

Tales from Shakespeare Study Guide

Tales from Shakespeare by Charles Lamb

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The Tempest and A Midsummer Night's Dream

The Tempest and A Midsummer Night's Dream Summary

The Tempest is about the duke of Milan, Prospero, and his daughter, Miranda, who are put into a small boat in the middle of the sea by Prospero's envious brother, Antonio, who hopes they will perish. A loyal friend secretly puts provisions and other necessities for survival in the boat. They land on an island which had been enchanted by the witch Sycorax who died a short time before they arrived. Fortunately Prospero's books on magic had been placed in the boat, and because of his study of the magic arts, he is able to release good spirits that had been imprisoned in trees on the island. The chief spirit is Ariel, a lively little spirit who becomes Prospero's servant.

On the island Prospero also finds an ape-like, bad-natured monster, Caliban, whom Ariel torments because he is the son of Sycorax. The spirits, at Prospero's command, raise a violent storm, in the midst of which is a ship with Prospero's enemies, his brother and the king of Naples. They are cast upon the island.

Miranda had seen no other human except her father. Ferdinand, the son of the king of Naples, also cast upon the island, meets Miranda and they fall in love at first sight. Prospero and his brother Antonio are reconciled. Antonio and the king of Naples both feel shame and sorrow for what they did to Prospero. The king embraces Miranda as a daughter. The two young people are wed, the duke regains his dukedom and Ariel is released from his servitude for his faithfulness. Prospero abandons his study and use of magic.

A Midsummer Night's Dream is a romantic, comical fantasy complete with fairies and magic spells. The tale takes place in Athens, where there is a law compelling maidens to marry the man their fathers choose for them. If they refuse, they'll be put to death. Hermia is in love with Lysander. Her father, Theseus, wants her to marry Demetrius, who has recently courted her best friend, Helena. They all appear before Egeus, the reigning duke, and Hermia's father demands she be put to death, according to the law, if she refuses to marry Demetrius.

Lysander hatches a plan where he and Hermia will flee to his aunt's where the law is not in effect and marry there. Jealous Helena overhears this and tells Demetrius. She plans to follow him in his pursuit of the two lovers. All four end up in a woods enchanted by the king and queen of the fairies, Oberon and Titania. The two royal fairies have had a spat over a changeling boy, whom both of them want.

Oberon orders Puck, his chief fairy counsellor, to drop the juice of a purple flower on Titania's eyelids as she sleeps. This will make her fall in love with the first creature she



sees upon awakening. Oberon has Puck also drop the flower juice in the young lovers' eyes, restoring the lovers to their rightful partners. A bit of a mix-up occurs but all turns out well in the end. Oberon and Titania, Lysander and Hermia, and Demetrius and Helena are all reconciled and the two young couples wed.

The Tempest and A Midsummer Night's Dream Analysis

In The "Tempest", the kind behavior of Prospero toward Ariel, the spirit he releases from magic entrapment in a tree, his attempt to help the ape-like monster, Caliban, son of the witch, his gentle, protective treatment of his daughter, Miranda and his forgiveness of his enemies— his brother Antonio and the king of Naples, both complicit in wishing his and his daughter's death—exhibit a noble, generous and good nature. This is a theme of good overcoming evil.

Prospero's kindness toward his former enemies prompts them both to feel shame and remorse and they repent. Their characters are transformed by Prospero's goodness and they vow to restore Prospero's dukedom. Prospero then says to the king of Naples: "I have a gift in store for you too", and opening a door, showed him his son Ferdinand playing chess with Miranda. The king and his son had both thought the other had perished in the tempest. However, due to Prospero's kindness, they are both alive and safe. Ferdinand has found his true love in Miranda and the king has gained a noble daughter-in-law. Once more one can see in this tale the recurring theme of the great power of good over evil and the power of good to transform character.

Foreshadowing is used in this tale in that first Prospero and Miranda are stranded on the island and then later Prospero's brother and the king of Naples and his son are cast up upon the same island. Simile is used when Prospero speaks of Ariel being "like a wild bird." At the end of the tale, Prospero buries his magic books and wand, which is another tribute to the depth of character of this noble duke. Once more there is a complete happy ending in this delightful tale.

In A Midsummer Night's Dream, Charles and Mary Lamb show how Shakespeare portrays characteristic traits of human nature which are exhibited by both the mortals and fairies. Helena feels jealousy for Hermia; Hermia later feels jealousy and anger towards Helena. Hermia's father, Egeus, portrays narrow-mindedness and hardheartedness with his intention to have his daughter put to death if she disobeys him regarding his decision that she should marry the man he has chosen for her. Theseus, the Prince of Athens, shows a merciful and noble nature in not wanting to enforce the law condemning Hermia to death. Titania and Oberon, the king and queen of the fairies, reveal almost a childishness in their desire each to possess the changeling boy for him/herself. Puck, Oberon's favorite fairy servant, shows a knavish, shrewd nature in the comical tricks he likes to play on humans.

Magic plays a large role in this tale. Oberon uses the juice of different magic flowers to play God with his queen Titania and a clown from Athens wandering in the woods and



with the two sets of young lovers. Finally his magic tricks have a happy outcome; his queen and he are reconciled and the lovers end up with their rightful sweethearts and are to be wed. The theme of mistaken identities which are finally revealed and the theme of reconciliation present themselves in this tale as two recurring themes in The Tales of Shakespeare.

Foreshadowing is evident in the quote of Oberon who warns his queen: "Well, go your way, before morning dawns I will torment you for this injury." This foreshadows Oberon's plan to trick his wife into falling in love with the first creature she sets her eyes upon after the juice of a magic flower is dropped on her eyelids. This is his revenge for her keeping the changeling boy for her own. Simile is used in the tale when Lysander awakens and loves Helena and exclaims that "she as much excelled Hermia in beauty as a dove does a raven." Metaphor is used in describing Hermia and Helena "growing up together in fashion of a double cherry."



The Winter's Tale and Much Ado About Nothing

The Winter's Tale and Much Ado About Nothing Summary

"The Winter's Tale is a fanciful tale full of drama, romance and reconciliation. Leontes, king of Sicily, is married to beautiful and virtuous Hermione. His best friend, Polixenes, king of Bohemia, comes to visit him. Leontes becomes intensely jealous of his friend and doubts his wife's faithfulness. Because of this unfounded jealousy, he asks his lord, Camillo, to poison him. Instead, Camillo helps Polixenes escape to Bohemia, where he too remains. The enraged king sends his wife to prison away from her little son Mamillius. He then sends two lords to the oracle of Delphos to inquire whether his queen had been unfaithful. Hermione gives birth to a baby girl in prison. Paulina, Hermione's friend, asks to take the baby to the king, thinking his heart will soften. However, the king orders the babe be taken to sea and left on a desert isle to perish.

Hermione is brought to trial, during which the answer from the oracle arrives that she is blameless. Leontes refuses to believe the message. Mamillius dies of grief about his mother and she faints. Leontes, hearing of the death of his child and that his wife has fainted, takes pity on Hermione. However, Paulina tells him Hermione has died. The king now believes her innocence, is remorseful and grieves. Antigones, ordered to leave the babe on a desert island, leaves her on the shore of Bohemia, dressed royally with the note Perdita pinned to her clothing. He is then killed by a bear.

The babe is found by a good shepherd, who raises her as his daughter. Polixenes's son, Florizel, sees Perdita while hunting and falls in love with her. He visits her home regularly disguised as Doricles, a gentleman. Polixenes finds out about his love for Perdita. He and Camillo visit the shepherd's house in disguise. Perdita loves Florizel. Florizel asks the stranger, actually his father, to witness his marriage vow to Perdita. His father reveals his identity and reproaches Florizel for wanting to marry a low-born maid. Perdita makes a noble speech about the unimportance of wealth. Camillo, charmed by Perdita's nobility, offers to take the young lovers to Sicily to seek protection from Leontes, who had since repented. He hopes Leontes can obtain a pardon from Polixenes for the young lovers. Camillo, Florizel, Perdita and the shepherd go to Sicily. Leontes realizes Perdita is his daughter. Paulina interrupts this scene saying a famous sculptor has made a statue of Hermione. The statue turns out to be not a statue but the queen herself. Leontes and Hermione are joyfully re-united. Polixenes arrives. All is revealed. Polixenes forgives Leontes and their former close friendship is restored.

"Much Ado About Nothing" is a tale of young lovers united by their friends through witty and clever schemes. Hero is the serious and demure daughter and Beatrice the witty and mischievous niece of Leonato, governor of Messina. The story unfolds as three young noblemen return from the wars and visit Leonato. They are Don Pedro, the prince



of Aragon, his friend, Claudio, the lord of Florence and the wild and witty Benedick, lord of Padua.

Beatrice and Benedick begin to verbally spar, using their sharp wits as they had been known to do in the past. The prince, Don Pedro, a true romantic at heart, feels they are perfect for one another and should wed. He devises a scheme to make Beatrice believe Benedick loves her and Benedick believe Beatrice loves him. This is accomplished by letting Benedick overhear a conversation between Claudio and the prince, in which they discuss Beatrice's great love for Benedick. Likewise, Beatrice is led to overhear a conversation about Benedick's love for her and his noble character.

Hero and Claudio already love one another and plan to be wed the next day. However, The prince's half-brother, Don John, hates both Claudio and the prince. He devises an evil scheme to make Claudio and the prince doubt Hero's purity and faithfulness. He hires evil Borachio to court Margaret, Hero's maid, dressed in Hero's clothing and appearing at her window. He tells Claudio and the prince that they can witness Hero's infidelity that night. When they see Hero supposedly being courted, Claudio's love changes to hatred. At the wedding the next day, Claudio denounced Hero and she falls into a death-like faint. The prince and Claudio leave not caring. Both Beatrice and Benedick don't believe Hero is guilty, nor does the old friar who tells Leonato to report Hero's death. Beatrice implores Benedick to kill his friend Claudio.

Fortunately, Borachio has been bragging about the evil scheme. He makes a full confession. Claudio begs Leonato's forgiveness. Leonato tells him he must marry Hero's cousin. When Claudio and the masked bride appear before the friar, Hero removes her mask and the two are joyfully wed. Beatrice and Benedick discover they were tricked into love but have fallen so deeply in love they are instantly reconciled and wed also. Don John, who had fled, is brought back to witness the joy of the couples as his punishment.

The Winter's Tale and Much Ado About Nothing Analysis

In "The Winter's Tale," one can see the theme of the final triumph and reward of virtue. Perdita is rewarded for her modest, honest, non-materialistic virtue, and Hermione is rewarded for her patience, loyalty and love. These two virtuous women, though tested by ill-fortune, emerge victorious and happy at the end of the tale. Repentance and reconciliation are also themes appearing in this tale and other of the Tales of Shakespeare. Leontes, the king of Sicily, repents his treatment of his wife and daughter. Leontes is reconciled with his wife, Miranda, his daughter, Perdita, his friend Polixenes and his friend Camillo. Polixenes is reconciled with his son and with Perdita.

All the characters in "The Winter's Tale" show nobility of character. Camillo refuses to poison Polixenes but later longs to see his former friend, Leontes, forgiving him, since he has repented and is remorseful. Polixenes also shows a forgiving and noble nature when he forgives Leontes, though he had wanted to poison him. Perdita shows a noble,



non-materialistic nature, loving Florizel for his goodness and stating that the sun shines equally on a palace as on a cottage. Miranda still loves Leontes though he was very cruel and unjust to her.

Foreshadowing is used when the ship carrying the infant princess, Perdita, lands on the coast of Bohemia. One can see this foreshadows the meeting of the daughter of Leontes with his former friend, Polixenes, who rules Bohemia.

In "Much Ado About Nothing," the characters of Beatrice and Benedict are quite different from the characters of Hero and Claudio. Beatrice and Benedick have a quick wit and enjoy the sport of clever argument. Hero and Claudio are of a more serious temperament. Hero is modest and quiet.

The knowledge of human behavior and psychology is depicted in the tale first when Benedict hates being called "the prince's jester" by Beatrice since it is a little too near the truth. Also, one see how both Beatrice and Benedick are swayed by believing themselves loved by the other. The prince has used this psychological trick to change their attitudes toward one another.

Simile is used in this instance in the tale: "honeysuckles, ripened by the sun, like ungrateful minions, forbid the sun to enter." It is part of the description of the arbor where Beatrice is enticed by Margaret to overhear the conversation about Benedict's love for her. Simile is also used in the description of Beatrice, "Beatrice like a lapwing runs close by the ground, to hear our conference," and "her spirits are coy as wild birds of the rock." The use of disguise to further the plot appears again in this tale. Margaret, Hero's maid, disguises herself in Hero's clothes to fulfill Don John's scheme. The theme of remorse and reconciliation occurs again in this tale when Claudio repents and is reconciled with Hero. Also Beatrice and Benedick when they hear the truth of the scheme to make them love one another, reconcile instantly.



As You Like It and The Two Gentlemen of Verona

As You Like It and The Two Gentlemen of Verona Summary

In the tale "As You Like It," a French duke is banished to the forest of Arden by his evil elder brother, Frederick. The duke has a daughter, Rosalind, whom his brother retains as a companion for his daughter, Celia. Rosalind and Celia become fast friends. There is a wrestling match at the court and they attend. A young man is to fight a strong wrestler, known for slaying many. Both are moved with compassion, but Rosalind falls in love. They try to persuade the young man not to fight. Rosalind's kind words give him courage and he wins the match.

The duke discovers he is Orlando, the son of his brother's good friend. Rosalind, moved by this fact, gives him a chain from her neck. The evil duke, reminded of his brother, banishes Rosalind. Celia decides to go with her. They disguise themselves as Ganymede and Aliana, a shepherd and his sister. In the forest they buy a shepherd's house, which has food provisions in it. Orlando is in the same forest. His elder brother had hoped he would be killed in the wrestling match and plans to burn him in his bed chamber. A faithful servant of Orlando's father, Adam, overhears the scheme and warns Orlando. They go into the forest and come upon the banished duke and his followers and are fed and taken care of. Rosalind, disguised as Ganymede, and Celia, disguised as Ganymede's sister, meet Orlando in the forest. They see Rosalind's chain around his neck. She pretends to give Orlando advice in love and they become close.

One morning, Orlando finds a sleeping man under a tree. It's his brother, and he saves him from a snake and a lion. Oliver awakens and see his brother defending his life and feels shame and remorse. Orlando forgives him. Orlando asks him to tell Ganymede and Aliana. Oliver confesses the whole story, including his former cruelty and his remorse. Aliana falls in love with him. Ganymede faints. The next day both Celia and Rosalind appear as themselves and they are married to their lovers. The happy news arrives that the duke's dukedom is restored. His brother intended to enter the forest and kill his brother and followers, but meets an old religious hermit who convinces him to relinquish the dukedom and become a true penitent.

"The Two Gentlemen of Verona" is a tale about two close friends, Valentine and Proteus. Proteus is in love with Julia. Valentine goes to the court of the duke of Milan. They part, vowing unalterable friendship. Julia writes the kindest letter she has ever written to Proteus. She had been playing hard-to-get. Proteus is delighted with the letter. While exclaiming for joy over it, his father asks him who it is from. Proteus says it's a letter from Valentine, asking him to join him in Milan. Proteus and Julia bid each other a tearful farewell, vowing constancy and exchanging rings.



In the meanwhile, in Milan, Valentine has fallen in love with Silvia, the duke's daughter. She loves him too. However, the duke wants her to marry Thurio, a courtier, so they must keep their love a secret from her father. Proteus arrives and falls in love with Silvia too, forgetting his love for Julia and his friendship with Valentine. Valentine tells Proteus that he and Silvia plan to flee to Mantua. Proteus proves to be a faithless friend and discloses Valentine's plan to the duke. The duke devises a cunning plan to make Valentine betray his secret. He then banishes Valentine from Milan forever.

Julia, missing Proteus, leaves Verona to seek him, dressed as a man. By chance, upon arriving in Milan, she comes upon Proteus declaring his love to Silvia and betraying her and Valentine. Although Julia despairs, she still loves Proteus and hires herself to him as the page, Sebastian. He sends her to her rival, Silvia, with letters, presents and the ring Julia had given him. Silvia rejects the suit of Proteus.

The banished Valentine wanders in a lonely wood and is set upon by robbers. Struck by his nobility, they tell him they won't kill him if he remains in the wood as their leader. Valentine stipulates only that they spare women and children.

Silvia decides to follow Valentine to Mantua, accompanied by old Elgamour. She passes through the same wood as Valentine and is seized by bandits. They assure her their leader is kind and gentle. Proteus and Julia, disguised as his page, arrive. Proteus saves Silvia from the bandits and once again begs her to marry him. Poor Julia fears Silvia will consent out of gratitude. Valentine, now leader of the bandits, appears. Proteus is thus caught courting Silvia. He is at once shamed and remorseful at having deceived his best friend. Gentle and noble Valentine forgives him and impulsively offers him Silvia. Julia faints, and Silvia is fearful Valentine will keep his impulsive promise. Julia awakens and reveals she has been disguised at Proteus's dear page. He then realizes he still loves Julia. The duke of Milan and Thurio appear. Thurio shows he is a coward and the duke realizes Valentine is worthy of Silvia's love. Proteus recites his story of love and betrayal as penance. Then the four lovers return to Milan to be married.

As You Like It and The Two Gentlemen of Verona Analysis

In the tale "As You Like It," one sees once again how beautifully the Lambs depict Shakespeare's theme of virtue and goodness overcoming malice and evil. The noble characters of the banished duke, the two maidens, Orlando and the faithful servant, Adam, though they endure all kinds of hardship, emerge happy and victorious. They are rewarded for their goodness.

One can also observe the theme of the repentance of formerly evil doers, another recurring theme in "The Tales of Shakespeare". Not only are their characters transformed, but they are forgiven by the people they injured and happy reconciliation takes place. The elder brother of the banished duke undergoes a total transformation of character when he meets the old religious hermit at the end of the tale. Oliver, Orlando's

cruel brother, is also transformed upon witnessing Orlando saving his life. Both the duke and Orlando freely forgive their persecutors showing their noble natures.

Another recurring theme of the tales which appears in "As You Like It" is the theme that a main character, though raised without education, Orlando in this story, exhibits all the nobility of a well-educated person because of his noble heritage and inherently good nature. The Lambs show how Shakespeare uses the device of women disguising themselves as men once more in this tale. Rosalind disguises herself as the country lad, Ganymede.

In the tale "The Two Gentlemen of Verona," one can see the recurring theme of a woman disguised as a man. Julia disguises herself as a man in order to follow her lover Proteus to Milan, her maid who accompanies her also disguises herself as a man. Repentance and reconciliation once more occur in this tale. Proteus is remorseful of his attempt to steal Silvia by scheme and lies from his best friend Valentine. Proteus shows his noble character by forgiving Proteus and even offering to give him Silvia. So once more reconciliation of good friends after a serious falling out occurs.



The Merchant of Venice and Cymbeline

The Merchant of Venice and Cymbeline Summary

The tale "The Merchant of Venice" is about Shylock, a Jewish usurer, who lends money to Christian merchants at great interest. Antonio, a Christian, lends money to people in distress at no interest. Bassanio, Antonio's friend, wishes to marry a wealthy heiress, whom he loves. He asks Antonio to lend him three thousand ducats to court his love. Antonio doesn't have the money and decides to borrow it from Shylock at interest, using ships he expects to return soon as credit. Shylock, feigning friendship, agrees to lend him the money interest-free. He only has to sign a paper before a lawyer that Shylock may cut a pound of flesh from Antonio's body should he not pay the debt on time. Bassanio doesn't want Antonio to sign the contract. Shylock said it's only jest.

Portia, the heiress, accepts Bassanio's suit of marriage because of his nobility, not money. Gratiano, Bassanio's servant, is likewise in love with Portia's maid, Nerissa, who loves him in return. A messenger appears, saying Antonio's ships are lost and he must now forfeit his life. Portia offers to pay, but Shylock refuses. Portia, disguised as a man and lawyer, Nerissa disguised as her clerk, plead Antonio's case in court. Portia very cleverly wins the case for Antonio. When all return to Portia's house, news arrives that Antonio's ships were not lost.

In the tale, "Cymbeline," the king of Britain marries again after his wife, who had born him two sons and a daughter, dies. Imogen, his daughter, had been raised with Posthumus, the orphan son of a brave and loyal soldier of the king. They fall in love and are secretly married when they come of age. The wicked queen tells the king, and Posthumus is banished to Rome. In Rome he meets Iachimo who, tired of hearing Imogen constantly praised, hatches a plot to gain the diamond ring Imogen had given Posthumus in parting. Iachimo travels to Britain, and using a clever, dishonest scheme, is able to convince Posthumus of Imogen's unfaithfulness upon his return to Rome. Posthumus writes to her servant, telling him to take Imogen to a seaport of Wales and kill her. Pisanio, instead of killing Imogen, tells her to disguise herself as a boy and go to Rome to find Posthumus.

The wicked queen had given Pisanio a phial of poison, telling him it was a cordial for Imogen should she get sick. The phial actually contains a potion which leaves the person drinking it in a death-like state for a few hours. Imogen comes upon the cave where Belarius and her two lost brothers, Polydore and Cadwal, live. Belarius has raised them well and they all love one another. When the men return and find Imogen in the cave, they are at once struck by her purity and beauty. Imogen tells them her name is Fidele. They love her immediately. The men go hunting again and Imogen, feeling sick, drinks the potion and falls into a death-like sleep. The men returning find her and carry her to the woods and strew flowers and leaves over her.



When she awakes, she sets out for Rome. War between Rome and Britain has just begun. Imogen falls into the hands of the Roman army, who happen to be in the wood, marching to war on Britain. She becomes page to the noble Roman general, Lucius. Posthumus is in the Roman army, but decides to fight for Britain when Pisanio writes to him telling him of his wife, Imogen's death. He is remorseful. Polydore, Caldwal and Belarius join the army to fight for Cymbeline. Belarius had long since repented of stealing the boys. All are reconciled at the end of the tale. Cymbeline forgives Belarius. Imogen and Posthumus are reconciled. Lucius, the Roman general, is spared by Imogen's intervention on his behalf. Even Iachimo is forgiven. The wicked queen dies.

The Merchant of Venice and Cymbeline Analysis

In "The Merchant of Venice," the theme of anti-semitism is apparent. Shylock is depicted as the worst stereotype of a Jew that prejudice can conjure up. At the same time, the Christians in the story are described as having extremely noble, generous and forgiving natures. Antonio is depicted as a very kind and generous Christian merchant who lends money at no interest to people in trouble. Antonio risks everything to lend his friend Bassiano the money he needs to woo the rich heiress, Portia. Bassanio shows his love and friendship for Antonio by not wanting him to sign the dreadful contract. Portia exhibits nobility, true love, virtue and courage. She doesn't care about marrying a rich man, only a good one. She courageously disguises herself as a man, a counsellor, in order to save her husband's friend. She also shows extreme intelligence in her handling of the contract as to save Antonio and teach Shylock a lesson. Humor is also evident in the prank Portia and Nerissa play on their husbands by demanding the rings they had given them while they are disguised as the counsellor and his page.

In the tale "Cymbeline," one encounters once again many noble characters. Imogen is virtuous, loyal and brave. She forgives her father for banishing her husband, and her husband who had not believed her to be faithful and had wanted her dead. She shows her courage by setting out by herself in a strange forest and later becoming page to a Roman general during a war. Pisanio is also an honest, kind man and refuses to kill Imogen and instead wants to help her. Posthumus, though he doubted his wife's virtue, later shows his nobility and courage by not wanting to take credit for saving the king. He also shows repentance and remorse. Belarius proves to be a good and loving father to the two sons of Cymbeline and honestly confesses his deed to the king, having long repented and forgiven the king for unjustly accusing him and banishing him. One can see the recurring device used in some of the plots in these tales of having a woman disguise herself as a man. Imogen disguises herself on the advice of Pisanio.



King Lear and Macbeth

King Lear and Macbeth Summary

In the tragic tale of "King Lear," the king of Britain has three daughters: Goneril, Regan and Cordelia. The king, being old and tired, decides to let the younger people manage his affairs. He calls his daughters to him, deciding to give each in proportion to her affection for him. Goneril and Regan flatter him with lies about their extreme love and devotion. Cordelia, his favorite and the joy of his life, is disgusted by her sister's lying flattery and states plainly that she loves him according to her duty as a daughter. She would, under other circumstances, have told him of her great love for him, but she was shocked at her sisters' lies and mercenary intent. She decides to love her father in silence. This behavior enrages the king. He has given Goneril and Regan and their husbands each a third of his kingdom. He now divides Cordelia's third between Goneril and Regan and their husbands.

The king of France still wants to marry Cordelia, saying her virtue is worth more than any kingdom. Cordelia leaves Britain, sorrowfully begging her sisters to take good care of their father. However, the sisters begin at once mistreating him and even begrudge him the one hundred knights he has retained. Lear's loyal friend, the earl of Kent, whom Lear has banished, disguises himself, and with the name of Caius, offers his services to the king. The king hires him, liking his plain manner. Lear's jester also remains loyal and tries to cheer Lear with his witty sayings.

The wicked sisters soon reduce Lear to the state of a beggar. The ingratitude of his daughters hurts Lear the most. A great storm arises. Lear chooses to venture into the storm rather than remain with his wicked daughters. He wanders through the bleak and stormy landscape with only the faithful Caius (Kent) and his jester. Kent entreats him to take shelter in the hovel on the hearth of a Bedlam beggar. Kent perceives Lear has finally gone completely mad and takes him to the castle at Dover, where he is known as the earl of Kent. He then embarks to France to seek Cordelia's help.

Cordelia persuades her husband to let her return to Britain with a royal army and win back her father's kingdom for him. Having somehow escaped from the castle, Lear is found by Cordelia's army, wandering near Dover. He is totally mad, singing to himself with a crown of straw, nettles and weeds on his head. The physicians advise Cordelia not to see her father until he is restored to health. When Lear is brought to his senses, a tender reunion takes place between the king and his daughter.

The wicked sisters, being unfaithful wives, both fall in love with Edmund, the bastard son of the late earl of Gloucester, who had through treachery disinherited Edgar, the rightful heir, and was not the earl himself. Regan's husband dies and she intends to marry Edmund. Goneril kills her with poison and is imprisoned by her husband for this. She takes her own life in prison. Cordelia is put in prison by the wicked earl of Gloucester and ends her life there. Lear dies soon after and then Kent dies. The evil



earl of Gloucester is slain by his brother the rightful earl. Goneril's husband, the duke of Albany,

who had never joined with his wife in her wickedness, becomes king of Britain.

"Macbeth" is about the Scottish thane, or lord, Macbeth, who upon returning from battle with another general, Banquo, comes upon three witches. The first addresses him as thane of Glamis, the second as thane of Cawdor and the third hails him as king to be. They speak to Banquo in a riddle, pronouncing him "lesser than Macbeth and greater! not so happy, but much happier!" They tell him he won't but his sons will be kings of Scotland.

Messengers arrive, sent from the king to confer on him the title of thane of Cawdor. Macbeth later tells his wife about the witches' predictions. His wife, being an evil and ambitious woman, urges Macbeth to murder the king and so fulfill the prophecy. However, fearing Macbeth would not do it, she goes to the king in the middle of the night with a dagger to kill him. However there was something in Duncan's face which reminded her of her father and she couldn't kill him. She returns to her husband, who is conflicted and hesitant to kill a kinsman and stain his reputation. His wife calls him a coward and he is persuaded to do the evil deed. He stabs the king to death in his room. When he returns to his wife, she tells him to wash the blood off his hands and takes the bloody dagger to put blood on the cheeks of the king's grooms to make them seem guilty. When morning arrives, suspicion for the murder falls on Macbeth, not on the poor grooms. Duncan's two sons flee, thus Macbeth is crowned king and the witches' prediction comes true.

However, Macbeth and his wife remember the prediction that Banquo's sons shall reign, so they determine to kill Banquo and Fleance, his son, and invite them to supper. Macbeth sends murderers to kill them on their way to the supper. Banquo is stabbed, but Fleance escapes. The ghost of Banquo appears at the supper and sits in Macbeth's chair. Macbeth turns white with terror. Only he can see the ghost. His wife sends everyone away, fearing disclosure of the terrible secret. Macbeth seeks the witches again. Three spirits, the masters of the witches, warn him of the thane of Fife, telling him none born of a woman can hurt him and he shall never be defeated until the wood of Birnam should come to Dunsinane Hill. All three predictions come true. Even the wood of Birnam moves, since soldiers carry boughs of trees to disguise themselves. Macduff and Macbeth prepare to fight. Macbeth is confident. He cannot be killed of a man born of a woman. However, Macduff tells Macbeth he was taken prematurely from his mother's womb and was not born naturally. Macduff cuts off his head to present as a gift to the young, lawful king, Malcolm.

King Lear and Macbeth Analysis

In "King Lear," one encounters all kinds of characters. Cordelia is kind, honest, loyal and noble. She refuses to use flattery to gain a rich inheritance from her father. Her wicked sisters, Regan and Goneril, are dishonest, mercenary, unfaithful, ungrateful and



disloyal. They trick their old father with flattery to give them each half his kingdom. They abuse him and begrudge him even his faithful attendants and royal train of one hundred knights. They are also unfaithful to their husbands. The king of France is also a noble character, marrying Cordelia who has no dowry, but stating that her virtue is worth more than any kingdom.

The earl of Kent is loyal, faithful, noble and brave. He gives up his position as earl to accompany the king and protect him during his misfortunes, disguised as a servant. The character of Edmund, the false earl of Gloucester, is wicked and mean-spirited. He became earl by treacherously disinheriting the rightful earl, his brother Edgar. He is lover to both wicked sister, Goneril and Regan and imprisons the innocent Cordelia. Lear's character is piteous and pathetic. He is too easily swayed by the flattery of his wicked daughters, too quick to disown his favorite and loving daughter, Cordelia. He is a true tragic figure in his suffering and madness.

The use of disguise appears once more in this tale. Kent disguises himself as Caius in order to remain with his friend King Lear. Foreshadowing is used when Lear sees Caius in stocks upon arriving to visit his daughter Regan. This is an omen of things to come. Metaphor is used in the famous comparison: "sharper than a serpent's tooth it was to have a thankless child."

In the tale "Macbeth" the main character, Macbeth, is weak and then turns evil being influenced by his evil, ambitious wife. Witches, spirits and prophecies play a large role in the tale. Colorful and eerie descriptions of the witches and their cauldron of strange and horrible things and descriptions of the spirits make the story more interesting. The theme of good overcoming evil is once more apparent in this tale. The evildoers, Macbeth and his wife, are destroyed both mentally and physically by their evil acts. The prophecies of the witches and of the spirits foreshadow the later events of the tale. The well-known metaphor "the milk of human kindness" appears in the tale.



All's Well That Ends Well and The Taming of the Shrew

All's Well That Ends Well and The Taming of the Shrew Summary

In the tale, "All's Well That Ends Well," Bertram, count of Rousillon, is called to the court of the king when his father dies. He has lived with his mother and Helena, whom his mother took in, after Helena's father, a famous physician, died. Helena loves Bertram but he is indifferent to her. Helena decides to go to Paris and cure the king, using her father's medicine. She cures the king and he gives her her choice of husbands. She chooses Bertram. He, however, doesn't love her and leaves France, sending her a letter in which he writes that when she can get the ring off his finger, she can call him husband but that will never be. In addition, he writes, "Till I have no wife, I have nothing in France."

The countess shows Helena sympathy but Helena sets out on a pilgrimage to the shrine of St. Jaques le Grand. On her way, she comes to Florence, where Bertram is. He has fallen in love with Diana, the daughter of a widow, with whom coincidentally Helena is staying. Diana doesn't love Bertram, and when Helena tells her story to the widow, she is sympathetic. A scheme is planned where Helena shall dress as Diana and have a rendezvous with Bertram. That day, she lets Bertram be informed of her death. Helena, disguised as Diana, is totally enchanting during the meeting she has with Bertram and he, thinking his wife is dead, proposes marriage. She asks for the ring from his finger and gives him the ring the king had given her. Bertram sets out for France, as do Helena, the widow her daughter, to whom Helena has promised a reward.

The king and Bertram's mother lament Helena's death. When the king sees the ring he gave Helena on Bertram's finger he fears he has killed her. Then Diana and her mother appear and demand that Bertram marry Diana as he has promised. Bertram refuses and the king doesn't believe Diana's story so she leaves, returning with Helena. The truth comes out and Bertram realizes he had fallen in love with Helena, not Diana, that night, and accepts her as his beloved wife. Diana is rewarded with the choice of any French nobleman as a husband.

In "The Taming of the Shrew," Katharine, the eldest daughter of Baptista of Padua, is known for her angry, shrewish nature. Baptista insists his youngest daughter, the gentle Bianca, shall not wed until Katharine is wed. Petruchio decides to marry Katharine. He pretends she is everything she is not and acts accordingly in spite of her rude behavior, vowing to marry her the next Sunday when he will return with rich wedding clothes. Sunday arrives and Petruchio doesn't show up. Katharine weeps for shame. Then he appears, dressed oddly and with no finery for Katharine. They are married, but Petruchio behaves in a rude, wild manner and carries Katharine off, not staying for the wedding feast. At his house, he pretends the food, bed and clothing offered Katherine



are not good enough for her and doesn't let her have them. She is totally fatigued, starving and has nothing nice to wear; Finally she is totally tamed by this treatment and becomes completely humble and obedient. They visit Baptista, where two other newly wedded couples are present: Bianca and Lucentio and Hortensio and his bride. Petruchio wins a wager about which of the wives is the most obedient and submissive. Katharine is famous from that day forth as the most obedient and dutiful wife in Padua.

All's Well That Ends Well and The Taming of the Shrew Analysis

In the tale "All's Well That Ends Well," one has a noble character in Helena, who heals the king with her father's medicine and follows her husband to Italy, proving her worth while posing as Diana, whom Bertram her husband wants to marry. She exhibits great faith and patience and is finally rewarded by Bertram's love. Metaphor is used in "All's Well That Ends Well" in the passage, "she seemed to draw his portrait on the tablet of her heart" (p. 168) and "Love is a thorn that belongs to the rose of youth:" (p. 169). Also on p. 170, "Bertram did not know she loved him, comparing her humble unassuming love to a poor Indian, who adores the sun that looks upon his worshipper, but knows of him no more." Once more this tale has a happy ending after many trials of the heroine.

"The Taming of the Shrew" uses comedy to further the plot. The scenes between Petruchio and Katharine and the way he tames and subdues her lend themselves to be played in a humorous manner. Katharine is a dynamic character who changes during the tale from a shrewish, demanding, angry woman to a docile, dutiful, virtuous wife. Petruchio shows a good knowledge of human nature in his behavior in the tale.

In "The Taming of the Shrew" human psychology is used by Petruchio in subduing his shrewish bride. Comedy is also used in the tale to amuse the readers. Katharine is a dynamic character who changes during the tale from an angry, shrewish woman to a virtuous, dutiful wife.



The Comedy of Errors and Measure For Measure

The Comedy of Errors and Measure For Measure Summary

In "The Comedy of Errors," the states of Syracuse and Ephesus are at war. Any merchant from Syracuse seen in Ephesus is put to death, according to the law, unless he can pay a thousand marks. Aegeon from Syracuse is discovered in Ephesus and brought before the duke. Having no money, he asks if he may tell his life history before being put to death. When he was young and in Epidamnum on business, he sent for his wife, who gave birth to identical twin boys soon after arriving. In the same inn, a poor woman also gave birth to identical twin boys. Aegeon bought the boys as slaves to his sons. On their voyage home there was a terrible storm and the ship was torn in two. Aegeon saw his wife with one son and slave being taken up by fishermen. He and other two boys were saved and brought to Syracuse. His son, when he turned eighteen, asked if he and his slave could search for his mother and brother. Aegeon spent seven years searching for them, and having not found them anywhere else, thought to look in Ephesus. The duke is moved and gives him a day to get the money. His sons both have the name Antipholus and the slaves the name Dromio.

It happens the lost son and slave have been in Syracuse twenty years and the son is wealthy. He knows nothing of his parents. The fishermen sold the two boys to the uncle of the duke of Ephesus. To return to the present, the two identical sets of twins, now both in Ephesus, are constantly mistaken for one another and total confusion results. Happily, one set of twins seeks refuge in a convent. The abbess turns out to be the wife of Aegeon. So at the end of the tale, the family is happily re-united. The rich twin offers to pay the fine but the duke refuses the money. Antipholus of Syracuse marries the sister of his brother's wife, Luciana.

In "Measure for Measure," the mild-mannered duke of Vienna lets everyone break the laws with impunity, particularly one harsh law condemning to death any man who lives with a woman not his wife. Men and women are living in sin now and not marrying. The duke wanting to change this, but fearing he will be unpopular, decides to charge Angelo, a strict and moral man, to enforce the laws and pretends to leave on a trip to Poland. However, he returns disguised as a friar to observe what happened.

Angelo imprisons young Claudio, convicted for seducing Juliet, and sentences him to be beheaded. Claudio sends word to his sister, Imogen, who is that day entering the convent, to please go to Angelo and plead for his life. Imogen pleads fervently but Angelo is tempted by her beauty and tells her he will spare her brother if she will lose her virtue to him. She tells her brother and he tells her to do it that he may live. She refuses, saying that death is better than dishonor. The duke, dressed as the friar, overhears the conversation and tells Claudio he must prepare to die. Then the duke,



alone with Isabel, tells her a way she can redeem them all. She must get Angelo's wife, Mariana, rejected by him for having lost her dowry, to go in her place to the rendezvous. The duke, fearing Angelo would still have Claudio beheaded, persuades the prison provost to send the head of a dead man in place of Claudio's head.

The duke appears in his royal robes. Isabel tells him that she was dishonored by Angelo in order to save her brother's life but that Angelo had her brother killed anyway. The duke pretends not to believe her story. Then Mariana appears and says it was she who was with Angelo, not Isabel. Angelo thinks the conflicting stories will clear him. The duke leaves, saying the friar who had put these women up to what they did should be summoned. The duke, once more dressed as the friar, appears and tells of all the corrupt practices he has observed. He is threatened with torture for treason. Then to the amazement of all, the friar throws off his clothes, revealing he is the duke. Angelo realizes he is found out and admits he should be put to death. Mariana pleads for his life, as does Isabel. The duke presents Claudio alive. The duke has fallen in love with the virtuous Isabel and asks her to be his wife. She loving him for his goodness, and not yet having taken the veil, becomes his wife. Claudio and Juliet marry. Because of Isabel's good example, the maidens of Vienna are once more virtuous.

The Comedy of Errors and Measure For Measure Analysis

The use of comedy and misidentification recur often in this tale. This comes about because the main characters are two sets of identical twins bearing identical names. Total confusion results in misunderstandings and comedy. The abbess, mother of the twin sons of the merchant, shows great wisdom and teaches the wife of the twin of Ephesus to not be jealous. The recurring theme of the selling main characters as slaves also appears in this tale. The one twin and his slave were sold as slaves to duke Menaphon, a famous warrior, who is the uncle of the duke of Ephesus who makes the twin an officer in his army. Shipwreck is also a recurring theme of the tales which is a pivotal plot happening in this tale.

Jealousy a recurring theme of the tales appears in "The Comedy of Errors." The wife of the twin who lives in Ephesus is intensely jealous of other women, but this jealousy is all her imagination. The plot revolves around a law in this tale as it does in several other "Tales from Shakespeare." The law is that any merchant from Syracuse seen in Ephesus will be put to death unless he pays a thousand marks for his life. There is a happy ending to this play after many trials and misunderstandings. These totally happy endings are also a trademark of many of the tales.

In the tale "Measure for Measure" one can see the use of disguise in the plot. The duke of Vienna disguises himself as a friar in order to observe the happenings in his city after Angelo has taken over the governing of the city and the enforcing of the laws. The theme of nobility is once more apparent in this tale. Isabel, the duke of Vienna and Mariana, Angelo's wife are all noble in their characters and actions. The theme of forgiveness and repentance occurs again in this tale. The duke forgives Angelo,



Mariana, Angelo's betrayed wife forgives him and the young couple Claudio and Juliet are not punished for having lived together before marriage. They marry.

There's a happy ending for all in the tale. Isabel marries the duke and because of her noble example, the city no longer has the problem of young couples living in sin. The harsh law of condemning young men to death if they seduce maidens no longer has to be enforced.



Twelfth Night; or, What You Will and Timon of Athens

Twelfth Night; or, What You Will and Timon of Athens Summary

In "Twelfth Night; Or, What You Will," Sebastian and Viola, identical twins, though brother and sister, are shipwrecked on the coast of Illyria. Viola comes safe to shore, but her brother is last seen clinging to a mast. Viola hears of Olivia, who mourns her brother's death and refuses to see the noble duke, Orsino, who loves her and wants to wed her. Viola decides to dress as a man and she becomes page to the duke, under the name Cesario. She hears the duke tell of his deep love for Olivia and falls in love with him. She too, as the page, Cesario, becomes dear to him. He asks her to go to Olivia and plead for him. However, Olivia, falls in love with her in her disguise as Cesario. Cesario returns to Orsino, telling him that she wasn't successful. He sends her once more to Olivia, who finally declares her love to Cesario, who leaves, saying only "never to love any woman." Sebastian appears and Olivia confesses her love to him, thinking he is Cesario. They decide to wed. The duke discovers that it was Viola, not a page, with whom he had become so close. He realizes her beauty and goodness and asks her to marry him. So under Olivia's roof, both twins marry noble partners.

In "Timon of Athens," Timon, lord of Athens, is so generous he gives his great wealth to anyone who, seemingly in need and flattering him, asks for it. He does this for such a long time and in such a great degree that he himself is finally reduced to poverty. His honest steward, Flavius had tried to warn him, but he hadn't listened. Asking the many people, now rich, whom he had helped to now come to his aid, he is again and again turned away. No one whom he helped will now help him; they shun him. All these false friends are surprised when they are once more invited to a great feast given by Timon.

They arrive, expecting the former abundance, but when the lids of the dishes are uncovered there is only water and smoke. Timon chases them out, hurling insults at them. Soon after that, Timon goes to live in the woods away from loathsome humanity. He strips naked, living like a beast, hating all mankind, especially the people of Athens.

One day, while digging in the dirt, he finds a chest of gold. Soon after this discovery, an army appears, marching on Athens and headed by Alcibiades, who had been betrayed by the Athenian senators. Timon gives Alcibiades the gold telling him to level Athens and kill everyone. He dies still hating all mankind.



Twelfth Night; or, What You Will and Timon of Athens Analysis

In "Twelfth Night; or What You Will," there are a number of themes which often recur in the Tales from Shakespeare. The theme of twins is the first recurring theme to appear in the tale. The main characters are Sebastian and Viola, who are identical in appearance except for their sex. The second recurring theme in the tale is the theme of shipwreck. The twins are separated by a shipwreck due to a violent storm, and that is an important factor in the plot, for they are separated by the shipwreck. Another recurring theme is the use of disguise. Viola disguises herself as a page in order to serve the duke Orsino. There is a happy ending to the tale where all the lovers are wed.

"Timon of Athens" is a tale where the hero is a dynamic character; that is, his character changes during the tale. In the beginning of the tale, Timon is an overly gullible and incredibly generous man. He is totally disillusioned when, because he has given all his wealth away, he becomes poor and his so-called friends desert him. He turns into a wild man living in the woods and hates all mankind till he dies.

The recurring theme of a loyal servant is present in this tale. Flavius an honest and loyal steward of Timon, is a noble man. He warns him about his extravagance, but Timon doesn't listen to him. After Timon has fled to the woods and is living in a cave, Flavius finds him after much searching. However, though Timon realizes that Flavius may be the only honest man in the world, Flavius has the image of a human and so Timon can't stand to look at him.



Romeo and Juliet and Hamlet, Prince of Denmark

Romeo and Juliet and Hamlet, Prince of Denmark Summary

"Romeo and Juliet" is about Romeo and Juliet, two young people of Verona who come from feuding families, the Montagues and the Capulets. They fall in love at a masked ball. Romeo woos Juliet that night under her window. Romeo asks friar Lawrence to marry them, which he does. That same day Romeo's friends, Benvolio and Mercutio meet a group of Capulets, led by Tybalt, Juliet's cousin. Tybalt and Mercutio begin fighting. Romeo and Benvolio try to part them but Tybalt kills Mercutio. Romeo is so angered he fights and kills Tybalt. Romeo is banished from Verona. Juliet's father wants her to marry Paris, a young nobleman. She pleads with the friar for help. He gives her a potion which will make her appear dead for forty-two hours. They find her on the day she is to be wed to Paris, seemingly dead. The family takes her to the tomb. The friar had told her Romeo would come and fetch her that night. The message telling Romeo Juliet is not dead but sleeps doesn't get to Romeo in time, but he does learn of Juliet's death. He buys poison and when he arrives at the tomb, he finds Paris there and kills him, then takes the poison. Juliet awakes and stabs herself. The grieving families are reconciled.

In "Hamlet, Prince of Denmark," Hamlet's father, the king, is murdered by his brother, Claudius who then marries Gertrude, Hamlet's mother. The ghost of the king returns and tells Hamlet to avenge the murder. Hamlet pretends to be mad. He neglects and is cold to Ophelia his sweetheart, the daughter of Polonius and sister of Laertes. Traveling players come to the castle and Hamlet has them perform a play with a plot similar to the murder of his father. He wants to see his uncle's reaction. His uncle leaves abruptly during the play and afterwards asks Gertrude to send for her son. Polonius is hiding behind the hangings of Gertrude's room in order to overhear the conversation. Hamlet, hearing him, stabs the hangings thinking it is Claudius. However, he kills Ophelia's father instead and weeps.

Hamlet is banished from Denmark. When he returns, he comes upon Ophelia's funeral. She has gone mad and committed suicide. Claudius gets Laertes, Ophelia's brother, to challenge Hamlet to a duel. Laertes hates Hamlet because of the death of his father and sister. The sword Claudius gives him is pointed and poisoned. Laertes mortally wounds Hamlet, and in the scuffle the swords are switched and Hamlet is also mortally wounded. Before he dies, he confesses his treachery. Unknowingly, Gertrude drinks poison prepared for Hamlet should the duel fail.



Romeo and Juliet and Hamlet, Prince of Denmark Analysis

The recurring theme of hatred appears in this tale. The two families, the Capulets and the Montagues, hate one another, and the tale revolves around this hatred and what the two main character, Romeo and Juliet are driven to do because of it. It is a true tragedy resulting from the feud and hatred between these two families. One sees once again the theme of love at first sight, which occurs so frequently in the Tales from Shakespeare. Romeo and Juliet fall in love immediately in one night and marry right away.

Metaphor is used in the passage, "her beauty to show by night like a rich jewel worn by a blackamoor;like a snowy dove trooping with crows" (p. 268) and "he presumed in the gentlest manner to take her by the hand, calling it a shrine, which if he profaned by touching it, he was a blushing pilgrim, and would kiss it for atonement" (p. 269) and "her exceeding beauty seemed to break like the light of the sun in the east; and the moon, which shone in the orchard with a faint light" (p. 270). Also, on p. 277, "she called him a beautiful tyrant, a fiend angelical, a ravenous dove, a lamb with a wolf's nature, a serpent-heart hid with a flowering face, "

The recurring them of the seeming death of a main character as a motivation for the characters of the tale appears in Romeo and Juliet when she takes the potion the friar gives her and seems dead, though she isn't. This is a true tragedy, and though the theme of reconciliation does occur between the Capulets and the Montagues, it occurs too late.

The tale "Hamlet, Prince of Denmark" is one of the tragic tales. The theme of one evil brother's envy motivating an evil act against his brother takes place. In this tale, Claudius murders his brother, the king of Denmark and soon after marries the king's wife and Hamlet's mother, Gertrude. The theme of an apparition is found in this tale. Hamlet's father, the murdered king, appears and demands that Hamlet avenge his death.

Multiple tragic events take place in the tale. Hamlet kills his sweetheart's father, Polonius, by mistake. Ophelia goes mad and kills herself by drowning. Laertes is persuaded to fight a duel with Hamlet using a sword with a pointed and poisoned tip. Hamlet is killed in the duel, but not before he kills Laertes with the same poisoned sword that got switched in the fight. Laertes realizes his treachery and confesses it to Hamlet. Gertrude, Hamlet's mother, drinks poison by mistake, poison meant for Hamlet if he hadn't died in the duel. An all around tragic ending to a tragic tale.



Othello and Pericles, Prince of Tyre

Othello and Pericles, Prince of Tyre Summary

In "Othello," Desdemona falls in love with a noble Moor, a brave soldier who is now a general. They marry. Cassio is a young soldier whom Othello loves and trusts. Cassio had been the go-between for Othello and Desdemona. Iago hates both Othello and Cassio. With a scheme, he makes Othello jealous of Cassio and distrusting of Desdemona's faithfulness. Othello smothers Desdemona in her bed. Cassio, escaping assassination by Iago, returns with proof of his and Desdemona's innocence. Horrified, Othello falls on his sword and dies.

In "Pericles, Prince of Tyre," Pericles, threatened by the wicked emperor of Greece, Antiochus, has to flee his country. He goes to Tarsus where he finds a famine and gives the provisions on his ship to save the people. Cleon and his people are very grateful. He then hears Antiochus, knows where he is, and sets out by ship once more. A storm arises and he is cast upon the shore of Pentapolis, where a tournament is about to take place. The winner of the tournament will wed the princess. He wins and he and princess Thaisa wed, having both immediately fallen in love. Then he hears that Antiochus

has died and he wants to return to Tyre. Thaisa insists on accompanying him though she is with child. Thaisa dies giving birth to a baby girl, whom Pericles names Marina. He puts his wife in a chest with spices and jewels and a note and casts it into the sea.

The next day the chest washes up on the shores of Ephesus and is brought to Cerimon, who discovers Thaisa is alive. Thaisa goes to the temple of Diana to be a priestess. Pericles leaves the baby Marina with Cleon and Dionysia, the rulers of the land he saved from famine. Marina grows into a beautiful, virtuous maiden. Dionysia is jealous and plans to have her servant kill Marina. However, pirates carry Marina away before she can be killed and sell her as a slave at Mitylene. She becomes famous for her beauty, virtue and talent and teaches music, dance etc. Knowledge of her comes to Lysimachus, the noble, young governor. He falls in love with her.

Meanwhile, a mock funeral for Marina takes place and a monument is erected. Dionysia's servant told her he had killed Marina. Pericles is heartbroken to hear of his daughter's death. He sails off and, passing Mitylene, drops anchor. Lysimachus is curious about the royal vessel and hears of Pericles' grief. He sends Marina to cheer him. To both their joy, they discover they are father and daughter. Pericles dreams he must go to Ephesus to the Temple of Diana. Marina accepts Lysimachus's marriage proposal and all three go to the Temple of Diana, where Pericles is joyfully reunited with his wife and Thaisa with her daughter, Marina.



Othello and Pericles, Prince of Tyre Analysis

In the tale "Othello," one has the theme of evil. Iago is a truly evil character, and because of his evil schemes, the hero and heroine die. Desdemona is killed by her husband, who was made jealous by Iago, and Othello kills himself when he learns the truth about Cassio and Desdemona; that they were both loving and loyal to him. The recurring theme of intense love turning to hate is present. Othello's love for Desdemona turns to murderous hate. Iago, though evil, has a good knowledge of human nature which he uses to do evil. Othello is a dynamic character, transitioning during the tale. Cassio and Desdemona remain noble throughout the tale.

In "Pericles, Prince of Tyre," one can see a number of themes that recur in The Tales from Shakespeare. The themes of shipwreck, innate nobility, the seeming death of two main characters, jealousy, hatred and the reunion of parted family members. It has a happy ending, and in this tale villainess, Dionysia, who had plotted Marina's death, receives her just reward and is burned in her palace by the people of her kingdom.



Characters

King Lear appears in King Lear

King Lear is an aged British king who decides to make his will. He had three daughters, Goneril, Regan and Cordelia. Goneril and Regan are hateful, ungrateful, treacherous and greedy. They feign great love for their old father and shower him with flattery and vows of loyalty. He is taken in by them and gives each of them and their husbands a third of his kingdom. Cordelia, the youngest and his treasure, is sickened by her sisters' flattery, greed and dishonesty and thus is very sparse and plain in her statement to her father, saying that she loves him according to her duty as his child. If her sisters hadn't been so crafty and flattering, she would have been even more extravagant than they in her show of love for her father. King Lear is shocked that his favorite daughter, Cordelia, should not profess her love for him the way her sisters had done and foolishly bequeaths her portion of the kingdom to be divided between the other two sisters and their husbands. His old age has beclouded his reason.

King Lear is then mistreated horribly by Goneril and Regan, who now show their true colors. Cordelia goes off to marry the king of France. King Lear makes another mistake in judgment. He banishes his one true friend in the kingdom, the good earl of Kent. This loyal friend disguises himself and continues to serve Lear in disguise as Caius. The court jester also remains loyal to the king but jests about the king's faulty judgment.

King Lear is a truly tragic figure. He wanders the heath of Britain in winter and through a horrible story and takes refuge in the wretched hovel of a Bedlam beggar. He is now not only somewhat senile, he has been driven mad by his elder daughters' cruel treatment. He escapes from his guardian the earl of Kent and wanders around the heath totally mad, singing songs with a wreath of straw, nettles and weeds on his head.

He is found, and with the help of physicians, becomes well enough to be reunited with Cordelia, who has come from France to save him and restore his kingdom. This is a tragic meeting too, for Lear is still half-crazy, not at first being sure it really is Cordelia and then begging her forgiveness. He dies before he even realizes the his faithful friend, the earl of Kent, has stayed with him though all his trials.

Prospero appears in The Tempest

Prospero, the main character in the tale "The Tempest," exhibits many noble character traits. He is betrayed by his younger brother, Antonio, and the king of Naples, put in a small boat without any provisions and left to perish far out at sea. Prospero has always been interested in magic and, fortunately, a loyal friend of his secretly puts provisions for him and his small daughter in the boat and also his books on magic. The boat lands on an enchanted island. It was enchanted by a witch, Sycorax. Spirits were entrapped in trees by the witch. The witch dies shortly before Prospero and his daughter, Miranda,



are cast upon the island. With the help of his books on magic, Prospero frees the spirits and employs one of them, Ariel, as his chief servant. Prospero is even kind to the ugly, ape-like Caliban, son of the witch whom he finds on the island. He teaches him to speak.

Prospero and his young daughter live in a large cave on the island. He dotes on his beautiful, virtuous daughter and she on him. One day, he finds that a ship carrying his own mortal enemies is sailing near the island. He has his spirits conjure up a tempest so that they are cast upon the island but do not die. Prospero could have arranged it so they would have died, but he shows compassion and later forgives them totally for what they did to him. His good and noble nature so impresses them that they become remorseful and repent of their evil deeds. They are all reconciled and Prospero even approves of the marriage of his beloved Miranda to Ferdinand, the son of the King of Naples, his old enemy. His spirit servant, Ariel, longs for freedom and Prospero releases him from his service. Prospero also shows good sense when he decides to bury his magic books and wand, now that all are happy.

Hamlet appears in Hamlet

Hamlet is the main character in the tale "Hamlet." He is the prince of Denmark whose father, the king, was murdered by the king's brother, who then married Hamlet's mother, Gertrude, two months later. Hamlet's father returns as a ghost and orders Hamlet to revenge his murder. Hamlet is a noble character who falls into a deep melancholy. He is ashamed of his mother for her disloyalty to his father and for marrying his evil uncle, Claudius. The tale unfolds and more and more tragic events take place. Hamlet kills his sweetheart Ophelia's father by mistake while he is standing behind a curtain listening to the conversation between Hamlet and his mother. Hamlet thinks it is Claudius behind the curtain. Ophelia, Hamlet's love, commits suicide during Hamlet's banishment from Denmark. Finally, Hamlet dies in a duel with Ophelia's brother, Laertes.

Oberon appears in A Midsummer Night's Dream

Oberon is the king of the fairies in "A Midsummer Night's Dream." He is angry with his queen, Titania, over a changeling boy whom Titania wants for her own and Oberon also wants. Oberon uses the juice of magic flowers in his enchanted forest to make Titania and others fall in love with the first creature they set eyes on upon waking. Oberon and Titania are finally reconciled at the end of the tale.

Beatrice appears in Much Ado About Nothing

Beatrice is one of the heroines in the tale "Much Ado About Nothing". She is known for her quick wit and love of sparring intellectually with others, especially Benedick. Through trickery, Beatrice is made to fall in love with Benedick and he with her, and even at the end of the tale when they discover they've been duped, they remain in love with one another.



Rosalind appears in As You Like It

Rosalind is the daughter of a French duke who is unjustly banished to live in a forest in Arden by his jealous younger brother. Rosalind is kept at court to be the companion to the younger brother's daughter, Celia. Rosalind falls in love with a young wrestler, Orlando, who turns out to be the son of an old friend of her father's. When Frederick, the duke's brother and Celia's father, finds out that Orlando is the son of a friend of his banished brother, he becomes enraged and banishes Rosalind too. Celia goes with her into the Arden wood, Rosalind is disguised as a shepherd boy and Celia as his sister. They name Rosalind takes in her disguise is Ganymede. She becomes a friend to her sweetheart, Orlando, while still disguise, and later when her identity is revealed, they are united.

Valentine appears in The Two Gentlemen of Verona

Valentine is Proteus's best friend. They live in Verona. Proteus is in love with Julia, but Valentine scorns love and travels to Milan to the court of the duke of Milan. There, he too succumbs to love when he falls in love with Silvia, the duke's daughter. Proteus joins him in Milan and he too falls in love with Silvia. He tries through trickery to get Silvia away from Valentine. The scheme is disclosed, but Valentine forgives the penitent Proteus.

Shylock appears in The Merchant of Venice

Shylock is a Jewish usurer who hates Antonio, a generous Christian merchant. When Antonio is forced to ask Shylock to lend him money to give his friend Bassanio, Shylock devises a shocking scheme where Antonio is persuaded to sign a contract promising a pound of his flesh should he not repay the loan within the time period set by Shylock. Portia, the future wife of Antonio's friend Bassiano, is a virtuous and intelligent woman who disguises herself as a man and acts as Antonio's lawyer. Through clever manipulation of the facts, Portia saves Antonio from his desperate situation and Shylock gets his just desserts.

Cymbeline appears in Cymbeline

Cymbeline is king of Britain during the time of the Roman emperor, Caesar Augustus. His first wife dies and his second wife is evil and a cruel stepmother to Cymbeline's daughter, Imogen. Imogen falls in love with Posthumus, who had grown up with her, being the orphaned son of one of the king's soldiers. They marry. When Cymbeline finds out, he banishes Imogen. At the end of the tale, Cymbeline is overjoyed to embrace his daughter Imogen again and welcomes Posthumus as a son-in-law. Cymbeline even forgives Belarius, who kidnapped his two sons. Cymbeline's wicked second wife dies.



Macbeth appears in Macbeth

Macbeth is a Scottish lord who listens to the prophesies of three witches and murders the king of Scotland at the urging of his evil wife. His head is cut off at the end of the tale.

Petruchio appears in The Taming of the Shrew

Petruchio comes to Padua looking for a wife and decides to marry and tame the infamous Katharine, known for her shrewish ways and terrible temper. He marries her and succeeds in taming her and turning her into the most dutiful and obedient wife in Padua.

Angelo appears in Measure For Measure

The mild and gentle duke of Vienna turns over the governing of city to Angelo, who is a seemingly virtuous and definitely strict man. He hopes that Angelo will be able to bring order to Vienna, where young people no longer marry but live in sin. They do not give any heed to the Viennese law forbidding a man and woman to live together before marriage or else the man will be put to death.

Angelo throws young Claudio into prison for seducing a young woman and he is scheduled to be beheaded. Claudio persuades his beautiful sister, Isabel, to go and plead with Angelo. Angelo is overcome with lust for Isabel and tells her he will free her brother if she submits to his sexual advancements. A scheme is devised by the duke, who remained in Vienna disguised as a friar. The scheme is for Angelo's own wife, whom he has rejected because she lost her dowry, to take Isabel's place at the rendezvous. Angelo, nevertheless, intends for Claudio to be beheaded. The friar thwarts this. At the end of the tale, Angelo is remorseful when all is disclosed and reconciles with his wife, who loved him in spite of all he had done and realizes how sweet mercy is.

Isabel appears in Measure For Measure

Isabel is the sister of Claudio who has been condemned to death for seducing Juliet. She is a novice in the convent of St. Clare. She frees her brother with the help of the duke of Vienna who is disguised as a friar. She decides not to take the veil and marries the duke.

Viola appears in Twelfth Night; Or, What You Will

Viola is Sebastian's twin sister. They are separated when a ship they're on is shipwreck on the coast of Illyria. She falls in love with a noble duke Orsino, whom she serves as a



page, disguised as a young man. She and Orsino finally end up together and get married.

Timon appears in Timon of Athens

Timon is a lord of Athens who is generous to a fault. All his false friends take advantage of his generosity reducing him to poverty. He goes to live in the forest like a wild animal and becomes a people hater to the end.

Flavius appears in Timon of Athens

The honest steward of Timon a rich and overly generous lord of Athens. Flavius tries to warn Timon about Timon's so-called friends who actually had no love for Timon but used flattery and lies to take his wealth from him. Flavius is loyal to Timon to the end and seeks him out in the wood where he lives like a beast in a cave. At first Timon doesn't recognize him but is convinced that he is the only good man in the world. However, he sends Flavius away because he appears in

the form of a man and he hates all men.

Juliet appears in Romeo and Juliet

Juliet is the young daughter of the family of Capulet in Verona. This family has a long-held feud with the family of the Montagues. Juliet Capulet and Romeo Montague fall in love at a ball that Juliet's father gives. Romeo attends the ball disguised by a mask. They marry secretly, helped by an old friar. Through a terrible stroke of fate, they both die in the Capulet tomb. Romeo kills himself when he sees Juliet supposedly dead, although she had only taken a potion to make her

seem dead. She kills herself upon awakening when she sees her dead Romeo.

Miranda appears in The Tempest

Miranda is the daughter of Prospero, the duke Milan. She and her father are stranded on an enchanted island during most of the tale.

Caliban appears in The Tempest

Caliban is the ugly, ape-like creature, son of the witch Sycorax, whom Prospero teaches to speak but who can only serve as a slave he is so lazy and bad-natured.



Gertude appears in Hamlet

The prince of Denmark's mother, who marries her murdered husband's brother Claudius, Hamlet's uncle.

Ophelia appears in Hamlet

Hamlet's sweetheart who commits suicide when she hears he has killed her father Polonius.

Laertes appears in Hamlet

Ophelia's brother and Polonius's son. He fights a duel with Hamlet on the urging of Hamlet's wicked uncle. He fights with a sword dipped in poison, but during the fight the swords are switched so he too dies from the poisoned sword, but not before he confesses his part in the treachery devised by Claudius to kill Hamlet.

Othello appears in Othello

Othello is a noble, black Moor and a brave soldier. He kills his faithful wife out of jealousy by suffocating her with her bedding.

Desdemonda appears in Othello

Desdemona is the daughter of Brabantio, a rich senator of Venice, Italy. She falls in love with the famed and noble black soldier, the Moor Othello, and marries him. She is killed by her husband, Othello, because of his rage and jealousy, which is tragically unfounded.

Iago appears in Othello

Iago is a treacherous, evil man. He uses his knowledge of human nature to trick Othello into a jealous rage by total deception and evil schemes, thus driving Othello to kill his beloved wife, Desdemona.

Cassio appears in Othello

Othello employs Cassio to help him woo Desdemona. Cassio and Desdemona become friends. Othello promotes Cassio to the position of lieutenant. Iago later convinces Othello that Cassio and Desdemona are lovers, which is not true.



Pericles appears in Pericles, Prince of Tyre

Pericles is the prince of Tyre, who flees his kingdom from the wicked emperor of Greece, Antiochus. On his way to Tarsus, he is shipwrecked on Pentapolis. He fights a tournament and wins the daughter of the king, Thaisa, as his bride. He hears that his former enemy has died and plans to return to Tyre with his now pregnant wife. His wife seemingly dies during childbirth on board the ship. At the end of the tale, Pericles is reunited with his wife, who is supposed to be dead, and with his grown daughter, Marina, who also is supposed to be dead. Both, however, had miraculously survived.

Thaisa appears in Pericles, Prince of Tyre

Thaisa is the wife of Pericles, who seemingly dies during childbirth on board Pericles' ship. He puts her in a large chest laden with jewels, sweet-smelling spices and a note. The chest is cast up on shore and a gentleman of Ephesus finds it, opens it and finds Thaisa is still alive. She becomes a priestess of Diana at the Temple, and later Pericles and she meet again at the temple and reunite.

Dionysia appears in Pericles, Prince of Tyre

Dionysia is the wife of Cleon, with whom Pericles leaves his infant daughter, Marina, to be cared for and educated. Dionysia becomes very jealous of Marina's beauty, intelligence and talents because her own daughter lacks of Marina's good qualities, though she had the same benefits of education. She plots the murder of Marina.



Objects/Places

An Enchanted Island appears in The Tempest

This is an island where a witch named Sycorax traps spirits in trees. Shortly after she dies, Prospero and his small daughter, Miranda, are cast upon the island in a small boat. The boat contains books on magic with which Prospero releases the spirits; chief among them is Ariel, who becomes his faithful servant. Prospero and his daughter, Miranda, live in a large cave on the island until, with the aid of his spirits, Prospero causes a tempest which casts upon the island his former enemies: his brother Antonio and the king of Naples. Prospero and his enemies are reconciled and all leave the island at the end of the tale.

An Enchanted Wood near Athens appears in A Midsummer Night's Dream

An imaginary wood near Athens where Titania and Oberon, king and queen of the fairies, and their tiny fairy attendants live. This is the main location where the action of the tale takes place. The wood has magic flowers with special magical powers. These flowers and their powers play a part in the development of the plot in "A Midsummer Night's Dream".

Sicily appears in The Winter's Tale

Sicily is where a good part of the tale, "The Winter's Tale" takes place. The tale is about the king of Sicily, his queen and children, and his friend Polixenes. Sicily is a large island off the southern tip of Italy.

Messina appears in Much Ado About Nothing

Messina is a city in Italy where the tale "Much Ado About Nothing" takes place.

The Forest of Arden appears in As You Like It

This forest is a forest in France where a French duke along with his followers is banished and lives. His younger brother banishes him. The goodly portion of the tales takes place in the forest.



Venice appears in The Merchant of Venice

Venice is an Italian city with a port which is the location where the plot of "The Merchant of Venice" unfolds.

Christianity appears in The Merchant of Venice

Christianity is a religion which has an important role in the behavior and character of a number of characters in "The Merchant of Venice." Its teachings of honesty, charity and generosity are emphasized in the tale.

The Countryside or Heath of Britain appears in King Lear

A lot of the action in "King Lear" takes place on the heath of Britain, where King Lear wanders in his insanity. The heath is barren and cold and there's a terrible storm.

Padua appears in The Taming of the Shrew

Padua is an Italian city where Baptista and his two daughters, Katharine and Bianca, live. Baptista wants to marry off his eldest daughter, Katharine, but she is shrewish and has a bad temper. The action of the tale takes place in or near Padua.

Ephesus appears in The Comedy of Errors

Ephesus is an ancient city in Turkey where most of the action of "The Comedy of Errors" takes place. A law of Ephesus states that any merchant from Syracuse found in Ephesus will be put to death unless he can pay a fine of a thousand marks.

Vienna appears in Measure for Measure

Vienna is an Austrian city where the tale "Measure for Measure" takes place. In Vienna, there was a law that a young man and woman should not live together before marrying and that the man would be condemned to death for disobeying this law. However, the duke of Vienna, being kind and mild-mannered, didn't enforce the law. He pretends to leave the city and puts it under the control of a seemingly virtuous but very strict man, Angelo. However, he remains in the city, disguised as a friar in order to observe what happens.



Verona appears in Romeo and Juliet

Verona is an Italian city where two families the Montagues and the Capulets have long hated one another. Romeo, a Montague, falls in love with Juliet, a Capulet. They marry, but there is a tragic ending where both die. The two families are reconciled in the end by this tragedy.

Bohemia appears in The Winter's Tale

The country where Polixenes, the best friend of Leontes, king of Sicily, was king.

Rome appears in Cymbeline

The Italian city where Posthumus flees to when he's banished.

Tarsus appears in Pericles, Prince of Tyre

Tarsus is a Greek isle to where Pericles flees when from Tyre. He saves the people from a famine there.

Pentapolis appears in Pericles, Prince of Tyre

The country upon whose shore Pericles is cast during a storm. He wins a tournament there and weds Princess Thaisa.

Mitylene appears in Pericles, Prince of Tyre

The city where Marina, daughter of Pericles, is sold as a slave by pirates who captured her. The governor of Mitylene falls in love with and marries Marina.

Rome appears in Cymbeline

The Italian city to which Posthumus flees when he is banished from England.



Themes

Nobility

One of the most popular recurring themes in Shakespeare's Tales is nobility. In "As You Like It", nobility is the theme that a main character, though raised without education, Orlando in this story, exhibits all the the nobility of a well-educated person because of his noble heritage and inherently good nature.

In the tale "Cymbeline" one encounters once again many noble characters. Imogen is virtuous, loyal and brave. She forgives her father for banishing her husband, and her husband who had not believed her to be faithful and had wanted her dead. She shows her courage by setting out by herself in a strange forest and later becoming page to a Roman general during a war. Pisanio is also an honest, kind man and refuses to kill Imogen, instead helping her.

Posthumus, though he doubted his wife's virtue, later shows his nobility and courage by not wanting to take credit for saving the king. He also shows repentance and remorse. Belarius proves to be a good and loving father to the two sons of Cymbeline and honestly confesses his deed to the king, having long repented and forgiven the king for unjustly accusing him and banishing him.

In "King Lear," the earl of Kent is loyal, faithful, noble and brave. He gives up his position as earl to accompany the king and protect him during his misfortunes, disguised as a servant.

In "The Merchant of Venice," Bassiano confesses he has no wealth, only a noble heritage. Portia, the heiress, loves him not for money but for his noble character, declares that all that is hers is now his and gives him a ring which he vows never to part with.

Envy/Jealousy

Envy or jealousy is a recurring theme in "Tales from Shakespeare". In the tale "The Tempest," Prospero's younger brother, Antonio, envies Prospero, who was the duke of Milan, of his power and plotted to have Prospero and his young daughter, Miranda, perish at sea in a small boat. Fortunately, Prospero's friend at court secretly put provisions in the boat and it landed on an island.

In "A Midsummer Night's Dream," Helena envies Hermia who had formerly been her best friend. The reason for this jealousy was that her lover, Demetrius, wants to marry Hermia, though Hermia doesn't want to marry him. Oberon, the king of the fairies, envies Titania her little changling boy and they are temporarily estranged because of this.



In "The Winter's Tale," Leontes is jealous of his life-long best friend, Polixenes, whom he thinks is romantically involved with his wife, Hermione. The jealousy is unfounded, but he plans Polixenes' death and puts his, formerly dearly beloved, wife in prison.

In "As You Like It" once more a younger brother envies his older brother, a duke, and banishes him to live with his followers in a forest in Arden, France so that he can be duke.

In "The Two Gentlemen of Verona" Proteus envies his best friend Valentine when because he falls in love with a young woman, Silvia, whom Valentine loves.

In "The Comedy of Errors," Adriana, the wife of Antipholus of Ephesus, is a very jealous woman and continually suspects her husband of being unfaithful, a trait which sours her whole disposition. Later she is taught by her husband's mother, who had become an abbess in Ephesus, to be a good and trusting wife.

In "Hamlet," the brother of the king of Denmark envies him his kingdom and wife and murders him.

In "Pericles, Prince of Tyre," Dionysia, in whose care Pericles leaves his daughter, Marina, is jealous of Marina for her beauty, grace and talent because her own daughter has none of these traits, though she was raised the same. Dionysia plots to have Marina murdered.

Forgiveness

Forgiveness is an inspiring recurring theme in many of the "Tales from Shakespeare". In "The Tempest" Prospero forgives his former mortal enemies, his brother, Antonio and the king of Naples, who had plotted his and his daughter's deaths. Even though he has the opportunity for revenge and could easily destroy them in a tempest using his magic and the powers of the spirits he has freed, he chooses to spare their lives and forgives them. He even approves his daughter marrying the son of his former enemy the king of Naples

In "The Winter's Tale," Leontes' wife, Hermione, forgives her husband even though he casts her into prison and in doing so, causes the death of her dear son, Mamillius. At the end of the tale, Polixenes forgives Leontes for his unjust jealousy and attempt to have him murdered.

In "Much Ado About Nothing," Hero forgives Claudio and marries him, in spite of his lack of trust in her loyalty and purity.

In "The Two Gentlemen of Verona," Julia forgives Proteus, her lover, though he is unfaithful and falls in love with Sylvia. Valentine forgives Proteus, who tries through trickery to take Sylvia, his sweetheart, from him.



In "Cymbeline," Imogen forgives her husband, Posthumus, though he had tried to have her murdered because he was tricked into believing she was unfaithful to him. Cymbeline forgives Belarius, though Belarius kidnapped his two sons.

In "Romeo and Juliet," the two families, the Capulets and the Montagues, who have hated one another for many years, forgive each other because of the tragic deaths of their beloved children who had fallen in love and married.

Hatred

Hatred is a recurring theme in many of The Tales from Shakespeare. The reader can find love turning to hatred in the character of Helena who, having been Hermia's best friend, begins to hate her out of jealousy in "A Midsummer Night's Dream." However, they are reconciled.

Antonio hates his brother Prospero and plans his death in "The Tempest." They are reconciled in the end through Prospero's nobility and forgiveness and Antonio's shame and repentance.

Leontes, due to jealousy, hates his best friend Polixenes in "The Winter's Tale," but they are reconciled in the end through Leontes's remorse and repentance.

Don John hates his half-brother the prince and Claudio in "Much Ado About Nothing" and plans an evil scheme which backfires. He, however, does not change and is not reconciled.

In "As You Like It," the usurper hates his elder brother the duke of France and banishes him to a forest. At the end of the tale, he meets an old religious man and goes through a reformation.

In "The Merchant of Venice," Shylock the Jewish userer and the generous Christian merchant hate one another. Shylock devises an evil plan to get a pound of Antonio's flesh. The plan is thwarted by Portia, the wife of Antonio's friend, who is dressed as a lawyer.



Style

Point of View

The point of view of the authors, Charles and Mary Lamb, is third person omniscient throughout all twenty tales. Since the authors are completely familiar with the original Shakespeare plays and the tales they write are abridged story form versions of the play, they write with total knowledge of the characters, their motives, the plot developments and denouements. They tell the tales using exposition and dialogue. They use quotes from Shakespeare's original plays, thus letting Shakespeare's point of view come to life for their readers, many of whom are children. They use their knowledge and love of Shakespeare's plays to make the characters come to life and make their readers either love and admire or dislike or even hate them. They portray Shakespeare's characters in the tragedies as bigger than life, having extreme and forceful feelings of love, envy, avarice, loyalty and misery. The comedies are told with the point of view a fairytale author might use. Also, the point of view is imbued with great comedy and the use of clever schemes brings this humor to the light. Love at first sight, reconciliation, forgiveness and soap-opera amazing reappearance of

characters believed to be dead, forgiveness and happily-ever-after endings might very well be a point of view which would enchant a young girl reading them. The boys might be interested in the treachery and military themes of the tragedies. Magic is a theme used in both the comedies and tragedies and once again reveals a point of view entirely enchanting to the young reader.

Setting

Each of the twenty stories in Tales from Shakespeare has its own setting or settings. Two of the tales, "The Tempest and "A Midsummer Night's Dream" are set in enchanted places, an enchanted island and an enchanted forest. In a number of the tales, a short period of time is spent by the main characters on board a ship or boat, as in "The Tempest," "A Winter's Tale" and "Pericles, Prince of Tyre." Other tales are set in known cities of different countries like Venice, Italy in "The Merchant of Venice" and "Othello," Verona, Italy in "Two Gentlemen of Verona" and "Romeo and Juliet," Padua, Italy in "The Taming of the Shrew," Messina, Italy, in "Much Ado About Nothing," Vienna, Austria in "Measure for Measure," and in Athens or near Athens, Greece, in "A Midsummer Night's Dream" and "Timon of Athens."

A number of the tales take place in royal courts, as in "Hamlet, Prince of Denmark." In several of the tales, banished men live in forests, as in "As You Like It," where the banished duke lives in the forest of Arden in France and in "Cymbeline" Belarius is banished and lives in a cave in a British forest. Two of the tales take place on barren heaths in the British isles: "Macbeth" on the Scottish heath and "King Lear" on the English heath.



There are many different settings in the tales, some of which are set in mythological ancient Greece and the middle East, others in ancient Britain and other European countries. These colorful and varied settings might be conducive for making the children want to travel and see the world someday. The settings definitely stimulate young imaginations, or anyone's imagination, for that matter.

Language and Meaning

Charles and Mary Lamb took care to use vocabulary used during the time Shakespeare wrote his plays. The language is old-fashioned, like the vocabulary and it gives the reader a taste of what it will be like to read the original Shakespeare. The tales are told using both exposition and dialogue. Direct quotes from the original Shakespeare plays are also used, which once again may tend to make the reader want to someday read the original plays Shakespeare wrote. The narrative is quite easy to follow, which is an extraordinary accomplishment considering the complexity and twists and turns of the plots of the tales. Only in "The Comedy of Errors," where there are two sets of identical twins bearing the same names, does the narrative get a bit complicated to follow and tiresome to read. All the other tales hold the readers' interest and attention and are a tribute to Shakespeare's plays. The language is beautiful and the grammar correct, which is something rare in this present age where even the most educated people, including newscasters and famous people, misuse the English language, saying lay where lie should be used and loan instead of lend. Seemingly the knowledge of transitive and intransitive verbs has been completely lost at present. It's extremely rare to hear those two examples correctly used; lend as the verb, loan as the noun and lie as the intransitive verb and lay as the transitive verb.

Structure

The book *Tales from Shakespeare* by Charles and Mary Lamb is comprised of twenty tales, each one based on one of Shakespeare's plays. Most of the plays are comedies or at least have happy endings, however, the famous tragedies, such as "Macbeth," "King Lear," and "Hamlet, Prince of Denmark" are also included.

The plots of each of the tales are very complicated, and it is to the credit of Charles and Mary Lamb that they are able, through their narrative, use of dialogue and direct quotes from Shakespeare, to make the tales entertaining, understandable and sometimes quite emotionally moving.

The paragraphs often tend to be long. Dialogue is used often, thus the frequent use of quotation marks. In the Puffin Books, Penguin Classics Edition of the "*Tales from Shakespeare*", the twenty tales are divided length-wise fairly evenly within the 346 pages.



Quotes

"Be not so amazed, daughter Miranda,' said Prospero; "there is no harm done. I have so ordered it, that no person in the ship shall receive any hurt." Tale 1, The Tempest, p. 3

"Prospero, who had enjoined Ferdinand this task merely as a trial of his love, was not at his books, as his daughter supposed, but was standing by them invisible, to overhear what they said." Tale 1, The Tempest, p. 9

"Oberon the king, and Titania the queen of the fairies, with all their tiny train of followers, in this wood held their midnight revels." Tale 2, A Midsummer Night's Dream, p. 18

"Come hither, Puck', said Oberon to this little merry wanderer of the night, 'fetch me the flower which maids call Love of Idleness; the juice of that little purple flower laid on the eyelids of those who sleep, will make them, when they awake, dote on the first thing they see.'" Tale 2, A Midsummer Night's Dream, p. 19

"His dead queen thus restored to life, his lost daughter found, the long-suffering Leontes could scarcely support the excess of his own happiness." Tale 3, The Winter's Tale, p. 43

"So these two mad wits were reconciled, and made a match of it, after Claudio and Hero were married; and to complete the history, Don John, the contriver of the villainy, was taken in his flight, and brought back to Messina; and a brave punishment it was to this gloomy, discontented man, to see the joy and feastings which, by the disappointment of his plots, took place in the palace in Messina." Tale 4, Much Ado About Nothing, p. 60

"White they were gone, the duke said to Orlando, that he thought the shepherd Ganymede very like his daughter Rosalind; and Orlando said, he also had observed the resemblance." Tale 5, As You Like It, p. 70

"Proteus, now looking earnestly upon her, plainly perceived that the page Sebastian was no other than the lady Julia herself; and the proof she had given of her constancy and true love so wrought in him, that his love for her returned into his heart, and he took again his own dear lady, and joyfully resigned all pretensions to the lady Silvia to Valentine, who had so well deserved her." Tale 6, The Two Gentlemen of Verona, p. 97

"Whenever Antonio met Shylock on the Rialto (or Exchange), he used to reproach him with his usuries and hard dealings, which the Jew would bear with seeming patience, while he secretly meditated revenge." Tale 7, The Merchant of Venice, p. 99

"Cymbeline forgave old Belarius; for who could think of punishments at a season of such universal happiness? To find his daughter living, and his lost sons in the persons of his young deliverers, what he had seen so bravely fight in his defense, was unlooked-for joy indeed!" Tale 8, Cymbeline, p. 131



"And from this and many such wild speeches which he uttered, the good Caius plainly perceived that he was not in his perfect mind, but that his daughters' ill usage had really made him go mad." Tale 9, King Lear p. 147

"'That hope,' answered the general, 'might enkindle you to aim at the throne; but oftentimes these ministers of darkness tell us truths in little things, to betray us into deeds of greatest consequence.'" Tale 10, Macbeth, p. 153

"Thus Helena at last found that her father's legacy was indeed sanctified by the luckiest stars in heaven; for she was now the beloved wife of her dear Bertram, the daughter-in-law of her noble mistress, and herself the countess of Rousillon." Tale 11, All's Well That Ends Well, p. 181

"And Katharine once more became famous in Padua, not as heretofore, as Katharine the Shrew, but as Katharine the most obedient and duteous wife in Padua." Tale 12, The Taming of the Shrew, p. 195

"The lady abbess, having drawn this full confession from the jealous Adriana, now said: "And therefore comes it that your husband is mad. The venomous clamour of a jealous woman is more deadly poison than a mad dog's tooth.'" Tale 13, The Comedy of Errors, p. 211

"And the mercy-loving duke long reigned with his beloved Isabel, the happiest of husbands and of princes." Tale 14, Measure For Measure, p. 232

"Thus the twin brother and sister were both wedded on the same day; the storm and shipwreck, which had separated them, being the means of bringing to pass their high and mighty fortunes." Tale 15, Twelfth Night; Or, What You Will, p. 249

"For lord Timon weighed his friends' affection with his own, and so fond was he of bestowing, that he could have dealt kingdoms to these supposed friends, and never have been weary." Tale 16, Timon of Athens, p. 253

"And they fell to dancing, and Romeo was suddenly struck with the exceeding beauty of a lady who danced there, who seemed to him to teach the torches to burn bright, and her beauty to show by night like a rich jewel worn by a blackamoor; beauty too rich for use, too dear for earth!" Tale 17, Romeo and Juliet, p. 268

"For Hamlet was a loving and a gentle prince, and greatly beloved for his many noble and princelike qualities; and if he had lived, would no doubt have proved a most royal and complete king to Denmark." Tale 18, Hamlet, p. 308

"Trifles light as air are to the jealous proofs as strong as holy writ." Tale 19, Othello, p. 321

"Thus have we seen in Pericles, his queen, and daughter, a famous example of virtue assailed by calamity (through sufferance of Heaven, to teach patience and constancy to

men), under the same guidance becoming finally successful, and triumphing over chance and change." Tale 20, Pericles, Prince of Tyre, p. 345



Topics for Discussion

Envy or jealousy is a motivation of certain characters throughout Tales From Shakespeare. Discuss this theme as it appears in the tales. Name two or three characters motivated by this emotion and name the tales in which they appear. Tell what envy drove them to do. Who were the victims of their envy or jealousy and what became of them because of this? What happened to the envious or jealous characters at the end of the tales? Why is envy considered one of the seven deadly sins?

A number of young couples in the tales fall in love at first sight. Discuss this. Is this just too fairytale-like and fanciful? Is it possible to fall in love at first sight? Is this theme over-used in the tales? Give two or three examples of this phenomenon in the tales and say where they occur. Have you ever known anyone who has fallen in love at first sight, married and lived a long happy life together?

Discuss forgiveness. A number of the main characters in the Tales forgive people who have even plotted their deaths. Prospero forgives his brother Antonio and the king of Sicily, though they wanted him and his young daughter to die. Quite a few characters in the tales exhibit amazing forgiveness to former enemies in and out of their families. Did you agree with the forgiveness they gave to their enemies? Do you believe one should be able to forgive anyone anything? Or should there be limits or exceptions? What was the happy result of some of the characters' acts of forgiveness? Give

some examples of forgiveness in Tales from Shakespeare.

Discuss remorse, repentance and the resulting reformation which takes place in many of the characters of the tales. Which characters experience these emotions and the resulting change in their characters? In what plays do they appear? Do you feel this theme is used too much in too many of the tales? Are remorse, repentance and reformation believable in all the characters?

Discuss the female heroines of Tales of Shakespeare. Name some of them and state why they are heroines and in which plays they appear. Are most of them one-dimensional, totally good women? Are any of them dynamic characters who change during the tales for whatever reasons? Choose a couple whom you particularly admire and tell why you do.

Discuss the male heroes of the Tales. Which of them do you particularly admire and why? Be sure to tell which tale they appear in and enough of the plot to explain why they're heroes.

Discuss the villainesses of the Tales. Which of them do you feel are particularly evil? What are the motives behind their evil actions? Name several of them and tell which tales they appear in and why they are definitely evil.



Discuss the villains in the Tales. Which of the villains are particularly evil? Why? Which of the villains become remorseful, repent and reform? Why? What is the basic difference between the thoroughly, unchanging evil villains and the ones who eventually change their characters and repent?

Discuss how magic is used in Tales from Shakespeare. For instance, how does magic play a role in "A Midsummer Night's Dream"? In "The Tempest" and in "Macbeth"?

Discuss the frequent use of shipwrecks in the Tales. A number of the characters are cast upon the shores of different countries due to shipwrecks. Name the Tales and the characters who are shipwrecked and how this affects their lives and the plots of the tales.

Discuss the use of humor in the Tales. Which tales are particularly humorous and why? Where is magic used to make a Tale comical? Where are schemes used? Where is disguise used? Name the characters and Tales you feel are the most humorous.