

'We shall remain in friendship'

Exploring friendship through performance

Shakespeare's plays are full of close friendships. Sometimes the characters are family. Sometimes the characters have a professional relationship. Sometimes the friendship is full of rivalry, and sometimes the relationship is put to the test.

Explore some scenes about friendship

Check out the three scenes below. Find someone to work with and, together, choose the scene(s) you'd like to explore. Remember: anyone can play any part, so choose your characters based on what the characters say to one another.

Work together to understand what each character is saying. Some words might be unfamiliar, so ask for help if you need it.

With curiosity and a sense of play, try doing the scene several different ways, making sure you support one another's ideas and creativity. When you're done, reflect on your experience.

Scene 1: Celia and Rosalind from *As You Like It*

Rosalind and Celia are cousins and best friends. However, their fathers are feuding. Celia's father has recently banished Rosalind's father, but Rosalind and Celia have remained the closest of friends. Now Celia's father has banished Rosalind, too, and Celia is deeply distressed.

Celia	O my poor Rosalind, whither wilt thou go? Wilt thou change fathers? I will give thee mine. I charge thee, be not thou more grieved than I am.
Rosalind	I have more cause.
Celia	Thou hast not, cousin; Prithee be cheerful: know'st thou not, the duke Hath banish'd me, his daughter?
Rosalind	That he hath not.
Celia	No, hath not? Rosalind lacks then the love Which teacheth thee that thou and I am one: Shall we be sunder'd? shall we part, sweet girl? No: let my father seek another heir. Say what thou canst, I'll go along with thee.

Scene 2: Sebastian and Antonio from *Twelfth Night*

Antonio has rescued Sebastian from a shipwreck in which Sebastian's twin, Viola, was lost. Sebastian decides to go to Illyria, hoping to find friends or acquaintances there. Antonio wants to follow but has many enemies in Illyria, so it's dangerous to go there. Antonio's feelings for Sebastian are so strong, however, that following is the only choice.

Sebastian	I would not by my will have troubled you; But, since you make your pleasure of your pains, I will no further chide you.
Antonio	I could not stay behind you: my desire, More sharp than filed steel, did spur me forth.
Sebastian	My kind Antonio, I can no other answer make but thanks, And thanks; and ever thanks.

Scene 3: Helena & Hermia from *A Midsummer Night's Dream*

Hermia and Helena have been close friends since childhood, 'playfellows' who have spent all of their time together, sharing secrets. Now Helena is in love with Demetrius, who used to be in love with Helena, but then fell in love with Hermia instead. Hermia, however, is in love with Lysander, and isn't interested in Demetrius.

Helena	O, teach me how you look, and with what art You sway the motion of Demetrius' heart.
Hermia	I frown upon him, yet he loves me still
Helena	O that your frowns would teach my smiles such skill!
Hermia	I give him curses, yet he gives me love.
Helena	O that my prayers could such affection move!
Hermia	The more I hate, the more he follows me.
Helena	The more I love, the more he hateth me.
Hermia	His folly, Helena, is no fault of mine.
Helena	None, but your beauty: would that fault were mine!

Reflect

- What was it like to collaborate with your scene partner? How did you support each other's ideas and creativity?
- What did you learn about your character's point of view in the situation? How did it compare to the other character's point of view?
- How did the relationship between the characters change in this brief exchange? What do you imagine will happen next for them?