La Prueba de los Ingenios
Plot Synopsis
Excerpted from:
“The Transformation of La Prueba de los Ingenios into The Labyrinth of Desire: Adapting Lope de Vega for a Contemporary American Audience”
by Dr. DeLys Ostlund
Portland State University

The central character in Prueba is Florela, who finds herself dishonored. Alejandro, the man she must marry in order to recover her honor, has decided to compete for the hand of Laura, the only child of the wealthy Duke of Ferrara. Finding herself abandoned, Florela follows Alejandro and, as Diana, serves as a lady in waiting to Laura. Having been given the right to select her future spouse by her father, Laura finds herself unable to choose between the three suitors: Alejandro, the Infante of Aragon, and Paris, Prince of Urbino. Diana/Florela suggests a “prueba de los ingenios” to allow the suitors to prove their merit. This tripartite test of wits includes a riddle, a debate, and finally a labyrinth. When Laura begins to show a preference for Alejandro, Diana/

Florela announces that she is actually Félix in disguise as Diana and begins her own pursuit of Laura to distract her from Alejandro’s attentions. Having been seduced herself, Florela proves herself rather adept at the art of seduction, and Laura begins to fall in love with her. Paris, the one and only suitor to complete the labyrinth, wins Laura’s hand. When Laura announces “que marido tengo” (336), the time has come for Florela to confess her true identity and for Alejandro to acknowledge

Que Diana es mi mujer,
y todos estos enredos
han sido para esorbar
comiog tu casamiento;
esta es Florela de Mantua. (337)

Read Dr. Ostlund’s full paper: