Shakespeare's Couples

The Merchant of Venice vs. Twelfth Night

Shakespeare uses similar characters to fit his classifications for couples.

Realistic Couples
Portia/Bassanio vs. Viola/Orsino

Both couples are the lead characters that progress the play through the plots onto the ending.
Both females have a fair amount of control in their relationship.
Portia has control with her use of the ring plot.
Viola teaches Orsino about true love vs. obsession.

Sexual Couples
Nerissa/Gratiano vs. Sir Toby/Maria

Both couples are servants or relatives to the lead characters.
The ladies jest against men
Nerissa jests against Gratiano vs. against Malvolio in the ring plot.

Romantic Couples
Jessica/Lorenzo vs. Olivia/Sebastian

These characters set the plots for a happy ending.
Olivia is the only one that plays a lead role while the other three are supporting characters.
They both have references to famous lovers.