

## COMEDY & ITS MAIN TYPES

### DEFINITION OF COMEDY

Comedy is a literary genre and a type of dramatic work that is amusing and satirical in its tone, mostly having a cheerful ending. The motif of this dramatic work is triumph over unpleasant circumstance by creating comic effects, resulting in a happy or successful conclusion. Thus, the purpose of comedy is to amuse the audience.

### TYPES OF COMEDY

There are five types of comedy in literature:

#### Romantic Comedy

Romantic comedy involves a theme of love leading to a happy conclusion. We find romantic comedy in Shakespearean plays and some Elizabethan contemporaries. These plays are concerned with idealized love affairs. It is a fact that true love never runs smoothly; however, love overcomes difficulties and ends in a happy union.

#### Comedy of Humors

Humor is anything that makes us laugh or is amusing or the ability to recognize what is funny about a situation or person. It has many types like slapstick, irony, satire and parody.

#### Comedy of Manners

This form of dramatic genre deals with intrigues and relations of ladies and gentlemen living in a sophisticated society. This form relies upon high comedy, derived from sparkle and wit of dialogues, violations of social traditions, and good manners, by nonsense characters like jealous husbands, wives, and foppish dandies. We find its use in Restoration dramatists, particularly in the works of Wycherley and Congreve.

#### Sentimental Comedy

Sentimental drama contains both comedy and sentimental tragedy. It appears in literary circles due to reaction of the middle class against obscenity and indecency of

Restoration Comedy of Manners. This form, which incorporates scenes with extreme emotions evoking excessive pity, gained popularity among the middle class audiences in the eighteenth century.

### Tragicomedy

This dramatic genre contains both tragic and comedic elements. It blends both elements to lighten the overall mood of the play. Often, tragicomedy is a serious play that ends happily.

## THE MAIN CHARACTERISTICS OF SHAKESPEAREAN COMEDY

The main characteristics in Shakespeare's Comedies are:

- A struggle of young lovers to overcome problems, often the result of the interference of their elders.
- There is some element of separation and reunification.
- Mistaken identities, often involving disguise.
- A clever servant.
- Family tensions that are usually resolved in the end.
- Complex, interwoven plot-lines.
- Frequent use of puns and other styles of comedy.

## THE SHAKESPEAREAN PLAYS WHICH ARE USUALLY CLASSED AS COMEDY ARE:

- The Merchant of Venice,
- Twelfth Night,
- All's Well That Ends Well,
- The Tempest,
- Taming of the Shrew,
- The Winter's Tale,
- As You Like It,
- The Comedy of Errors,
- Love's Labours Lost,
- A Midsummer Night's Dream,
- The Two Gentlemen of Verona,
- The Merry Wives of Windsor,
- Measure for Measure,
- Much Ado About Nothing,
- Pericles, Prince of Tyre and
- The Two Noble Kinsmen.