

Activities: Key Stage 3

First interview with Jordan Mifsud playing Borachio

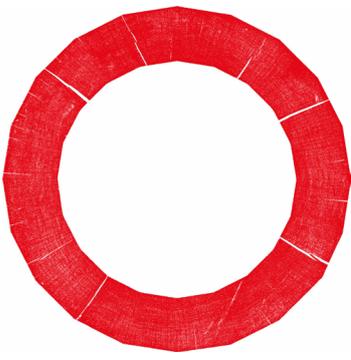
1) Find the Week 1 audio interview with Jordan Mifsud playing Borachio on the Playing Shakespeare web-site. In the interview Jordan talks about Borachio's character and motivation.

2) Work in a small group. Jordan explains that the name Borachio means a leather skin to hold wine and therefore this is Shakespeare suggesting that he is a character who likes a drink and is perhaps often drunk. Discuss this idea with your fellow students and decide how knowing the origin of his name affects the understanding of his character.

3) Speak the lines from Act 1 sc3 where Borachio enters (line 40) to the end of the scene. As well as the idea of him being a drunkard, Jordan describes Borachio as a man who is a 'bit of a lad'. Try saying the lines to emphasise that the three men are really enjoying the idea of a possible plot to upset Claudio's plans. How might this enjoyment make the audience realise that they are men who can be dangerous?

4) Jordan suggests that Borachio's position in the army is a young ordinary soldier who is from the 'wrong side of the tracks', with a very different background to the officers like Claudio, Benedick and Don Pedro. Discuss how the difference in his background explains why he is so friendly with Don John and Conrade. Record your findings in a chart which shows how all three are 'outsiders' not part of the army elite.

5) Read Act 2 sc2 where the main plot is hatched. Jordan describes Borachio as the mastermind of the plot. Discuss how this scene demonstrates that Borachio is the clever one who shows the others how the plot will work. How does Don John's offer of a reward (likely to be between £80,000 and £90,000 in today's money) show the value he placed on Borachio's cleverness? Annotate a copy of Borachio's long speech (line 31-50) to show how his plan is cleverly planned.



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- 6) Read the part of the scene set in the ball where Borachio and Margaret, both wearing masks, talk to each other (Act2 sc1 99-109). Discuss what this brief conversation reveals about the relationship between Margaret and Borachio and how this helps Borachio to make the plot work as he hopes.
- 7) Read Act 5 sc1 224-239 where Borachio admits to his part in the shaming of Hero. He then apologises to Leonato (lines 258-260) and then makes sure that Margaret's innocence is clear (lines 292 -299). Discuss how these speeches change the audience's feelings about Borachio and decide why you think he decided to admit his guilt so openly.
- 8) Imagine Borachio is being tried in court over his behaviour in the play. List the arguments that he should be punished. Then list the reasons which seem to have made him agree to the plot such as wanting to please Don John. Finally list the good points about his behaviour such as his honesty at the end when he admits his guilt.
- 9) Present the arguments in a trial of Borachio.