



WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE	KING LEAR	HAMLET	MACBETH	OTHELLO	ROMEO AND JULIET	JULIUS CAESAR	CORIOLANUS
CYMBELINE	TITUS ANDRONICUS	TIMON OF ATHENS	TROILUS AND CRESSIDA	ANTONY AND CLEOPATRA	KING JOHN		
HENRY IV, PART 1	HENRY IV, PART 2	HENRY V	HENRY VI, PART 1	HENRY VI, PART 2	HENRY VI, PART 3	RICHARD III	
HENRY VIII	ALL'S WELL THAT ENDS WELL	AS YOU LIKE IT	THE COMEDY OF ERRORS	LOVE'S LABOUR'S LOST			
MEASURE FOR MEASURE	THE MERCHANT OF VENICE	THE MERRY WIVES OF WINDSOR	A MIDSUMMER NIGHT'S DREAM				
MUCH ADO ABOUT NOTHING	PERICLES, PRINCE OF TYRE	THE TEMPEST	TWELFTH NIGHT	THE TWO GENTLEMEN OF VERONA			
THE TWO NOBLE KINSMEN	THE WINTER'S TALE	LOVE'S LABOUR'S WON	THE HISTORY OF CARDENIO	A LOVER'S COMPLAINT			
THE RAPE OF LUCRECE	THE PASSIONATE PILGRIM	VENUS AND ADONIS	THE PHOENIX AND THE TURTLE	SHAKESPEARE'S SONNETS			

[WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE](#)[Comedies >](#)[WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE](#)[COMEDIES](#)[A MIDSUMMER NIGHT'S](#)

DREAM[CHARACTERS](#)[MAJOR CHARACTERS](#)[MOTIFS](#)[PLOT OVERVIEW](#)[SUMMARY](#)[SYMBOLS](#)[THEMES](#)[ALL'S WELL THAT ENDS WELL](#)[AS YOU LIKE IT](#)[LOVE'S LABOUR'S LOST](#)[MEASURE FOR MEASURE](#)[MUCH ADO ABOUT NOTHING](#)[PERICLES, PRINCE OF TYRE](#)[THE COMEDY OF ERRORS](#)[THE MERCHANT OF VENICE](#)[THE MERCHANT OF VENICE](#)[THE MERRY WIVES OF WINDSOR](#)[THE TAMING OF THE SHREW](#)[THE TEMPEST](#)[THE TWO GENTLEMEN OF
VERONA](#)[THE TWO NOBLE KINSMEN](#)[THE WINTER'S TALE](#)[TWELFTH NIGHT](#)

HISTORIES[HENRY IV, PART 1](#)[HENRY IV, PART 2](#)

A Midsummer Night's Dream

 [Subscribe to posts](#)

Symbols

posted Aug 8, 2013, 9:04 AM by alaa hagag [**updated Aug 21, 2013, 12:13 PM**]

Theseus and Hippolyta

Theseus and Hippolyta bookend *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, appearing in the daylight at both the beginning and the end of the play's main action. They disappear, however, for the duration of the action, leaving in the middle of Act I, scene i and not reappearing until Act IV, as the sun is coming up to end the magical night in the forest. Shakespeare uses Theseus and Hippolyta, the ruler of Athens and his warrior bride, to represent order and stability, to contrast with the uncertainty, instability, and darkness of most of the play. Whereas an important element of the dream realm is that one is not in control of one's environment, Theseus and Hippolyta are always entirely in control of theirs. Their reappearance in the daylight of Act IV to hear Theseus's hounds signifies the end of the dream state of the previous night and a return to rationality.

The Love Potion

The love potion is made from the juice of a flower that was struck with one of Cupid's misfired arrows; it is used by the fairies to wreak romantic havoc throughout Acts II, III, and IV. Because the meddling fairies are careless with the love potion, the situation of the young Athenian lovers becomes increasingly chaotic and confusing (Demetrius and Lysander are magically compelled to transfer their love from Hermia to Helena), and Titania is hilariously humiliated (she is magically compelled to fall deeply in love with the ass-headed Bottom). The love potion thus becomes a symbol of the unreasoning, fickle, erratic, and undeniably powerful nature of love, which can lead to inexplicable and bizarre behavior and cannot be resisted.

The Craftsmen's Play

[HENRY V](#)[HENRY VI, PART 1](#)[HENRY VI, PART 2](#)[HENRY VI, PART 3](#)[HENRY VIII](#)[KING JOHN](#)[RICHARD II](#)[RICHARD III](#)

HISTORIES

LOST PLAYS

[LOVE'S LABOUR'S WON](#)[LOVE'S LABOUR'S WON](#)[THE HISTORY OF CARDENIO](#)

POEMS

[A LOVER'S COMPLAINT](#)[SHAKESPEARE'S SONNETS](#)[THE PASSIONATE PILGRIM](#)[THE PHOENIX AND THE TURTLE](#)[THE RAPE OF LUCRECE](#)[VENUS AND ADONIS](#)[VENUS AND ADONIS](#)

TRAGEDIES

[ANTONY AND CLEOPATRA](#)[CORIOLANUS](#)[CYMBELINE](#)[HAMLET](#)[JULIUS CAESAR](#)

The play-within-a-play that takes up most of Act V, scene i is used to represent, in condensed form, many of the important ideas and themes of the main plot. Because the craftsmen are such bumbling actors, their performance satirizes the melodramatic Athenian lovers and gives the play a purely joyful, comedic ending. Pyramus and Thisbe face parental disapproval in the play-within-a-play, just as Hermia and Lysander do; the theme of romantic confusion enhanced by the darkness of night is rehashed, as Pyramus mistakenly believes that Thisbe has been killed by the lion, just as the Athenian lovers experience intense misery because of the mix-ups caused by the fairies' meddling. The craftsmen's play is, therefore, a kind of symbol for *A Midsummer Night's Dream* itself: a story involving powerful emotions that is made hilarious by its comical presentation.

Motifs

posted Aug 8, 2013, 9:03 AM by alaa hagag [**updated Aug 8, 2013, 9:03 AM**]

Contrast

The idea of contrast is the basic building block of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. The entire play is constructed around groups of opposites and doubles. Nearly every characteristic presented in the play has an opposite: Helena is tall, Hermia is short; Puck plays pranks, Bottom is the

[KING LEAR](#)[MACBETH](#)[OTHELLO](#)[ROMEO AND JULIET](#)[SITEMAP.XML](#)[TIMON OF ATHENS](#)[TITUS ANDRONICUS](#)[TROILUS AND CRESSIDA](#)

[RECENT SITE ACTIVITY](#)

victim of pranks; Titania is beautiful, Bottom is grotesque. Further, the three main groups of characters (who are developed from sources as varied as Greek mythology, English folklore, and classical literature) are designed to contrast powerfully with one another: the fairies are graceful and magical, while the craftsmen are clumsy and earthy; the craftsmen are merry, while the lovers are overly serious. Contrast serves as the defining visual characteristic of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, with the play's most indelible image being that of the beautiful, delicate Titania weaving flowers into the hair of the ass-headed Bottom. It seems impossible to imagine two figures less compatible with each other. The juxtaposition of extraordinary differences is the most important characteristic of the play's surreal atmosphere and is thus perhaps the play's central motif; there is no scene in which extraordinary contrast is not present.

Themes

posted Aug 8, 2013, 9:02 AM by alaa hagag [**updated Aug 21, 2013, 12:15 PM**]

Love's Difficulty

"The course of true love never did run smooth," comments Lysander, articulating one of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*'s most important themes—that of the difficulty of love (I.i.134). Though most of the conflict in the play stems from the troubles of romance, and though the play involves a number of romantic elements, it is not truly a love story; it distances the audience from the emotions of the characters in order to poke fun at the torments and afflictions that those in love suffer. The tone of the play is so lighthearted that the audience never doubts that things will end happily, and it is therefore free to enjoy the comedy without being caught up in the tension of an uncertain outcome.

The theme of love's difficulty is often explored through the motif of love out of balance—that is, romantic situations in which a disparity or inequality interferes with the harmony of a relationship. The prime instance of this imbalance is the asymmetrical love among the four young Athenians: Hermia loves Lysander, Lysander loves Hermia, Helena loves Demetrius, and Demetrius loves Hermia instead of Helena—a simple numeric imbalance in which two men love the same woman, leaving one woman with too many suitors and one with too few. The play has strong potential for a traditional outcome, and the plot is in many ways based on a quest for internal balance; that is, when the lovers' tangle resolves itself into symmetrical pairings, the traditional happy ending will have been achieved. Somewhat similarly, in the relationship between Titania and Oberon, an imbalance arises out of the fact that Oberon's coveting of

Titania's Indian boy outweighs his love for her. Later, Titania's passion for the ass-headed Bottom represents an imbalance of appearance and nature: Titania is beautiful and graceful, while Bottom is clumsy and grotesque.

Magic

The fairies' magic, which brings about many of the most bizarre and hilarious situations in the play, is another element central to the fantastic atmosphere of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. Shakespeare uses magic both to embody the almost supernatural power of love (symbolized by the love potion) and to create a surreal world. Although the misuse of magic causes chaos, as when Puck mistakenly applies the love potion to Lysander's eyelids, magic ultimately resolves the play's tensions by restoring love to balance among the quartet of Athenian youths. Additionally, the ease with which Puck uses magic to his own ends, as when he reshapes Bottom's head into that of an ass and recreates the voices of Lysander and Demetrius, stands in contrast to the laboriousness and gracelessness of the craftsmen's attempt to stage their play.

Dreams

As the title suggests, dreams are an important theme in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*; they are linked to the bizarre, magical mishaps in the forest. Hippolyta's first words in the play evidence the prevalence of dreams ("Four days will quickly steep themselves in night, / Four nights will quickly dream away the time"), and various characters mention dreams throughout (I.i.7–8). The theme of dreaming recurs predominantly when characters attempt to explain bizarre events in which these characters are involved: "I have had a dream, past the wit of man to say what / dream it was. Man is but an ass if he go about t'expound this dream," Bottom says, unable to fathom the magical happenings that have affected him as anything but the result of slumber.

Shakespeare is also interested in the actual workings of dreams, in how events occur without explanation, time loses its normal sense of flow, and the impossible occurs as a matter of course; he seeks to recreate this environment in the play through the intervention of the fairies in the magical forest. At the end of the play, Puck extends the idea of dreams to the audience members themselves, saying that, if they have been offended by the play, they should remember it as nothing more than a dream. This sense of illusion and gauzy fragility is crucial to the atmosphere of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, as it helps render the play a fantastical experience rather than a heavy drama.

Versions of Reality

With so many subplots in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, and so many intersections between people from different worlds, there's got to be some way to account for the different ways

they each perceive reality. Dreams serve as a way to explain away plot holes or add a gauzy mystery, but the different versions of reality also extend to perspectives. In Lysander's book, if you don't have to fight for it, it isn't true love. Puck sees the mortal world as full of fools, and Theseus is certain fairies aren't real. These differing perspectives are central to the play, revealing that each man envisions his reality according to his circumstances.

Foolishness and Folly

A Midsummer Night's Dream is a comedy, so it's going to have its fair share of slapstick humor. It's obviously funny to watch a man with a donkey's head wander around on stage, but it's a different kind of humor than when Egeus gets absurdly mad at his daughter and decides to have her killed. Really, it all ends up being two sides of the same coin – nothing, not even murder and death, is taken seriously here. Misunderstanding is as central to the play as any other element of plot. Finally, as the play is really about love, you can't avoid embarrassing foolishness. We all know that.

Man and the Natural World

Part of the strength of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* is that we're not always sure where humans and the natural world, as two separate elements, fall in relation to each other. Sometimes humans are part of the natural world, and complemented by it, like women becoming fertile with the midsummer fest, or crops that agree with seasons to put food on the table. Other times the natural world seems alien to man because he has separated himself from it – especially with his urban life. Some Athenian workers want to rehearse a play in the woods to escape the city distractions, but all the sprite Puck needs to do to frighten them from their wits is to pretend he's a regular woodland creature or element – a fire, hound, or bear. Even at the end of their tough evening, the four young lovers, who have a lot to escape, decide to go back to Athens. Regardless of all the drama in the city, their courtly beds are no doubt better than this dirty forest floor. In this way, the natural world is an escape for man, but it's also a reminder of how good man has it in his other home.

Major Characters

posted Aug 8, 2013, 8:59 AM by alaa hagag [**updated Aug 8, 2013, 8:59 AM**]

Puck

Though there is little character development in *A Midsummer Night's Dream* and no true protagonist, critics generally point to Puck as the most important character in the play. The mischievous, quick-witted sprite sets many of the play's events in motion with his magic, by means of both deliberate pranks on the human characters (transforming Bottom's head into that of an ass) and unfortunate mistakes (smearing the love potion on Lysander's eyelids instead of Demetrius's).

More important, Puck's capricious spirit, magical fancy, fun-loving humor, and lovely, evocative language permeate the atmosphere of the play. Wild contrasts, such as the implicit comparison between the rough, earthy craftsmen and the delicate, graceful fairies, dominate *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. Puck seems to illustrate many of these contrasts within his own character: he is graceful but not so saccharine as the other fairies; as Oberon's jester, he is given to a certain

coarseness, which leads him to transform Bottom's head into that of an ass merely for the sake of enjoyment. He is good-hearted but capable of cruel tricks. Finally, whereas most of the fairies are beautiful and ethereal, Puck is often portrayed as somewhat bizarre looking. Indeed, another fairy mentions that some call Puck a "hobgoblin," a term whose connotations are decidedly less glamorous than those of "fairy" (II.i.40).

Nick Bottom

Whereas Puck's humor is often mischievous and subtle, the comedy surrounding the overconfident weaver Nick Bottom is hilariously overt. The central figure in the subplot involving the craftsmen's production of the Pyramus and Thisbe story, Bottom dominates his fellow actors with an extraordinary belief in his own abilities (he thinks he is perfect for every part in the play) and his comical incompetence (he is a terrible actor and frequently makes rhetorical and grammatical mistakes in his speech). The humor surrounding Bottom often stems from the fact that he is totally unaware of his own ridiculousness; his speeches are overdramatic and self-aggrandizing, and he seems to believe that everyone takes him as seriously as he does himself. This foolish self-importance reaches its pinnacle after Puck transforms Bottom's head into that of an ass. When Titania, whose eyes have been anointed with a love potion, falls in love with the now ass-headed Bottom, he believes that the devotion of the beautiful, magical fairy queen is nothing out of the ordinary and that all of the trappings of her affection, including having servants attend him, are his proper due. His unawareness of the fact that his head has been transformed into that of an ass parallels his inability to perceive the absurdity of the idea that Titania could fall in love with him.

Helena

Although Puck and Bottom stand out as the most personable characters in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, they themselves are not involved in the main dramatic events. Of the other characters, Helena, the lovesick young woman desperately in love with Demetrius, is perhaps the most fully drawn. Among the quartet of Athenian lovers, Helena is the one who thinks most about the nature of love—which makes sense, given that at the beginning of the play she is left out of the love triangle involving Lysander, Hermia, and Demetrius. She says, "Love looks not with the eyes, but with the mind," believing that Demetrius has built up a

fantastic notion of Hermia's beauty that prevents him from recognizing Helena's own beauty (I.i.234). Utterly faithful to Demetrius despite her recognition of his shortcomings, Helena sets out to win his love by telling him about the plan of Lysander and Hermia to elope into the forest. Once Helena enters the forest, many of her traits are drawn out by the confusion that the love potion engenders: compared to the other lovers, she is extremely unsure of herself, worrying about her appearance and believing that Lysander is mocking her when he declares his love for her.

Characters

posted Aug 8, 2013, 8:57 AM by alaa hagag [**updated Aug 21, 2013, 12:17 PM**]

Puck

Also known as Robin Goodfellow, Puck is Oberon's jester, a mischievous fairy who delights in playing pranks on mortals. Though *A Midsummer Night's Dream* divides its action between several groups of characters, Puck is the closest thing the play has to a protagonist. His enchanting, mischievous spirit pervades the atmosphere, and his antics are responsible for many of the complications that propel the other main plots: he mistakes the young Athenians, applying the love potion to Lysander instead of Demetrius, thereby causing chaos within the group of young lovers; he also transforms Bottom's head into that of an ass.

Oberon

The king of the fairies, Oberon is initially at odds with his wife, Titania, because she refuses to relinquish control of a young Indian prince whom he wants for a knight. Oberon's desire for revenge on Titania leads him to send Puck to obtain the love-potion flower that creates so much of the play's confusion and farce.

Titania

The beautiful queen of the fairies, Titania resists the attempts of her husband, Oberon, to make a knight of the young Indian prince that she has been given. Titania's brief, potion-induced love for Nick Bottom, whose head Puck has

transformed into that of an ass, yields the play's foremost example of the contrast motif.

Lysander

A young man of Athens, in love with Hermia. Lysander's relationship with Hermia invokes the theme of love's difficulty: he cannot marry her openly because Egeus, her father, wishes her to wed Demetrius; when Lysander and Hermia run away into the forest, Lysander becomes the victim of misapplied magic and wakes up in love with Helena.

Demetrius

A young man of Athens, initially in love with Hermia and ultimately in love with Helena. Demetrius's obstinate pursuit of Hermia throws love out of balance among the quartet of Athenian youths and precludes a symmetrical two-couple arrangement.

Hermia

Egeus's daughter, a young woman of Athens. Hermia is in love with Lysander and is a childhood friend of Helena. As a result of the fairies' mischief with Oberon's love potion, both Lysander and Demetrius suddenly fall in love with Helena. Self-conscious about her short stature, Hermia suspects that Helena has wooed the men with her height. By morning, however, Puck has sorted matters out with the love potion, and Lysander's love for Hermia is restored.

Helena

A young woman of Athens, in love with Demetrius. Demetrius and Helena were once betrothed, but when Demetrius met Helena's friend Hermia, he fell in love with her and abandoned Helena. Lacking confidence in her looks, Helena thinks that Demetrius and Lysander are mocking her when the fairies' mischief causes them to fall in love with her.

Egeus

Hermia's father, who brings a complaint against his daughter to Theseus: Egeus has given Demetrius permission to marry Hermia, but Hermia, in love with Lysander, refuses to marry Demetrius. Egeus's severe insistence that Hermia either respect his wishes or be held accountable to Athenian law places him squarely outside the whimsical dream realm of the forest.

Theseus

The heroic duke of Athens, engaged to Hippolyta. Theseus represents power and order throughout the play. He appears only at the beginning and end of the story, removed from the dreamlike events of the forest.

Hippolyta

The legendary queen of the Amazons, engaged to Theseus. Like Theseus, she symbolizes order.

Nick Bottom

The overconfident weaver chosen to play Pyramus in the craftsmen's play for Theseus's marriage celebration. Bottom is full of advice and self-confidence but frequently makes silly mistakes and misuses language. His simultaneous nonchalance about the beautiful Titania's sudden love for him and unawareness of the fact that Puck has transformed his head into that of an ass mark the pinnacle of his foolish arrogance.

Peter Quince

A carpenter and the nominal leader of the craftsmen's attempt to put on a play for Theseus's marriage celebration. Quince is often shoved aside by the abundantly confident Bottom. During the craftsmen's play, Quince plays the Prologue.

Francis Flute

The bellows-mender chosen to play Thisbe in the craftsmen's play for Theseus's marriage celebration. Forced to play a young girl in love, the bearded craftsman determines to speak his lines in a high, squeaky voice.

Robin Starveling

The tailor chosen to play Thisbe's mother in the craftsmen's play for Theseus's marriage celebration. He ends up playing the part of Moonshine.

Tom Snout

The tinker chosen to play Pyramus's father in the craftsmen's play for Theseus's marriage celebration. He ends up playing the part of Wall, dividing the two lovers.

Snug

The joiner chosen to play the lion in the craftsmen's play for Theseus's marriage celebration. Snug worries that his roaring will frighten the ladies in the audience.

Philostrate

Theseus's Master of the Revels, responsible for organizing the entertainment for the duke's marriage celebration.

Peaseblossom, Cobweb, Mote, and Mustardseed

The fairies ordered by Titania to attend to Bottom after she falls in love with him.

Summary

posted Aug 8, 2013, 8:53 AM by alaa hagag [**updated Aug 8, 2013, 8:53 AM**]

At his palace in Athens, Duke Theseus is hanging out with his bride-to-be, Hippolyta, the [Amazon queen](#) who was recently defeated by Theseus and his army. Theseus is VERY excited about getting hitched (in just four days) and spending his wedding night with Hippolyta. He promises her that getting married will a lot more fun than being conquered in battle. (Well, we sure hope so.)

Egeus, an Athenian citizen, arrives at Theseus's palace with a crisis. He's made plans for his daughter, Hermia, to marry Demetrius, but this other guy named Lysander has managed to steal his daughter's heart. Now Hermia refuses to marry Demetrius. Egeus is outraged and wants Theseus to give Hermia the death sentence for her disobedience, per Athenian law. (Yikes! Somebody needs to stop being such a control freak.)

Duke Theseus wants to be reasonable, so he advises Hermia to be a good girl and listen to her father. Hermia flat-out refuses, so Theseus gives her two alternative options: 1) accept the death penalty as punishment for disobedience, or 2) become a nun and remain a virgin

forever. Hermia has four days to decide her fate. (Yep, that's Theseus and Hippolyta's wedding day. Weird.)

Demetrius and Lysander bicker over who should get to marry the lovely Hermia. Demetrius thinks he should have dibs because Hermia's dad likes him the best and has already given him permission to marry his daughter. Lysander argues that he should get Hermia because Hermia actually loves him. Plus, Demetrius has way too much baggage – he used to go steady with Hermia's friend Helena, who is still in love with Demetrius.

Secretly, Hermia and Lysander make plans to meet in the nearby wood. Once there, they'll run off to Lysander's aunt's house (which is outside of Athenian jurisdiction) and get married. Just as the couple decides to elope, Hermia's friend Helena trips in. Helena is a mess because she still loves Demetrius – she's crushed that he wants to marry Hermia. The young lovers assure Helena that she has nothing to worry about because they're planning to elope, which means that Demetrius will be single and ready to mingle.

After the happy couple leaves, Helena decides to squeal to Demetrius about Hermia and Lysander's plan to run away. That way, Demetrius is sure to follow the runaway lovers, and then Helena can follow Demetrius, which will be fun and cost her nothing but her dignity. With that, we have the makings of a romantic chase.

Meanwhile, a group of Athenian craftsmen (called "the Mechanicals") are preparing to perform a play for Theseus's upcoming wedding. The play will be the tragic tale of two young lovers, *Pyramus and Thisbe* (think *Romeo and Juliet* storyline). However, it's clear the Mechanicals are horrible actors and are clueless about how to stage a play. The group decides to practice the play in the wood.

Cut to the woods, where we meet Puck (a.k.a. Robin Goodfellow), a mischievous sprite known for the tricks he likes to play on women in the nearby village. This charismatic sprite serves Oberon, King of the Fairies. Titania, the Queen of the Fairies, and Oberon also show up; they're in a fight, which has turned the entire natural world upside down. (We're talking seriously bad weather that's caused flooding and famine, which is something Shakespeare's original audience dealt with in the 1590s.)

The source of the quarrel is a "lovely" Indian boy that Titania has been raising as a foster son. Oberon is jealous and wants the boy to be his personal page (errand boy). Oberon refuses to dance, revel, or otherwise engage with Titania until she agrees to give up the child. Titania flat-out refuses and says that she'll raise the boy as her own as a favor to the kid's dead mother, who was chummy with Titania back in India.

Oberon makes plans to enchant Titania that evening with a magic love "juice" that will make her fall in love with the first creature she sees. Oberon hopes that when Titania wakes up, she'll see a monstrous beast and fall in love. Hopefully, Titania will be so crazy in love that she'll lose interest in the little boy and hand him over to Oberon. Also, Titania will be totally humiliated.

That evening, Helena and Demetrius wander into the woods. Demetrius tries desperately to get rid of Helena. The problem is that Helena won't leave him alone because she wants to be his one true love. Watching Helena's pathetic display, Oberon declares that, before the pair leaves the forest, their roles will be reversed: Demetrius should be fawning over Helena. Mischief is afoot! Oberon leaves to enchant Titania with the love potion. He also instructs Puck to find this young man in Athenian clothes (traveling with a girl) and enchant the heck out of him. Little does Puck know that there is more than one young Athenian man in the woods tonight.

Elsewhere in the forest, Lysander and Hermia are lost. It's about time they went to bed, and Lysander suggests that they share a bed on the forest floor. Hermia isn't having it, and tells Lysander to lie a good distance from her. The two fall asleep.

Puck runs into the sleeping pair and, seeing that Lysander is a young man dressed in Athenian clothes, Puck dumps the love juice in his eyes. (Whoops.) Then Helena shows up and accidentally trips over the sleeping Lysander while pursuing Demetrius. Lysander wakes up, immediately declares his love for Helena, and follows her further into the woods.

Meanwhile, Hermia has slept through the love-juice dumping, the tripping and falling, and the declaring of love. When she wakes up and realizes Lysander is gone, she heads off into the woods in search of him, clueless that her boyfriend has fallen in love with her friend Helena.

As the four young lovers chase each other around the forest, the Athenian craftsmen (the Mechanicals) practice their play nearby. It's immediately clear that our crew of amateur actors is pretty incompetent, which amuses Puck, the mischievous sprite who is watching the rehearsal from the sidelines. Puck decides to play a joke on Bottom, one of the worst actors, by transforming the guy's head into that of a donkey.

Once Puck completes his little prank on Bottom, the Mechanicals are terrified of Bottom's donkey head and run away in horror. Bottom, who is oblivious to his transformation, declares that his friends are just trying "to make an ass" of him. (Hehe.) The commotion awakens Titania, who's been sleeping nearby and has been dosed with the magic love juice. She takes one look at Bottom and instantly falls in love.

Meanwhile, Oberon comes across Demetrius and Helena and dumps some love juice in Demetrius's eyes. Uh-oh. Trouble Alert! When Oberon finds out that Titania has fallen in love with an ass, he's thrilled. Then Demetrius and Hermia show up, though, and Oberon soon figures out that Puck sprinkled the love juice in the wrong Athenian's eyes. (Remember, Puck put the potion in Lysander's eyes instead of Demetrius's.)

Puck returns, leading Helena, who is followed by the lovesick Lysander. Demetrius wakes up and immediately declares Helena to be his goddess. Just in time, Hermia wanders in, lured by the sound of Lysander's voice. Now that the four are together, Lysander declares that he too is in love with Helena. (Poor Hermia. Before the four humans entered the woods, both men were in love with *her* and now Lysander and Demetrius are hot for Helena.) Helena thinks it's just a prank and begins to argue with Hermia. Then the boys fight some more over Helena and challenge each other to a game of fisticuffs. They run off to duke it out somewhere in the wood. Helena decides to take off before Hermia gets violent and scratches her eyes out or something. Hermia chases after her.

Puck and Oberon have been watching all of this. Oberon instructs Puck to cast a shadow over the night, so the feuding boys can't find each other. Once the boys are asleep, Puck is to apply the remedy for the love potion on Lysander's eyes, so that he will fall back in love with Hermia. The hope is that lovers wake up in happy pairs. Puck follows all of these instructions.

Meanwhile, Titania is still having fits of love over Bottom, who is happily being tended to by fairies and the Fairy Queen. Oberon, easily got the Indian boy from the love-crazed Titania earlier that evening. Now he sees Titania as pitiful, and reasons that its time to bring her back to her senses. He asks Puck to transform Bottom to his natural self as well. Oberon un-enchants Titania, and she awakens as if from a dream. Oberon points to donkey-faced Bottom beside her and promises to explain later.

The next morning, Theseus shows up in the woods with Hippolyta (his bride), Egeus (Hermia's dad), and a hunting party. Theseus discovers the four Athenian youths sleeping on the ground in the woods. He wakes them up and wonders what could've brought them all together. Lysander admits his plan to elope with Hermia, and Demetrius also explains that he's now in love with Helena. So both couples are happily in love and seem to have forgotten last night's events. Egeus demands that the death sentence be carried out, but Theseus overrides him, declaring that the youths will all be married alongside him and Hippolyta this evening.

After the older folks leave, the foursome talks about the previous night, admitting it was dreamlike. Bottom wakes up as the young lovers exit and speaks of the strange dream *he* had.

He then hurries back to Athens, where he pleasantly surprises all the Mechanicals with his presence. By this time, the Duke and other couples have all been married, and it's about time for them to seek their celebratory entertainment. The Mechanicals get ready to perform their play.

The play begins. It is the well-known tragedy of Pyramus and Thisbe, two lovers separated by a wall. They speak through a hole in said wall, and decide to meet by moonlight at Ninus's tomb. Thisbe gets there early, but encounters a lion, which makes her run off, accidentally leaving her cape behind as a chew toy for the lion. Pyramus finds Thisbe's cape all torn and looking like a lion mauled it. He stabs himself, assuming his girl is dead. Thisbe then shows up and also chooses suicide. So everyone's dead, but the audience doesn't take it too seriously because it was so poorly performed. Following the entertainment, Theseus wishes the couples to bed.

Puck returns to the stage to talk about the scary things of night, and to sweep the doorstep, promising the couples will be happy and the house protected. He ends the play by saying that if you feel the play (*A Midsummer Night's Dream*) was absurd, you need only applaud and imagine the whole thing was a dream

Plot Overview

posted Aug 8, 2013, 8:51 AM by alaa hagag [**updated Aug 8, 2013, 8:51 AM**]

Theseus, duke of Athens, is preparing for his marriage to Hippolyta, queen of the Amazons, with a four-day festival of pomp and entertainment. He commissions his Master of the Revels, Philostrate, to find suitable amusements for the occasion. Egeus, an Athenian nobleman, marches into Theseus's court with his daughter, Hermia, and two young men, Demetrius and Lysander. Egeus wishes Hermia to marry Demetrius (who loves Hermia), but Hermia is in love with Lysander and refuses to comply. Egeus asks for the full penalty of law to fall on Hermia's head if she flouts her father's will. Theseus gives Hermia until his wedding to consider her options, warning her that

disobeying her father's wishes could result in her being sent to a convent or even executed. Nonetheless, Hermia and Lysander plan to escape Athens the following night and marry in the house of Lysander's aunt, some seven leagues distant from the city. They make their intentions known to Hermia's friend Helena, who was once engaged to Demetrius and still loves him even though he jilted her after meeting Hermia. Hoping to regain his love, Helena tells Demetrius of the elopement that Hermia and Lysander have planned. At the appointed time, Demetrius stalks into the woods after his intended bride and her lover; Helena follows behind him.

In these same woods are two very different groups of characters. The first is a band of fairies, including Oberon, the fairy king, and Titania, his queen, who has recently returned from India to bless the marriage of Theseus and Hippolyta. The second is a band of Athenian craftsmen rehearsing a play that they hope to perform for the duke and his bride. Oberon and Titania are at odds over a young Indian prince given to Titania by the prince's mother; the boy is so beautiful that Oberon wishes to make him a knight, but Titania refuses. Seeking revenge, Oberon sends his merry servant, Puck, to acquire a magical flower, the juice of which can be spread over a sleeping person's eyelids to make that person fall in love with the first thing he or she sees upon waking. Puck obtains the flower, and Oberon tells him of his plan to spread its juice on the sleeping Titania's eyelids. Having seen Demetrius act cruelly toward Helena, he orders Puck to spread some of the juice on the eyelids of the young Athenian man. Puck encounters Lysander and Hermia; thinking that Lysander is the Athenian of whom Oberon

spoke, Puck afflicts him with the love potion. Lysander happens to see Helena upon awaking and falls deeply in love with her, abandoning Hermia. As the night progresses and Puck attempts to undo his mistake, both Lysander and Demetrius end up in love with Helena, who believes that they are mocking her. Hermia becomes so jealous that she tries to challenge Helena to a fight. Demetrius and Lysander nearly do fight over Helena's love, but Puck confuses them by mimicking their voices, leading them apart until they are lost separately in the forest.

When Titania wakes, the first creature she sees is Bottom, the most ridiculous of the Athenian craftsmen, whose head Puck has mockingly transformed into that of an ass. Titania passes a ludicrous interlude doting on the ass-headed weaver. Eventually, Oberon obtains the Indian boy, Puck spreads the love potion on Lysander's eyelids, and by morning all is well. Theseus and Hippolyta discover the sleeping lovers in the forest and take them back to Athens to be married—Demetrius now loves Helena, and Lysander now loves Hermia. After the group wedding, the lovers watch Bottom and his fellow craftsmen perform their play, a fumbling, hilarious version of the story of Pyramus and Thisbe. When the play is completed, the lovers go to bed; the fairies briefly emerge to bless the sleeping couples with a protective charm and then disappear. Only Puck remains, to ask the audience for its forgiveness and approval and to urge it to remember the play as though it had all been a dream.

1-7 of 7



[Sign in](#) | [Recent Site Activity](#) | [Report Abuse](#) | [Print Page](#) | Powered By [Google Sites](#)