
SHAKESPEARIENCE

Main Characters

ROMEO AND JULIET

ROMEO – Passionate, intelligent and in search of true love, Romeo is the teenage son of Lord and Lady Montague. After attending a ball thrown by the Capulets, Romeo falls deeply in love with Juliet (the daughter of Lord Capulet) despite the fact that Romeo’s family has a long-standing feud with the Capulets. His utter devotion and commitment to Juliet cloud his judgement with the Capulets and prevent him from accurately seeing the challenges ahead.

JULIET – Just 13 years old, young Juliet is the only daughter of Lord and Lady Capulet. Beautiful, strong-willed and wise beyond her years, she falls deeply in love with Romeo after meeting him at a party hosted by her father. Her carefree innocence quickly disappears after meeting Romeo revealing a very thoughtful and methodical side to her personality.

BENVOLIO – A cousin to Romeo, Benvolio is a compassionate and loyal friend. Peaceful and law-abiding, Benvolio cares deeply about Romeo and wants to avoid any conflict with the Capulets.

TYBALT – Arrogant, haughty and easily offended, Tybalt is the cousin of Juliet. As a member of the Capulet family, Tybalt is a sworn enemy of the Montagues and seeks revenge on Romeo (the son of Lord Montague) for crashing a party hosted by Lord Capulet. The young Capulet is an excellent swordsman and not afraid to use his sword when he feels dishonored.

MERCUTIO – Nephew to the Duke of Verona, Mercutio is a hot headed prankster who is just as happy to engage in wordplay as he is in swordplay. Spirited, mercurial and at times, slightly unhinged, he is a devoted friend to Romeo and seems to have little regard for the rules. When Tybalt challenges Romeo to a duel in the streets, Mercutio happily takes up the gauntlet with dire results for both houses.

THE TAMING OF THE SHREW

KATHERINA – Infamous throughout Italy for her short fuse and sharp tongue, Katherina (or Kate) is the oldest daughter of Baptista Minola, a wealthy gentleman from Padua. Katherina’s razor wit and explosive temper have made her a nearly impossible prospect for marriage, placing her father in a difficult position. Katherina is not afraid to stand up for herself, both verbally and physically making her quite a match for Petruchio.

PETRUCHIO – A gentleman of Verona, Petruchio has arrived in Padua seeking a wife. Overbearing, pompous and supremely confident, Petruchio sets his sights on Katherina as his future bride after hearing of the enormous dowry which her father has offered any man willing to marry her. Beneath his chauvinistic bravado, Petruchio can be charming and even compassionate.

MACBETH

MACBETH – As the Thane of Glamis, Macbeth is a brilliant general in the Scottish army whose bravery and accomplishments on the battlefield have afforded him numerous accolades. However, his true dark nature is revealed after he encounters 3 witches who predict his eventual ascension to the throne. Spurred by the witches' prophesy and aided by his scheming wife, Macbeth murders the King of Scotland and assumes the throne. Unfortunately for all, Macbeth proves to be a poor statesman and instead resorts to violence and murder to solve his growing problems. For all of his external fierceness and savagery, he harbors deep seated insecurities and often turns to his wife for support.

LADY MACBETH – The wife of Macbeth, Lady Macbeth is ambitious, ruthless and a master manipulator. Determined to help her husband fulfill the prophesy of the witches and become king, she soothes Macbeth's every fear and turns his indecision into action. Not afraid to get her own hands dirty, she demonstrates a deadly resolve and refuses to let anything stand in her way. Beautiful, confident, charming and intelligent, there is also a mental fragility to her which is increasingly revealed as her problems mount.

WITCHES – Elemental spirits who practice dark magic, the witches offer multiple prophecies to Macbeth throughout the play. Indeed, their first prediction that Macbeth will be named the Thane of Cawdor comes true without any assistance from Macbeth. Encouraged by the realization of this first prophecy, Macbeth decides to ensure that the second prophecy comes true as well – namely, that Macbeth will become King of Scotland. Following his ascension to the throne, the witches offer 3 warnings to Macbeth. First, Macbeth should beware another Scottish general named Macduff. Second, he can never be harmed by any man naturally born of a woman. Finally, he shall never be defeated until the forest outside his castle begins to physically advance on his castle. While the true nature of the witches is never revealed, the witches (or weird sisters) are stated servants of Hecate and seem to delight in causing humans despair.

MACDUFF – Brave, fiercely loyal to Scotland and a loving family man, Macduff is a Scottish nobleman and general whose skill and prowess on the battlefield are well known. When Macbeth murders Macduff's wife and young son, Macduff leads the uprising to overthrow Macbeth and bring the bloody tyrant to justice.

HAMLET

HAMLET – As the Prince of Denmark and only son to the late King of Denmark and his wife, Queen Gertrude, Hamlet is highly intelligent, yet deeply depressed having just discovered that his father was in fact murdered by his uncle to gain the throne. Teetering on the edge of sanity, Hamlet keeps his uncle's treason a secret from everyone as he struggles with how best to deal with his murderous uncle. In a famous speech, he contemplates suicide when he asks "To be, or not to be; that is the question." However, instead of ending his own life, Hamlet decides to revenge his father and expose his uncle's treason.

OPHELIA – Ophelia is the daughter of a nobleman (Polonius) and the object of Hamlet's affections. Kind, compassionate and concerned for Hamlet, she is willing to do anything to help lift Hamlet out of his deep melancholy. Naturally subservient to men, she acquiesces to her father's wish that she should spy on Hamlet – a decision which ultimately spells the end of her relationship with Hamlet.

A MIDSUMMER NIGHT'S DREAM

LYSANDER – Desperately in love with Hermia, Lysander is a young man of Athens. Romantic, loyal and clever, he concocts a plan to elope with Hermia through the forest and marry her at the home of his wealthy widow aunt. However, when he crosses paths with a mischievous fairy named Puck while traveling through the woods at night with Hermia, he has a spell placed on him which causes him to fall in love with Helena, much to the bewilderment of Hermia.

DEMETRIUS – As a wealthy young nobleman, Demetrius is also in love with young Hermia and unlike Lysander, has her father's permission to marry her. Haughty and entitled, he scorns Helena and her romantic advances despite the fact that the two once had a secret relationship – instead, Demetrius focuses all of his amorous attention on Hermia. When Lysander and Hermia escape into the woods, Demetrius follows, hoping to bring Hermia back to her father. Unfortunately, he too has a spell cast on him by Puck which causes him to fall madly in love with Helena as well.

HERMIA – Hermia is the daughter of a stubborn, old nobleman named Egeus who has decided – against his daughter's wishes – that she should marry Demetrius. While short in stature, Hermia is feisty and willful, especially in matters of the heart. Determined to disobey her father and follow her heart, she secrets away with Lysander at night to get married. While traveling through the forest, the two become separated. After frantically searching for him, she finally discovers him madly courting Helena. Although Hermia and Helena have been friends since childhood, Hermia becomes convinced that Helena has somehow stolen her true love from her.

HELENA – A dear friend of Hermia, Helena is devoted to Demetrius despite the fact that he openly loathes her. After Demetrius decides to follow Lysander and Hermia into the forest, Helena decides to follow Demetrius into the forest in a last attempt to win his love. After her losing her way in the forest, Helena stumbles across both Lysander and Demetrius who are now inexplicably in love with her. Believing this to be a cruel trick planned by the other 3 lovers, Helena is deeply hurt at her former friends' apparent betrayal.