

MODERN SHAKESPEARE

Conceived and Produced by Arushi Grover

Directed by Mary Rose Valentine, Joey Reihart, and Arushi Grover

3 Dots Downtown
137 E Beaver Ave, State College, PA 16801
Tuesday, November 16, 2021

MODERN SHAKESPEARE

Set List

Act 1: “We see / The seasons alter” (*A Midsummer Night’s Dream*)

Directed by Arushi Grover

TITANIA | Sangeeta Iyer

Act 2: “We grow together, / Like to a double cherry” (*A Midsummer Night’s Dream*)

Directed by Joey Reihart

HELENA | Mary Rose Valentine

Act 3: “Make me a willow cabin at your gate” (*Twelfth Night*)

Directed by Joey Reihart

VIOLA | Gale Bartuska

OLIVIA | Sangeeta Iyer

Act 4: “I give my sensual race the rein” (*Measure for Measure*)

Directed by Arushi Grover

ANGELO | Gale Bartuska

ISABELLA | Sangeeta Iyer

Act 5: “I...will awhile uphold / The unyoked humour of your idleness” (*Henry IV, Part One*)

Directed by Arushi Grover

PRINCE HAL | Arushi Grover

Act 6: “You have witchcraft in your lips, Kate” (*Henry V*)

Directed by Mary Rose Valentine & Arushi Grover

KING HENRY V | Arushi Grover

KATHERINE | Mary Rose Valentine

ALICE | Sangeeta Iyer

Act 7: “To be, or not to be” (*Hamlet*)

Directed by Mary Rose Valentine

HAMLET | Mary Rose Valentine

Act 8: “Is it possible disdain should die?” (*Much Ado About Nothing*)

Directed by Mary Rose Valentine & Arushi Grover

BEATRICE | Mary Rose Valentine

BENEDICK | Arushi Grover

Act 9: “I do love nothing in the world so well as you” (*Much Ado About Nothing*)

Directed by Mary Rose Valentine & Arushi Grover

BEATRICE | Mary Rose Valentine

BENEDICK | Arushi Grover

MODERN SHAKESPEARE

Prologue

EMCEE

Hello! My name is Arushi Grover, and I will be your emcee tonight. I want to thank 3 Dots for hosting us tonight; we are very grateful for the opportunity to perform here and for you, and I want to thank you so much for coming and staying today to see our cabaret, “Modern Shakespeare.”

In addition to your emcee for tonight, I am also currently serving as the dramaturg for Penn State Centre Stage’s upcoming production of *A Midsummer Night’s Dream*. In my role as dramaturg, I assist the production team, the director, and the cast in understanding the text of the play from historical, literary, cultural, and contextual perspectives. And in my role as dramaturg, I am most concerned with the question, “Why this play now?” Why are we producing this work now and here, in our current context? Shakespeare’s works are 400 years old. How do we understand the language today? And how do we relate the themes and content of the work to our contemporary life and society? These are the questions I want to answer today through this cabaret.

Thus, I ask you to join me in this endeavor to explore a selection of various scenes and monologues from Shakespeare’s works and how we can understand them, as people in contemporary times. Today, the cast, directors, and I of this cabaret want to show how we can understand Shakespeare’s language and themes. Some scenes and monologues today, we will be presenting twice; first in a translation to contemporary language, and second, in Shakespeare’s original text. For all of our scenes and monologues, we hope to explore their content and themes from a modern perspective.

The cast, directors, and I are very excited to present you a slice of Shakespeare’s oeuvre, and we are excited to explore with you today, “modern Shakespeare”.

Act 1: “We see / The seasons alter” (*A Midsummer Night’s Dream*)

EMCEE

Beginning our program today, we have two selections from Shakespeare’s most oft-performed work, the comedy, *A Midsummer Night’s Dream*. The central plot device of this play is the conflict between the king and queen of the fairies, a conflict that, in turn, affects the mortals of the human world. The queen of the fairies, Titania, and the king of the fairies, Oberon, are feuding over the custody of a child, a human boy, the child of one of Titania’s followers.

Enter TITANIA.

After both accuse each other of infidelity, Titania [*EMCEE gestures to TITANIA*], the queen, erupts, discussing how their conflict, between her and the king, has begun to affect the natural and mortal worlds, causing disruption and destruction.

TITANIA

Your words are nothing but the fictitious stories of jealousy. Since the beginning of midsummer, my fairies and I have never been able to meet anywhere to dance in a ringlet to the piping wind—not by the forest or meadow, the rushing brook or the shoreline—because of you and your arguments. Therefore, the winds have sucked up disease-ridden fogs, which have fallen to the land and made every river overflow their banks, as if to get revenge on you. The oxen and farmers have plowed their fields for nothing, and the unripe corn has rotted before ripening. Sheep pens are empty in flooded fields, and crows are fattened on the bodies of infected sheep. Fields, where games are usually played, are filled with mud, and you can't see the mazes people have cut out of grass, because they've overgrown, and no one walks in them anymore. It's no longer winter for human mortals, so their hymns and carols cannot bless the night. Therefore, the pale and angry moon washes tides of disease through the air, and through this bad weather, we see the seasons change. A frost spreads across crimson roses, and Winter wears a crown of flowers, not an ice crown, as some mocking joke. Spring, summer, fertile autumn, and angry winter change their usual appearance, and now the confused world doesn't know which is which. And this is all because of our debate, our argument. We are their parents and origin.

EMCEE

Titania's monologue resonates with our world today, with the issues of climate change and pandemics. We have overflowing banks, our rising sea level, and we have agriculture that lays dead, affecting people's livelihoods across the world. We've seen changes to the natural order of seasons. Further, in the Renaissance, it was thought that clouds rained down diseases; today, we can still relate to how our own clouds, our breath, allows for the spread of disease. Most of all, it's Titania's claim, that it is our own actions that have caused this disorder of the natural world, that resonates with our world today. And in Shakespeare's language...

TITANIA

These are the forgeries of jealousy:
 And never, since the middle summer's spring,
 Met we on hill, in dale, forest or mead,
 By paved fountain or by rushy brook,
 Or in the beached margent of the sea,
 To dance our ringlets to the whistling wind,
 But with thy brawls thou hast disturb'd our sport.
 Therefore the winds, piping to us in vain,
 As in revenge, have suck'd up from the sea

Contagious fogs; which falling in the land
 Have every pelting river made so proud
 That they have overborne their continents:
 The ox hath therefore stretch'd his yoke in vain,
 The ploughman lost his sweat, and the green corn
 Hath rotted ere his youth attain'd a beard;
 The fold stands empty in the drowned field,
 And crows are fatted with the murrion flock;
 The nine men's morris is fill'd up with mud,
 And the quaint mazes in the wanton green
 For lack of tread are undistinguishable:
 The human mortals want their winter here;
 No night is now with hymn or carol blest:
 Therefore the moon, the governess of floods,
 Pale in her anger, washes all the air,
 That rheumatic diseases do abound:
 And thorough this distemperature we see
 The seasons alter: hoary-headed frosts
 Far in the fresh lap of the crimson rose,
 And on old Hiems' thin and icy crown
 An odorous chaplet of sweet summer buds
 Is, as in mockery, set: the spring, the summer,
 The chiding autumn, angry winter, change
 Their wonted liveries, and the mazed world,
 By their increase, now knows not which is which:
 And this same progeny of evils comes
 From our debate, from our dissension;
 We are their parents and original.

Exit TITANIA.

EMCEE

“We are their parents and original.” Indeed. Thank you.

Act 2: “We grow together, / Like to a double cherry” (A Midsummer Night’s Dream)

EMCEE

Moving on to another part of the woods in *A Midsummer Night’s Dream*, we encounter Helena, one of the four lovers in the play. To introduce you to the conflict, imagine, not a “love triangle”, but a “love square”. The young Hermia and Lysander love each other, but Demetrius is also pursuing Hermia. Helena, Hermia’s best friend, loves Demetrius. Upon threat of death for Hermia if she does not follow her father’s will and marries Demetrius, the four enter the woods, Lysander and Hermia

trying to elope, Demetrius following Hermia, and Helena following Demetrius. In the woods, some fairies find them, and attempting to make Demetrius love Helena, they make a mistake, and they use the magic of a flower's juice to make Lysander love Helena, not Demetrius loving Helena.

Essentially, Helena, finding both Demetrius and Lysander now in love with her, thinks that the two men are mocking her, and that her love does not love her back. Hermia, Helena's best friend, meanwhile, is upset with Helena, that the man that she loves now loves her best friend. We meet, in the midst of this argument between the four lovers, Helena, who is angry with her childhood friend, Hermia. We will be presenting this scene three times; first, in modern language...

HELENA

Lo, she is in on this, too! Now, I think they've all joined to play this cruel trick on me, to spite me. Hurtful Hermia! You, ungrateful girl! Have you conspired with these two to provoke me with this awful ridicule? Have you forgotten all the talks and vows we shared, the hours we've spent together, when we scorned Time for pulling us apart—Oh, have you forgotten it all? Our friendship in school days, our childhood innocence? We used to sit together and sew one flower on one sampler, sitting on one cushion, singing one song, in one key, as if our hands, our parts, voices and minds have been joined. Like that, we grew together, like two cherries on one stem, together, yet apart, two bodies, but one heart. Will you let our timeworn love be divided to join with men in mocking your friend? It's not friendly, it's not ladylike. All women would admonish you for it, although I alone feel the pain.

EMCEE

For a play that is largely concerned with patriarchal authority, this monologue reminds us of the significance of relationships between women, both friendship and relationships of more intimacy. Elizabethan England, where *A Midsummer Night's Dream* was first performed, did not have the same modern concepts of sexual and romantic orientation that we inherited from 19th- and 20th-century theories of sexuality and psychology, so categories such as a "straight" and "gay" would be anachronistic. However, Shakespeare's plays are rife with same-gender affection, and for women, intimate relationships were accepted, as long as they didn't interfere with women's conventional sexual and social duties, such as getting married, having children, maintaining chastity, and behaving in a feminine manner. So, women in Shakespeare's time were able to establish and maintain intimate relationships of friendship, patronage, and service. Scholars of Renaissance language and sexuality are keen to point out one interesting thing about Helena's monologue; Helena talks about Hermia's and her "sides"—or translated in our modern language, their "parts"—being incorporated or joined. The word "sides", in the Renaissance, was synonymous with "loins", showing how this perceived act of betrayal serves as a transition in the two women's friendship from love to passion. In thinking about how satisfaction and frustration can be two sides of the same coin of passion, this expression of Helena's has been interpreted as a form of homoeroticism. And in Shakespeare's language...

HELENA

Lo, she is one of this confederacy!
Now I perceive they have conjoin'd all three
To fashion this false sport, in spite of me.
Injurious Hermia! most ungrateful maid!
Have you conspired, have you with these contrived
To bait me with this foul derision?
Is all the counsel that we two have shared,
The sisters' vows, the hours that we have spent,
When we have chid the hasty-footed time
For parting us,--O, is it all forgot?
All school-days' friendship, childhood innocence?
We, Hermia, like two artificial gods,
Have with our needles created both one flower,
Both on one sampler, sitting on one cushion,
Both warbling of one song, both in one key,
As if our hands, our sides, voices and minds,
Had been incorporate. So we grow together,
Like to a double cherry, seeming parted,
But yet an union in partition;
Two lovely berries moulded on one stem;
So, with two seeming bodies, but one heart.
And will you rent our ancient love asunder,
To join with men in scorning your poor friend?
It is not friendly, 'tis not maidenly:
Our sex, as well as I, may chide you for it,
Though I alone do feel the injury.

EMCEE

And thirdly, and lastly, to sum up this monologue briefly, one may interpret it as...

HELENA

[Clears throat] You bitch!

EMCEE

The play shows a tragic ending to Helena and her friend, Hermia's, relationship.

Exit HELENA.

After their rift in the woods, the desires of the lovers work out so that Hermia and Lysander love each other and so that Helena and Demetrius love each other; however, the two women never

explicitly make up their relationship. Shakespeare shows how, in this patriarchal society, marriage and ties with men disrupt women's relationships to each other.

Act 3: "Make me a willow cabin at your gate" (*Twelfth Night*)

EMCEE

Moving on to another comedy with potentially sapphic relationships, we enter the world of *Twelfth Night*, which has been considered Shakespeare's most perfect comedy. Viola, an upper class woman, is shipwrecked on the island of Illyria, and she crossdresses as a man to get by in this new land alone. She is a servant to her new employer, Orsino, whom she has fallen in love with, and who has sent her to woo the Countess Olivia on his behalf. He has previously tried multiple times to woo Olivia, and he thinks that, perhaps, sending Viola, cross-dressed as a man that people are perceiving as a boy and going by the name "Cesario", might be able to more effectively woo Olivia with her feminine and youthful characteristics.

Enter VIOLA and OLIVIA.

Thus, we enter that manor of Olivia, where Viola professes that she has something sacred to share with Olivia, a message on behalf of Orsino. Olivia is veiled, or, er, *masked*, and Viola dressed as a man.

OLIVIA

Everyone, let us be alone for a moment—let's hear this "sacred" secret he has to share.

EMCEE

Olivia dismisses her servants and attendants.

OLIVIA

Now sir, what is your secret?

VIOLA

Most sweet lady—

OLIVIA

"Sweet"! How devout. In what passage of this holy text lies your delivery of faith?

VIOLA

In Orsino's heart.

OLIVIA

In his heart! In what verse of his heart?

VIOLA

To answer by the table of contents, in the first verse of his heart.

OLIVIA

Oh, I have read it. It is heresy. Don't you have anything else to say?

VIOLA

Madam, let me see your face.

OLIVIA

Did your lord give you any command to negotiate with my face? I didn't think so. You're overstepping now. But, look, I will draw the curtain and show you the picture behind it. Isn't it a pretty one?

VIOLA

It's beautiful. If it's natural beauty, it's God's will.

OLIVIA

It's natural, I assure you—wind and rain couldn't wash it away.

VIOLA

You have true beauty. Nature painted such pure ivory and rouge with her hand; Lady, you would be the cruellest woman alive if you were to leave this world without any children to inherit your beauty for generations.

OLIVIA

Oh, I will not be so cruel. I will inventory my beauty for the world, every feature will be labelled. As in, item: two indifferent lips; item, two grey eyes; item: one neck, one chin, and so on... Weren't you sent here to praise me?

VIOLA

I see your true nature. You are too proud. But, even if you were the devil, you would be beautiful. My lord and master loves you—you should reciprocate such a strong passion, even if you are the most beautiful person in the world!

OLIVIA

How does he love me?

VIOLA

With adoration, with tears and tears, with groans and sighs.

OLIVIA

Your lord knows what I think, what I want; I can't love him. Yes, I guess he is moral, he is honest; he has a good reputation, and he's young; and people say that he's generous, educated, and brave, and he's an attractive person, but yet—I cannot love him. He should have accepted my answer long ago.

VIOLA

If I loved you with my master's passion, I too wouldn't be able to make sense of your denial. I wouldn't be able to understand it.

OLIVIA

Why? What would you do about it?

VIOLA

I'd built a sad, weeping cabin at your doorstep, one with my soul imprisoned in it. I'd write sad verses and torch songs, and I'd sing them loud in the middle of the night. I'd shout your name to the echoing hills, making them echo "Olivia, Olivia, Olivia!" You wouldn't be able to live on this earth without feeling pity for me!

OLIVIA

You might get somewhere with that. Who are your parents?

VIOLA

I was born to a higher position than my current one, but I'm still at a high status; I am a gentleman.

OLIVIA

Go back to Orsino. I can't love him. Tell him to stop sending people. Unless, maybe, you come to me again... to let me know what he says? Thank you for your trouble, goodbye. Here is some money for you.

VIOLA

I am not a messenger that you must pay; keep your change. My master is the one in need of reciprocation, not me. Let the person you love have a heart of cold, cold stone. And let you love for them be ridiculed with contempt, just as you've done with my master. Goodbye, beautiful cruelty.

Exit VIOLA.

OLIVIA

“Who are your parents?” “I was born to a higher position than my current one, but I’m still at a high status; I am a gentleman.” I know you are. Your voice, your face, your arms and legs, movement and spirit—they all prove that you are *so* a gentleman! Whoa! Calm the fuck down! Unless the wooer were to be him? Really, now! Can one really fall in love so quickly? I think I feel how perfect this youth is creeping in to affect my vision.

EMCEE

Thus, Olivia starts to fall in love with Viola, or, as she is perceiving her, a youth or a boy named Cesario. This play is one that explores gender and sexuality. Both a woman, Olivia, and a man, Orsino, fall in love with Viola, a woman dressing as a man. And even if one argues that Olivia falls in love with the perceived gender presentation of Cesario, the boy, and Orsino falls in love with essential femininity of Viola, as a woman, we still explore the character of Viola/Cesario bending a binary of gender, keeping the role of both man and woman. And in Shakespeare’s language...

Enter VIOLA.

OLIVIA

Give us the place alone: we will hear this divinity.

EMCEE

Exeunt servants and attendants.

Now, sir, what is your text?

VIOLA

Most sweet lady,--

OLIVIA

A comfortable doctrine, and much may be said of it.

Where lies your text?

VIOLA

In Orsino's bosom.

OLIVIA

In his bosom! In what chapter of his bosom?

VIOLA

To answer by the method, in the first of his heart.

OLIVIA

O, I have read it: it is heresy. Have you no more to say?

VIOLA

Good madam, let me see your face.

OLIVIA

Have you any commission from your lord to negotiate with my face? You are now out of your text: but we will draw the curtain and show you the picture. Look you, sir, such a one I was this present: is't not well done?

Unveiling.

VIOLA

Excellently done, if God did all.

OLIVIA

'Tis in grain, sir; 'twill endure wind and weather.

VIOLA

'Tis beauty truly blent, whose red and white Nature's own sweet and cunning hand laid on: Lady, you are the cruell'st she alive, If you will lead these graces to the grave And leave the world no copy.

OLIVIA

O, sir, I will not be so hard-hearted; I will give out divers schedules of my beauty: it shall be inventoried, and every particle and utensil labelled to my will: as, item, two lips, indifferent red; item, two grey eyes, with lids to them; item, one neck, one chin, and so forth. Were you sent hither to praise me?

VIOLA

I see you what you are, you are too proud; But, if you were the devil, you are fair. My lord and master loves you: O, such love

Could be but recompensed, though you were crown'd
The nonpareil of beauty!

OLIVIA

How does he love me?

VIOLA

With adorations, fertile tears,
With groans that thunder love, with sighs of fire.

OLIVIA

Your lord does know my mind; I cannot love him:
Yet I suppose him virtuous, know him noble,
Of great estate, of fresh and stainless youth;
In voices well divulged, free, learn'd and valiant;
And in dimension and the shape of nature
A gracious person: but yet I cannot love him;
He might have took his answer long ago.

VIOLA

If I did love you in my master's flame,
With such a suffering, such a deadly life,
In your denial I would find no sense;
I would not understand it.

OLIVIA

Why, what would you?

VIOLA

Make me a willow cabin at your gate,
And call upon my soul within the house;
Write loyal cantons of contemned love
And sing them loud even in the dead of night;
Halloo your name to the reverberate hills
And make the babbling gossip of the air
Cry out 'Olivia!' O, You should not rest
Between the elements of air and earth,
But you should pity me!

OLIVIA

You might do much.

What is your parentage?

VIOLA

Above my fortunes, yet my state is well:
I am a gentleman.

OLIVIA

Get you to your lord;
I cannot love him: let him send no more;
Unless, perchance, you come to me again,
To tell me how he takes it. Fare you well:
I thank you for your pains: spend this for me.

VIOLA

I am no fee'd post, lady; keep your purse:
My master, not myself, lacks recompense.
Love make his heart of flint that you shall love;
And let your fervor, like my master's, be
Placed in contempt! Farewell, fair cruelty.

Exit VIOLA.

OLIVIA

'What is your parentage?'
'Above my fortunes, yet my state is well:
I am a gentleman.' I'll be sworn thou art;
Thy tongue, thy face, thy limbs, actions and spirit,
Do give thee five-fold blazon: not too fast:
soft, soft!
Unless the master were the man. How now!
Even so quickly may one catch the plague?
Methinks I feel this youth's perfections
With an invisible and subtle stealth
To creep in at mine eyes.

Exit OLIVIA.

EMCEE

Critics and audiences note that this play ends very heteronormative, with Viola marrying Orsino and Olivia marrying Viola's brother, Sebastian. However, I would not discount and, in fact, appreciate

the exploration of gender and sexuality that *Twelfth Night* offers. It is truly worth something to see representation on an aged page.

Act 4: "I give my sensual race the rein" (Measure for Measure)

EMCEE

Moving on from comedy to comedy with a twist, we enter the world of *Measure for Measure*, a play that in Shakespeare's time was grouped with comedies, ending in various marriages and unions, but that modern scholars and theatre practitioners consider a "problem play" for its ambiguous and complex dealing with a society's woes and its psychological exploration. In *Measure for Measure*, set in Vienna, we explore justice, punishment, and sexual harassment. A pious woman who is becoming a nun, Isabella, her brother has been jailed and is planned to be executed for getting his lover and fiancé, Juliet, pregnant before marriage, which is against the laws of the land. Isabella has gone to the deputy ruler or duke of the city, Angelo, to plead for her brother's life... and the puritanical and strict Angelo, attracted to Isabella's modesty, wants to hypocritically sleep with Isabella, in exchange for allowing her brother, Claudio, to live.

Enter ANGELO

In this scene, Angelo has asked Isabella to return to him, and he makes his proposition, or threat. We are presenting this scene with light blocking, to draw attention to the use of language in these power dynamics. While we will not be using heavy action, I do want to preface that this will depict sexual harassment; if you are uncomfortable with seeing this depiction, please consider leaving at this time. Now, in Shakespeare's original language...

Enter ISABELLA

ANGELO

How now, fair maid?

ISABELLA

I am come to know your pleasure.

ANGELO

[*Aside*] That you might know it, would much better please me
Than to demand what 'tis. [*To ISABELLA*] Your brother cannot live.

ISABELLA

Even so. Heaven keep your honour!

ANGELO

Yet may he live awhile; and, it may be,
As long as you or I
yet he must die.

ISABELLA
Under your sentence?

ANGELO
Yea.

ISABELLA
When, I beseech you? that in his reprieve,
Longer or shorter, he may be so fitted
That his soul sicken not.

ANGELO
Ha! fie, these filthy vices! It were as good
To pardon him that hath from nature stolen
A man already made, as to remit
Their saucy sweetness that do coin heaven's image
In stamps that are forbid: 'tis all as easy
Falsely to take away a life true made
As to put metal in restrained means
To make a false one.

ISABELLA
'Tis set down so in heaven, but not in earth.

ANGELO
Say you so? then I shall pose you quickly.
Which had you rather, that the most just law
Now took your brother's life; or, to redeem him,
Give up your body to such sweet uncleanness
As she that he hath stain'd?

ISABELLA
Sir, believe this,
I had rather give my body than my soul.

ANGELO
I talk not of your soul: our compell'd sins

Stand more for number than for account.

ISABELLA

How say you?

ANGELO

Nay, I'll not warrant that; for I can speak
Against the thing I say. Answer to this:
I, now the voice of the recorded law,
Pronounce a sentence on your brother's life:
Might there not be a charity in sin
To save this brother's life?

ISABELLA

Please you to do't,
I'll take it as a peril to my soul,
It is no sin at all, but charity.

ANGELO

Pleased you to do't at peril of your soul,
Were equal poise of sin and charity.

ISABELLA

That I do beg his life, if it be sin,
Heaven let me bear it! you granting of my suit,
If that be sin, I'll make it my morn prayer
To have it added to the faults of mine,
And nothing of your answer.

ANGELO

Nay, but hear me.
Your sense pursues not mine: either you are ignorant,
Or seem so craftily; and that's not good.

ISABELLA

Let me be ignorant, and in nothing good,
But graciously to know I am no better.

ANGELO

Thus wisdom wishes to appear most bright
When it doth tax itself; as these black masks

Proclaim an enshield beauty ten times louder
Than beauty could, display'd. But mark me;
To be received plain, I'll speak more gross:
Your brother is to die.

ISABELLA

So.

ANGELO

And his offence is so, as it appears,
Accountant to the law upon that pain.

ISABELLA

True.

ANGELO

Admit no other way to save his life,--
As I subscribe not that, nor any other,
But in the loss of question,--that you, his sister,
Finding yourself desired of such a person,
Whose credit with the judge, or own great place,
Could fetch your brother from the manacles
Of the all-building law; and that there were
No earthly mean to save him, but that either
You must lay down the treasures of your body
To this supposed, or else to let him suffer;
What would you do?

ISABELLA

As much for my poor brother as myself:
That is, were I under the terms of death,
The impression of keen whips I'd wear as rubies,
And strip myself to death, as to a bed
That longing have been sick for, ere I'd yield
My body up to shame.

ANGELO

Then must your brother die.

ISABELLA

And 'twere the cheaper way:

Better it were a brother died at once,
Than that a sister, by redeeming him,
Should die forever.

ANGELO

Were not you then as cruel as the sentence
That you have slander'd so?

ISABELLA

Ignomy in ransom and free pardon
Are of two houses: lawful mercy
Is nothing kin to foul redemption.

ANGELO

You seem'd of late to make the law a tyrant;
And rather proved the sliding of your brother
A merriment than a vice.

ISABELLA

O, pardon me, my lord; it oft falls out,
To have what we would have, we speak not what we mean:
I something do excuse the thing I hate,
For his advantage that I dearly love.

ANGELO

We are all frail.

ISABELLA

Else let my brother die,
If not a fedary, but only he
Owe and succeed thy weakness.

ANGELO

Nay, women are frail too.

ISABELLA

Ay, as the glasses where they view themselves;
Which are as easy broke as they make forms.
Women! Help Heaven! men their creation mar
In profiting by them. Nay, call us ten times frail;
For we are soft as our complexions are,

And credulous to false prints.

ANGELO

I think it well:
And from this testimony of your own sex,--
Since I suppose we are made to be no stronger
Than faults may shake our frames,--let me be bold;
I do arrest your words. Be that you are,
That is, a woman; if you be more, you're none;
If you be one, as you are well express'd
By all external warrants, show it now,
By putting on the destined livery.

ISABELLA

I have no tongue but one: gentle my lord,
Let me entreat you speak the former language.

ANGELO

Plainly conceive, I love you.

ISABELLA

My brother did love Juliet,
And you tell me that he shall die for it.

ANGELO

He shall not, Isabel, if you give me love.

ISABELLA

I know your virtue hath a licence in't,
Which seems a little fouler than it is,
To pluck on others.

ANGELO

Believe me, on mine honour,
My words express my purpose.

ISABELLA

Ha! little honour to be much believed,
And most pernicious purpose! Seeming, seeming!
I will proclaim thee, Angelo; look for't:
Sign me a present pardon for my brother,

Or with an outstretch'd throat I'll tell the world aloud
What man thou art.

ANGELO

Who will believe thee, Isabel?
My unsoil'd name, the austereness of my life,
My vouch against you, and my place i' the state,
Will so your accusation overweigh,
That you shall stifle in your own report
And smell of calumny. I have begun,
And now I give my sensual race the rein:
Fit thy consent to my sharp appetite;
Lay by all nicety and prolixious blushes,
That banish what they sue for; redeem thy brother
By yielding up thy body to my will;
Or else he must not only die the death,
But thy unkindness shall his death draw out
To lingering sufferance. Answer me to-morrow,
Or, by the affection that now guides me most,
I'll prove a tyrant to him. As for you,
Say what you can, my false o'erweighs your true.

Exit ANGELO

ISABELLA

To whom should I complain? Did I tell this,
Who would believe me? O perilous mouths,
That bear in them one and the self-same tongue,
Either of condemnation or approval;
Bidding the law make courtesy to their will:
Hooking both right and wrong to the appetite,
To follow as it draws! I'll to my brother:
Though he hath fallen by prompture of the blood,
Yet hath he in him such a mind of honour.
That, had he twenty heads to tender down
On twenty bloody blocks, he'd yield them up,
Before his sister should her body stoop
To such abhorr'd pollution.
Then, Isabel, live chaste, and, brother, die:
More than our brother is our chastity.
I'll tell him yet of Angelo's request,

And fit his mind to death, for his soul's rest.

Exit ISABELLA

EMCEE

Measure for Measure is a play that may strike as shockingly modern in its depiction of sexual harassment, and the power dynamics and counterarguments that society brings up. When Isabella threatens to tell the world of his threat, Angelo asks, “when I have the power that I have, who would believe you?” Our protagonist, Isabella, though, is by far the strongest character in the play; Angelo threatens to torture, not just kill, Claudio, her brother, but Isabella stays strong, standing by her morals and her autonomy and agency. For the record, the play ends ambiguously, with Vienna’s true ruler and duke proposing marriage to Isabella, a similar potential abuse of power and case of harassment.

Act 5: “I know you all, and will awhile uphold / The unyoked humour of your idleness.” (Henry IV, Part One)

EMCEE

Moving on to a truly new genre, we have the history play and Shakespeare’s *Henriad*, a series of plays that follow the maturation of Prince Hal or King Henry V. We first encounter the character of Henry, now Hal, in *Henry IV, Part One*, in his youth as the wastrel prince who frequents taverns and brothels. In a soliloquy to the audience at the beginning of the play, as his tavern buddies leave the scene, Prince Hal discusses his plans for how he is going to deal with his reputation as a wastrel prince once he becomes king.

Enter PRINCE HAL.

In modern language...

PRINCE HAL

I know who you all are, that you’re beneath me, and I will go along with you little people. I, like the sun, who is currently letting these people, my friends, these clouds, cover up my glory, will, when it pleases me, break through these ugly fogs and vapors that seem to strangle me. If every single day of the year was a holiday, celebrating would seem just as tedious as working. The change is what pleases people. So, when I let go of this debaucherous behavior, I will exceed such low expectations, and seem even better than if I had been good all along. My bad reputation is a dingy background on which my reformation will shine. And my reputation will seem better for having a worse past to compare it to. I’ll make offenses to play this game, redeeming myself when people think I will the least.

EMCEE

Hal uses this truly beautiful rhetoric to explain how he will present his “reformation”, a series of three or four evocative metaphors. I encourage you to listen for the shifts and different motions of his argument, in Shakespeare’s language...

PRINCE HAL

I know you all, and will awhile uphold
 The unyoked humour of your idleness:
 Yet herein will I imitate the sun,
 Who doth permit the base contagious clouds
 To smother up his beauty from the world,
 That, when he please again to be himself,
 Being wanted, he may be more wonder'd at,
 By breaking through the foul and ugly mists
 Of vapours that did seem to strangle him.
 If all the year were playing holidays,
 To sport would be as tedious as to work;
 But when they seldom come, they wish'd for come,
 And nothing pleaseth but rare accidents.
 So, when this loose behavior I throw off
 And pay the debt I never promised,
 By how much better than my word I am,
 By so much shall I falsify men's hopes;
 And like bright metal on a sullen ground,
 My reformation, glittering o'er my fault,
 Shall show more goodly and attract more eyes
 Than that which hath no foil to set it off.
 I'll so offend, to make offence a skill;
 Redeeming time when men think least I will.

EMCEE

And indeed, he does—try to act his reformation, that is.

Act 6: “You have witchcraft in your lips, Kate” (Henry V)

EMCEE

Prince Hal becomes King Henry V, after the death of his father, Henry IV. And in the play, *Henry V*, Henry decides to go to war with France to claim the French throne and prove his reputation as a good ruler. Spoiler alert: England wins, and as part of his victory, he gets to marry the French princess, Katharine. In the following scene, which is part of the last scene of the play, we see the figure of Henry transform from a soldier in this history and war play to a blushing lover, the play, in its last breath, changing from a history to a comedy that ends in marriage.

Enter KATHARINE and ALICE.

In this scene we see Henry, king of England; Katharine, princess of France; and Alice, Katharine's waiting-woman. Henry tries to woo Katharine, to be his bride. Note, while watching this scene: Katharine has already been promised as a war bride to Henry, and she doesn't know English very well in the first place.

KING HENRY V

Fair Katharine, and most fair,
Will you vouchsafe to teach a soldier terms
Such as will enter at a lady's ear
And plead his love-suit to her gentle heart?

KATHARINE

Your majesty shall mock at me; I cannot speak your England.

KING HENRY V

O fair Katharine, if you will love me soundly with
your French heart, I will be glad to hear you
confess it brokenly with your English tongue. Do
you like me, Kate?

KATHARINE

Pardonnez-moi, I cannot tell vat is 'like me.'

KING HENRY V

An angel is like you, Kate, and you are like an angel.

KATHARINE

Que dit-il? que je suis semblable a les anges?

ALICE

Oui, vraiment, sauf votre grace, ainsi dit-il.

KING HENRY V

I said so, dear Katharine; and I must not blush to
affirm it.

KATHARINE

O bon Dieu! les langues des hommes sont pleines de tromperies.

KING HENRY V

What says she, fair one? that the tongues of men are full of deceits?

ALICE

Oui, dat de tongues of de mans is be full of deceits: dat is de princess.

KING HENRY V

The princess is the better Englishwoman. I' faith, Kate, my wooing is fit for thy understanding: I am glad thou canst speak no better English; for, if thou couldst, thou wouldst find me such a plain king that thou wouldst think I had sold my farm to buy my crown. I know no ways to mince it in love, but directly to say 'I love you!' then if you urge me farther than to say 'do you in faith?' I wear out my suit. Give me your answer; i' faith, do: and so clap hands and a bargain: how say you, lady?

KATHARINE

Sauf votre bonneur; me understand vell.

KING HENRY V

Marry, if you would put me to verses or to dance for your sake, Kate, why you undid me: for the one, I have neither words nor measure, and for the other, I have no strength in measure, yet a reasonable measure in strength. If I could win a lady at leap-frog, or by vaulting into my saddle with my armour on my back, under the correction of bragging be it spoken, I should quickly leap into a wife. But, before God, a good heart, Kate, is the sun and the moon; or, rather, the sun, and not the moon; for it shines bright and never changes, but keeps his course truly. If thou would have such a one, take me; and take me, take a soldier; take a soldier, take a king. And what sayest thou then to my love?

speak, my fair, and fairly, I pray thee.

KATHARINE

Is it possible dat I sould love de enemy of France?

KING HENRY V

No; it is not possible you should love the enemy of France, Kate: but, in loving me, you should love the friend of France; for I love France so well that I will not part with a village of it; I will have it all mine: and, Kate, when France is mine and I am yours, then yours is France and you are mine.

KATHARINE

I cannot tell vat is dat.

KING HENRY V

No, Kate? I will tell thee in French; which I am sure will hang upon my tongue like a new-married wife about her husband's neck, hardly to be shook off. *Je quand sur le possession de France, et quand vous avez le possession de moi,--let me see, what then? Saint Denis be my speed!—donc votre est France et vous êtes mienne.* It is as easy for me, Kate, to conquer the kingdom as to speak so much more French: I shall never move thee in French, unless it be to laugh at me.

KATHARINE

Sauf votre bonheur, le Francois que vous parlez; il est meilleur que l'Anglois lequel je parle.

KING HENRY V

No, faith, is't not, Kate: but thy speaking of my tongue, and I thine, most truly-falsely, must needs be granted to be much at one. But, Kate, dost thou understand thus much English, canst thou love me?

KATHARINE

I cannot tell.

KING HENRY V

Can any of your neighbours tell, Kate? I'll ask them. Come, I know thou lovest me: and at night, when you come into your closet, you'll question this gentlewoman about me. Shall not thou and I, between Saint Denis and Saint George, compound a boy, half French, half English, that shall go to Constantinople and take the Turk by the beard? shall we not? what sayest thou, my fair flower-de-luce?

KATHARINE

I do not know dat

KING HENRY V

No; 'tis hereafter to know, but now to promise. How answer you, *la plus belle Katharine du monde, mon très cher et devin deesse?*

KATHARINE

Your *majestee* 'ave *fausse* French enough to deceive de most *sage demoiselle* dat is en France.

KING HENRY V

Now, fie upon my false French! By mine honour, in true English, I love thee, Kate. But, tell me, will you have me? Put off your maiden blushes; avouch the thoughts of your heart with the looks of an empress; take me by the hand, and say 'Harry of England I am thine:' which word thou shalt no sooner bless mine ear withal, but I will tell thee aloud 'England is thine, Ireland is thine, France is thine, and Harry Plantagenet is thine.'

Come, your answer in broken music; for thy voice is music and thy English broken; therefore, queen of all, Katharine, break thy mind to me in broken English; wilt thou have me?

KATHARINE

Dat is as it sall please *de roi mon pere*.

KING HENRY V

Nay, it will please him well, Kate it shall please him, Kate.

KATHARINE

Den it sall also content me.

KING HENRY V

Upon that I kiss your hand, and I call you my queen.

KATHARINE

Laissez, mon seigneur, laissez, laissez: ma foi, je ne veux point que vous abaissiez votre grandeur en baisant la main d'une de votre seigneurie indigne serviteur; excusez-moi, je vous supplie, mon tres-puissant seigneur.

KING HENRY V

Then I will kiss your lips, Kate.

KATHARINE

Les dames et demoiselles pour être baisées devant leur nocces, il n'est pas la coutume de France.

KING HENRY V

Madam my interpreter, what says she?

ALICE

Dat it is not be de fashion pour *les* ladies of France—I cannot tell vat is *baiser* en English.

KING HENRY V

To kiss.

ALICE

Your majesty *entendre bettre que moi*.

KING HENRY V

It is not a fashion for the maids in France to kiss before they are married, would she say?

ALICE

Oui, vraiment.

KING HENRY V

O Kate, nice customs curtsy to great kings. Dear Kate, you and I cannot be confined within the weak list of a country's fashion: we are the makers of manners, Kate; and the liberty that follows our places stops the mouth of all find-faults; as I will do yours, for upholding the nice fashion of your country in denying me a kiss: therefore, patiently and yielding.

Kissing her.

You have witchcraft in your lips, Kate: there is more eloquence in a sugar touch of them than in the tongues of the French council; and they should sooner persuade Harry of England than a general petition of monarchs.

EMCEE

As hard as Henry is trying to woo Katharine, Katharine is already secured for him. The question is, “Who is Henry trying to woo?” Is it Katharine? It can’t be—she doesn’t know English, so she can’t understand what he is saying. One may interpret, then, that Henry is trying to woo the audience, to get the audience to valorize him and see him as a valiant figure, one that earnestly is asking for Katharine’s consent; however, I would argue that she does not have her consent to give, as it’s already been captured in this world of war. This scene is not as explicit as that between Isabella and Angelo in *Measure for Measure*, but it’s definitely in a similar vein—we must ask, “What is consent?”, and reckon with the thought that if you are asking that question, it has not been granted.

Exit KING HENRY V, KATHARINE, and ALICE.

Act 7: “To be, or not to be” (Hamlet)

EMCEE

Changing genres again, I bring to your attention a little known play called, *Hamlet*, a tragedy. What may be one of the most famous phrases in the English language, “To be, or not to be,” proves to come from a monologue that can be quite difficult to understand. Hamlet, who has been accosted by the ghost of his father who asks him to avenge his death by murdering Hamlet’s uncle, is in the

process of putting on a mad disposition. Hamlet's uncle has taken the throne and married Hamlet's mother.

Enter HAMLET.

Hamlet famously ruminates and procrastinates, and in this monologue, he ruminates on the idea of taking his own life.

HAMLET

To live or not to live, that is the question. Is it nobler to put up with all the outrageous trials and pains that life throws at you, or to take arms against them, in ending it? Death is nothing worse than sleep, and sleep ends all the heartache and disease and physical vulnerability that life gives us. To die, to sleep; to sleep, maybe to dream. Ah, but there's the catch. Because we have to give consideration to the dreams that come after life. That's what makes us live with adversity and pain for so long, what makes us bear suffering for so long. Because who would endure life's disdain and contempt, the abuse of superiors, proud men's insults, the pain of unrequited love, the bureaucracy of office, and the contempt that deserving people must patiently endure from less worthy persons—when one could instead, settle this account with one stroke of an unsheathed dagger? Who would bear the burdens of a tiring life, if there was not a dread for what comes after death, the fact that no one comes back? That which makes us bear the pains we know rather than confront the ones who don't? You see, punishment for sins makes us all cowards. And so, that crimson red resolution is covered with the ashen tint of contemplation. Thus, considerable actions go undelivered.

EMCEE

This monologue, famous as it is, has been interpreted many ways. A popular interpretation of it is that it depicts the universal human condition. I appreciate this, and I appreciate the ways in which we try to see ourselves in art. However, Dr. Marcy North, a professor of English at Penn State, posits that perhaps, this monologue is Hamlet's way of trying to fake being mad, to the people who surround him, to get them to think that he is not plotting to kill his uncle, the new king. What I find most enchanting about this monologue, however, is the way that Shakespeare structures Hamlet's thought process, a series of phrases interrupted by others, in this disorder of thought.

HAMLET

To be, or not to be, that is the question,
Whether 'tis nobler in the mind to suffer
The slings and arrows of outrageous fortune,
Or to take arms against a sea of troubles,
And by opposing end them? To die: to sleep;
No more; and by a sleep to say we end
The heart-ache and the thousand natural shocks

That flesh is heir to, 'tis a consummation
 Devoutly to be wish'd. To die, to sleep;
 To sleep: perchance to dream: ay, there's the rub;
 For in that sleep of death what dreams may come
 When we have shuffled off this mortal coil,
 Must give us pause: there's the respect
 That makes calamity of so long life;
 For who would bear the whips and scorns of time,
 The oppressor's wrong, the proud man's contumely,
 The pangs of despised love, the law's delay,
 The insolence of office and the spurns
 That patient merit of the unworthy takes,
 When he himself might his quietus make
 With a bare bodkin? who would fardels bear,
 To grunt and sweat under a weary life,
 But that the dread of something after death,
 The undiscover'd country from whose bourn
 No traveller returns, puzzles the will
 And makes us rather bear those ills we have
 Than fly to others that we know not of?
 Thus conscience does make cowards of us all;
 And thus the native hue of resolution
 Is sicklied o'er with the pale cast of thought,
 And enterprises of great pith and moment
 With this regard their currents turn awry,
 And lose the name of action.

Exit HAMLET.

EMCEE

And whether or not Hamlet's monologue should be interpreted as universal, it may still strike as such, as we collectively wrestle with the concept of mortality.

Act 8: "Is it possible disdain should die?" (Much Ado About Nothing)

EMCEE

And, switching genres for a final time, I invite us back into the world of comedy, for the last two acts of this cabaret. *Much Ado About Nothing* is Shakespeare's romantic comedy that is "much ado about" noting (or the act of observance) and about women's virginity, as "nothing" was Elizabethan slang for vagina. In this play, we are introduced to two couples, and the first is the rivalry and game of wits between two sworn enemies, the caustic Beatrice and the bachelor, Benedick.

Enter BEATRICE and BENEDICK.

Benedick, a soldier, has just come back to town, and they meet again, in a fabulous display of dialogic word play. First, in modern language...

BEATRICE

I wonder why you're still talking, Signior Benedick; nobody's paying attention.

BENEDICK

What, my dear Ms. Disdain! Are you still alive?

BEATRICE

Is it possible that Disdain should die when she has such food to feast on as Signior Benedick? Courtesy herself must turn into disdain, if she encounters you.

BENEDICK

Then, Courtesy is a traitor. But it's certain that all women love me—except for you. And I wish I could find it in myself that I didn't have a cold heart, because I truly love nobody.

BEATRICE

A dear thanks to all women! I thank God, and my own cold heart, that I am like you in that. I would rather hear a dog bark at a bird than hear a man say that he loves me.

BENEDICK

Please remember that! Lest some man's face be scratched.

BEATRICE

Scratching could not make it any worse, if it was your face.

BENEDICK

Look at you, instructing like a parrot.

BEATRICE

I'd rather squawk like a bird than growl like an animal of yours.

BENEDICK

I wish my horse was as fast as your tongue, and just as tireless. That's it—I'm done.

BEATRICE

You always dip out of the argument like that; I've known you before.

EMCEE

Beatrice and Benedick might not, in fact, be the main plot of *Much Ado*; however, their verbal matches and their courtship are often the most memorable parts of the play. In Shakespearean language...

BEATRICE

I wonder that you will still be talking, Signior
Benedick: nobody marks you.

BENEDICK

What, my dear Lady Disdain! are you yet living?

BEATRICE

Is it possible disdain should die while she hath
such meet food to feed it as Signior Benedick?
Courtesy itself must convert to disdain, if you come in her presence.

BENEDICK

Then is courtesy a turncoat. But it is certain I
am loved of all ladies, only you excepted: and I
would I could find in my heart that I had not a hard
heart; for, truly, I love none.

BEATRICE

A dear happiness to women: they would else have
been troubled with a pernicious suitor. I thank God
and my cold blood, I am of your humour for that: I
had rather hear my dog bark at a crow than a man
swear he loves me.

BENEDICK

God keep your ladyship still in that mind! so some
gentleman or other shall 'scape a predestinate
scratched face.

BEATRICE

Scratching could not make it worse, an 'twere such
a face as yours were.

BENEDICK

Well, you are a rare parrot-teacher.

BEATRICE

A bird of my tongue is better than a beast of yours.

BENEDICK

I would my horse had the speed of your tongue, and so good a continuer. But keep your way, i' God's name; I have done.

BEATRICE

You always end with a jade's trick: I know you of old.

EMCEE

Indeed, Beatrice does know Benedick “of old.” It is revealed, in Act 2, that they once possibly wooed, and that Beatrice, in a way, lost Benedick’s heart.

Act 9: “I do love nothing in the world so well as you” (Much Ado About Nothing)

EMCEE

The two spar initially, but through some amazing scenes of false observation, Benedick’s friends convince him that Beatrice is actually in love with him, and Beatrice’s friends trick her into thinking that Benedick is in love with her—a true romantic comedy. Meanwhile, Benedick’s friend, Claudio, leaves Beatrice’s cousin, Hero, at the altar on their wedding day, over false accusations of infidelity, leaving the poor Hero devastated. In these heightened emotional circumstances, Beatrice and Benedick have a moment together after the disaster at the altar, where they check in on one another and let each other know their true feelings. In the last act for today, we present to you only in Shakespeare’s language—I think you will be able to understand it....

BENEDICK

Lady Beatrice, have you wept all this while?

BEATRICE

Yea, and I will weep a while longer.

BENEDICK

I will not desire that.

BEATRICE

You have no reason; I do it freely.

BENEDICK

Surely I do believe your fair cousin is wronged.

BEATRICE

Ah, how much might the man deserve of me that would right her!

BENEDICK

Is there any way to show such friendship?

BEATRICE

A very even way, but no such friend.

BENEDICK

May a man do it?

BEATRICE

It is a man's office, but not yours.

BENEDICK

I do love nothing in the world so well as you: is not that strange?

BEATRICE

As strange as the thing I know not. It were as possible for me to say I loved nothing so well as you: but believe me not; and yet I lie not; I confess nothing, nor I deny nothing. I am sorry for my cousin.

BENEDICK

By my sword, Beatrice, thou lovest me.

BEATRICE

Do not swear, and eat it.

BENEDICK

I will swear by it that you love me; and I will make him eat it that says I love not you.

BEATRICE

Will you not eat your word?

BENEDICK

With no sauce that can be devised to it. I protest
I love thee.

BEATRICE

Why, then, God forgive me!

BENEDICK

What offence, sweet Beatrice?

BEATRICE

You have stayed me in a happy hour:
I was about to protest I loved you.

BENEDICK

And do it with all thy heart.

BEATRICE

I love you with so much of my heart that none is
left to protest.

BENEDICK

Come, bid me do anything for thee.

BEATRICE

Kill Claudio.

BENEDICK

Ha! not for the wide world.

BEATRICE

You kill me to deny it. Farewell.

BENEDICK

Tarry, sweet Beatrice.

BEATRICE

I am gone, though I am here: there is no love in
you: nay, I pray you, let me go.

BENEDICK

Beatrice,--

BEATRICE

In faith, I will go.

BENEDICK

We'll be friends first.

BEATRICE

You dare easier be friends with me than fight with mine enemy.

BENEDICK

Is Claudio thine enemy?

BEATRICE

Is he not approved in the height a villain, that hath slandered, scorned, dishonoured my kinswoman? O that I were a man! What, bear her in hand until they come to take hands; and then, with public accusation, uncovered slander, unmitigated rancour, --O God, that I were a man! I would eat his heart in the market-place.

BENEDICK

Hear me, Beatrice,--

BEATRICE

Talk with a man out at a window! A proper saying!

BENEDICK

Nay, but, Beatrice,--

BEATRICE

Sweet Hero! She is wronged, she is slandered, she is undone.

BENEDICK

Beat--

BEATRICE

Princes and counties! Surely, a princely testimony, a goodly count, Count Comfect; a sweet gallant,

surely! O that I were a man for his sake! or that I had any friend would be a man for my sake! But manhood is melted into courtesies, valour into compliment, and men are only turned into tongue, and trim ones too: he is now as valiant as Hercules that only tells a lie and swears it. I cannot be a man with wishing, therefore I will die a woman with grieving.

BENEDICK

Tarry, good Beatrice. By this hand, I love thee.

BEATRICE

Use it for my love some other way than swearing by it.

BENEDICK

Think you in your soul the Count Claudio hath wronged Hero?

BEATRICE

Yea, as sure as I have a thought or a soul.

BENEDICK

Enough, I am engaged; I will challenge him. I will kiss your hand, and so I leave you. By this hand, Claudio shall render me a dear account. As you hear of me, so think of me. And so, farewell.

EMCEE

And so, that is where we leave Beatrice and Benedick. A spoiler, I warn: it works out for the two of them, and there is so much joy to be had in found-again love.

Exit BEATRICE.

Epilogue

EMCEE

Thank you for joining us in exploring Shakespeare, in both modern context and modern language. Before we leave today, I want to mention one more thing—I want to acknowledge that Shakespeare is difficult, and I thank you for your cooperation today. We often encounter Shakespeare’s works in high school literature classrooms, an acquaintance we make not of our own free will. The relationship can be tense and stressed. The question that has driven my work has been, “Why do we still do Shakespeare?” Dame Judi Dench, a famed Shakespearean actress, says about the complete

works of Shakespeare, “It’s essential...for anyone who’s ever been in love, felt jealousy, fear, hatred, or desire. All human life is here.” Shakespeare is steeped in our culture, in references and the origin of words themselves, and I think part of that is because Shakespeare makes us feel understood in our human experiences. Shakespeare’s language can be tough, but rewarding. And once again, and I say this as someone majoring in English and Theatre Studies: Shakespeare is difficult. I have the great and beloved misfortune of loving it, the language. And I invite you to join me.

EMCEE will gesture for all actors to enter the stage again and line up on the stage.

If you are interested in seeing more modern approaches to Shakespeare, and especially in seeing the issue of consent depicted and discussed, please consider coming to see director Sam Osheroff’s, *A Midsummer Night’s Dream* with Penn State Centre Stage from this November 30 to December 9, here in State College. Thank you so much to our wonderful cast and directors for their work here today.

All the company bows.

And thank you, once again, to 3 Dots for hosting us today. My name is Arushi Grover, and I wish you a wonderful night.