ALL'S WELL THAT ENDS WELL

The play begins with a young Bertram assuming the title of Count of Rossillion upon the death of his father. Helena is the orphaned daughter of a great doctor, and for years lived in the Rossillion household under the care of Bertram's mother, the Countess. Over the years, Helena has developed a secret love for Bertram, although she dares not tell him. The Countess, however, is well aware of Helena's feelings (and indeed approves of them).

Against this backdrop, the King of France has taken deathly ill. Bertram has left to attend the King's court; Helena soon follows him to Paris, bearing a prescription of her father's that she feels might hold a cure for the ailing king. The cure earns her the gratitude of the King, who keeps a bargain between them that she can have her pick of the bachelors at his court. Helena, of course, picks Bertram, who is quite put off by the prospect. To Bertram, Helena is beneath and unworthy of his notice. Nevertheless, the King will keep his word—Bertram is ordered to marry her. Under protest, Bertram assents to the marriage, but slips off to war in Tuscany with his cowardly companion, Parolles.

Helena returns to Rossillion and the Countess, at first assuming that Bertram will be along directly. As it becomes apparent that he will not, Bertram sends word that she may not call him husband until she gets from him a ring (which he always wears) and can bear him a child—not a simple task, especially considering that Bertram is in Italy with no intention of ever consummating their marriage. Helena once again takes matters into her own hands and sets out to follow Bertram. She arrives in Florence in the guise of a pilgrim and winds up lodging with a widow whose daughter, Diana, is ironically the object of Bertram's affections. With Diana's help, Helena aims to trap Bertram, and thus is born one of the more famous plots in Shakespeare's repertoire: the original bed trick.

Helena gets Diana to accept Bertram's advances. Bertram, however, must agree to give Diana his ring before they share a bed. At the crucial moment, Helena takes Diana's place in the dark. She exchanges a ring that the King had given her for Bertram's, thus accomplishing both terms of Bertram's challenge. When a rumor is spread of Helena's death, Bertram figures that he is clear of any responsibility for a wife he never wanted, and he returns to France. However, the King easily recognizes the ring he bears as Helena's; when Bertram is caught in a series of lies, the King has him arrested (supposing that Bertram has murdered her). Adding to Bertram's misery, Diana and her widow mother arrive demanding justice, and this corners the young lord in even more lies. Helena finally appears—bearing Bertram's ring and carrying his child—and reveals the truth to all. Bertram ostensibly repents of his wrongdoings and avows his dear love for Helena.

AS YOU LIKE IT

As the play opens, Duke Frederick has usurped the title and throne of his elder brother, Duke Senior. The elder Duke has taken up residence in the Forest of Arden with his band of loyal followers, with his daughter, Rosalind, staying behind at the court. Into this situation, enter Orlando and Oliver de Boys, two brothers divided by enmity. Orlando has long been mistreated by his brother, and when Orlando enters a wrestling match sponsored by Duke Frederick, Oliver tells his opponent, Charles—a champion wrestler—to break Orlando's neck if need be. To the surprise of all, Orlando wins the match. In doing so, he attracts the attention of Rosalind and the ire of Oliver. Orlando flees into Arden, taking with him his servant, Adam, with Oliver in dogged pursuit. Likewise, Duke Frederick decides to banish Rosalind to Arden like her father; Celia, Frederick's daughter and Rosalind's best friend, travels with her. Rosalind disguises herself as a boy called Ganymede, and Celia will take the part of "his" sister, Aliena. They are accompanied by the clown Touchstone.

Orlando winds up in the company of Duke Senior's men, pining for his lost Rosalind. Rosalind, meanwhile, purchases a flock of sheep and a pasture, and sets out to lead a pastoral life. Before long, however, Orlando's habit of carving Rosalind's name in the trees and leaving love poems to her about the forest tip her off to Orlando's presence and whereabouts. Still disguised as Ganymede, Rosalind promises to cure Orlando's heartache by letting him pour his feelings out to Ganymede as if "he" were Rosalind. Also as Ganymede, Rosalind attempts a match between Silvius and Phebe that goes awry; Phebe falls for Rosalind's Ganymede alter ego. Touchstone also courts a country girl named Audrey, adding to the multiple romances.

The resolution begins when Oliver enters the camp. Orlando has saved him from an attack by a lion, and the two brothers have reconciled. Upon meeting Celia, now Oliver falls in love; Duke Senior promises to join them in wedlock the next day. Rosalind makes Phebe promise to marry Silvius if she can't have Ganymede, then tells Orlando that Rosalind will marry him that day as well. When all have gathered for the wedding, Rosalind reveals herself as the erstwhile Ganymede. She and Orlando are happily reunited, and Phebe agrees to marry Silvius. As a final addition, Touchstone will also marry Audrey. In a final resolution, Orlando and Oliver's brother Jaques de Boy enters the scene. He brings news that Duke Frederick, upon meeting a holy man, has repented his ways, opted for a monastic life, and restored Duke Senior's throne.

SHAKESPEARE RESOURCE CENTER
http://www.bardweb.net/plays/30.html
COMEDIES
**THE COMEDY OF ERRORS**

The play opens with Aegeon, a merchant of Syracuse, being arrested in Ephesus because of enmity between Ephesus and Syracuse. Aegeon tells Solinus, the Duke of Ephesus, his tale: he was shipwrecked many years ago while sailing with his wife, Aemilia, and two pairs of identical twins—their twin sons, both named Antipholus, and twin servants, both named Dromio. In the course of the storm, his wife, one of their sons, and one their servants, were lost. At eighteen, Aegeon had allowed the remaining Antipholus and Dromio to leave Syracuse for Ephesus to search for their long-lost twins, at which point both of them had disappeared as well. After five years, Aegeon had come to Ephesus to find them.

Solinus, moved by the old man's tale, postpones Aegeon's sentence; Aegeon has until nightfall to produce a ransom, or he will be put to death. At this point in the action, Antipholus of Syracuse arrives in Ephesus, and the farce commences as everyone—including the twins themselves—confuses the identities of the twins. Antipholus of Syracuse ends up invited to dinner at the home of Antipholus of Ephesus and dines with his twin's wife, Adriana. Meanwhile, Angelo, a merchant, gives a gold chain commissioned by Antipholus of Ephesus to Antipholus of Syracuse by mistake, telling him he'll come back later for payment. When Antipholus of Ephesus refuses to pay later on, Angelo has him arrested. All this time, Adriana and her sister, Luciana, are convinced that Antipholus and Dromio (of Ephesus) have gone mad, which leads them to forcibly restrain them and take them to a doctor.

Of course, when Adriana later encounters Antipholus and Dromio of Syracuse, she thinks they've escaped from the doctor. The pair from Syracuse are forced to flee into a nearby abbey for refuge. In the meantime, Antipholus and Dromio of Ephesus do escape from the doctor, and arrive to petition the Duke as Aegeon is being led to his death. In the midst of everyone trying to tell their varying accounts of the day, Antipholus and Dromio of Syracuse arrive with the abbess—who turns out to be Aemilia, Aegeon's long-lost wife. The twins all sort out their stories in the presence of the Duke. In the end, Aegeon is released from his death sentence and reunited with his wife and sons, Antipholus of Syracuse is set to marry Luciana, and all has been put to right.

**LOVE'S LABOR LOST**

Ferdinand, King of Navarre, opens the play by declaring that his court will be devoted to ascetic study for three years—and, to keep the distractions to a minimum, no women will be allowed within a mile of the court. Berowne, Longaville, and Dumaine agree to devote themselves with the King (although Berowne expresses reservations about the venture and its chances for success). Berowne also points out that the king has forgotten an embassy that very day with the Princess of France. As they set out to meet the princess, the king's fool, Costard, is sent to Don Armado to receive punishment for breaking the king's commands with the country wench, Jacquenetta.

Needless to say, the Princess and her entourage are put off when Ferdinand and his lords deny them entrance into the court. In protest, the embassy camps in front of the court. Boyet makes note of the king's "affection" toward the Princess, and the ladies retreat to their tents to plan how they can get back at Ferdinand and his court. In the meantime, Armado—who is himself in love with Jacquenetta—strikes a deal with Costard to let him off if Costard will deliver a letter to the wench. Before Costard can do so, however, Berowne finds him and asks him to take a letter to Rosaline. This sets up a highly comic series of errors as Costard manages to deliver Jacquenetta's letter to the Princess of France and Rosaline's letter to Jacquenetta.

At this point, King Ferdinand and his lords overhear one another professing their love for their respective ladies and to a man decide that their oaths are better off left for dead while the women are around. When the lords pay a visit to the ladies in disguise, however, the ladies turn the tables on them with disguises of their own. When the men return as themselves, the women continue to bait them with their own words, delighting in the men's confusion. Just when they begin to sort things out and sit down for a pageant, a messenger arrives to inform the Princess that her father has died, and she must leave immediately. The Princess tells Ferdinand that if he spends one year's time cloistered in a remote hermitage—his penance for being an oath-breaker—while she is in mourning, then she will consider his suit of marriage. Each lady-in-waiting exacts a similar promise from the king's lords. Although there will be no weddings forthcoming, the ladies vow to return to Navarre the following year to determine if their love is true.
MEASURE FOR MEASURE

Vincentio, Duke of Vienna, decides to take a sabbatical, appointing his deputy, Angelo, to rule as his proxy while the Duke is gone. The Duke, it seems, has grown lax in the enforcement of laws regarding wanton or unchaste behavior, and Angelo is given his powers for two specific reasons: a) the Duke doesn't want to seem a bad man, and b) someone has to accept the unpleasant and unpopular task of being more strict. Angelo is a zealous man, and the Duke feels he is perfect for the task. In the meantime, the Duke secretly remains in town disguised as a friar in order to keep an eye on things from the people's point of view.

Angelo's enthusiasm and harshness in carrying out his duties take everyone aback. When Claudio is arrested for getting his fiancée, Juliet, pregnant before they are married, Angelo condemns him with a death sentence. Claudio's sister, Isabella, hastens to Angelo to plead for her brother's life. Isabella is a novitiate preparing to enter a nunnery. Angelo is at first unwilling to budge, but Isabella's pleading (and beauty) eventually moves him in an unexpected way—he will grant a pardon to Claudio if she will yield her virginity to him. Isabella scorns his proposition; her chastity and honor are her life. She relates her tale to Claudio, who understandably is more willing trade his sister's virtue for his life. While in the jail, the Duke (in disguise) eavesdrops upon the conversation and sets into motion a plot to save both Claudio and Isabella from their predicament.

The Duke knows of one Mariana, formerly engaged to Angelo, who still loves him. He persuades Isabella to feign acceptance of Angelo's offer; when the moment comes, Mariana will switch places in the dark with Isabella (the bed trick of All's Well That Ends Well being used again). Mariana agrees readily to the plot, and the events transpire as planned. Angelo, however, decides to execute Claudio anyway. When the Duke gets this news, he persuades the jailer to substitute another condemned man for Claudio and to carry out the execution "as planned." All he tells Isabella is that she has been betrayed by Angelo, and she should seek justice from the Duke (who is soon expected to return). With that, the Duke abandons his disguise as a friar to make his entrance into Vienna.

When Isabel and Mariana make their accusations, Angelo is cornered. At first he charges Isabella with lying and lays blame with the secret friar (the Duke's disguised alter-ego). When the Duke is revealed as the friar, Angelo can do nothing but throw himself on the mercy of the Duke and Isabella. Claudio is revealed to be alive, Mariana pleads for Angelo's life, and the Duke orders that Angelo should marry Mariana and Claudio should marry Juliet. The Duke makes his own arrangements to be married with Isabella.

THE MERCHANT OF VENICE

In Venice, young Bassanio needs a loan of 3,000 ducats so that he can properly woo a wealthy heiress of Venice named Portia. To get the necessary funds, Bassanio entreats his friend Antonio, a merchant. Antonio's money, unfortunately, is invested in merchant ships that are presently at sea; however, to help Bassanio, Antonio arranges for a short-term loan of the money from Shylock, a Jewish usurer. Shylock has a deep-seated hatred for Antonio because of the insulting treatment that Antonio has shown him in the past. When pressed, Shylock strikes a terrible bargain: the 3,000 ducats must be repaid in three months, or Shylock will exact a pound of flesh from Antonio. The merchant agrees to this, confident in the return of his ships before the appointed date of repayment.

At this stage of the play, Portia is introduced: due to her father's will, all suitors must choose from among three coffers—one of which contains a portrait of her. If a man chooses the right one, he may marry Portia; however, if he chooses wrong, he must vow never to marry or even court another woman. Princes of Morocco and Arragon fail this test and are turned away. As Bassanio prepares to travel to Belmont for the test, his friend Lorenzo elopes with Jessica, Shylock's daughter (who escapes with a fair amount of Shylock's wealth in the process). Bassanio chooses the lead casket, which is the correct one, and happily agrees to marry Portia that very night.

In contrast to this happiness, Antonio finds himself in a pinch. Two of his ships have already wrecked in transit, and Antonio's creditors—including the vengeance-minded Shylock—are grumbling about repayment. Word comes to Bassanio about Antonio's predicament, and he hastens back to Venice, leaving Portia behind. Portia, however, travels after him with her maid, Nerissa; they disguise themselves as a lawyer and clerk, respectively. When Bassanio arrives, the loan is in default and Shylock is demanding his pound of flesh. Even when Bassanio (backed now by Portia's inheritance) offers many times the amount in repayment, Shylock is intent on revenge. The duke, who sits in judgement, will not intervene. Portia enters in her guise as a lawyer to defend Antonio. Through a technicality, Portia declares that Shylock may have his pound of flesh so long as he draws no blood (since there was no mention of this in the original agreement). And, since it is obvious that to draw a pound of flesh would take Antonio's life, Shylock has conspired to murder a Venetian citizen; he has forfeited his wealth as well as his loan. Half is to go to the city, and half is to go to Antonio.

In the end, Antonio gives back his half of the penalty on the condition that Shylock bequeath it to his disinherited daughter, Jessica. Shylock also must convert to Christianity. A broken and defeated Shylock accepts in a piteously moving scene. As the play ends, news arrives that Antonio's remaining ships are returned to port; with the exception of the humiliated Shylock, all will share in a happy ending.
THE MERRY WIVES OF WINDSOR

Sir John Falstaff, a knight down on both luck and cash, hatches a scheme to raise funds. He will seduce Mistress Ford and Mistress Page in an attempt to get at their husbands' money. Falstaff, however, has overestimated his ingenuity; the two women compare their letters, and—finding them identical—hatch a plan of their own to make a buffoon of the knight. They send him letters in return to encourage his advances. In the meantime, Pistol and Nym, whom Falstaff has sacked, go to Ford and Page's husbands with the news. Ford, who is jealous and paranoid, disguises himself and meets Falstaff. He pretends to be an illicit lover who wishes to hire Falstaff to woo Mistress Ford on his behalf, to which Falstaff agrees.

As Mistresses Ford and Page pursue their sport, Falstaff is first hidden in a basket of dirty laundry and cast into the Thames, then later dressed as a woman and beaten. Finally, the women tell their husbands about their secret revenge, and all plot one last humiliation for the feckless Falstaff. As this is going on, Page's daughter, Anne, is being courted by three suitors, only one of which she actually cares for: Fenton. Anne is included in the plans for Falstaff; she is to lead the children of the town—all dressed as fairies—in an attack on the knight as he waits in the woods for Mistress Ford and Mistress Page. As they prepare for the final prank, the husband Page pulls Slender (one of Anne's suitors) aside and tells him to elope with her that evening; Mistress Page pulls her favorite suitor, Doctor Caius, aside and says she wants him to elope with Anne. The two men are to recognize Anne (she'll be wearing a mask, after all) by the color of dress she wears. To add to this, Anne makes plans of her own to elope with her beloved Fenton.

Falstaff, dressed as Herne (complete with antlers), is mercilessly tormented by the children dressed as fairies. The wives and husbands eventually reveal themselves to the much chagrined Falstaff, who is forgiven by all. In the midst of this resolution, Slender and Doctor Caius reappear. It seems that Slender thought Anne was to wear a white dress; Caius believed her to be wearing green. Both men, having erred on the color of her dress, mistakenly ran off with boys instead of Anne. Fenton arrives with Anne in their wake; the two have married, and Anne's parents begrudgingly accept the fact.

A MIDSUMMER'S NIGHT'S DREAM

Lysander loves Hermia, and Hermia loves Lysander. Helena loves Demetrius; Demetrius used to love Helena but now loves Hermia. Egeus, Hermia's father, prefers Demetrius as a suitor, and enlists the aid of Theseus, the Duke of Athens, to enforce his wishes upon his daughter. According to Athenian law, Hermia is given four days to choose between Demetrius, life in a nunnery, or a death sentence. Hermia, ever defiant, chooses to escape with Lysander into the surrounding forest.

Complications arise in the forest. Oberon and Titania, King and Queen of Fairies, are locked in a dispute over a boy whom Titania has adopted. Oberon instructs his servant Puck to bring him magic love drops, which Oberon will sprinkle in the Queen's eyes as she sleeps, whereupon Titania will fall in love with the first creature she sees upon awakening. Meanwhile, Helena and Demetrius have also fled into the woods after Lysander and Hermia. Oberon, overhearing Demetrius's denouncement of Helena, takes pity upon her and tells Puck to place the magic drops on the eyes of Demetrius as well, so that Demetrius may fall in love with Helena. Puck, however, makes the mistake of putting the drops in the eyes of Lysander instead. Helena stumbles over Lysander in the forest, and the spell is cast; Lysander now desires Helena and renounces a stunned Hermia.

In the midst of this chaos, a group of craftsmen are rehearsing for a production of "Pyramus and Thisbe," to be played for the Duke at his wedding. Puck impishly casts a spell on Bottom to give him the head of a donkey. Bottom, as luck would have it, is the first thing Titania sees when she awakens; hence, Bottom ends up being lavishly kept by the Queen. Oberon enjoys this sport, but is less amused when it becomes apparent that Puck has botched up the attempt to unite Demetrius and Helena. Oberon himself anoints Demetrius with the love potion and ensures that Helena is the first person he sees; however, Helena understandably feels that she is now being mocked by both Demetrius and Lysander (who is still magically enamored of her).

Finally, Oberon decides that all good sports must come to an end. He puts the four lovers to sleep and gives Lysander the antidote for the love potion so that he will love Hermia again when they all wake up. Next, Oberon gives Titania the antidote, and the King and Queen reconcile. Theseus and Hippolyta then discover Lysander, Hermia, Helena, and Demetrius asleep in the forest. All return to Athens to make sense of what they think is a strange dream. Likewise, Bottom returns to his players, and they perform "Pyramus and Thisbe" at the wedding feast (which has since become a wedding of three couples). As everyone retires, fairies perform their blessings and Puck delivers a tender epilogue soliloquy.
MUCH ADO ABOUT NOTHING

Don Pedro, Prince of Arragon, pays a visit to Leonata, the governor of Messina, while returning from a victorious campaign against his rebellious brother, Don John. Accompanying him are two of his officers, Benedick and Claudio. While in Messina, Claudio falls for Leonato's daughter, Hero; Benedick verbally spars with Beatrice, the governor's niece. The budding love between Claudio and Hero prompts Don Pedro to arrange with Leonato for the marriage.

Meanwhile, the trickery begins as Don Pedro (with the help of Leonato and Claudio) attempts to sport with Benedick and Beatrice in an effort to make the two of them fall in love. Likewise, Hero and her waiting woman help to set up Beatrice. Both Benedick and Beatrice will think that the other has professed a great love for them.

The marriage of Claudio to Hero is set to go. Don John—ostensibly reconciled with his brother—despises Claudio, however, and plots against him. First, he tells Claudio that Pedro wants Hero for himself; next, he enlists the aid of his henchman Borachio and one of Hero's gentlewomen disguised as Hero to stage an encounter that will bring Hero's virtue into question. Claudio falls for the ruse and denounces Hero at the altar. Friar Francis helps her, hiding her away and enlisting the aid of Leonata, who announces that his daughter has died of grief from the proceeding.

Fortunately for Hero, Borachio is arrested while drunkenly boasting of his part in the plan (and the 1,000 ducats paid him). With Borachio's confession, Hero is to be exonerated. Leonato demands a public apology from Claudio, then tells him that he will allow Claudio to marry one of his nieces in Hero's place—a niece that turns out to be none other than Hero herself. Claudio and Hero are reunited, Benedick and Beatrice will wed alongside them, and they receive the news that the bastard Don John has been apprehended.

THE TAMING OF THE SHREW

The opening scenes present an unresolved framework to the play: Christopher Sly, a drunken tinker is taken in by a lord who wishes to make sport of him. Sly is dressed and placed in the lord's bedroom, then told that he is a nobleman who had been struck by insanity for some 15 years (from which he has just recovered). For his entertainment, a group of players will present a play entitled "The Taming of the Shrew." (Note: these scenes are commonly omitted from stage productions, as Sly and the rest of the bunch from the Inductions never return to complete the "framework.")

Baptista, a wealthy merchant of Padua, has two daughters: Katherina and Bianca. Because of Katherina's shrewish disposition, her father has declared that no one shall wed Bianca until such time as Katherina has been married. Lucentio of Pisa, one of many suitors to the younger and kinder Bianca, devises a scheme in which he and Tranio (his servant) will switch clothes, and thus disguised, Lucentio will offer his services as a tutor for Bianca in order to get closer to her. At his point, enter Petruchio of Verona, in Padua to visit his friend Hortensio (another suitor to Bianca). Attracted by Katherina's large dowry, Petruchio resolves to woo her.

To the surprise of everyone, Petruchio claims that he finds Katherina charming and pleasant. A marriage is arranged, and Petruchio immediately sets out to tame Katherina through a series of increasingly worse tricks. This involves everything from showing up late to his own wedding to constant contradictions to whatever she says, even to the point of claiming that the sun is in fact the moon. After many trying days and nights, an exhausted Katherina is indeed "tamed" into docility.

By the end of the play, Lucentio has won Bianca's heart and Hortensio settles for a rich widow in Padua. During an evening feast for Bianca and Lucentio, Petruchio makes and wins a wager in which he proposes that he has the most obedient wife of all the men there, at which point Katherina gives Bianca a lecture on how to be a good and loving wife herself.
TWELFTH NIGHT

Viola has been shipwrecked in a violent storm off the coast of Illyria; in the process she has lost her twin brother, Sebastian. She disguises herself as a boy and assumes the name Cesario for protection. Thus disguised, Viola becomes a page in the service of Orsino, the Duke. It seems that Orsino is having little luck courting Olivia, who is in mourning for the death of her father and brother. As Orsino's proxy, Viola is sent to Olivia with love letters. Viola refuses to budge until she is let in to see Olivia; Olivia, intrigued by the impudent young "boy," contrives to get "Cesario" to return by sending her steward, Malvolio, after her with one of Olivia's rings. Viola realizes to her dismay that Olivia has fallen for her Cesario rather than Duke Orsino—further complicated by the fact that Viola has had stirrings herself for Orsino.

In the two major subplots of the play, Sebastian (Viola's twin, presumed dead) comes ashore in Illyria thinking that Viola has drowned in the shipwreck. A man named Antonio rescued him from the surf, and continues to aid him—at some risk to himself, as Antonio fought against the Duke at one time. Meanwhile, in Olivia's house, Sir Toby Belch (her uncle) has hoodwinked a foppish Sir Andrew Aguecheek into supporting him by convincing him that he could be a suitor to Olivia. There is a running feud between Malvolio and Belch; with the help of Maria, Olivia's maid, and Feste, a clown, Belch plots to make a buffoon of the steward. Maria writes a love letter to Malvolio that will make him think Olivia has fallen for him.

Malvolio falls entirely for the sport, which eventually leads to his confinement as a madman. All the while, Belch is egging Sir Andrew into a duel with Viola's "Cesario" character as she departs from Olivia; Olivia is now entirely smitten with Cesario, even though Viola continues to press Orsino's cause. As Viola and Sir Andrew prepare for a duel that neither one wants, Antonio happens upon the scene. Believing Viola to be Sebastian, he intervenes and is arrested. Viola, of course, does not recognize Antonio. Later, Belch and Sir Andrew encounter Sebastian, who doesn't back down from Aguecheek when challenged and resoundingly beats him. Olivia intervenes in the matter, and—mistaking Sebastian for Viola/Cesario—presses her suit for him. A bemused Sebastian agrees to marry her.

Antonio is brought before the Duke for questioning, and Viola relates the events of the duel. Antonio tells everyone how he dragged "this man" from the surf, saving his life. Then Olivia enters, searching for her new husband—which she thinks is Viola (as Cesario). Adding to this confusion, Belch and Aguecheek enter claiming that Viola/Cesario has violently assaulted them. In the midst of Viola's denials, Sebastian appears. The brother and sister recognize one another and are reunited; Sebastian helps to clear the confusion as to who fought and married who. At the end, Orsino and Viola pledge their love, Olivia and Sebastian will remain satisfactorily wed, and Olivia rebukes Belch and Maria for their abuse of Malvolio, who vows his revenge upon the whole lot. Belch agrees to wed Maria to make up for getting her in trouble, and all—except the disgruntled Malvolio—will apparently live happily ever after.

TWO GENTLEMEN OF VERONA

Two youths, Valentine and Proteus, make their way from Verona to Milan. Valentine's father is sending him to take a position in the Duke of Milan's court, and Proteus accompanies him reluctantly, not wanting to leave his beloved Julia. While in Milan, Valentine falls for the Duke's daughter, Silvia. From here, things get considerably more complicated. Silvia is betrothed to Thurio, a wealthy courtier, although Silvia prefers Valentine. The two decide to elope, and Valentine confides in Proteus; Proteus, however, is smitten himself by the sight of Silvia. In order to get Valentine out of the way, Proteus betrays the plan to the Duke. Valentine is banished, Silvia is confined to a jail, and Proteus becomes a confidant of the Duke in matters concerning Thurio and Silvia.

Valentine joins a band of outlaws and is elected their leader. As the play progresses, Julia—disguised as a boy page—enters Milan in search of Proteus, who is trying unsuccessfully to woo Silvia on the sly. Silvia, on the other hand, still longs for Valentine, and cares nothing for Proteus or Thurio. Julia, ironically now in service as a page to Proteus, becomes an intermediary between Proteus and Silvia. Silvia finally tires of the situation and escapes Milan in search of Valentine. As fate would have it, Silvia is captured by Valentine's band of outlaws.

Unfortunately, the Duke has soon learned of Silvia's escape, and he, Proteus, and Thurio all set off to rescue her. Proteus recovers Silvia before the outlaws can bring her to Valentine. Valentine encounters them as Proteus makes the case for his love to Silvia; the two confront and eventually make peace with each other. In a gesture of reconciliation, Valentine even offers Silvia to Proteus, which causes Julia (who is still disguised as the page) to faint, whereupon Proteus recognizes her, much to his shame. The Duke and Thurio arrive upon the scene, but Thurio backs off his claim to Silvia when challenged by Valentine. As the play ends, Valentine gets Silvia with the Duke's approval, Proteus and Julia are reconciled, and the Duke grants a pardon to the band of outlaws.