



American Players Theatre
Presents



William Shakespeare's
**A MIDSUMMER
NIGHT'S DREAM**
2017 STUDY GUIDE

American Players Theatre / PO Box 819 / Spring Green, WI 53588
www.americanplayers.org

A MIDSUMMER NIGHT'S DREAM BY WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE
2017 STUDY GUIDE

All photos by Liz Lauren.

MANY THANKS!

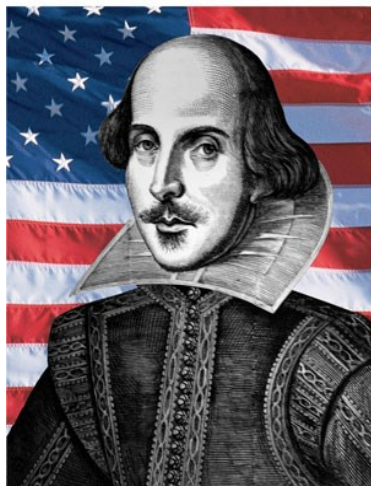
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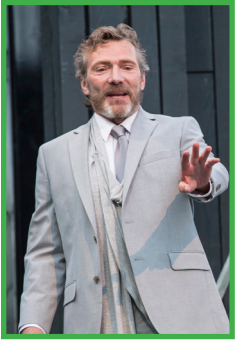


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If you have any questions or comments regarding the exercises or the information within this study guide, please contact Sharon Moshure, Education Coordinator, at 608-588-9270, or education@americanplayers.org.

Who's Who in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*



Theseus (Jonathan Smoots)

Duke of Athens, he's preparing for his wedding to Amazon Queen, Hippolyta, when he's interrupted by Hermia's angry father, Egeus. He takes the father's side, saying to Hermia "To you, your father should be as a god."

Egeus (Chiké Johnson)

Hermia's father, he's already promised his daughter's hand to Demetrius. He's not very happy to find that she is in love with Lysander.



Lysander (Juan Rivera Lebron)

In love with Hermia, Lysander proposes to her after her father rejects him as a suitor. Later, under Puck's enchantment, he will instead swear he loves Helena.

Demetrius (Nate Burger)

Demetrius swears he loves Hermia, and is angry that she won't follow her father's wishes to marry him. It comes to light that he's already wooed Helena, though he claims to no longer be interested in her.



Philostrate (Danny Martinez)

Master of Revels to Theseus, he's helping plan the Duke and Hippolyta's wedding.

Hippolyta (Laura Rook)

Queen of the Amazons, she's not terribly happy about her betrothal to the Duke at the beginning of the play, since the wedding is due to her being bested in battle.



Hermia (Melisa Pereyra)

In love with Lysander and unwilling to give him up, she flees with him into the forest to avoid marrying Demetrius. The other options given to her by the Duke are to be executed or become a nun.

Helena (Elizabeth Reese)

Childhood friend of Hermia, she's in love with Demetrius, and tips him off about Hermia's plans to flee with Lysander. Later, she'll believe Lysander and Demetrius are mocking her when they confess their love.



Who's Who in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*



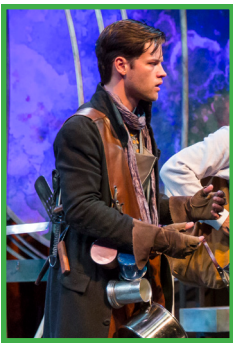
Quince (Tracy Michelle Arnold)
A carpenter and director of the play within a play, Quince has to keep all her actors in line (including Bottom).

Nick Bottom (John Pribyl)
A weaver, and a bit of an egomaniac, Bottom asks to play all the roles in the play within a play. Puck eventually gives Bottom the head of an ass, and Titania the Fairy Queen is enchanted to believe she loves him.



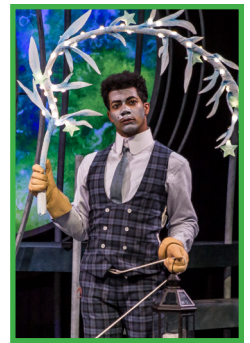
Francis Flute (Casey Hoekstra)
A bellows-mender, Flute is initially unhappy to be cast as Thisbe (a woman) in the play within a play.

Snug (Andrew Rathgeber)
A joiner (or carpenter who specializes in woodwork like window trim and paneling) plays the lion in the play within a play.



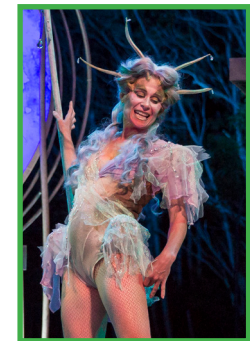
Tom Snout (Ty Fanning)
A tinker (a traveling utensil repairperson). Snout plays the wall in the play within a play.

Robin Starveling (Xavier Roe)
A tailor, he plays the moonshine in the play within a play



Oberon (Gavin Lawrence)
King of the Fairies and Puck's boss, he and his Queen, Titania, argue over the adoption of a changeling child.

Titania (Colleen Madden)
Queen of the Fairies, Titania takes in the child of one of her followers who passed away. Titania refuses to give the boy up to her husband, and he seeks retribution by having Puck enchant her to fall in love with Bottom.



Who's Who in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*



First Fairy (Tim Gittings)

A follower of Titania, he's the first fairy to meet Puck at the beginning of the play, rejoicing in Puck's tales of mischief.

Peaseblossom, Cobweb, Moth, Mustardseed & the fairies (Cher Desiree Alvarez, Eduardo Curley-Carrillo, Cage Sebastian Pierre, Josh Krause, Alejandro Cordoba, Elijah Edwards, Lauren Knutson, Jameson Ridge, Eli Saperstein & Dave Van Hallgren)

Titania's fairy followers, they are told by Titania to entertain and care for Bottom.



Robin Goodfellow or Puck (Cristina Panfilio)

A follower of Oberon, Puck is a prankster (a "merry wanderer of the night"). He enchants Titania, Bottom, Lysander and Demetrius throughout the course of the play - some of them purposefully and some due to mistaken identity. Puck closes the play by asking forgiveness for his mischief, and requesting applause from the audience.



About the Play

A Midsummer Night's Dream was believed to have been written in 1596, when Shakespeare was 32 years old. The play was inspired, in part, by Ovid's *Metamorphosis* and Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales*.

Theseus, Duke of Athens, is preparing for his wedding to Queen of the Amazons (and somewhat reluctant fiancé), Hippolyta. Their marriage has been arranged through battle, as Theseus bested the Amazons while at war. Egeus, a well-to-do Athenian community member arrives with a problem - his daughter Hermia loves a young man named Lysander, but Egeus wants her to marry Demetrius (who is loved by Helena, Hermia's friend from childhood). After some discussion with the young couple, Theseus decides that Egeus will have his way, and rules that Hermia must marry Demetrius within the

month, or choose between being executed or sent to a nunnery. Hermia and Lysander secretly decide on a third option – to elope to the forest. Hermia tells her childhood friend Helena of their plans. And Helena, who is in love with Demetrius and hoping to get into his good favor, in turn tells Demetrius about her friend's escape plan. Demetrius chases the happy couple into the woods, and Helena chases after him.

A group of tradesmen (the “rude mechanicals” - in this case, rude means “common” rather than “impolite”) meet to discuss a play on the theme of Pyramus and Thisbe, which they hope to perform at Theseus' wedding. Bottom, a bit of a diva, tries to get director Peter Quince to give all the roles to him. After calming Bottom down and giving him the role of Pyramus, the male romantic lead, they plan to rehearse in the forest.

Shakespeare's *A Midsummer Night's Dream* inspired composer Felix Mendelssohn to write the now famous *Wedding March*, which many couples choose to play as the bride walks down the aisle.

Oberon and Titania, the king and queen of the fairies, are arguing over who should have a changeling boy, the son of one of Titania's followers who had died. Titania will not give him up, so Oberon takes his revenge by having his servant Puck find a special flower whose juice he will squeeze onto Titania's eyes while she is asleep, which will make her fall in love with the first thing she sees upon waking. Oberon, who feels sorry for Helena after seeing Demetrius rudely reject her, tells Puck to put the potion in Demetrius' eyes also. But Puck mistakes Lysander for Demetrius, and Lysander wakes to see Helena. He falls in love with and chases after her, leaving Hermia alone in the woods.

The planet Uranus has three moons named after characters from *A Midsummer Night's Dream*: Puck, Titania and Oberon.

Meanwhile, Bottom and the other mechanicals begin their rehearsal near where Titania is sleeping. Puck gives Bottom the head of an ass, which frightens his friends away. The ruckus wakes Titania, and she falls in love with ass-head Bottom, who is treated like a lord by Titania's fairy followers.

Hermia, having become separated from Lysander, thinks Demetrius has killed him and goes off in search of her beloved. Oberon is furious with Puck for mistakenly giving Lysander the love potion, and tells him to find Helena and bring her to him. Oberon squeezes the flower onto Demetrius' eyes while he sleeps. Lysander enters with Helena, begging for her love, telling her Demetrius does not love her; Demetrius then wakes, sees Helena, and also begs for her love. Hermia enters and is snubbed by Lysander, while Helena thinks all three are playing a mean, elaborate trick on her. Demetrius and Lysander challenge each other to a duel. Oberon gets Puck to imitate the two men's voices, leading them around until they fall asleep. Puck puts an antidote on Lysander's eyes so that he resumes his love for Hermia.

Oberon then releases Titania from her spell, having received the changeling boy from her, and Puck removes Bottom's ass head. Theseus and Hippolyta arrive in the woods with Egeus, where they discover the sleeping lovers. They hear their story, and Theseus decrees they shall be married as they wish, despite Egeus' will.

One particularly extravagant production of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* from 1856 included 90 fairies during the final scene. Interestingly, the character of Puck was also played by an 8-year-old girl.

The action within the play takes place over the course of four or five nights, rather than a single midsummer evening.

Bottom is reunited with his friends, and they rehearse their play, which has been selected as one of those to be made available as entertainment at the wedding. After supper, Theseus chooses the mechanicals' production of Pyramus and Thisbe, which is presented in front of an audience of all the lovers, who mock the silly play in good fun. They all retire to bed, and Oberon and Titania enter to dance, blessing the marriages. Puck ends the play by asking the audience for forgiveness for his mischief, and also for applause.

American Players Theatre's *A Midsummer Night's Dream*



Oberon (Gavin Lawrence, center) holds a magic flower as he plans his revenge on Titania.

We often refer to *A Midsummer Night's Dream* as the quintessential APT experience. If any single play could represent APT's core identity, this would be the one. It was the first play ever staged at APT, and has been produced more often than any other play here (2017 marks APT's 11th production). Set largely in the woods outside of Athens, our stage in the woods sets the perfect scene for a little sylvan fairy magic.

APT's Artistic Director Brenda DeVita articulated it perfectly when she said "When I go to see *A Midsummer Night's Dream* at any theater, I always am aware of the need or the desire for those designers and that director to create a magical outdoor setting. That they have to work really hard to make it feel like the woods, outside. We're way ahead on that front. It's almost like cheating."

While it's true that *Midsummer* and APT are kind of perfect for each other, it's also one of Shakespeare's most popular plays in general. In fact, in 2016, using data from Shakespeareances, Priceonomics found that *A Midsummer Night's Dream* is probably the most often produced of Shakespeare's plays, accounting for more than 7% of the 2000-plus Shakespearean performances listed on the site between 2011 and 2016. (*Romeo and Juliet* and *Twelfth Night* came in second and third in the US, while *Hamlet* and *King Lear* took second and third places abroad).

So what's with the popularity? For starters, the play is a pretty perfect balance of spectacle and poetry, with a healthy dose of comedy and romance thrown in for good measure. The spectacle comes into play with ample opportunity for magical effects and glorious fairy costuming. APT keeps special effects to a minimum, relying more on the acting and beautiful natural surroundings to make the magic for our audience. As for costuming, we'll get to that in bit. But let's just say for now, the costumes are uniquely suited to the woods.

Midsummer's language is 81% verse (poetry) and 19% prose (writing with no metric structure), with the prose primarily spoken by the workmen, or "rude mechanicals." This ties into a greater linguistic strategy, since which characters speak poetry versus prose is often dictated by the speaker's class in Shakespeare's works. This is a fairly high percentage of poetry, and 1596 seems to have been a poetic year for Shakespeare, as it is believed that this is the year he wrote *Midsummer*, as well as *Romeo and Juliet* (88% verse) and *King John* (100% verse).

Along with poetry, magic is generously sprinkled throughout Shakespeare's works, but it's concentrated in this play. Magic obviously adds elements of glamor and wonder to a story, but it also provides certain characters with special power. Here, it gives the fairies power over the mortal characters (and occasionally other fairy characters), but it also gives them power over the audience. For example, Puck is allowed to break the fourth wall – the imaginary boundary between the characters and the audience that allows the play to go on as if unobserved – at the end of the play by asking the audience to forgive him for his mischief, and also to applaud ("Give me your hands if we be friends...").

The Role of the Audience

This particular production of *Midsummer* starts knocking down that fourth wall much earlier, asking at times for the audience to participate in the action. This is something the director felt would help fully immerse the

audience in the story being told on stage. According to director John Langs, “One of the tenets of this production is this participatory celebration. And we had sort of an epiphany while we were designing this production, and part of it came from a Ted Talk led by Bobby McFerrin, who wrote the song “Don’t Worry Be Happy.” So I was thinking about *A Midsummer Night’s Dream*, and I was watching his Ted Talk. And he didn’t say anything. He walked up and he jumped on a spot on a stage. And he sang “ahhh.” And the audience went “ahhh.” And then he jumped to a different spot and sang “ahhh,” and the audience said “ahhh.” And he started to play the audience like an orchestra. And it was incredible. There was kind of a Puckish participatory magic in that moment that really inspired the design team in the way we wanted to go after this play.”



The rude mechanicals celebrate together.

So if you’ve already seen play, you’ll know the “participatory magic” John was referring to. And if you haven’t, we can’t wait for you to experience it for yourself.

It’s Complicated

Our production of *Midsummer* kicks off with a joyful dance, including lovers Hermia and Lysander. But things get tense quickly, as we meet Hermia’s father Egeus, along with the Duke Theseus and his betrothed, Hippolyta. (As a side note, Jonathan Smoots plays Theseus, a role he also played in APT’s first production of the play back in 1980. So Jonathan spoke the very first words ever uttered in our theater.) Theseus and Hippolyta are planning their wedding, but it’s not the happiest match. The reason for the nuptials is that Theseus has bested the Amazons in battle, and Hippolyta is his “prize,” or as he states: “I wo’ld thee with my sword...” Needless to say, she’s not necessarily over the moon about it. Their plans are interrupted by an angry father (Egeus), who wants the Duke’s help in forcing his daughter Hermia to marry the man he chose for her (Demetrius) instead of the one she loves (Lysander). Also, Hermia’s best friend, Helena is in love with Demetrius. Which all amplifies one of Lysander’s best-known lines “The course of true love never did run smooth.”

After all, 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 a truly a love story, since it distances the audience from the more negative emotions in the play in order to poke fun at the angst the lovers are experiencing. Compare that to a play like *Romeo and Juliet*, where the audience truly has to feel and understand the depth of the characters’ love for each other, or the whole premise of the play falls apart. The tone of *A Midsummer Night’s Dream* is so lighthearted that the audience never doubts that things will end happily, and is therefore free to enjoy the comedy without being caught up in the tension of an uncertain romantic outcome.

At the beginning of the play, the relationships are out of sync. Hermia loves Lysander, Lysander loves Hermia, Helena loves Demetrius, but Demetrius is the fly in the ointment because he loves Hermia – a



Hermia (Melisa Pereyra) and Helena (Elizabeth Reese) look on as Demetrius (Nate Burger) and Lysander (Juan Rivera Lebron) quarrel for Helena’s affection.



Oberon (Gavin Lawrence, Left) and Puck (Cristina Panfilio, Right) celebrate after finding the magic flower and plotting their revenge.

simple numeric imbalance in which one woman has too many suitors and one has too few. The play has strong potential for a traditional outcome, and the plot is in many ways based on a quest for symmetry; that is, when the lovers' tangle resolves itself into pairings, the traditional happy ending is achieved.

There's also an imbalance of power in the relationship between Titania and Oberon, arising from the fact that Oberon's coveting of Titania's Changeling Child seems to outweigh 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.

As the lovers chase their respective objects of affection into the Forest of Arden, the men are put under a spell by Puck (one through misidentification and one on purpose), but it's the chase through the forest that helps visually portray their metamorphosis. As they all enter in their fine Athenian attire, which gets muddy and tattered as they run deeper into the forest – and into their own individual obsessions. It's not until they come out on the other side, exhausted and dirty, but with new appreciation for the loves in their lives, that they can truly be happy.

The Fairy World

Which brings us back around to magic - the cause of, and solution to, many of the challenges the characters face in this play. And that magic is brought to us courtesy of the fairy world. This year, we have Colleen Madden playing Titania, Queen of the Fairies, and Gavin Lawrence playing her King, Oberon. The two are in a spat over a child Titania has taken under her wing – the child of one of her followers who passed away. The artists wanted to underscore Titania's love for her lost follower as an explanation of why she was so unwilling to part with the child in the face of a huge fight with her husband.

The battle of fairy wills is so fierce that it even affects the weather. As Titania says in her famous speech to Oberon, because of his constant pestering about the child, she and her fairies have been unable to perform their midsummer dances. This has angered nature, which released its fury in the form of fog, floods, frost and general confusion of the seasons. Colleen says that plays into the real-world conversation going about weather, saying “It's a marvelous play to see now, because of how much concern there is about environmental changes. And what's fun is that we're highlighting Titania and Oberon, their conflict is creating this rift in weather patterns. So one of the things we talk about is how the seasons are all 'changing clothes,' and why that's a problem. So it's about discussion, agreement, compromise and moving forward.”

Titania has a large fairy entourage, the youngest actor being just eight years old. Gavin said of the group, “We are blessed with a wonderful group of young people working on this show. There's one in particular, a changeling child, who Titania will not allow Oberon to take. That is actually the point of contention between the two of them. And the young man playing him, Eli (Saperstein), is perfect as he has this sense of innocence and worldliness in his eyes that lends itself to Oberon really wanting to take him from Titania.”

Colleen has a very personal connection to one of those fairy children – he's her son. “So my son Jameson is in the



A costume rendering of Puck by Murell Horton.

project, and that's fun having him with me. And he's having fun dancing. Another young man, Dave (Van Hallgren), is just full of personality. He actually starts the play. He's the first one on the stage. And he's just completely fearless. One of the wonderful things about being in the theater is that it is truly multi-generational."

The Artists Behind the Scenes

"Part of John Langs' genius is that he collects great artists around him," said Brenda DeVita. And that is certainly true of this production of *Midsummer*. John Langs has worked with APT for a number of years, and his design team this season range from long-timers like sound designer Josh Schmidt, Scenic Designer Nayna Ramey and Lighting Designer Michael Peterson, to first-timers like choreographer and co-composer Ameenah Kaplan and Costume Designer Murell Horton.

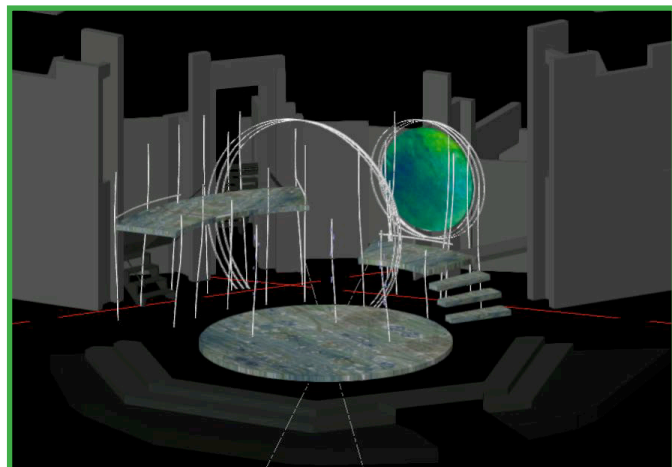
According to John, "When we went to work on *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, with my incredible designers, we had three guiding principles. We wanted to do justice to this play in the simplest way we could. We wanted to get underneath this play, and all that it has to say about the confusion around the idea of love, versus the reality of love. And that you

cannot get from that idea to that reality without going through a very, very messy woods. That was incredibly important to us."

"The second thing was that we really wanted to make this play a celebration. And the third element was, very importantly, that it wanted to spring out of those woods. That we wanted to walk up that Hill and feel like we've just uncovered this thing that's been here forever. And to that end, we're working with a new artist, Murell, the costume designer. And he took that ball and ran with it. He came here and he shot literally over a thousand pictures of the flora and fauna around APT's incredible space. And out of that he carved this remarkable world. Looking at nature that closely, is, of course, a wonder. But what was so unexpected about it was that it was *all there*. All of these goblins and spirits were there, in the woods, and he sort of translated them costume by costume, so, so very beautifully."

Brenda agrees, saying "Murell is a genius, and the fantasy world of the fairies looks so exciting. He came up to APT last fall and went through the woods and took these incredible photos of you know milkweed and flowers and foliage and bark, and he has used that as inspiration. So the fairies really, really feel like they are walking out of the plants, out of the woods. It's very, very organic. And beautiful. The kind of fantasy meets nature design is just really exquisite."

APT's 2017 production of *Midsummer* starts with a dance, and that is very much the work of the play's choreographer, Ameenah Kaplan. Ameenah worked with Director John Langs in the past, and he introduced her to APT. She was an original cast member of STOMP, as well as a drum coach for The Blue Man Group. She's even done choreography for *Dancing with the Stars*. She is paired with award-winning composer Josh Schmidt to make the production feel festive and inviting, and the music and dance combo helps pull the audience into the first scenes of the



A model of the set by Scenic Designer Nayna Ramey.

play. Ameenah referenced Africa, Afro-Cuban and Brazilian rhythms in her composition, along with Louisiana's famous "second line" funeral parades, and Dabke, a traditional Arab folk dance.

In a recent interview, Ameenah said "My choreography is a hodgepodge and a mixture, because I am that. There are so many (movement) influences in America and I have an appetite for it all. There's always a bit of rhythm in everything I do, a little body percussion."

The magic on the stage may seem effortless, but as you can see, so much thought goes into every detail, from the beautiful moon on stage, to the movement of the fairies, to the bug eyes on actor Tim Gittings' fairy costume. Brenda can hardly contain her excitement about this production, saying, "I love the way John describes this play.



The merry dance choreographed by Ameenah Kaplan kicks off the play.

He says 'Love is so hard. It's so hard. Until it's not. Then love is so easy.' And I think that's a perfect lens into this play. Of course it's got fairies, and lots of kids and lots of dancing and lots of, you know, Puck. We're just thrilled with it."

A Midsummer Night's Dream Photo Summary

1. Theseus, Duke of Athens prepares for his wedding to Hippolyta, who he is marrying due to his besting her in battle. They are interrupted by Egeus who is angry that his daughter Hermia refuses to marry the man he chose for her (Demetrius), preferring the company of Lysander.



Theseus (Act I sc 1)

Hippolyta, I woo'd thee with my sword, and won thy love,
doing thee injuries; But I will wed thee in another key, With
pomp, with triumph and with reveling.

2. Theseus rules that Hermia marry Demetrius, or be executed or sent to live in a nunnery. Hippolyta isn't happy.



Theseus (Act I sc 1)

Either to die the death or to abjure For ever the society of men.
Therefore, fair Hermia, question your desires; Know of your
youth, examine well your blood, Whether, if you yield not to
your father's choice, You can endure the livery of a nun

3. Hermia and Lysander don't take the ruling lying down. Lysander proposes, and says he has an aunt who can shelter them. With this plan in mind, the couple flees into the forest.



Lysander (Act I sc 1)

A good persuasion: therefore, hear me, Hermia. I have a widow
aunt, a dowager Of great revenue, and she hath no child:
From Athens is her house remote seven leagues; And she
respects me as her only son. There, gentle Hermia, may I marry
thee; And to that place the sharp Athenian law
cannot pursue us.

4. Hermia's childhood friend Helena (who is in love with Demetrius) comes across Hermia and Lysander in the woods, where she discovers their plans to elope. Despite her love for Hermia, Helena decides to tell Demetrius of the engagement.



Hermia (Act 1 sc 1)

Take comfort: he no more shall see my face;
Lysander and myself will fly this place.
Before the time I did Lysander see,
Seem'd Athens as a paradise to me:
O, then, what graces in my love do dwell,
That he hath turn'd a heaven unto a hell!

5. A group of "rude mechanicals" come together to rehearse a play for Theseus and Hippolyta's wedding reception. They decide on Pyramus and Thisbe, and the lovably narcissistic Nick Bottom wants to play all the parts. He is eventually given the part of Pyramus.



Bottom (Act I sc 1)

Let me play the lion too: I will roar, that I will do any man's
heart good to hear me; I will roar,
that I will make the duke say 'Let him roar again,
let him roar again.'



6. In the forest, Robin Goodfellow (Puck) chats with a fairy about his exploits in the fields and towns.

Puck (Act II sc 1)



Thou speak'st aright; I am that merry wanderer of the night.
I jest to Oberon and make him smile When I a fat and
bean-fed horse beguile, Neighing in likeness of a filly foal:
And sometime lurk I in a gossip's bowl In very likeness of a
roasted crab, And when she drinks, against her lips I bob
And on her withered dewlap pour the ale.



7. Oberon and Titania - King and Queen of the fairies, arrive. They have been arguing about the possession of a boy who was the son of one of Titania's followers. Oberon wants him for one of his henchmen, but Titania refuses to give him up. She claims that Oberon's temper tantrum is causing the fairies to miss their dances, which is affecting the weather and seasons.

Titania (Act II sc 1)

But with thy brawls thou hast disturb'd our sport.
 Therefore the winds, piping to us in vain,
 As in revenge, have suck'd up from the sea
 Contagious fogs; which falling in the land
 Have every pelting river made so proud
 That they have overborne their continents:
 The ox hath therefore stretch'd his yoke in vain,
 The ploughman lost his sweat, and the green corn
 Hath rotted ere his youth attain'd a beard

8. Hermia's friend Helena, who loves Demetrius, informs him of her plan to elope with Lysander. He determines to follow the couple into the woods, and Helena follows him. Oberon oversees their squabble, and vows to help Helena out with her plight.

Helena (ACT 2 sc 1)

I'll follow thee and make a heaven of hell, To die upon
 the hand I love so well.

Oberon

Fare thee well, nymph: ere he do leave this grove,
 Thou shalt fly him and he shall seek thy love.



9. Oberon tells Puck to enchant Titania with the juice of a magical flower so she falls in love with the first being she sees. He also wants Demetrius to fall in love with Helena, saying Puck will recognize Demetrius by his Athenian clothes.



Oberon (Act 2 sc 1)

And with the juice of this I'll streak
 her eyes, And make her full of hateful
 fantasies. Take thou some of it, and
 seek through this grove:

A sweet Athenian lady is in love
 With a disdainful youth: anoint his
 eyes; But do it when the next thing
 he espies May be the lady: thou shalt
 know the man By the Athenian
 garments he hath on. Effect it with
 some care, that he may prove More
 fond on her than she upon her love:
 And look thou meet me ere the
 first cock crow.

Puck

Fear not, my lord, your servant shall
 do so.

10. On his quest to find Demetrius, Puck stumbles across Lysander and Hermia asleep in the woods. He mistakes Lysander for the man he's looking for because he is dressed in Athenian clothes, and uses the enchanted flower on him.

Puck (Act II sc 2)

Night and silence. - Who is here? Weeds of Athens
he doth wear: This is he, my master said, Despised
the Athenian maid;

And here the maiden, sleeping sound,
On the dank and dirty ground.

Pretty soul! she durst not lie
Near this lack-love, this kill-courtesy.

Churl, upon thy eyes I throw
All the power this charm doth owe.

When thou wakest, let love forbid
Sleep his seat on thy eyelid:
So awake when I am gone;
For I must now to Oberon.



11. While in pursuit of Demetrius, Helena sees Lysander and wakes him. Because she's the first person he sees while under Puck's enchantment, Lysander falls in love with Helena.



Helena (Act II sc 2)

Lysander if you live, good sir, awake.

Lysander

[Awaking] And run through fire I will
for thy sweet sake.

Transparent Helena!

Nature shows art,

That through thy bosom makes me
see thy heart.

12. Elsewhere in the forest, the mechanicals gather to rehearse their play.

Quince (Act III sc 1)

If that may be, then all is well. Come, sit down, every
mother's son, and rehearse your parts.

Pyramus, you begin: when you have spoken your
speech, enter into that brake: and so every one
according to his cue.





13. But when Bottom enters, he has the head of an ass. The rest of the group is terrified and runs away, with Quince telling Bottom (who is very confused by their reactions) that he is transformed. Bottom decides to show them he's not afraid of their antics by singing.

Quince (Act III sc 1)

Bless thee, bottom! Bless the! Thou art translated

Bottom

I see their knavery: this is to make an ass of me; to fright me, if they could. But I will not stir from this place, do what they can. I will walk up and down here, and I will sing, that they shall hear I am not afraid.

14. Bottom's singing wakes Titania, who has likewise been enchanted by Puck's flower. She sees Bottom and instantly falls in love with him, ass head and all.

Titania (Act III sc 1)

I pray thee, gentle mortal, sing again:
 Mine ear is much enamour'd of thy note;
 So is mine eye enthralled to thy shape;
 And thy fair virtue's force perform doth move me
 On the first view to say, to swear, I love thee.



15. Hermia awakes in to find herself alone in the woods. She fears that Demetrius has caught up to them in the night and murdered Lysander.

Hermia (Act III sc 2)

What's this to my Lysander? where is he?
 Ah, good Demetrius, wilt thou give him me?



16. Puck and Oberon realize that the wrong Athenian man has been enchanted. Oberon is angry, and Puck promises to fix the mistake.

Oberon (Act III sc 2)

What hast thou done? thou hast mistaken quite
 And laid the love-juice on some true-love's sight:
 Of thy misprision must perforce ensue
 Some true love turn'd and not a false turn'd true.



17. Meanwhile, both Lysander and Demetrius have caught up to Helena, and both are professing their love. She thinks they're making fun of her, and she's hurt and angry.

Helena (Act III sc 2)

O spite! O hell! I see you all are bent To set against me for
 your merriment: If you were civil and knew courtesies, You
 would not do me thus much injury. Can you not hate me, as
 I know you do, But you must join in souls to mock me too?
 If you were men, as men you are in show, You would not
 use a gentle lady so; To vow, and swear, and superpraise my
 parts, When I am sure you hate me with your hearts.
 You both are rivals, and love Hermia; And now both rivals,
 to mock Helena:



18. Hermia arrives, and Helena believes she's in on the trick. Hermia is angry that Lysander seems to be throwing her over for Helena. The women argue, and Hermia is offended that Helena keeps mocking her for being short.

Helena (Act III sc 2)

I pray you, though you mock me, gentlemen,
 Let her not hurt me: I was never curst;
 I have no gift at all in shrewishness;
 I am a right maid for my cowardice:
 Let her not strike me. You perhaps may think,
 Because she is something lower than myself,
 That I can match her.



Hermia

Lower! Hark, again.



19. Puck hunts for the two couples in the forest, leading them all back to the clearing so he can right his mistakes.

Puck (Act III sc 2)

Up and down, up and down,
I will lead them up and down:
I am fear'd in field and town:
Goblin, lead them up and down.
Here comes one.

20. Hermia, heartbroken over her perceived loss of Lysander, is the last to be brought back to the group. Puck finally puts her into a deep sleep.

Hermia (Act III sc 2)

Never so weary, never so in woe,
Bedabbled with the dew and torn with briers,
I can no further crawl, no further go;
My legs can keep no pace with my desires.
Here will I rest me till the break of day.
Heavens shield Lysander, if they mean a fray!



21. With everyone gathered, Puck goes about setting everything right.

Puck (Act III sc 2)

On the ground Sleep sound:
I'll apply To your eye,
Gentle lover, remedy. When thou wakest,
Thou takest True delight In the sight
Of thy former lady's eye:
And the country proverb known,
That every man should take his own,
In your waking shall be shown:
Jack shall have Jill;
Nought shall go ill;
The man shall have his mare again,
and all shall be well.





22. Bottom, who is beginning to quite like being waited on by Titania and her fairy clan, decides to take a nap.

Bottom (Act IV sc 1)

☛ I had rather have a handful or two of dried peas.
But, I pray you, let none of your people stir me: I have an exposition of sleep come upon me.

23. Oberon and Puck arrive, and remove Titania's enchantment. She awakes, confused to find herself snuggled up next to a mortal with the head of an ass. As she prepares to depart with her husband, she asks him to explain how all of these oddities came to pass.

Titania (Act IV sc 1)

☛ Come, my lord, and in our flight
Tell me how it came this night
That I sleeping here was found
With these mortals on the ground.



24. Theseus, Hippolyta and Egeus have been searching the woods for the lovers, and come across them sleeping in the clearing. The couples awake. Lysander's enchantment has been lifted, and he's now in love with Hermia again, and Demetrius is in love with Helena. Theseus decides that Hermia should marry who she likes, and offers to hold wedding celebrations for both couples. Hippolyta is pleased.

Theseus (Act IV sc 1)

☛ Fair lovers, you are fortunately met:
Of this discourse we more will hear anon.
Egeus, I will overbear your will; For in the temple by and by with us These couples shall eternally be knit: And, for the morning now is something worn, Our purposed hunting shall be set aside. Away with us to Athens; three and three, We'll hold a feast in great solemnity.
Come, Hippolyta.





25. Bottom is reunited with his friends, who have been worried about him. They ask him to tell them about his adventures, but humbled by his experiences, he says it's a story for another time, and that they should rehearse the play instead.

Bottom (Act IV sc 2)

Not a word of me. All that I will tell you is, that the duke hath dined. Get your apparel together, good strings to your beards, new ribbons to your pumps; meet presently at the palace; every man look o'er his part; for the short and the long is, our play is preferred. In any case, let Thisbe have clean linen; and let not him that plays the lion pair his nails, for they shall hang out for the lion's claws. And, most dear actors, eat no onions nor garlic, for we are to utter sweet breath; and I do not doubt but to hear them say, it is a sweet comedy. No more words: away! go, away!

26. With everyone happily married, Theseus looks over the entertainment list for the wedding party and decides to have the mechanicals stage their play.

Theseus (Act IV sc 2)

'A tedious brief scene of young Pyramus
And his love Thisbe; very tragical mirth.'
Merry and tragical! tedious and brief!
That is, hot ice and wondrous strange snow.
How shall we find the concord of this discord?



27. The play is, of course, ridiculous, and the couples mock it good-naturedly as the play goes on.

Bottom as Pyramus (Act IV sc 2)

O grim-look'd night! O night with hue so black!
O night, which ever art when day is not!
O night, O night! alack, alack, alack,
I fear my Thisbe's promise is forgot!
And thou, O wall, O sweet, O lovely wall,
That stand'st between her father's ground
and mine! Thou wall, O wall, O sweet and
lovely wall, Show me thy chink, to blink
through with mine eyne!





28. At the play's conclusion, Thisbe (AKA Flute) surprises everyone by giving a moving speech about her love for Pyramus (AKA Bottom).

Flute as Thisbe (Act IV sc 2)



And, farewell, friends; Thus Thisbe ends:
Adieu, adieu, adieu.

29. The fairy clan, with Titania and Oberon reunited, bless the mortal marriages with a dance.

Titania (Act IV sc 2)

Hand in hand, with fairy grace,
Will we sing, and bless this place.



30. Puck returns, asking for forgiveness for any offense. She asks the audience to applaud, as the play is over.

Puck (Act IV sc 2)

If we shadows have offended,
Think but this, and all is mended,
That you have but slumber'd here
While these visions did appear.
And this weak and idle theme,
No more yielding but a dream,



Gentles, do not reprehend:
if you pardon, we will mend:
And, as I am an honest Puck,

If we have unearned luck
Now to 'scape the serpent's tongue,
We will make amends ere long;

Else the Puck a liar call;
So, good night unto you all.
Give me your hands, if we be friends,
And Robin shall restore amends.



Exercises & Activities

APT education exercises are designed as follow-ups and introductions to the themes and ideas of the play.

FAIRY MAGIC

A script is the beginning of making a play: like a coloring book before the crayons or an empty playground before recess. Everything you need is there, but until you start using it in the way it was designed, or in totally new ways that you just came up with, the real fun is just sitting there waiting for you.

So a script is the beginning. How you fill it as actors will determine what kind of play you'll create. From script to rehearsal to performance, you are key in every step of the process.

When working on *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, one of the fun things actors can create is Fairy Magic. How do you create magic onstage? Flight, sudden appearances and disappearances, freezes, sleeping, tripping; how do you create the illusion of magic?

When actors work together they can create all kinds of magic. For instance, let's look at a scene between Oberon (King of the Fairies) and Puck (his mischievous servant). This particular scene is just after Puck has fetched a magic flower for Oberon. Oberon has just witnessed two lovers fighting in the woods and has decided to help the girl by using the magic flower of love on the young man. Oberon begins his instructions to Puck:

OBERON

Take thou some of it, and seek through this grove:

A sweet Athenian lady is in love
With a disdainful youth: anoint his eyes;
But do it when the next thing he espies
May be the lady: thou shalt know the man
By the Athenian garments he hath on.
Effect it with some care, that he may prove
More fond on her than she upon her love:
And look thou meet me ere the first cock crow.

PUCK

Fear not, my lord, your servant shall do so.

That is pretty straight forward. The boss gives the instructions and the servant listens. But what happens if we have the actor playing Puck leave every time they think "Puck" understands the instructions? This time through, each time there is a mark (★) in the script below, have the actor playing Puck leave and then come back to hear the rest of the instructions.

OBERON

Take thou some of it, and seek through this grove: ★

A sweet Athenian lady is in love
With a disdainful youth:★anoint his eyes; ★
But do it when the next thing he espies
May be the lady: ★thou shalt know the man
By the Athenian garments he hath on. ★
Effect it with some care, that he may prove
More fond on her than she upon her love:
And look thou meet me ere the first cock crow.

PUCK

Fear not, my lord, your servant shall do so.★

How are those two versions different? Same script, but when the actors begin to ‘play’ with the script all kinds of things happen.

Now let’s try adding some words to Puck’s stops.

For instance:

OBERON

A sweet Athenian lady is in love with a disdainful youth.

PUCK

Got it.

What other phrase could you give Puck?

Okay.

Yep.

Yes sir.

Right.

Gotcha.

Okey dokey.

Now run the scene again, this time having Puck fill in a phrase at each mark.

FAIRY MAGIC

Now let’s add some magic. This time the actors playing Oberon and Puck will have to work together. At each mark Oberon will snap his fingers to ‘freeze’ Puck magically. Puck will have to stiffen their body as soon as they hear the snap and when the next mark in the script appears they will release again to leave. SNAP. RELEASE. SNAP. RELEASE.

OBERON

Take thou some of it, and seek through this grove: ★

A sweet Athenian lady is in love

With a disdainful youth: ★anoint his eyes;★

But do it when the next thing he espies

May be the lady:★thou shalt know the man

By the Athenian garments he hath on. ★

Effect it with some care, that he may prove

More fond on her than she upon her love: ★

And look thou meet me ere the first cock crow.

PUCK

Fear not, my lord, your servant shall do so.

Let’s try a variation. Have Oberon ‘grab’ the collar of Puck at each mark. Puck goes up on their tippy toes and pretends to be magically ‘grabbed’. The further away the actors are the better.

What other ways can Oberon stop Puck magically? How about a magical ‘wet willy’?

Exercises & Activities

FLOWER, CROWN AND CLAW

OVERVIEW

Flower, Crown and Claw is a simple exercise designed to help you and your students explore the way themes and ideas can dramatically shift a scene. You'll begin by introducing the scene itself and assisting with any vocabulary or contextual questions they may have. Briefly talk about the characters and the situations in which they find themselves. Introduce three themes that can be found within the scene: love, law, and base animal instinct. Divide your class into three groups and assign them a theme. Each group will then be given enough time to explore and create a version of the scene that fully highlights their assigned theme. Compare and contrast the versions.

1) Introduce Midsummer Act 1, sc 1

- Text
- Vocabulary
- Context
- Character

2) Set the three groups. Assign or ask students to place themselves into a group.

- 1) Flower
- 2) Crown
- 3) Claw

Flower- heart and love. **Crown**- laws and rules. **claw**- animal and base desires.

A prop (i.e. a flower, a crown, a heart) or an icon (i.e. hands over the heart, clawed fingers, a salute, flat hands raised from the temples, etc) can be incorporated to identify each group as well as to highlight when choices have been made to accent a theme.

Each group should take (as well as create) opportunities that utilize, center on, and highlight their theme as much as possible. Groups prepare the scene for an on book performance before the class. Allow enough time for groups to explore and select staging for the scene.

3) At the appointed time have each group present their scene separately.

Allow a brief feedback session after each scene.

4) At the completion of the exercise have small groups create a version (to be staged or described) that incorporates elements of all three themes.

Your students were provided with Flower, Crown and Claw. What other themes do they find within the scene: God, Family, Friends, Pride, Fear, etc. As your exploration of the play continues, the exercise can be altered and repeated for other scenes.

POWER PLAYERS AND THE PECKING ORDER

In small groups, have students determine the pecking order of the characters with the scene.

King

Queen

Father

Daughter

Suitor (Preferred by father)

Suitor (Preferred by daughter)

Can your students find textual evidence of sexism? Classism? Agism? The variation of the last three and the rationale behind them will provide juicy conversations.

In the APT's 2017 of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, Lysander's lines beginning with "I am my Lord as well derived as he..." were reassigned to Hermia. Would this change the hierarchy and how?