LOVE'S LABOUR'S LOST

By William Shakespeare
Directed by Jon Kretzu
Dear Educators,

In planning out the 2012–2013 season, Artistic Director George Mount themed it around the idea of “Lovers and Other Strangers.” This theme has so far pulled us through the tempestuous affair between Antony and Cleopatra and the broken marriage of Nora and Torvald. Now it takes us to Navarre, where four young and, at times, foolish gentlemen meet four lovely and witty ladies, and fall in love with these strangers.

But this story is not one that is common in the love stories that Shakespeare told. If you don’t know Love’s Labour’s Lost, you might expect all the usual comedic fare — usually a stern father, perhaps a trip to the forest, an upstanding but underrated love object, definitely a girl dressing as a boy, and of course the multiple happy marriages at the end of the play. Most of these are absent from this play. Instead, the only obstacle to love is pride, and the men excel at breaking their oaths to themselves, so much so that the women do not believe the men’s oaths of love to them!

Perhaps the defining feature of this play is the unfinished feeling we get at the end when no marriages occur, but the Princess and her ladies task the King and his men with year-long assignments to prove that their oaths are real. The ending is somewhat unexpected, even though the title clearly states Love’s Labours Lost. This cliffhanger leaves the viewer unsatisfied, but ultimately gives us the chance to truly think about what it means to make and break promises.

We hope you enjoy this production for all that it makes you consider. And if it leaves you feeling unsatisfied, come back for our last show of the season, The Taming of the Shrew, where love finds a way in the most unlikely of pairings.

Best,
Michelle Burce
Education Director

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**Synopsis and dramatis personae**
A summary of the plot and list of characters in *Love's Labour's Lost*.

**First Tries**
*Love's Labour's Lost* is one of Shakespeare's earliest comedies, and shows some first tries at a variety of character types and plot devices.

**Sources**
Source material and inspirations Shakespeare may have used.

**Wordplay**
A look at the use of elaborate language and wordplay in *Love's Labour's Lost*.

**Love's Labour's Won**
Was there a sequel to *Love's Labour's Lost*?

**Reflection and Discussion Questions**
Students consider themes in pre-show reflection questions, and are challenged to think about the production in post-show discussion questions.

**Placing the Production**
Take a look inside director Jon Kretzu's inspiration and thoughts for the production.

**Activity: One Year Later**
Students will work in groups to imagine an epilogue to the play, and create a short scene about what happens to the couples after a year apart.

**Activity: Nine Worthies**
Students list and write short poems about important historical figures, based on the “Nine Worthies” play at the end of *Love's Labour's Lost*.

Activities in this study guide satisfy Washington State Arts Essential Academic Learning Requirements (EALRs) 1.1, 1.2, 2.1, 2.2, 2.3, 3.1, and 3.3.
The King of Navarre and his three lords, Berowne, Longaville, and Dumaine, swear an oath to scholarship, which includes fasting and swearing off women for three years. They receive a letter from Don Armado, a Spaniard visiting the King’s court, telling them that he has caught Costard, a fool, and Jaquenetta, a country wench, consorting in the park. The King announces Costard’s sentence, and he and the lords go off to begin their oath.

Don Armado confesses to his page Moth that he has fallen in love with Jaquenetta. He writes her a letter that he asks Costard to deliver.

Meanwhile, the Princess of France has arrived to visit the King on official business. Because of his oath, however, the King cannot receive the Princess and her party at his court; he and his lords must visit them at their camp outside the castle. The three lords fall in love with the three ladies, in particular Berowne, who had been the King’s biggest supporter. The King himself has fallen for the Princess. Berowne gives Costard a letter to deliver to Rosaline, but Costard accidentally switches it with the letter from Don Armado to Jaquenetta. When he gives Berowne’s letter to Jaquenetta, she brings it to the schoolmaster Holofernes and Sir Nathaniel to read for her. They tell her that the letter was meant for someone else and bring it to the King.

The King reads and speaks of his love for the Princess. He doesn’t know that Berowne is hiding from him. Longaville enters, and the King hides as well; he and Berowne observe Longaville reading of his love for Maria. Dumaine enters, Longaville hides, and all of them see Dumaine reading an ode he has written to Katherine. Longaville advances and tells Dumaine he isn’t the only one in love. The King then reveals himself and shames the two men for breaking their oath. Berowne appears and teases all his friends that they have fallen in love. Jaquenetta arrives and gives Berowne the letter, which he rips up in a panic. However, Dumaine sees a piece of the letter with Berowne’s name on it, and Berowne confesses that he too is in love. The four men decide to court their women.

The King and his lords arrive at the Princess’s pavilion disguised. Boyet has warned the ladies of their suitors’ approach and they disguise themselves as well, so that the men will court the wrong lady. After the men leave and reappear as themselves, the women reveal their joke. They all watch a show of the Nine Worthies, performed by Don Armado, Sir Nathaniel, and Holofernes, who all nearly come to blows during the show. The festivities are cut short by a messenger who brings news to the Princess that her father has died, and she prepares to return to France. Berowne and his friends declare their love to their respective ladies. The ladies tell their suitors to seek them again in a year and they depart for France.

SYNOPSIS

**Dramatis Personae**

FERDINAND  
King of Navarre

BEROWNE  
Lord, attending on the King

LONGAVILLE  
Lord, attending on the King

DUMAINE  
Lord, attending on the King

THE PRINCESS OF FRANCE

ROSALINE  
Lady, attending on the Princess

MARIA  
Lady, attending on the Princess

KATHARINE  
Lady, attending on the Princess

BOYET  
Lord, attending on the Princess of France

MERCADE  
Lord, attending on the Princess of France

DON ARMADO  
A Spanish knight and braggart

MOTh  
Page to Don Armado

SIR NATHANIEL  
A Curate

HOLOFERNES  
A Schoolmaster

DULL  
A Constable

COSTARD  
A Clown

JAQUENETTA  
A country Wench

OFFICERS AND OTHERS, ATTENDANTS ON THE KING and PRINCESS.
FIRST TRIES

As one of Shakespeare’s earliest comedies, Love’s Labour’s Lost can at times feel a little bit amateur or unpolished compared to his later works. However, this play provides a platform for Shakespeare to try out various character types and plot devices that he uses again in his more mature plays. Drawing parallels between the characters and events in this play help to highlight Shakespeare’s development as a writer, and the tiny ideas that later bloomed into more realized people and plots.

Love’s Labour’s Lost shows Shakespeare beginning to find his feet as a comedic playwright. Written during his early career, and years before Much Ado about Nothing and As You Like It, it demonstrates Shakespeare creating characters and plot devices which would flower into different manifestations later in his career. This play contains a number of aspects which didn’t quite work at the time. Despite that, we can see how Shakespeare is still learning here, and the play gives us much to enjoy and further enriches many of his later plays.

First, we can look at characters. Berowne, with his loquaciousness and biting wit, is a clear ancestor of Benedick from Much Ado about Nothing. Berowne used language in a much more fantastical and dense way than Benedick. Shakespeare is clearly enjoying his talents as a wordsmith with this character, who literally talks circles around his friends. Yet love strikes Berowne and he meets his match with Rosaline. The verbal duels between these two characters are the blueprint from which Shakespeare would create Benedick and Beatrice. Although Rosaline is not as fully developed a character as Beatrice, she does prove to be a match for Berowne in wit and words. As one looks at other characters in the play, one can see how Midsummer’s Peter Quince came from Holofernes or Don Armado’s bluster was reimagined in Bottom. Costard clearly can be seen as an ancestor of Shakespeare’s great clowns which include Twelfth Night’s Feste and As You Like It’s Touchstone.

Although Shakespeare was to use these character types again in subsequent plays, it can be said that Love’s Labour is a play where Shakespeare begins to infuse characters with a little more depth. He had written the Henry VI plays as well as Richard III which he followed with Comedy of Errors. Now he begins to further his obvious comedic chops with characters that had more depth and an arc beyond simple archetypes. It is the character of Berowne which becomes the focal point among the male lords. He clearly begins the play as a more cynical character, swearing off love and changes through the course of the story. His soliloquies to the audience give depth to a character who is at a loss of how to comprehend his feelings and, more importantly, how to act on them. One begins to root for Berowne and emotionally invest in the story, rather than being a mere observer. Again, Shakespeare was able to develop this in his subsequent plays, which are reasons why such characters as Benedick, Beatrice and Viola have become favorites within his canon.

Next, we can look at plot and plot devices. The plot of the four lords swearing off love and then, of course, falling in love, was a familiar enough plot device in Shakespeare’s time. One sees it recur in Much Ado and his later comedies. The scene where each of the four suitors hides to overhear the other speak of their love is a device Shakespeare used in nearly all his comedies. He also used the device of people pretending they were someone else for both comedic and sometimes tragic effect. For example, Much Ado About Nothing uses a similar scenario and Merry Wives of Windsor has several scenes in which Falstaff is duped. But Shakespeare also used this in his more tragic plays, such as Hamlet, King Lear, and Measure for Measure.

Another device used by Shakespeare is the play within the play. Shakespeare reused this convention (if not the scene from Love’s Labours) in A Midsummer’s Night Dream. He also, of course, used it to much different effect in Hamlet.

The end of Love’s Labour’s Lost is a decidedly curious one. His previous comedy, The Comedy of Errors, ended with a happy ending for all. But, Shakespeare swings things the other direction with this play as it ends with separation rather than union. Whether or not Shakespeare meant to revisit these characters is a separate issue. But, if one looks at his comedies, it was the rare play which tied up things neatly. Yet, Twelfth Night ends with the two marriages of Orsino and Viola and Olivia and Sebastian. Yet, one is left with Malvolio’s heartbeat and promise of revenge. In As You Like It, there are four marriages, yet at least one of them comes about from the loss of a bet. One could also say Shakespeare took this ambiguity even further with later plays like Measure for Measure or Winter’s Tale, which have comedic elements, but resolutions that are far from neat.

It is obvious that Shakespeare was still learning his craft with Loves Labours Lost. Many things about the play were reused and rebooted in later works. Other aspects were abandoned all together. Yet there is much to enjoy from this play as a fan of Shakespeare as it still has a lightness and fun with language that hinted at greater things to come. Shakespeare was just getting warmed up.

SOURCES

There is no main source for Love’s Labour’s Lost, but there are many literary and real-life inspirations for Shakespeare’s writing of this play. Several of the characters are no doubt inspired by the historical King of Navarre and his supporters, the Duc de Biron and the Duc de Longueville, as well as De Mayenne, a brother of the Catholic Guise. These allusions also suggest that the play was written prior to 1589, when a civil war broke out between the Catholic Guise and Protestant Navarre, which would have made them inappropriate subjects for a light courtly comedy. Prior to that date, Navarre would have seemed a charming setting for such a story.

Shakespeare also likely relied on stock characters from Commedia dell’Arte for several of the characters found in Love’s Labour’s Lost. Holofernes fits the mold of the dottore or pedant, a wealthy man who claims to be well-educated, but is all book and no experience. Don Armado is clearly playing the role of Il Capitano, a soldier braggart who is usually a Spaniard, and can maintain his outwardish claims simply because he is a foreigner and no one can refute him. Nathaniel is thought to be modeled on the “parasite” who follows around the dottore, and Costard is modeled on the rustic servant.
Love’s Labour’s Lost contains excessive amounts of wordplay, from puns to rhymes to embedded sonnets. As this is one of Shakespeare’s earlier works, this could be marks of his immaturity as a writer. However, the wordplay fits well both within the historical context of the development of the English language, and with the themes of the play itself, wherein characters mock each other for being wordy or overly flowery with their language. Here are some examples of wordplay to watch for when attending the production.

**Repeated words and puns**

Shakespeare’s characters seem enamored with the different uses and meanings of various words. Several times through the play, a character will start to pun on one or two words, and create a full witty paragraph just using as many different meanings as possible. As you listen to the play, keep an ear out for these passages, and try to decipher what they are trying to say with each version of the word.

Here is Costard, punning on the words “manner” and “form.”

**COSTARD**

In manner and form following, sir; all those three:
I was seen with her in the manor-house, sitting with her upon the form, and taken following her into the park; which, put together, is in manner and form following. Now, sir, for the manner,—it is the manner of a man to speak to a woman: for the form,—in some form.

**Sonnets**

Sonnets are poems with a very specific form. They are fourteen lines long, written in iambic pentameter and an alternating A-B-A-B rhyme scheme through the first twelve lines, ending with a rhyming couplet. Shakespeare was famous for writing 154 stand-alone sonnets, but he would also include them embedded in his plays. Love’s Labour’s Lost contains several sonnets, and is also the play that is most connected in theme to Shakespeare’s sonnets, including ideas of hidden love and a “dark” lady, as Katharine and Rosaline joke that Rosaline is. Several of the characters write sonnets for their loves, but there are also sonnets written into seemingly normal speech.

Here is an embedded sonnet from Act 1, Scene 1:

**FERDINAND**

Ay, that there is. Our court, you know, is haunted
With a refined traveller of Spain;
A man in all the world’s new fashion planted,
That hath a mint of phrases in his brain;
One whom the music of his own vain tongue
Doth ravish like enchanting harmony;
A man of complements, whom right and wrong
Have chose as umpire of their mutiny:
This child of fancy, that Armado hight,
For interim to our studies shall relate
In high-born words the worth of many a knight
From tawny Spain lost in the world’s debate.
How you delight, my lords, I know not, I;
But, I protest, I love to hear him lie
Opposites

The characters in Love's Labour's Lost also employ the use of opposites when engaging in banter and wordplay. They contrast one object or idea with another, to both highlight their differences and again give a theme around which to challenge each other to wordplay. In this exchange, Katharine and Rosaline pun on the opposites of dark and light. They use various forms of each word:

Light = merry, nimble of spirit; happy; without cares; illumination; not heavy
Dark = melancholy, sad, heavy; mysterious; in a bad mood; lack of brightness; secretly

KATHARINE
He made her melancholy, sad, and heavy;
And so she died: had she been light, like you,
Of such a merry, nimble, stirring spirit,
She might ha’ been a grandam ere she died:
And so may you; for a light heart lives long.

ROSALINE
What’s your dark meaning, mouse, of this light word?

KATHARINE
A light condition in a beauty dark.

ROSALINE
We need more light to find your meaning out.

KATHARINE
You’ll mar the light by taking it in snuff;
Therefore I’ll darkly end the argument.

ROSALINE
Look what you do, you do it still i’ the dark.

KATHARINE
So do not you, for you are a light wench.

ROSALINE
Indeed I weigh not you, and therefore light.

Latin Text

It was the fashion in Shakespeare’s day, as English was rapidly growing as a language, to incorporate Latin or Greek into speech in order to appear learned. This practice was also criticized by some, who felt it was pompous and did not want to dilute English with too many foreign words. In Love's Labour’s Lost, characters will sometimes use Latin to appear smart. Here are two examples of Latin usage by Costard the Clown, and Holofernes, the schoolmaster.

COSTARD
O, they have lived long on the alms-basket of words.
I marvel thy master hath not eaten thee for a word;
for thou art not so long by the head as

Honorificabilitudinitatibus: thou art easier
swallowed than a flap-dragon.

Honorificabilitudinitatibus: a Latin tongue twister word that
means “the state of being loaded with honors.”

HOLOFERNES
Novi hominem tanquam te: his humour is lofty, his
discourse peremptory, his tongue filed, his eye
ambitious, his gait majestical, and his general
behavior vain, ridiculous, and thrasonical.

Novi hominem tanquam te: Phrase from a popular Latin
grammar of the day that means “I know the man as well as I
know you”;
Shakespeare's *Love's Labour's Lost* ends very oddly, particularly for a comedy. Instead of ending in the marriages of the four couples, which would be a familiar sight to many Shakespeare fans, it ends with a sudden message that the King of France has died, and the Princess must leave Navarre and head home to take the throne. This bitter twist prevents any of the lovers from being wed at the end of the play. However, the story is not presumed to be over. The men swear to their ladies that they will be faithful, and the ladies, somewhat unconvinced, give them tasks to do.

The Princess asks of King Ferdinand,

*Your oath I will not trust; but go with speed*  
*To some forlorn and naked hermitage,*  
*Remote from all the pleasures of the world;*  
*There stay until the twelve celestial signs*  
*Have brought about the annual reckoning.*

She asks him to live as a hermit for a year and a day until she returns to see if he has kept his oath. Katharine and Maria ask the same of Dumaine and Longaville, also saying that they shall return in a year and, if the men have remained faithful, they shall marry. Rosaline asks Berowne to use his sharp wit to make the sick smile. He protests, but ultimately agrees. With that, the ladies depart and leave the men alone in Ferdinand's court, and so the play ends.

This cliffhanger has prompted some scholars to believe that there was a sequel to *Love's Labour's Lost* called *Love's Labour's Won*. This is further presumed because there were several mentions of this title in lists of Shakespeare's plays during his time. There are several explanations for this.

One explanation would be that there never was a separate play called *Love's Labour's Won*, but that this was an alternate title of another of Shakespeare's plays before he settled on the title that we know today. Some candidates for this are *The Taming of the Shrew* or *Much Ado About Nothing*, since these plays are both thematically connected to the proposed title, and have been at points left off of the lists of plays during his time. There are several explanations for this.

A second idea is that the title *Love's Labour's Won* could truly refer to a sequel to this play that has simply been lost over time, and we no longer have the text today. This explanation seems more romantic and mysterious to some. It allows us to imagine the plot of the play. Maybe it chronicled the story of Ferdinand, Dumaine, Longaville, and Berowne trying to fulfill the promises they made to their ladies, and they were either clumsily faithful through many trials, or perhaps they had just as much trouble sticking to those oaths as they did when they swore they would stay away from women in the original play. We can imagine a comic and happy ending, where misunderstandings are resolved and four marriages grace the stage at the end of the show. For some, this might be a welcome happy ending to an otherwise ambiguously finished play. For others, it ruins the mystery of whether or not the men will be able to keep these vows any more successfully than they kept their original ones. The fact that the ending is left open to speculation may be part of the joy of this play.
**REFLECTION QUESTIONS**

These questions will help students to think about some of the big ideas behind the play before watching it.

- It is said that most new year’s resolutions are broken before Valentine’s Day. These might include resolutions about eating right, exercising more, always being on time, being more organized, etc. Why might anyone make a challenging resolution if they knew they probably would not be able to keep at it?

- Nearly half of *Love’s Labour’s Lost* is written in rhymed verse. What do you think this says about the people who speak in rhyme? What is the significance of the presence or absence of rhyme? Did you notice the rhymes?
  - Those who spoke in rhyme are more refined and well-educated than those who speak normally.
  - The people who spoke in rhyme were probably in love, and thinking about poetry.
  - The rhymes were very obvious — it felt like listening to a nursery rhyme!
  - The rhymes were not obvious — the actors worked the rhyme into the story very well!

- Who or what is the antagonist or villain in *Love’s Labour’s Lost*? What is the opposing force that pushes these characters through the play?
  - There really is no antagonist in this play. It’s a pretty simple story where there is not a lot of action.
  - The force pushing them all through the play is Costard and his mis-delivering of letters. If he had just gotten all of the recipients correct, things would have gone much smoother.
  - The antagonist is everyone’s pride. The men don’t want to admit that they are in love, so they go to great lengths to save face, when they should just admit they love the women.

In this play, four men fall in love, and all try to hide it from each other. When they finally discover that each is hiding the same secret, they all feel better and decide to help each other. Have you ever been in a situation where you were embarrassed about something or wanted to keep something secret, only to later discover that many of your friends also felt the same way? How does it feel to find out that you’re not the only one in your situation?

Have you ever made a resolution for yourself or your life that was very difficult to keep? Why did you make it? Why was it difficult?

**DISCUSSION QUESTIONS**

The following questions are to help lead a discussion with your class after seeing the play. For all of these, there are many possible answers, and student response will vary. There is no wrong answer, so long as students use examples from the play to back up their opinions. Some possible responses are provided.

- Imagine a year after the end of the play. What do you think happens? Do the Princess and her ladies return to Navarre? If they do, do you think the men have kept their oaths? Why or why not?
  - The Princess and her women probably did not return to Navarre. Now that the Princess runs France, she probably has an obligation to marry someone for an alliance instead of for love.
  - The ladies probably do not return. A fling over a few days is probably forgotten.
  - The ladies probably do return, but the men have not kept their oaths. They are very bad at keeping oaths — when they swore to give up women, the first thing they did was fall in love!
  - A year later everyone is probably older and wiser, and have fallen in true love as mature men and women. After a year of thinking about their loves, the reunion was probably very happy!

- How do you think *Love’s Labour’s Lost* compares with other Shakespearean comedies, not having marriages at the end?
  - It’s still a comedy! Just because the couples don’t actually get married doesn’t mean they didn’t go through all of the other steps of misunderstanding, falling in love, and revealing love to each other. The story still looks toward the future and the commitments they make to each other.
  - It’s a comedy with a cliffhanger. The story feels incomplete because they don’t actually get married or settle anything by the end of the play. The ladies are still skeptical that the men’s love will last.
  - It’s very different from the other comedies, and more similar to some of his more problematic plays (like Measure for Measure or All’s Well that Ends Well). Even though everyone has declared their love for each other, the women don’t trust the men and they suggest that the men’s love will not even last a year until their return. The ending is not exactly happy, and it leaves everyone a little unsatisfied.

- Have you ever played a prank on someone you cared about? Did it improve your relationship, or did the prank hurt it?

- *Have you ever made a resolution for yourself or your life that was very difficult to keep? Why did you make it? Why was it difficult?*

- *Nearly half of *Love’s Labour’s Lost* is written in rhymed verse. What do you think this says about the people who speak in rhyme? What is the significance of the presence or absence of rhyme? Did you notice the rhymes?*
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  - The antagonist is everyone’s pride. The men don’t want to admit that they are in love, so they go to great lengths to save face, when they should just admit they love the women.

- *Have you ever made a resolution for yourself or your life that was very difficult to keep? Why did you make it? Why was it difficult?*

- *In this play, four men fall in love, and all try to hide it from each other. When they finally discover that each is hiding the same secret, they all feel better and decide to help each other. Have you ever been in a situation where you were embarrassed about something or wanted to keep something secret, only to later discover that many of your friends also felt the same way? How does it feel to find out that you’re not the only one in your situation?*

- *Have you ever made a resolution for yourself or your life that was very difficult to keep? Why did you make it? Why was it difficult?*
When first thinking about how to produce this play, director Jon Kretzu took a long look at the plot and characters of the play, and came up with a setting in the late 1920’s, drawing heavily from the novel Brideshead Revisited. One of the reasons for this was that Shakespeare’s Love’s Labour’s Lost is stylistically similar to other comedies written in the 1920’s, such as those written by Noel Coward. These are plays that are light and have relatively simple plots, but focus on wordplay and banter. He also saw nobility and gentrified characters who have never needed to work in their lives as an important part of the play, and imagined that this fit in nicely with the pre-crash world that is just about to face a depression and a world war, but does not know it yet. Many productions of Love’s Labour’s Lost have been set in the earlier pre-WWI time period, but Kretzu wanted to put it between wars, in a time when wit and wealth were perhaps even more apparent, and there was a general carefree attitude. The costumes in this piece, designed by Deane Middleton,
will ground the play firmly in this world, with sumptuous evening gowns, casual wear, and suits.

In designing the set, Kretzu and set designer Andrea Bush wanted to create something almost dream-like, where action could flow seamlessly from one scene to the next. They were also influenced by art and photography of the time, and came up with a world that is somewhat upside-down. There is sky on the floor and grass on the bookshelves, and everyone is living in an elegant world that is at once indoor and outdoor. The set also goes through a change throughout the play — at the beginning it has color and life, but by the end it has become almost black and white as the sad news from the rest of the world closes in on the lovers.
ACTIVITY: ONE YEAR LATER

In this activity, students are asked to think about the unusual ending of Shakespeare's play, to imagine the sequel to Love's Labour's Lost. Students are encouraged to look at all of the evidence in the play and create a short scene that happens one year and one day later. In their scene, the characters will allude to what happened in the past year, and how things have turned out.

Instructions

As a class, review what happened at the end of play, immediately after the Princess received word that her father had died. Here are some important quotes. Have volunteers read these parts as the eight mentioned characters. Then as a class, discuss what they have been assigned to do for the next year.

Divide students into groups of about 4 to 6 students. Each group should imagine it is one year later, and discuss what they think happened in the past year. Did they all forget each other in the hubub of daily life in court? Did they meet other people? Did they all get back together, after faithfully completing their vows? Did they break their vows but still get together anyway? Did only some of them succeed and some fail?

Then create a short scene with some of these eight characters, showing what happened to the lovers over the past year. Scenes should be about 2-5 minutes long, and should involve all of the group members in some way. They can be carefully scripted, or planned out but have improvised dialogue. Once all groups have planned out their scene and rehearsed it once or twice, they will present to the class.

After each scene, discuss the following questions:

• What happened to each couple in the past year?
• What evidence is there in the play that this is a likely ending to the story?
• How is this similar to or different from other endings?

FERDINAND AND THE PRINCESS:

KING
Now, at the latest minute of the hour,
Grant us your loves.

PRINCESS
A time, methinks, too short
To make a world-without-end bargain in.
No, no, my lord, your Grace is perjur’d much,
Full of dear guiltiness; and therefore this;
If for my love, as there is no such cause,
You will do aught, this shall you do for me:
Your oath I will not trust, but go with speed
To some forlorn and naked hermitage,
Remote from all the pleasures of the world;
There stay until the twelve celestial signs
Have brought about the annual reckoning.

BEROWNE AND ROSALINE:

BEROWNE
Impose some service on me for thy love.

ROSA LINE

. . . You shall this twelvemonth term from day to day
Visit the speechless sick and still converse
With groaning wretches; and your task shall be,
With all the fierce endeavor of your wit
To enforce the pained impotent smile.

BEROWNE
To move wild laughter in the throat of death?
It cannot be; it is impossible.
Mirth cannot move a soul in agony...
A twelvemonth! Well, befall what will befal l,
I’ll jest a twelvemonth in a hospital.
ACTIVITY: NINE WORTHIES

At the end of *Love’s Labour’s Lost*, several of the characters put on a play about the “Nine Worthies,” or nine historical figures who were worthy of praise due to their good character and success in combat or war. The nine worthies that they chose reflected their values, and also were important figures in their history. Since Shakespeare's time, our values may have changed, and we have added to the list of important historical figures. In this activity, students will be asked to create their own list of “Worthies” and write a dramatic line about their importance.

Instructions
As a class, review some of the speeches given by characters as Worthies from their play. Note the content of the speeches, as well as the way they are written including the first-person point of view and the rhyme scheme of either couplets (AABB) or alternating lines (ABAB).

“I Pompey am, surnam’d the Great,
That oft in field, with targe and shield, did make my foe to sweat.
And traveling along this coast, I here am come by chance,
And lay my arms before the legs of this sweet lass of France.”

“When in the world I liv’d, I was the world’s commander;
By east, west, north, and south, I spread my conquering might.
My scutcheon plain declares that I am Alexander . . . ”

“Great Hercules is presented by this imp,
Whose club kill’d Cerberus, that three-headed canus;
And when he was a babe, a child, a shrimp,
Thus did he strangle serpents in his manus.”

Lead a discussion with students about these characters and the other Worthies mentioned in the play. The full list is as follows:

- Hector of Troy
- Pompey
- Alexander the Great
- Hercules
- Judas Maccabeaus

Other Worthies typically included (though not mentioned by Shakespeare) can include Julius Caesar, David (of David & Goliath), Joshua (of the destruction of Jericho), King Arthur, Charlemagne, Godfrey of Bullion (leader of the first crusade).

Some Discussion Questions:
What do all of these people have in common?
What does that say about the values of the people who considered them “worthy”?
What do these Worthies mention in their introductions of themselves?

Then divide the class into groups of 2–4, and ask them to come up with their own list of nine “Worthies.” These should be based on what the students value, and they should be historical figures who embody those values.

Shakespeare’s Worthies were all successful warriors — is that what we value as the highest honor today?

Once students have their list of nine Worthies, they should choose 3 or 4 of them to write text for. Here are some guidelines for the text to give students:

- The text should be four lines long,
- It should introduce the character and why they are “worthy,”
- It should have some sort of rhyme scheme (usually AABB or ABAB)
- Bonus points if students can work in an uncommon word

Have students present their text to the rest of the class, each student presenting one of their group’s Worthies. After each group presents their text, have the class generate words to describe the Worthies that group came up with and write them on the board. These could include words like “warlike,” “peaceful,” “a great leader,” “inspiring,” “worked for equality,” “outspoken critic,” “got things done,” etc. Once all groups have presented, review the list of descriptors generated, and discuss the values of your class.

Some Discussion Questions:
Which values came up often in students’ lists of Worthies?
Does this class share certain values? Are some of these values more important to some students than to others?
How are the Worthies listed by this class different than those mentioned by the Elizabethans?
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