

Book Discussion Notes –Ten Tales from Shakespeare – Charles & Mary Lamb

1. YLBC – Opening and business
2. Narration – _____
3. Author Review – Shakespeare - _____
4. Discuss Toy, item from home that reminds you of one of the tales
5. Each person say “I like _____ because” (each character)
6. What was your favorite of the ten tales, and why?
- 7.

Discussion:

Shakespeare’s stories are not wont in rich content. Each of the tales in some way are “enrichers of the fancy, strengtheners of virtue, a withdrawing from all selfish and mercenary thoughts, a lesson of all sweet and honorable thoughts and actions, to teach courtesy, benignity, generosity, humanity: for of examples, teaching these virtues, Shakespeare’s pages are full.” Lamb

THE TEMPEST

Summary: A storm strikes a ship carrying Alonso, Ferdinand, Sebastian, Antonio, Gonzalo, Stephano, and Trinculo, who are on their way to Italy after coming from the wedding of Alonso’s daughter, Claribel, to the prince of Tunis in Africa.

Prospero & Mirands watch from shore & he reveals to her that he orchestrated the shipwreck and tells her the lengthy story of her past. The story goes that Prospero was the Duke of Milan until his brother Antonio, conspiring with Alonso, the King of Naples, usurped his position. Kidnapped and left to die on a raft at sea, Prospero and his daughter survive because Gonzalo leaves them supplies and Prospero’s books, which are the source of his magic and power. Prospero and his daughter arrived on the island where they remain now and have been for twelve years. Only now, Prospero says, has Fortune at last sent his enemies his way, and he has raised the tempest in order to make things right with them once and for all.

Prospero uses Ariel to bring Alonso and the others before him. Prospero confronts Alonso, Antonio, and Sebastian with their treachery, but tells them that he forgives them. He draws aside a curtain to reveal Ferdinand and Miranda playing chess. Alonso and his companions are amazed by the miracle of Ferdinand’s survival, and Miranda is stunned by the sight of people unlike any she has seen before. Ferdinand tells his father about his marriage

Prospero stopped using his books and magic, overcome his enemies, reconciled with his brother (Antonio) and the king of Naples, take possession of his dukedom and witness happy nuptials of his daughter and Prince Ferdinand

Virtues:

Faults: Greed

Characters:

Question	Answer
Protagonist(s) – Leading character, hero, or heroine of a drama or other literary work who traditionally, undergoes some sort of change (pushing something forward). –	Prospero
Adjectives to describe Protagonist(s)	Prospero is one of Shakespeare’s more enigmatic protagonists. He is a sympathetic character in that he was wronged by his usurping brother, but his absolute power over the other characters and his overwrought speeches make him difficult to like.
Antagonist - An antagonist is one that contends with or opposes another, adversary or opponent, the villain. The antagonist of a story is the character that provides an obstacle for the protagonist.	Antonio
Adjectives to describe Antagonist(s)	Power hungry, greedy

Rising Action, Climax, Falling Action, Resolution

Question	Answer
Conflict (Man vs. Man, Man vs. Nature, Man vs. God, Man vs. Himself, Man vs. Society)	Man vs. Man
Meaning of the Title	A storm brought all of this into play

Major Themes	Justice - Prospero says, has Fortune at last sent his enemies his way, and he has raised the tempest in order to make things right with them once and for all with Alonso and Antonio. Forgiveness and Reconciliation
Minor Themes	prudence

Other Characters (these are the main, there are others):

Who	Adjectives
Prospero	Protagonist
Ariel	Prospero's spirit helper. Ariel is Prospero's servant until Prospero decides to release him. He is mischievous and ubiquitous, able to traverse the length of the island in an instant and to change shapes at will. He carries out virtually every task that Prospero needs accomplished in the play.
Miranda	Just under fifteen years old, Miranda is a gentle and compassionate, but also relatively passive, heroine. From her very first lines she displays a meek and emotional nature.
Caliban	Prospero's dark, earthy slave, frequently referred to as a monster by the other characters, Caliban is the son of a witch-hag and the only real native of the island to appear in the play.
Ferdinand	Son and heir of Alonso. Ferdinand seems in some ways to be as pure and naïve as Miranda. He falls in love with her upon first sight and happily submits to servitude in order to win her father's approval.
Alonso	King of Naples and father of Ferdinand. Alonso aided Antonio in unseating Prospero as Duke of Milan twelve years before. As he appears in the play, however, he is acutely aware of the consequences of all his actions. After the magical banquet, he regrets his role in the usurping of Prospero.
Antonio	Prospero's brother. Antonio quickly demonstrates that he is power-hungry and foolish.
Sebastian	Alonso's brother. Like Antonio, he is both aggressive and cowardly.
Gonzalo	An old, honest lord, Gonzalo helped Prospero and Miranda to escape after Antonio usurped Prospero's title.

A MIDSUMMER NIGHT'S DREAM

Summary

Egeus, an Athenian nobleman, marches into Theseus's court with his daughter, Hermia, and two young men, Demetrius and Lysander. Egeus wishes Hermia to marry Demetrius (who loves Hermia), but Hermia is in love with Lysander and refuses to comply. Egeus asks for the full penalty of law to fall on Hermia's head if she flouts her father's will. Theseus gives Hermia until his wedding to consider her options, warning her that disobeying her father's wishes could result in her being sent to a convent or even executed. Nonetheless, Hermia and Lysander plan to escape Athens the following night and marry in the house of Lysander's aunt, some seven leagues distant from the city. They make their intentions known to Hermia's friend Helena, who was once engaged to Demetrius and still loves him even though he jilted her after meeting Hermia. Hoping to regain his love, Helena tells Demetrius of the elopement that Hermia and Lysander have planned

Virtues:

Faults:

Characters:

Question	Answer
Protagonist(s)	Puck
Adjectives to describe Protagonist(s)	Enchanting, mischievous
Antagonist	None; the play's tensions are mostly the result of circumstances, accidents, and mistakes
Adjectives to describe Antagonist(s)	

Rising Action, Climax, Falling Action, Resolution

Question	Answer
Conflict (Man vs. Man, Man vs. Nature, Man vs. God, Man vs. Himself, Man vs. Society)	Man Vs Nature
Meaning of the Title	Just that... the magic appears to the lovers as only a dream
Major Themes	The difficulties of love; magic; the nature of dreams; the relationships between fantasy and reality and between environment and experience
Minor Themes	

Other Characters (these are the main, there are others):

Who	Adjectives
Puck	Also known as Robin Goodfellow, Puck is Oberon's jester, a mischievous fairy who delights in playing pranks on mortals. Though <i>A Midsummer Night's Dream</i> divides its action between several groups of characters, Puck is the closest thing the play has to a protagonist. His enchanting, mischievous spirit pervades the atmosphere, and his antics are responsible for many of the complications that propel the other main plots
Oberon	The king of the fairies, Oberon is initially at odds with his wife, Titania, because she refuses to relinquish control of a young Indian prince whom he wants for a knight. Oberon's desire for revenge on Titania leads him to send Puck to obtain the love-potion flower that creates so much of the play's confusion and farce
Titania	The beautiful queen of the fairies, Titania resists the attempts of her husband, Oberon, to make a knight of the young Indian prince that she has been given. Titania's brief, potion-induced love for Nick Bottom, whose head Puck has transformed into that of an ass, yields the play's foremost example of the contrast motif.
Lysander	A young man of Athens, in love with Hermia. Lysander's relationship with Hermia invokes the theme of love's difficulty: he cannot marry her openly because Egeus, her father, wishes her to wed Demetrius; when Lysander and Hermia run away into the forest, Lysander becomes the victim of misapplied magic and wakes up in love with Helena
Demetrius	A young man of Athens, initially in love with Hermia and ultimately in love with Helena. Demetrius's obstinate pursuit of Hermia throws love out of balance among the quartet of Athenian youths and precludes a symmetrical two-couple arrangement
Hermia	Egeus's daughter, a young woman of Athens. Hermia is in love with Lysander and is a childhood friend of Helena. As a result of the fairies' mischief with Oberon's love potion, both Lysander and Demetrius suddenly fall in love with Helena. Self-conscious about her short stature, Hermia suspects that Helena has wooed the men with her height. By morning, however, Puck has sorted matters out with the love potion, and Lysander's love for Hermia is restored.
Helena	A young woman of Athens, in love with Demetrius. Demetrius and Helena were once betrothed, but when Demetrius met Helena's friend Hermia, he fell in love with her and abandoned Helena. Lacking confidence in her looks, Helena thinks that Demetrius and Lysander are mocking her when the fairies' mischief causes them to fall in love with her
Egeus	Hermia's father, who brings a complaint against his daughter to Theseus: Egeus has given Demetrius permission to marry Hermia, but Hermia, in love with Lysander, refuses to marry Demetrius
Theseus	The heroic duke of Athens, engaged to Hippolyta. Theseus represents power and order throughout the play. He appears only at the beginning and end of the story, removed from the dreamlike events of the forest.
Hippolyta	The legendary queen of the Amazons, engaged to Theseus. Like Theseus, she symbolizes order.

AS YOU LIKE IT

Summary:

Duke Frederick absconds with Duke Senior’s dukedom and Duke Senior has fled to the forest with his dearest companions and friends. Rosalind, Duke Sr.’s daughter is allowed to remain at court with Frederick’s daughter and friend Celia . Rosalind sees Orlando and falls in love with him after Orlando prevails in a duel; they fall in love. Orlando flees learning that his brother Oliver wants to kill him. He flees to the forest. Rosalind is banished by Frederick and Celia accompanies her to the forest. Orlando meets Duke Senior in the Forest of Ardenne where he is welcomed when Senior learns that Orlando is the son of his late friend, the Sir Rowland de Bois. Rosalind and Celia, for safety, act as a brother and sister and have folly with Orlando’s love for Rosalind... in the meantime Oliver and Celia fall in love. They all meet and Rosalind reveals her true identity to Orlando, they are married (so are Oliver and Celia). Ferdinand is repentant and re

Virtues: Duke Frederick - repentance and forgiveness (begs forgiveness, restores Duke Senior to his Dukedom and leads a monastic life.)

Faults: Power & greed

Characters:

Question	Answer
Protagonist(s)	Rosalind
Adjectives to describe Protagonist(s)	
Antagonist	Duke Frederick - Duke Senior’s brother, who usurps Senior's dominions
Adjectives to describe Antagonist(s)	

Rising Action, Climax, Falling Action, Resolution

Question	Answer
Conflict (Man vs. Man, Man vs. Nature, Man vs. God, Man vs. Himself, Man vs. Society)	Man vs. Man - Rosalind and Orlando fall in love, but Rosalind is unjustly banished from Duke Frederick’s court; Orlando is both denied his birthright by his jealous brother Oliver and forced to flee from the vindictive Duke Frederick
Meaning of the Title	As You Like It breaks with the courtly love tradition by portraying love as a force for happiness and fulfilment and ridicules those who revel in their own suffering
Major Themes	The delights of love; the malleability of the human experience; city life versus country life
Minor Themes	

Other Characters (these are the main, there are others):

Who	Adjectives
Rosalind	The daughter of Duke Senior. Rosalind, considered one of Shakespeare’s most delightful heroines, is independent minded, strong-willed, good-hearted, and terribly clever. Rather than slink off into defeated exile, Rosalind resourcefully uses her trip to the Forest of Ardenne as an opportunity to take control of her own destiny. When she disguises herself as Ganymede—a handsome young man—and offers herself as a tutor in the ways of love to her beloved Orlando, Rosalind’s talents and charms are on full display. Only Rosalind, for instance, is both aware of the foolishness of romantic love <i>and</i> delighted to be in love.
Orlando	The youngest son of Sir Rowland de Bois and younger brother of Oliver. Orlando is an attractive young man who, under his brother’s neglectful care, has languished without a gentleman’s education or training. Regardless, he considers himself to have great potential, and his victorious battle with Charles proves him right. Orlando cares for the aging Adam in the Forest of Ardenne and later risks his life to save Oliver from a hungry lioness, proving himself a proper gentleman. He is a fitting hero for the play and, though

	he proves no match for her wit or poetry, the most obvious romantic match for Rosalind.
Duke Senior	The father of Rosalind and the rightful ruler of the dukedom in which the play is set. Having been banished by his usurping brother, Frederick, Duke Senior now lives in exile in the Forest of Ardenne with a number of loyal men, including Lord Amiens and Jaques.
Jaques	A faithful lord who accompanies Duke Senior into exile in the Forest of Ardenne. Jaques is an example of a stock figure in Elizabethan comedy, the man possessed of a hopelessly melancholy disposition.
Celia	The daughter of Duke Frederick and Rosalind's dearest friend. Celia's devotion to Rosalind is unmatched, as evidenced by her decision to follow her cousin into exile. To make the trip, Celia assumes the disguise of a simple shepherdess and calls herself Aliena. As elucidated by her extreme love of Rosalind and her immediate devotion to Oliver, whom she marries at the end of the play, Celia possesses a loving heart, but is prone to deep, almost excessive emotions
Duke Frederick	The brother of Duke Senior and usurper of his throne. Duke Frederick's cruel nature and volatile temper are displayed when he banishes his niece, Rosalind, from court without reason. That Celia, his own daughter, cannot mitigate his unfounded anger demonstrates the intensity of the duke's hatefulness. Frederick mounts an army against his exiled brother but aborts his vengeful mission after he meets an old religious man on the road to the Forest of Ardenne. He immediately changes his ways, dedicating himself to a monastic life and returning the crown to his brother, thus testifying to the ease and elegance with which humans can sometimes change for the better

THE MERCHANT OF VENICE

Summary: Shylock plans to take one pound of Antonio's flesh as payment for Bassiano's loan to have enough money to court Portia. Portia, disguised as a law clerk to argue Antonio's case and prevails and in the meantime tests her Bassiano's love for her by tricking him into giving away his ring she had gifted him.

Virtue: Mercy

Fault: Shylock - Jealousy,

Characters:

Question	Answer
Protagonist(s)	Bassanio - There is no clear protagonist. Antonio is the merchant of the play's title, but he plays a relatively passive role. The major struggles of the play are Bassanio's quest to marry Portia and his attempt to free Antonio from Shylock, so Bassanio is the likeliest candidate.
Adjectives to describe Protagonist(s)	Loyal, faithful,
Antagonist	Shylock
Adjectives to describe Antagonist(s)	Cruel, clever, evil

Rising Action, Climax, Falling Action, Resolution

Question	Answer
Conflict (Man vs. Man, Man vs. Nature, Man vs. God, Man vs. Himself, Man vs. Society)	Man vs. Man
Meaning of the Title	A merchant of Venice... the relationship between two
Major Themes	Self-interest versus love; the divine quality of mercy; hatred as a cyclical phenomenon, charity
Minor Themes	Love, faithfulness

Other Characters (these are the main, there are others):

Who	Adjectives
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Shylock	A Jewish moneylender in Venice. Angered by his mistreatment at the hands of Venice's Christians, particularly Antonio, Shylock schemes to eke out his revenge by ruthlessly demanding as payment a pound of Antonio's flesh.
Portia	A wealthy heiress from Belmont. Portia's beauty is matched only by her intelligence. Bound by a clause in her father's will that forces her to marry whichever suitor chooses correctly among three caskets, Portia is nonetheless able to marry her true love, Bassanio. Far and away the most clever of the play's characters, it is Portia, in the disguise of a young law clerk, who saves Antonio from Shylock's knife.
Antonio	The merchant whose love for his friend Bassanio prompts him to sign Shylock's contract and almost lose his life. Antonio is something of a mercurial figure, often inexplicably melancholy. Merciful
Bassanio	The merchant whose love for his friend Bassanio prompts him to sign Shylock's contract and almost lose his life. Antonio is something of a mercurial figure, often inexplicably melancholy and
Gratiano	friend of Bassanio's who accompanies him to Belmont. A coarse and garrulous young man, Gratiano is Shylock's most vocal and insulting critic during the trial. While Bassanio courts Portia, Gratiano falls in love with and eventually weds Portia's lady-in-waiting, Nerissa
Jessica	Jessica hates life in her father's house, and elopes with the young Christian gentleman

KING LEAR

Summary: The aging king of Britain and the protagonist of the play. Lear divides his kingdom to his eldest two daughters Regan & Goneril, who fill him with hollow praise, in a test for how much they love him... & his youngest, Cordelia, disgusted with her sisters' lies, does not swoon her farther with love & praise. He disowns her. The two eldest reject & humiliate the King & he seeks out Cordelia who forgives & receives him in her new Kingdom in France.

English troops reach Dover, and the English, defeat the Cordelia-led French. Lear and Cordelia are captured. In the climactic scene, Goneril poisons Regan out of jealousy over Edmund and then kills herself when her treachery is revealed to Albany; Edmund's betrayal of Cordelia leads to her needless execution in prison; and Lear finally dies out of grief at Cordelia's passing. Albany, Edgar, and the elderly Kent are left to take care of the country under a cloud of sorrow and regret.

Virtues:

- **Love** – Cordelia had a true, unconditional love for her father. Temperant, generous, & forgiving.

Fault:

- **Humility vs. pride** – King Lear was won by his pride through his eldest daughters hollow professions of love. Cordelia saw through the empty words of love from her sisters Regan and Goneril.

Characters:

Question	Answer
Protagonist(s)	King Lear
Adjectives to describe Protagonist(s)	The aging king of Britain and the protagonist of the play. Lear is used to enjoying absolute power and to being flattered, and he does not respond well to being contradicted or challenged. At the beginning of the play, his values are notably hollow—he prioritizes the appearance of love over actual devotion and wishes to maintain the power of a king while unburdening himself of the responsibility. Nevertheless, he inspires loyalty in subjects such as Gloucester, Kent, Cordelia, and Edgar, all of whom risk their lives for him
Antagonist	Goneril & Regan
Adjectives to describe Antagonist(s)	Greedy, deceptive, selfish, hard hearted, vindictive

Rising Action, Climax, Falling Action, Resolution

Question	Answer
Conflict (Man vs. Man, Man vs. Nature, Man vs. God, Man vs. Himself, Man vs. Society)	Man vs. Man
Meaning of the Title	The Protagonist
Major Themes	Justice, reconciliation, redemption
Minor Themes	Authority vs. chaos, love

Other Characters (these are the main, there are others):

Who	Adjectives
King Lear	Prideful, naïve
Cordelia	Faithful, loving, generous, loyal - Lear's youngest daughter, disowned by her father for refusing to flatter him. Cordelia is held in extremely high regard by all of the good characters in the play—the king of France marries her for her virtue alone, overlooking her lack of dowry. She remains loyal to Lear despite his cruelty toward her, forgives him, and displays a mild and forbearing temperament even toward her evil sisters, Goneril and Regan.
Goneril	Lear's ruthless oldest daughter and the wife of the duke of Albany. Goneril is jealous, treacherous, and amoral. She is bold and ruthless.
Regan	Lear's middle daughter and the wife of the duke of Cornwall. Regan is as ruthless as Goneril and as aggressive in all the same ways..
Kent	A nobleman who is loyal to King Lear. Kent spends most of the play disguised as a peasant, calling himself "Caius," so that he can continue to serve Lear even after Lear banishes him. He is extremely loyal.

MACBETH

Summary: Macbeth encounters three witches who... like the devil, speak in half-truths... enough to entice without disclosing their cruel motives. The witches tell Macbeth a prophetic tale. The witches prophesy that Macbeth will be made thane (a rank of Scottish nobility) of Cawdor and eventually King of Scotland. They also prophesy that Macbeth's companion, Banquo, will beget a line of Scottish kings, although Banquo will never be king himself. So he and Lady Macbeth conspire to kill the king to take Macbeth's throne. One of the prophecies is that Banquo's sons will inherit the Scottish throne... so Macbeth kills Banquo and tries to kill his son, but his son escapes. Banquo haunts Macbeth and Macbeth returns to the witches for more prophesy: There, they show him a sequence of demons and spirits who present him with further prophecies: he must beware of Macduff, a Scottish nobleman who opposed Macbeth's accession to the throne; he is incapable of being harmed by any man born of woman; and he will be safe until Birnam Wood comes to Dunsinane Castle. So Macbeth has his army go after Macduff and Macduff's wife and son.

On the battlefield, Macbeth encounters the vengeful Macduff, who declares that he was not "of woman born" but was instead "untimely ripped" from his mother's womb (what we now call birth by cesarean section). Though he realizes that he is doomed, Macbeth continues to fight until Macduff kills and beheads him. Malcolm, now the King of Scotland, declares his benevolent intentions for the country and invites all to see him crowned at Scone.

Virtue: Banquo - reserved and prudent

Fault: Lady Macbeth and Macbeth - Greed, Pride

Rising Action, Climax, Falling Action, Resolution

Question	Answer
Conflict (Man vs. Man, Man vs. Nature, Man vs. God, Man vs. Himself, Man vs. Society)	Man vs. Himself - The struggle within Macbeth between his ambition and his sense of right and wrong; the struggle between the murderous evil represented by Macbeth and Lady Macbeth and the best interests of the nation, represented by Malcolm and Macduff
Meaning of the Title	The main character
Major Themes	The corrupting nature of unchecked ambition; the

	relationship between cruelty and masculinity; the difference between kingship and tyranny
Minor Themes	

Other Characters (these are the main, there are others):

Who	Adjectives
Macbeth	Macbeth is a Scottish general and the thane of Glamis who is led to wicked thoughts by the prophecies of the three witches, especially after their prophecy that he will be made thane of Cawdor comes true. Macbeth is a brave soldier and a powerful man, but he is not a virtuous one. He is easily tempted into murder to fulfill his ambitions to the throne, and once he commits his first crime and is crowned King of Scotland, he embarks on further atrocities with increasing ease. Ultimately, Macbeth proves himself better suited to the battlefield than to political intrigue, because he lacks the skills necessary to rule without being a tyrant. His response to every problem is violence and murder.
Lady Macbeth	Macbeth's wife, a deeply ambitious woman who lusts for power and position. She ultimately commits suicide due to guilt.
Three Witches	Three "black and midnight hags" who plot mischief against Macbeth using charms, spells, and prophecies. Their predictions prompt him to murder Duncan, to order the deaths of Banquo and his son, and to blindly believe in his own immortality. They clearly take a perverse delight in using their knowledge of the future to toy with and destroy human beings.
Banquo	The brave, noble general whose children, according to the witches' prophecy, will inherit the Scottish throne. Like Macbeth, Banquo thinks ambitious thoughts, but he does not translate those thoughts into action. In a sense, Banquo's character stands as a rebuke to Macbeth, since he represents the path Macbeth chose not to take: a path in which ambition need not lead to betrayal and murder. Appropriately, then, it is Banquo's ghost—and not Duncan's—that haunts Macbeth.
King Duncan	The good King of Scotland whom Macbeth, in his ambition for the crown, murders. Duncan is the model of a virtuous, benevolent, and farsighted ruler.
Macduff	A Scottish nobleman hostile to Macbeth's kingship from the start. He eventually becomes a leader of the crusade to unseat Macbeth. The crusade's mission is to place the rightful king, Malcolm, on the throne, but Macduff also desires vengeance for Macbeth's murder of Macduff's wife and young son.
Malcolm	Son of Duncan, whose restoration to the throne signals Scotland's return to order following Macbeth's reign of terror. Malcolm becomes a serious challenge to Macbeth with Macduff's aid (and the support of England). Prior to this, he appears weak and uncertain of his own power, as when he and Donalbain flee Scotland after their father's murder.

THE TRAINING OF THE SHREW

Summary: Katherine the shrew is unlikely to be wed because of her ill temperament. Petruchio is determined to tame her and is able to accomplish this. She is utterly transformed from a difficult and unruly woman into a docile and obedient wife. This tale is extraordinary in helping to understand the true Christian marriage, the way God intended it. Shakespeare does not delve too deep into it, however... In Christian marriage the man is the head of house hold and the wife is the heart. She is to obey him in matters of the head, and he, in turn, in matters of the heart. They are channels of grace for eachother... but without this mutual love, respect, and obedience, it simply does not work.

Virtue: obedience

Flaw:

Characters:

Question	Answer
Protagonist(s)	There is no single protagonist; Katherine and

	Petruchio are the main characters.
Adjectives to describe Protagonist(s)	Petruchio – clever, wise, committed. Katherine - in the beginning, a shrew, difficult, in the end, docile and obedient
Antagonist	None
Adjectives to describe Antagonist(s)	n/a

Rising Action, Climax, Falling Action, Resolution

Question	Answer
Conflict (Man vs. Man, Man vs. Nature, Man vs. God, Man vs. Himself, Man vs. Society)	Man vs. Man - Petruchio's attempt to "tame" Katherine; that is, to assert his authority in their marriage and overcome her hotheaded resistance to playing the role of his wife
Meaning of the Title	Transforming an person from unruly to obedient and docile (taming her)
Major Themes	Marriage as an economic institution; the effect of social roles on individual happiness
Minor Themes	Obedience, hope

Other Characters (these are the main, there are others):

Who	Adjectives
Katherine (The Shrew)	The "shrew" of the play's title, Katherine, or Kate, is the daughter of Baptista Minola, with whom she lives in Padua. She is sharp-tongued, quick-tempered, and prone to violence, particularly against anyone who tries to marry her. Her hostility toward suitors particularly distresses her father. But her anger and rudeness disguise her deep-seated sense of insecurity and her jealousy toward her sister, Bianca. She does not resist her suitor Petruchio forever, though, and she eventually subjugates herself to him, despite her previous repudiation of marriage
Petruchio	Petruchio is a gentleman from Verona. Loud, boisterous, eccentric, quick-witted, and frequently drunk, he has come to Padua "to wive and thrive." He wishes for nothing more than a woman with an enormous dowry, and he finds Kate to be the perfect fit. Disregarding everyone who warns him of her shrewishness, he eventually succeeds not only in wooing Katherine, but in silencing her tongue and temper with his own.
Bianca	The younger daughter of Baptista. The lovely Bianca proves herself the opposite of her sister, Kate, at the beginning of the play: she is soft-spoken, sweet, and unassuming.
Baptista	Minola Baptista is one of the wealthiest men in Padua, and his daughters become the prey of many suitors due to the substantial dowries he can offer. He is good-natured, if a bit superficial.
Lucentio	A young student from Pisa, the good-natured and intrepid Lucentio comes to Padua to study at the city's renowned university, but he is immediately sidetracked when he falls in love with Bianca at first sight

ROMEO AND JULIET

Characters:

Question	Answer
Protagonist(s)	Romeo and Juliet
Adjectives to describe Protagonist(s)	Loving, romantic,
Antagonist	The feuding Montagues and Capulets; Tybalt; the Prince and citizens of Verona; fate
Adjectives to describe Antagonist(s)	

Rising Action, Climax, Falling Action, Resolution

Question	Answer
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Conflict (Man vs. Man, Man vs. Nature, Man vs. God, Man vs. Himself, Man vs. Society)	Man vs Man
Meaning of the Title	The Protagonists
Major Themes	The forcefulness of love; love as a cause of violence; the individual versus society; the inevitability of fate
Minor Themes	

Other Characters (these are the main, there are others):

Who	Adjectives
Romeo	The son and heir of Montague and Lady Montague. A young man of about sixteen, Romeo is handsome, intelligent, and sensitive. Though impulsive and immature, his idealism and passion make him an extremely likable character. He lives in the middle of a violent feud between his family and the Capulets, but he is not at all interested in violence. His only interest is love. At the beginning of the play he is madly in love with a woman named Rosaline, but the instant he lays eyes on Juliet, he falls in love with her and forgets Rosaline. Thus, Shakespeare gives us every reason to question how real Romeo's new love is, but Romeo goes to extremes to prove the seriousness of his feelings. He secretly marries Juliet, the daughter of his father's worst enemy; he happily takes abuse from Tybalt; and he would rather die than live without his beloved. Romeo is also an affectionate and devoted friend to his relative Benvolio, Mercutio, and Friar Lawrence
Juliet	The daughter of Capulet and Lady Capulet. A beautiful thirteen-year-old girl, Juliet begins the play as a naïve child who has thought little about love and marriage, but she grows up quickly upon falling in love with Romeo, the son of her family's great enemy. Because she is a girl in an aristocratic family, she has none of the freedom Romeo has to roam around the city, climb over walls in the middle of the night, or get into swordfights. Nevertheless, she shows amazing courage in trusting her entire life and future to Romeo, even refusing to believe the worst reports about him after he gets involved in a fight with her cousin
Friar Lawrence	A Franciscan friar, friend to both Romeo and Juliet. Kind, civic-minded, a proponent of moderation, and always ready with a plan, Friar Lawrence secretly marries the impassioned lovers in hopes that the union might eventually bring peace to Verona. He is a Catholic holy man.
Mercutio	A kinsman to the Prince, and Romeo's close friend. One of the most extraordinary characters in all of Shakespeare's plays, Mercutio overflows with imagination, wit, and, at times, a strange, biting satire and brooding fervor. Mercutio loves wordplay. He can be quite hotheaded, and hates people who are affected, pretentious, or obsessed with the latest fashions.
Tybalt	A Capulet, Juliet's cousin on her mother's side. Vain, fashionable, supremely aware of courtesy and the lack of it, he becomes aggressive, violent, and quick to draw his sword when he feels his pride has been injured. Once drawn, his sword is something to be feared. He loathes Montagues
Capulet	The patriarch of the Capulet family, father of Juliet, husband of Lady Capulet, and enemy, for unexplained reasons, of Montague. He truly loves his daughter, though he is not well acquainted with Juliet's thoughts or feelings, and seems to think that what is best for her is a "good" match with Paris.
Lady Capulet	Juliet's mother, Capulet's wife. A woman who herself married young (by her own estimation she gave birth to Juliet at close to the age of fourteen), she is eager to see her daughter marry Paris. She is an ineffectual mother, relying on the Nurse for moral and pragmatic support.
Montague	Romeo's father, the patriarch of the Montague clan and bitter enemy of Capulet. At the beginning of the play, he is chiefly concerned about Romeo's melancholy
Lady Montague	Romeo's mother, Montague's wife. She dies of grief after Romeo is exiled from Verona

Benvolio	Montague's nephew, Romeo's cousin and thoughtful friend, he makes a genuine effort to defuse violent scenes in public places, though Mercutio accuses him of having a nasty temper in private. He spends most of the play trying to help Romeo get his mind off Rosaline, even after Romeo has fallen in love with Juliet
Paris	A kinsman of the Prince, and the suitor of Juliet most preferred by Capulet. Once Capulet has promised him he can marry Juliet, he behaves very presumptuous toward her, acting as if they are already married

HAMLET, PRINCE OF DENMARK

Summary: The King of Denmark is murdered, allegedly by Claudius, his brother, who is presently married to the Queen. Hamlet, the prince is visited by the King who orders Hamlet to seek revenge on the man who usurped his throne (Claudius) and married his wife.

Hamlet has a play performed in the audience of Claudius and the Queen reenact the murder scene of the King and Claudius is horrified in seeing the portrayal and leaves the performance with a "sudden sickness."

Hamlet reproves his mother, the Queen and begs her confession to heaven. Polonius (Father of Ophelia) is charged to hide and listen to the conversation. Thinking Claudius was behind the curtain (in an attempt to avenge his father); Hamlet stabs him, sight unseen; only to learn that it was Polonius.

Claudius sends Hamlet away under the pretense of safety (wink, wink), intent on Hamlet's murder when they landed on English ground. Hamlet suspects treachery, alters the letters directing his murder, by removing his name and replaces them with the two courtiers (who bail on Hamlet when the ship is attacked by pirates and thus are deserving of their own destruction).

Hamlet returns to Ophelia's funeral after she drowns while making a bouquet, having fallen from a tree.

Claudius arranges a fencing match between Laertes and Hamlet, with poison on the tip of Laertes' weapon. Laertes fatally wounds Hamlet; in turn, Hamlet mortally wounds Laertes with the same weapon. The queen then drank the same poison, inadvertently that the king had prepared for Hamlet in case he survived the match, and died. Hamlet learns the whole of Claudius's treachery and thrusts the weapon into his heart and fulfills his promise to his father.

Hamlet, in his dying breath, asks Horatio, his dear friend to tell his story to the world.

Virtue: Repentance – The Queen is repentant as well as Hamlet for the murder of Polonius

Flaw: Haste (Hamlet killing w/o knowing who was behind the curtain)

Characters:

Question	Answer
Protagonist(s)	Hamlet
Adjectives to describe Protagonist(s)	Melancholy, bitter, and cynical, full of hatred for his uncle's scheming and disgust for his mother's decisions. Hamlet is also indecisive and hesitant, but at other times prone to rash and impulsive acts.
Antagonist	Claudius
Adjectives to describe Antagonist(s)	Evil, cunning,

Rising Action, Climax, Falling Action, Resolution

Question	Answer
Conflict (Man vs. Man, Man vs. Nature, Man vs. God, Man vs. Himself, Man vs. Society)	Man vs. Man - Hamlet feels a responsibility to avenge his father's murder by his uncle Claudius, but Claudius is now the king and thus well protected. Moreover, Hamlet struggles with his doubts about whether he can trust the ghost and whether killing Claudius is the appropriate thing to do.
Meaning of the Title	The Protagonist
Major Themes	The impossibility of certainty; the complexity of action; the mystery of death; the nation as a

	diseased body
Minor Themes	

Other Characters (these are the main, there are others):

Who	Adjectives
Hamlet	The Prince of Denmark, the title character, and the protagonist. About thirty years old at the start of the play, Hamlet is the son of Queen Gertrude and the late King Hamlet, and the nephew of the present king, Claudius. Hamlet is melancholy, bitter, and cynical, full of hatred for his uncle's scheming and disgust for his mother's decisions. A reflective and thoughtful young man who has studied at the University of Wittenberg, Hamlet is often indecisive and hesitant, but at other times prone to rash and impulsive acts.
Claudius	The King of Denmark, Hamlet's uncle, and the play's antagonist. The villain of the play, Claudius is a calculating, ambitious politician, driven by his appetites and his lust for power, but he occasionally shows signs of guilt and human feeling—his love for Gertrude, for instance, seems sincere
Gertrude	The Queen of Denmark, Hamlet's mother, recently married to Claudius. Gertrude loves Hamlet deeply, but she is a shallow, weak woman who seeks affection and status more urgently than moral rectitude or truth - Shallow and weak
Polonius	The Lord Chamberlain of Claudius's court, a pompous, conniving old man. Polonius is the father of Laertes and Ophelia. "A man grown old in crooked aims and policies of state, and delighted to get at the knowledge in an indirect and cunning way."
Horatio	Hamlet's close friend, who studied with the prince at the university in Wittenberg. Horatio is loyal and helpful to Hamlet throughout the play. After Hamlet's death, Horatio remains alive to tell Hamlet's story
Ophelia	Polonius's daughter, a beautiful young woman with whom Hamlet has been in love. Ophelia is a sweet and innocent young girl, who obeys her father and her brother, Laertes.
Laertes	Polonius's son and Ophelia's brother, a young man who spends much of the play in France. Passionate and quick to action, Laertes is clearly a foil for the reflective Hamlet.
The Ghost	The specter of Hamlet's recently deceased father. The ghost, who claims to have been murdered by Claudius, calls upon Hamlet to avenge him. However, it is not entirely certain whether the ghost is what it appears to be, or whether it is something else. Hamlet speculates that the ghost might be a devil sent to deceive him and tempt him into murder, and the question of what the ghost is or where it comes from is never definitively resolved

Quotes: . "Sweets to the sweet." Laertes, Ophelia's brother at her funeral

OTHELLO

Summary:

Virtue: love,

Fault: Evil, jealousy

Characters:

Question	Answer
Protagonist(s)	Othello
Adjectives to describe Protagonist(s)	Jealous,
Antagonist	Iago
Adjectives to describe Antagonist(s)	

Rising Action, Climax, Falling Action, Resolution

Question	Answer
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Conflict (Man vs. Man, Man vs. Nature, Man vs. God, Man vs. Himself, Man vs. Society)	Othello and Desdemona marry and attempt to build a life together, despite their differences in age, race, and experience. Their marriage is sabotaged by the envious Iago, who convinces Othello that Desdemona is unfaithful.
Meaning of the Title	The Protagonist
Major Themes	The incompatibility of military heroism and love; the danger of isolation
Minor Themes	

Other Characters (these are the main, there are others):

Who	Adjectives
Othello	A Christian Moor and general of the armies of Venice, Othello is an eloquent and physically powerful figure, respected by all those around him. In spite of his elevated status, he is nevertheless easy prey to insecurities because of his age, his life as a soldier, and his race. He possesses a “free and open nature,” which his ensign Iago uses to twist his love for his wife, Desdemona, into a powerful and destructive jealousy.
Desdemona	The daughter of the Venetian senator Brabantio. Desdemona and Othello are married. While in many ways stereotypically pure and meek, Desdemona is also determined and self-possessed. She is equally capable of defending her marriage, jesting bawdily with Iago, and responding with dignity to Othello’s incomprehensible jealousy.
Iago	Othello’s ensign (a job also known as an ancient or standard-bearer), and the villain of the play. Iago is twenty-eight years old. While his ostensible reason for desiring Othello’s demise is that he has been passed over for promotion to lieutenant, Iago’s motivations are never very clearly expressed and seem to originate in an obsessive, almost aesthetic delight in manipulation and destruction.
Michael Cassio	Othello’s lieutenant. Cassio is a young and inexperienced soldier, whose high position is much resented by Iago. Truly devoted to Othello, Cassio is extremely ashamed after being implicated in a drunken brawl on Cyprus and losing his place as lieutenant. Iago uses Cassio’s youth, good looks, and friendship with Desdemona to play on Othello’s insecurities about Desdemona’s fidelity.

The Characters

- Which character do you identify with?
- Which do you *admire or dislike*?
- Who in this book would you most *like* to meet? What would you ask—or say?

The Story, the Plot and Your Experience

- Is the *plot well developed*? Is it believable?
- Does the book *remind you of someone*—or something—in your own life?

Title, Themes, Style and Symbolism

- How does the title *relate to the book*? Can you pick out a passage that’s profound or interesting—or perhaps sums up the central issue of the book?

The Ending

- Did you *expect the ending* or did it *surprise* you?
- Was the ending *satisfying*? If you could *rewrite the ending*, would you?
- What ending would you have chosen for the story?

Do You Want to Read More?

- What is the *future of the characters’ lives*?

Question for thought:

- **Are there any quotes that resonated with you?**

- Did you find any foreshadowing?
- Did you find any interesting phrases?

William Shakespeare –

The most influential writer in all of English literature, William Shakespeare was born in 1564 to a successful middle-class glove-maker in Stratford-upon-Avon, England. Shakespeare attended grammar school, but his formal education proceeded no further. In 1582 he married an older woman, Anne Hathaway, and had three children with her. Around 1590 he left his family behind and traveled to London to work as an actor and playwright. Public and critical success quickly followed, and Shakespeare eventually became the most popular playwright in England and part-owner of the Globe Theater. His career bridged the reigns of Elizabeth I (ruled 1558–1603) and James I (ruled 1603–1625), and he was a favorite of both monarchs. Indeed, James granted Shakespeare's company the greatest possible compliment by bestowing upon its members the title of King's Men. Wealthy and renowned, Shakespeare retired to Stratford and died in 1616 at the age of fifty-two. At the time of Shakespeare's death, literary luminaries such as Ben Jonson hailed his works as timeless.

Shakespeare's works were collected and printed in various editions in the century following his death, and by the early eighteenth century his reputation as the greatest poet ever to write in English was well established. The unprecedented admiration garnered by his works led to a fierce curiosity about Shakespeare's life, but the dearth of biographical information has left many details of Shakespeare's personal history shrouded in mystery. Some people have concluded from this fact that Shakespeare's plays were really written by someone else—Francis Bacon and the Earl of Oxford are the two most popular candidates—but the support for this claim is overwhelmingly circumstantial, and the theory is not taken seriously by many scholars.

In the absence of credible evidence to the contrary, Shakespeare must be viewed as the author of the thirty-seven plays and 154 sonnets that bear his name. The legacy of this body of work is immense. A number of Shakespeare's plays seem to have transcended even the category of brilliance, becoming so influential as to profoundly affect the course of Western literature and culture ever after

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