

*A Shakespearean Dating Show!*



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## A Shakespearean Dating Show!

**FARCE.** In this reality-TV show, characters from Shakespeare's *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, *The Taming of the Shrew*, *King Lear*, and *Romeo and Juliet* compete to find true love. Bachelors battle it out for a date with Juliet and Hermia, and bachelorettes pull out the stops to win a date with Hortensio and the King of France. In the midst of the chaos, the ghost of Hamlet's father appears, the Chorus constantly comments on the action, Juliet's hot-headed cousin chases Romeo off, and some witches create havoc for Macbeth, the stage manager. A fun way to introduce students to Shakespeare. Easy to stage.

**Performance Time:** Approximately 30 minutes.

## Characters

(13 M, 13 F, 1 flexible, extras)

(With doubling: 8 M, 8 F, 1 flexible. Tripling possible.)

**DESDEMONA:** Co-host, a Venetian senator's daughter and Othello's new wife; from *Othello*; female.

**JULIUS CAESAR:** Co-host and Roman general; from *Julius Caesar*; male.

**MACBETH:** Ambitious, pugnacious stage manager; from *Macbeth*; male.

**CHORUS:** Character who provides commentary on the action in the show using flowery, descriptive language; flexible.

**HERMIA:** Bachelorette who has to choose between Lysander, Demetrius, and Puck; fair young Athenian woman of noble birth; from *A Midsummer Night's Dream*; female.

**LYSANDER:** Bachelor competing for a date with Hermia; handsome young Athenian from *A Midsummer Night's Dream*; male.

**DEMETRIUS:** Bachelor competing for a date with Hermia; handsome young Athenian from *A Midsummer Night's Dream*; male.

**PUCK:** Bachelor competing for a date with Hermia; a mischievous sprite from *A Midsummer Night's Dream*; male.

**HELENA:** Fair young Athenian woman who is obsessed with Demetrius from *A Midsummer Night's Dream*; female.

**GHOST:** Ghost of the murdered King of Denmark and Hamlet's father; from *Hamlet*; wears a lot of white stage makeup; male.

**HORTENSIO:** Bachelor who has to choose between Katherina, Bianca, and a Widow; noble gentleman and gold-digger; from *The Taming of the Shrew*; male.

**KATHERINA:** Bachelorette competing for a date with Hortensio; assertive, outspoken, and a bit of a shrew; from *The Taming of the Shrew*; female.

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- BIANCA:** Bachelorette competing for a date with Hortensio; a fair, virtuous maiden from Padua who enjoys academic pursuits and is Katherina's younger sister; from *The Taming of the Shrew*; female.
- WIDOW:** Bachelorette competing for a date with Hortensio; a very rich woman; from *The Taming of the Shrew*; female.
- OTHELLO:** Respected general in Venice and a jealous husband; has recently married Desdemona; male.
- KING OF FRANCE:** Bachelor who has to choose between Cordelia, Goneril, and Regan; very French, a bit of a fop; from *King Lear*; male.
- CORDELIA:** Bachelorette competing for a date with the King of France; King Lear's virtuous daughter; from *King Lear*; female.
- GONERIL:** Bachelorette competing for a date with the King of France; Cordelia's villainous older sister; from *King Lear*; female.
- REGAN:** Bachelorette competing for a date with the King of France; Cordelia's sycophantic, cunning older sister; from *King Lear*; female.
- WITCH 1, 2, 3:** Witches from *Macbeth*; female.
- JULIET:** Bachelorette who has to choose between Romeo, Mercutio, and Benvolio; fair girl from Verona, a Capulet; from *Romeo and Juliet*; female.
- ROMEO:** Bachelor competing for a date with Juliet; romantic, dramatic young man, a Montague; from *Romeo and Juliet*; male.
- MERCUTIO:** Bachelor competing for a date with Juliet; Romeo's friend; from *Romeo and Juliet*; male.
- BENVOLIO:** Bachelor competing for a date with Juliet; Romeo's friend and cousin, a Montague; from *Romeo and Juliet*; male.
- TYBALT:** Juliet's hot-headed, confrontational cousin, a Capulet; from *Romeo and Juliet*; male.
- EXTRAS:** As Fairies and Roman Guards. See notes.

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**NOTE:** Fairies from *A Midsummer Night's Dream* set up the stage at the beginning of the production while fairy music from the ballet, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, by Mendelssohn is played.

**NOTE:** Roman Guards enter with Julius Caesar and stand guard during the production. They can move to protect Julius Caesar if anything dangerous happens, such as the Ghost or Witches entering unexpectedly. They also can react in humorous ways to things the Judges and Contestants say, such as rolling their eyes, or being very sensitive and getting teary-eyed and dabbing their eyes with a handkerchief at certain sentimental moments.

## Options for Doubling

**HERMIA/JULIET** (female)  
**LYSANDER/ROMEO** (male)  
**DEMETRIUS/MERCUTIO** (male)  
**PUCK/BENVOLIO** (male)  
**HORTENSIO/TYBALT** (male)  
**KATHERINA/WITCH 1** (female)  
**BIANCA/WITCH 2** (female)  
**WIDOW/WITCH 3** (female)  
**KING OF FRANCE/GHOST** (male)  
**CORDELIA/HELENA** (female)

**NOTE:** All roles may be doubled except Desdemona, Macbeth, Julius Caesar, and Chorus. If roles are doubled/tripled, simple costumes are best and actors need to develop distinctive traits (voice, walk, mannerisms, gestures, etc.) for each character to help differentiate them onstage.

## Setting

TV studio.

## Set

**TV studio.** There is a curtain or a wall CS so that those on either side of the curtain can't see each other. On either side of the curtain are three stools facing the audience, six stools total. There are three stools on one side for the two hosts and the bachelor or bachelorette. On the other side of the curtain are three other stools for the competing characters.

**NOTE:** To build a simple curtain to stand in the middle of the stage, use a garment rack on wheels and hang a sheet over it or put a curtain on it. You can also build a simple curtain rack using PVC pipe.

## Props

Clipboard

Swords, for Macbeth, Tybalt, and Mercutio

Cap, for Lysander and Demetrius

Note cards with three questions on them for the bachelors and  
bachelorettes

## Sound Effects

Sound of wind blowing

Smoke, opt.

Evil cackling

Eerie wind

Thunder

Fog, opt.

"Is that a ghost?  
It looks like someone  
in a lot of white stage makeup."

-Desdemona

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(AT RISE: A TV studio. Desdemona and Julius Caesar are seated on their stools.)

DESDEMONA: *(To audience.)* Welcome, lords and ladies! Our illustrious patrons and our groundlings, stinkards, and penny-stinkers. Welcome to "A Shakespearean Dating Show"! I'm one of your hosts, Desdemona, a Venetian senator's daughter and newly married to the moor of Venice, Othello. And this is my co-host, Julius Caesar, Roman general and soon-to-be emperor of Rome!

JULIUS CAESAR: Congratulations on your marriage to war hero Othello.

DESDEMONA: Thank you! And congrats on soon becoming the emperor of the Roman Empire.

JULIUS CAESAR: *(To audience.)* Tonight, our bachelors and bachelorettes will attempt to find love.

"Love is a smoke raised with the fume of sighs;  
Being purged, a fire sparkling in lovers' eyes;  
Being vexed, a sea nourished with lovers' tears.  
What is it else? A madness most discreet,  
A choking gall, and a preserving sweet."

DESDEMONA: *(To audience.)* Our bachelors and bachelorettes will be unable to see the three contestants, who will be seated onstage, out of sight.

"Love looks not with the eyes, but with the mind,  
And therefore is winged Cupid painted blind."

JULIUS CAESAR: *(To audience.)* The bachelor or bachelorette will then ask their three potential dates questions. And based on their answer, they will chose one of the lucky singles as their date.

*(Chorus enters.)*

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CHORUS: *(To audience.)* Two hosts, both alike in dignity,  
In this fair television studio, where we lay our scene...

DESDEMONA: What are you doing here?

CHORUS: I am the chorus. I, you know, am an omnipotent narrator who assists in the telling of the story. I also use flowery, descriptive language to help the audience imagine settings. I'm like a cheap alternative to having sets, basically.

*(Macbeth enters.)*

MACBETH: Chorus, what are you doing out here? I thought I told you that we didn't need a chorus for our television show.

CHORUS: *(Begging.)* Please, I have all my long descriptive monologues prepared!

MACBETH: Offstage now, or...with my "brandish'd steel,  
Which smoked with bloody execution,"  
I shall fix thy head upon our battlements! *(Draws his sword menacingly.)*

CHORUS: All right, all right, all right! I'm going! *(To audience, aside.)* A Shakespearean dating show!  
"Is now the" half hour "traffic of our stage;  
The which if you with patient ears attend,  
What here shall miss, our toil shall strive to mend." *(Exits.)*

JULIUS CAESAR: Thanks, Macbeth!

MACBETH: Hey, what's a stage manager for? Always happy to serve. *(To audience, aside.)* "Look like the innocent flower, but be the serpent under't." *(Puts away his sword and gets out a clipboard. To Desdemona and Julius Caesar.)* You ready for me to send out the three bachelors?

JULIUS CAESAR: Go hence! We "stand on sudden haste"! The Roman Empire doesn't run itself, you know.

**[END OF FREEVIEW]**