: Katherine: "Is it possible?"

End: King: "Then I will Kiss..."

CHARACTER DESCRIPTIONS & SYNOPSIS

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.

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.

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.

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.

The 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.

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.

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.

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.



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.

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.

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.

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.

A Midsummer Night's 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 a 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.

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.

Robin Starveling - The tailor chosen to play Thisbe's mother in the craftsmen's play for Theseus's marriage celebration.

Tom Snout - The tinker chosen to play Pyramus's father in the craftsmen's play for Theseus's marriage celebration.

Snug - The joiner chosen to play the lion in the craftsmen's play for Theseus's marriage celebration.

Philostrate - Theseus's Master of the Revels, responsible for organizing the entertainment for the duke's marriage celebration.



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.

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.

The 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.

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.

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.

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

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.

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.

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.

Twelfth Night

Twelfth Night—an allusion to the night of festivity preceding the Christian celebration of the Epiphany—combines love, confusion, mistaken identities, and joyful discovery.

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.

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.

The Two Gentlemen of Verona

The Two Gentlemen of Verona tells the story of two devoted friends, Valentine and Proteus. Valentine leaves their home city of Verona for Milan, but Proteus, in love with Julia, stays behind. Then Proteus's father sends him to Milan, too. Before leaving, Proteus pledges his love to Julia.

In Milan, Valentine and the duke's daughter, Sylvia, are in love. Proteus, on arriving, falls in love with Sylvia at first sight. He reveals to the duke that Sylvia and Valentine plan to elope, and Valentine is banished. Meanwhile, Proteus's earlier love, Julia, assumes a male disguise and travels to Milan.

The banished Valentine meets outlaws and becomes their leader. Sylvia, in search of Valentine, is seized by his outlaws. Proteus rescues her and then, when she spurns him, tries to violate her. Valentine stops the violation, but out of friendship offers to yield Sylvia to Proteus. Julia, however, reveals her identity, regaining Proteus's love. Two weddings are planned: Valentine with Sylvia, and Proteus with Julia.

Proteus - Valentine's supposed best friend and one of the title gentleman of Verona, though he behaves in a most ungentlemanly fashion. He is Julia's sweetheart at the beginning of the play, but when he joins Valentine at the Duke's palace, he falls in love with Silvia and attempts to steal her away from Valentine and Thurio.

Valentine - The other title gentlemen of Verona. He is Proteus' best friend, and Silvia's love.

Julia - Proteus' beloved, and mistress to the servant Lucetta.

Silvia - Daughter to the Duke and beloved of Valentine, also sought after by Proteus and Thurio.

Duke of Milan - Silvia's father, the Duke wants her to marry the boorish but wealthy suitor Sir Thurio.

Lucetta - Julia's servant, who considers love from a practical point of view. Lucetta helps Julia disguise herself as a man.

Launce - Proteus' humorous servant, and master to a poorly-trained mutt named Crab. His devotion to his dog knows no bounds. He falls in love with an ugly but wealthy maid.

Speed - Valentine's page, though at the beginning of the play he does Proteus' bidding as well. He is friendly with Launce.

Thurio - A foolish rival to Valentine for Silvia's hand. Thurio is very rich, but does not make for pleasant company.

Sir Eglamour - The gentleman upon whom Silvia calls to help her escape from the Duke's court, in order to find her love, Valentine, and to avoid marrying Thurio.

Antonio - Father to Proteus and master to the servant Panthino.

Host - Houses Julia while she searches for Proteus.

Outlaws - When Valentine is banished from Milan, the outlaws intercept him during his journey to Mantua and make him the king of their crew of gentlemen bandits.

Crab - Launce's dog.

Panthino - Antonio's servant.

TRAGEDIES:

Antony and Cleopatra

Antony and Cleopatra tells the story of a romance between two powerful lovers: Cleopatra, the queen of Egypt, and Mark Antony, who rules the Roman Empire with Octavius Caesar and Lepidus.

Although he is needed in Rome, Antony lingers in Egypt with Cleopatra. He finally returns to Rome when Pompey, another military leader, tries to gain control of the empire. Once in Rome, Antony marries Caesar's sister Octavia.

After Pompey is defeated, Caesar imprisons Lepidus and turns on Antony. Octavia attempts to reconcile them, but fails. Antony returns to Cleopatra. He challenges Caesar at sea, adding Cleopatra's ships to his own. When she and her navy flee in mid-battle, Antony follows, abandoning his men.

Antony fails in a second battle at sea. At first, he blames Cleopatra and plans to kill her. He responds to false news of her death, however, by attempting suicide; fatally wounded, he reunites with her as he dies. Faced with Caesar's plans to humiliate her in Rome, Cleopatra kills herself with poisonous snakes.

Antony - A once fierce and feared soldier who rules the Roman Empire along with Octavius Caesar and Lepidus.

Cleopatra - The queen of Egypt and Antony's lover.

Octavius Caesar - The nephew and adopted son of Julius Caesar. Octavius rules the Roman Empire with Antony and Lepidus.

Enobarbus - Antony's most loyal supporter.

Marcus Aemilius Lepidus - The third member of the triumvirate and the weakest, both politically and personally.

Pompey - The son of a great general who was one of Julius Caesar's partners in power.

Octavia - Octavius Caesar's sister.

Charmian and Iras - Cleopatra's faithful attendants.

The Soothsayer - An Egyptian fortune-teller who follows Antony to Rome and predicts that his fortune will always pale in comparison to Caesar's.

Dolabella - One of Octavius Caesar's men. Dolabella is assigned to guard the captive Cleopatra.

Agrippa - One of Octavius Caesar's officers. Agrippa leads the retreat from Antony's unexpectedly powerful forces.

Camidius - A general in Antony's army.

Ventidius - A Roman soldier under Antony's command.

Scarus - A brave young soldier serving under Antony.

Proculeius - One of Caesar's soldiers, who proves untrustworthy.

Diomedes - Cleopatra's servant.

Eros - An attendant serving Antony.

Menas - An ambitious young soldier under Pompey.

Seleucus - Cleopatra's treasurer, who betrays his master.

Clown - An Egyptian who brings a basket of figs containing poisonous snakes to Cleopatra.

Decretas - One of Antony's soldiers.



Hamlet

Events before the start of *Hamlet* set the stage for tragedy. When the king of Denmark, Prince Hamlet's father, suddenly dies, Hamlet's mother, Gertrude, marries his uncle Claudius, who becomes the new king.

A spirit who claims to be the ghost of Hamlet's father describes his murder at the hands of Claudius and demands that Hamlet avenge the killing. When the councilor Polonius learns from his daughter, Ophelia, that Hamlet has visited her in an apparently distracted state, Polonius attributes the prince's condition to lovesickness, and he sets a trap for Hamlet using Ophelia as bait.

To confirm Claudius's guilt, Hamlet arranges for a play that mimics the murder; Claudius's reaction is that of a guilty man. Hamlet, now free to act, mistakenly kills Polonius, thinking he is Claudius. Claudius sends Hamlet away as part of a deadly plot.

After Polonius's death, Ophelia goes mad and later drowns. Hamlet, who has returned safely to confront the king, agrees to a fencing match with Ophelia's brother, Laertes, who secretly poisons his own rapier. At the match, Claudius prepares poisoned wine for Hamlet, which Gertrude unknowingly drinks; as she dies, she accuses Claudius, whom Hamlet kills. Then first Laertes and then Hamlet die, both victims of Laertes's rapier.

Hamlet - The Prince of Denmark, the title character, and the protagonist. About thirty years old at the start of the play, son of Queen Gertrude and late King Hamlet, nephew of the present king, Claudius.

Claudius - The King of Denmark, Hamlet's uncle, and the play's antagonist.

Gertrude - The Queen of Denmark, Hamlet's mother, recently married to Claudius.

Polonius - The Lord Chamberlain of Claudius's court, a pompous, conniving old man. Polonius is the father of Laertes and Ophelia.

Horatio - Hamlet's close friend, who studied with the prince at the university in Wittenberg.

Ophelia - Polonius's daughter, a beautiful young woman with whom Hamlet has been in love.

Laertes - Polonius's son and Ophelia's brother, a young man who spends much of the play in France.

Fortinbras - The young Prince of Norway, whose father the king (also named Fortinbras) was killed by Hamlet's father (also named Hamlet).

The Ghost - The specter of Hamlet's recently deceased father. The ghost, who claims to have been murdered by Claudius, calls upon Hamlet to avenge him.

Rosencrantz and Guildenstern - Two slightly bumbling courtiers, former friends of Hamlet from Wittenberg, summoned by Claudius and Gertrude to discover the cause of Hamlet's strange behavior.

Osric - The foolish courtier who summons Hamlet to his duel with Laertes.

Voltimand and Cornelius - Courtiers whom Claudius sends to Norway to persuade the king to prevent Fortinbras from attacking.

Marcellus and Bernardo - The officers who first see the ghost walking the ramparts of Elsinore and who summon Horatio to witness it.

Francisco - A soldier and guardsman at Elsinore.

Reynaldo - Polonius's servant, who is sent to France by Polonius to check up on and spy on Laertes.

King Lear

King Lear dramatizes the story of an aged king of ancient Britain, whose plan to divide his kingdom among his three daughters ends tragically. When he tests each by asking how much she loves him, the older daughters, Goneril and Regan, flatter him. The youngest, Cordelia, does not, and Lear disowns and banishes her. She marries the king of France. Goneril and Regan turn on Lear, leaving him to wander madly in a furious storm.

Meanwhile, the Earl of Gloucester's illegitimate son Edmund turns Gloucester against his legitimate son, Edgar. Gloucester, appalled at the daughters' treatment of Lear, gets news that a French army is coming to help Lear. Edmund betrays Gloucester to Regan and her husband, Cornwall, who puts out Gloucester's eyes and makes Edmund the Earl of Gloucester.

Cordelia and the French army save Lear, but the army is defeated. Edmund imprisons Cordelia and Lear. Edgar then mortally wounds Edmund in a trial by combat. Dying, Edmund confesses that he has ordered the deaths of Cordelia and Lear. Before they can be rescued, Lear brings in Cordelia's body and then he himself dies.

King Lear - The aging king of Britain and the protagonist of the play. Lear is used to enjoying absolute power and to being flattered, and he does not respond well to being contradicted or challenged.

Cordelia - Lear's youngest daughter, disowned by her father for refusing to flatter him. Cordelia is held in extremely high regard by all of the good characters in the play—the king of France marries her for her virtue alone, overlooking her lack of dowry.

Goneril - Lear's ruthless oldest daughter and the wife of the duke of Albany. Goneril is jealous, treacherous, and amoral.

Regan - Lear's middle daughter and the wife of the duke of Cornwall.

Gloucester - A nobleman loyal to King Lear whose rank, earl, is below that of duke.

Edgar - Gloucester's older, legitimate son.

Edmund - Gloucester's younger, illegitimate son.

Kent - A nobleman of the same rank as Gloucester who is loyal to King Lear.

Albany - The husband of Lear's daughter Goneril.

Cornwall - The husband of Lear's daughter Regan.

Fool - Lear's jester, who uses double-talk and seemingly frivolous songs to give Lear important advice.

Oswald - The steward, or chief servant, in Goneril's house. Oswald obeys his mistress's commands and helps her in her conspiracies.



Macbeth

Macbeth, set primarily in Scotland, mixes witchcraft, prophecy, and murder. Three "Weird Sisters" appear to Macbeth and his comrade Banquo after a battle and prophesy that Macbeth will be king and that the descendants of Banquo will also reign. When Macbeth arrives at his castle, he and Lady Macbeth plot to assassinate King Duncan, soon to be their guest, so that Macbeth can become king.

After Macbeth murders Duncan, the king's two sons flee, and Macbeth is crowned. Fearing that Banquo's descendants will, according to the Weïrd Sisters' predictions, take over the kingdom, Macbeth has Banquo killed. At a royal banquet that evening, Macbeth sees Banquo's ghost appear covered in blood. Macbeth determines to consult the Weïrd Sisters again. They comfort him with ambiguous promises.

Another nobleman, Macduff, rides to England to join Duncan's older son, Malcolm. Macbeth has Macduff's wife and children murdered. Malcolm and Macduff lead an army against Macbeth, as Lady Macbeth goes mad and commits suicide.

Macbeth confronts Malcolm's army, trusting in the Weïrd Sisters' comforting promises. He learns that the promises are tricks, but continues to fight. Macduff kills Macbeth and Malcolm becomes Scotland's king.

Macbeth - Macbeth is a Scottish general and the thane of Glamis who is led to wicked thoughts by the prophecies of the three witches, especially after their prophecy that he will be made thane of Cawdor comes true. Macbeth is a brave soldier and a powerful man, but he is not a virtuous one. He is easily tempted into murder to fulfill his ambitions to the throne, and once he commits his first crime and is crowned King of Scotland, he embarks on further atrocities with increasing ease. Ultimately, Macbeth proves himself better suited to the battlefield than to political intrigue, because he lacks the skills necessary to rule without being a tyrant. His response to every problem is violence and murder.

Lady Macbeth - Macbeth's wife, a deeply ambitious woman who lusts for power and position. Early in the play she seems to be the stronger and more ruthless of the two, as she urges her husband to kill Duncan and seize the crown.

The Three Witches - Three "black and midnight hags" who plot mischief against Macbeth using charms, spells, and prophecies.

Banquo - The brave, noble general whose children, according to the witches' prophecy, will inherit the Scottish throne. Like Macbeth, Banquo thinks ambitious thoughts, but he does not translate those thoughts into action.

King Duncan - The good King of Scotland whom Macbeth, in his ambition for the crown, murders.

Macduff - A Scottish nobleman hostile to Macbeth's kingship from the start.

Malcolm - The son of Duncan, whose restoration to the throne signals Scotland's return to order following Macbeth's reign of terror.

Hecate - The goddess of witchcraft, who helps the three witches work their mischief on Macbeth.

Fleance - Banquo's son, who survives Macbeth's attempt to murder him.

Lennox - A Scottish nobleman.

Ross - A Scottish nobleman.

The Murderers - A group of ruffians conscripted by Macbeth to murder Banquo, Fleance (whom they fail to kill), and Macduff's wife and children.

Porter - The drunken doorman of Macbeth's castle.

Lady Macduff - Macduff's wife. The scene in her castle provides our only glimpse of a domestic realm other than that of Macbeth and Lady Macbeth.

Donalbain - Duncan's son and Malcolm's younger brother.

Othello

In Venice, at the start of *Othello*, the soldier Iago announces his hatred for his commander, Othello, a Moor. Othello has promoted Cassio, not Iago, to be his lieutenant.

Iago cruelly informs Brabantio, Desdemona's father, that Othello and Desdemona have eloped. Before the Venetian Senate, Brabantio accuses Othello of bewitching Desdemona. The Senators wish to send Othello to Cyprus, which is under threat from Turkey. They bring Desdemona before them. She tells of her love for Othello, and the marriage stands. The Senate agrees to let her join Othello in Cyprus.

In Cyprus, Iago continues to plot against Othello and Cassio. He lures Cassio into a drunken fight, for which Cassio loses his new rank; Cassio, at Iago's urging, then begs Desdemona to intervene. Iago uses this and other ploys—misinterpreted conversations, insinuations, and a lost handkerchief—to convince Othello that Desdemona and Cassio are lovers. Othello goes mad with jealousy and later smothers Desdemona on their marriage bed, only to learn of Iago's treachery. He then kills himself.

Othello - The play's protagonist and hero. A Christian Moor and general of the armies of Venice, Othello is an eloquent and physically powerful figure, respected by all those around him. In spite of his elevated status, he is nevertheless easy prey to insecurities because of his age, his life as a soldier, and his race.

Desdemona - The daughter of the Venetian senator Brabantio. Desdemona and Othello are secretly married before the play begins.

Iago - Othello's ensign (a job also known as an ancient or standard-bearer), and the villain of the play. Iago is twenty-eight years old.

Michael Cassio - Othello's lieutenant. Cassio is a young and inexperienced soldier, whose high position is much resented by Iago.

Emilia - Iago's wife and Desdemona's attendant. A cynical, worldly woman, she is deeply attached to her mistress and distrustful of her husband.

Roderigo - A jealous suitor of Desdemona. Young, rich, and foolish, Roderigo is convinced that if he gives Iago all of his money, Iago will help him win Desdemona's hand.

Bianca - A courtesan, or prostitute, in Cyprus. Bianca's favorite customer is Cassio, who teases her with promises of marriage.

Brabantio - Desdemona's father, a somewhat blustering and self-important Venetian senator.

Duke of Venice - The official authority in Venice, the duke has great respect for Othello as a public and military servant.

Montano - The governor of Cyprus before Othello. We see him first in Act II, as he recounts the status of the war and awaits the Venetian ships.

Lodovico - One of Brabantio's kinsmen, Lodovico acts as a messenger from Venice to Cyprus. He arrives in Cyprus in Act IV with letters announcing that Othello has been replaced by Cassio as governor.'

Graziano - Brabantio's kinsman who accompanies Lodovico to Cyprus.

Clown - Othello's servant.



Romeo and Juliet

The prologue of *Romeo and Juliet* calls the title characters "star-crossed lovers"—and the stars do seem to conspire against these young lovers.

Romeo is a Montague, and Juliet a Capulet. Their families are enmeshed in a feud, but the moment they meet—when Romeo and his friends attend a party at Juliet's house in disguise—the two fall in love and quickly decide that they want to be married.

A friar secretly marries them, hoping to end the feud. Romeo and his companions almost immediately encounter Juliet's cousin Tybalt, who challenges Romeo. When Romeo refuses to fight, Romeo's friend Mercutio accepts the challenge and is killed. Romeo then kills Tybalt and is banished. He spends that night with Juliet and then leaves for Mantua.

Juliet's father forces her into a marriage with Count Paris. To avoid this marriage, Juliet takes a potion, given her by the friar, which makes her appear dead. The friar will send Romeo word to be at her family tomb when she awakes. The plan goes awry, and Romeo learns instead that she is dead. In the tomb, Romeo kills himself. Juliet wakes, sees his body, and commits suicide. Their deaths appear finally to end the feud.

Romeo - son and heir of Montague and Lady Montague. A handsome young man of about sixteen, Though impulsive and immature, his idealism and passion make him an extremely likable character.

Juliet - The daughter of Capulet and Lady Capulet. A beautiful thirteen-year-old girl, Juliet begins the play as a naïve child, but she grows up quickly upon falling in love with Romeo, the son the enemy.

Friar Lawrence - A Franciscan friar, friend to both Romeo and Juliet.

Mercutio - A kinsman to the Prince, and Romeo's close friend.

The Nurse - Juliet's nurse, the woman who breast-fed Juliet when she was a baby and has cared for Juliet her entire life.

Tybalt - A Capulet, Juliet's cousin on her mother's side.

Capulet - The patriarch of the Capulet family, father of Juliet, husband of Lady Capulet, and enemy, for unexplained reasons, of Montague.

Lady Capulet - Juliet's mother, Capulet's wife.

Montague - Romeo's father, the patriarch of the Montague clan and bitter enemy of Capulet.

Lady Montague - Romeo's mother, Montague's wife, dies of grief after Romeo is exiled from Verona.

Paris - A kinsman of the Prince, and the suitor of Juliet most preferred by Capulet.

Benvolio - Montague's nephew, Romeo's cousin and thoughtful friend.

Prince Escalus - The Prince of Verona. A kinsman of Mercutio and Paris.

Friar John - A Franciscan friar charged by Friar Lawrence with taking the news of Juliet's false death to Romeo in Mantua.

Balthasar - Romeo's dedicated servant, brings Romeo news of Juliet's death, unaware that it's a ruse.

Sampson & Gregory - Two servants of the house of Capulet, who hate the Montagues.

Abram - Montague's servant, who fights with Sampson and Gregory in the first scene of the play.

The Apothecary - An apothecary in Mantua.

Peter - Capulet servant who invites guests to Capulet's feast and escorts the Nurse to meet Romeo.

Rosaline - The woman with whom Romeo is infatuated at the beginning of the play.



HISTORIES:

Henry V

Henry V begins at the English court, where the young king is persuaded that he has a claim to the throne of France. When the French dauphin, or heir apparent, insults him by sending him tennis balls, Henry launches his military expedition to France.

Before departing, Henry learns that three of his nobles have betrayed him, and he orders their execution. Meanwhile, his old tavern companions grieve over Sir John Falstaff's death, and then leave for France.

Henry and his army lay siege to the French town of Harfleur, which surrenders. The Princess of France, Katherine, starts to learn English, but the French nobles are sure of success against Henry. Instead, Henry's forces win a great victory at Agincourt.

After a brief return to England, Henry comes back to France to claim his rights and to set up his marriage to Princess Katherine. The play's epilogue points out that Henry will die young and that England will as a result lose most of his French territories.

King Henry V - The young, recently crowned king of England. Henry is brilliant, focused, fearless, and committed to the responsibilities of kingship. These responsibilities often force him to place his personal feelings second to the needs of the crown.

Chorus - A single character who introduces each of the play's five acts.

The Dukes of Exeter, Westmorland, Salisbury, and Warwick - Trusted advisors to King Henry and the leaders of his military. The Duke of Exeter, who is also Henry's uncle, is entrusted with carrying important messages to the French king.

The Dukes of Clarence, Bedford, and Gloucester Henry's three younger brothers. - Clarence, Bedford, and Gloucester are noblemen and fighters.

The Archbishop of Canterbury and the Bishop of Ely - Wealthy and powerful English clergymen.

Cambridge, Scrope, and Grey Three conspirators against King Henry. - Cambridge, Scrope, and Grey are bribed by French agents to kill Henry before he sets sail for France.

York and Suffolk - Two noble cousins who die together at the Battle of Agincourt.

The King of France Charles VI. - A capable leader, Charles does not underestimate King Henry, as his son, the Dauphin, does.

Isabel - The queen of France, married to Charles VI.

The Dauphin - The son of the king of France and heir to the throne (until Henry takes this privilege from him).

Catherine - The daughter of the king of France. Catherine is eventually married off to King Henry in order to cement the peace between England and France.

French noblemen and military leaders - The Constable of France, the Duke of Orléans, the Duke of Britain, the Duke of Bourbon, the Earl of Grandpré, Lord Rambures, the Duke of Burgundy, and the Governor of Harfleur are French noblemen and military leaders. Most of them are killed or captured by the English at the Battle of Agincourt, though the Duke of Burgundy survives to help with the peace negotiations between France and England.

Sir Thomas Erpingham - A wise, aged veteran of many wars who serves with Henry's campaign.

Captain Gower - An army captain and a capable fighter who serves with Henry's campaign.

Captain Fluellen, Captain MacMorris, and Captain Jamy - The captains of King Henry's troops from Wales, Ireland, and Scotland, respectively, all of whom have heavy accents reflecting their countries of origin. Fluellen, a close friend of Captain Gower, is the most prominent of the three.

Ancient Pistol - A commoner from London who serves in the war with Henry, and a friend of Nim and Bardolph.

Bardolph - A commoner from London who serves in the war with Henry, and a friend of Pistol and Nim.



Nim - A commoner from London who serves in the war with Henry, and a friend of Pistol and Bardolph. Like Bardolph, Nim is hanged in France for looting from the conquer

Boy - Formerly in the service of Falstaff, the nameless boy leaves London after his master's death and goes with Pistol, Nim, and Bardolph to the war in France. ed towns.

Michael Williams, John Bates, and Alexander Court - Common soldiers with whom King Henry, disguised, argues the night before the Battle of Agincourt.

Hostess - The keeper of the Boar's Head Tavern in London.

Sir John Falstaff - The closest friend and mentor of the young Henry, back in his wild days.

Alice - The maid of the French princess Catherine

Montjoy - The French herald, or messenger.

Monsieur le Fer - A French soldier and gentleman who is captured by Pistol at the Battle of Agincour

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