

William Shakespeare

# A MIDSUMMER NIGHT'S DREAM



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Classic

# Book brief

- 1 *A Midsummer Night's Dream* is a comedy written by William Shakespeare about 1595 or 1596.
- 2 It is one of Shakespeare's most popular plays even today.
- 3 Set in Athens and in the woods where the fairies live, the play tells the story of four young lovers.
- 4 The play is also about the marriage of the Duke of Athens, Theseus to Hippolyta and a group of workmen who decide to prepare a play for the wedding couple.
- 5 One of the main themes of the play is love and how the fairies 'play' with humans.

*William Shakespeare*

# A Midsummer Night's Dream

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## Main Characters



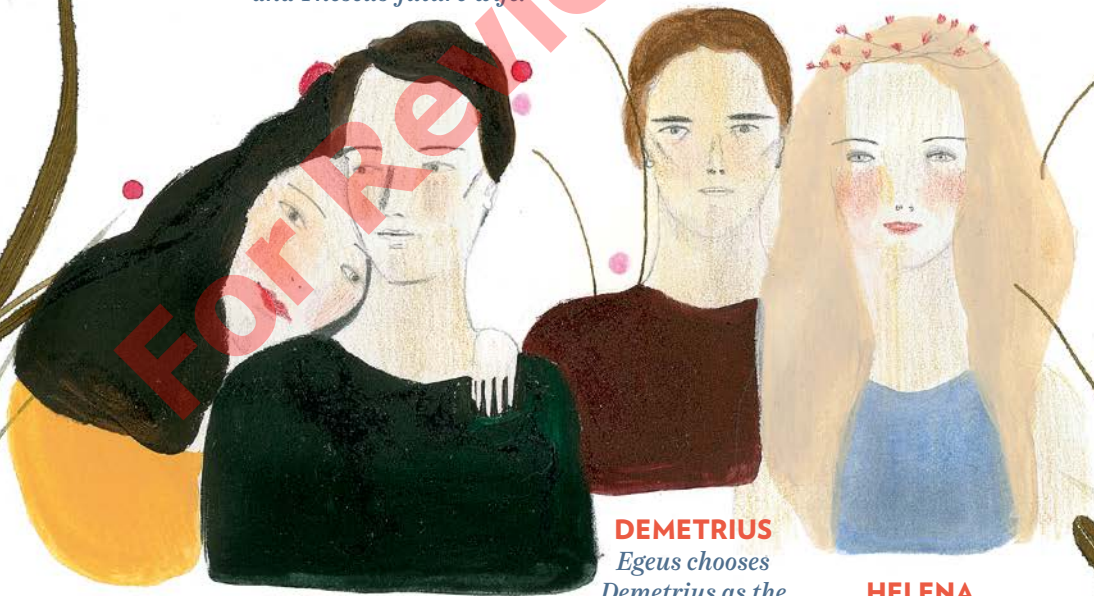
### THE COURTIER

#### HIPPOLYTA

*Queen of the Amazons  
and Theseus' future wife.*

#### THESEUS

*Duke of Athens.*



#### HERMIA

*Egeus' daughter,  
she loves Lysander.*

#### LYSANDER

*Lysander loves  
Hermia.*

#### DEMETRIUS

*Egeus chooses  
Demetrius as the  
man to marry  
Hermia and  
Demetrius is  
happy about this.*

#### HELENA

*Helena is Hermia's  
best friend and she  
loves Demetrius.*



**TITANIA**

*Queen of the Fairies  
and Oberon's wife.*

**OBERON**

*King of the Fairies  
and Titania's husband.*

**THE FAIRIES**



**PUCK**

*Oberon's servant.*

**BOTTOM**



**FLUTE**

**SNUG**

**SNOUT**

**STARVELING**

**QUINCE**

**THE WORKMEN**

*These men prepare  
a play about  
a tragic love story  
for the Duke, Theseus,  
on his wedding day.*

## Before you Read • Act One

### Reading **A2 KEY**

**1 Complete the text about the play with one word for each space.**

William Shakespeare ..... *wrote* ..... *A Midsummer Night's Dream* **(1)** ..... the 1590s. Some people think he wrote the play for a wedding party. **(2)** ..... people think he wrote it for Queen Elizabeth I, **(3)** ..... was Queen of England and Ireland at that time. The story happens in Athens, Greece. Love is a **(4)** ..... important theme in the play. **(5)** ..... the start of the play, the Duke of Athens is planning his wedding. There are four other Athenian lovers in the play, as **(6)** ..... as the King and Queen of the Fairies.

### Speaking **21st Century Skills**

**2 Discuss the following questions with a partner.**

- 1 Is there a theatre or a cinema where you live?
- 2 How often do you go to the theatre?
- 3 What's different about watching people on stage and people on TV?
- 4 Do you prefer watching TV series or films? Why?
- 5 Do you watch them on TV or on your PC? Why?
- 6 Who's your favourite actor / actress? Why?



### Vocabulary

**3 Match the words to their definitions.**

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| 1 <input type="checkbox"/> <b>play</b> /pleɪ/         | <b>a</b> where actors stand when they're acting                |
| 2 <input type="checkbox"/> <b>part</b> /pɑ:t/         | <b>b</b> the people who watch something in a theatre           |
| 3 <input type="checkbox"/> <b>lines</b> /laɪnz/       | <b>c</b> <i>A Midsummer Night's Dream</i> is an example of one |
| 4 <input type="checkbox"/> <b>stage</b> /steɪdʒ/      | <b>d</b> all the actors in a play                              |
| 5 <input type="checkbox"/> <b>audience</b> /'ɔ:diəns/ | <b>e</b> the character an actor plays                          |
| 6 <input type="checkbox"/> <b>cast</b> /kɑ:st/        | <b>f</b> the words an actor has to learn                       |

## Writing

- 4 **Stage Directions.** Use the words from the box to complete the stage directions.

~~steps~~ - Exit - Enter - wakes up - Re-enter

- THESEUS. Come here, Lysander! [*Lysander ..... **steps** ..... forward.*]
- 1 FAIRY. Oh no, Oberon and Titania are coming!  
[..... *Oberon with Servants and Titania with Fairies.*]
- 2 OBERON. Go now, Puck! Immediately!  
[..... *Puck.*]
- 3 PUCK. Come back here!  
[..... *Lysander.*]
- 4 HERMIA [.....]. Lysander! Where are you? I had a terrible dream.

## Warming up

- 5 A **Before you act, it's very important for you to warm up. This activity helps you to warm up your voice. Say this tongue-twister slowly.**

- Red leather. Yellow leather.

**Now repeat it. Keep repeating it, faster and faster! When you're ready, try the next two.**

- She sells sea shells on the sea shore.  
- I scream, you scream, we all scream for ice-cream.

- 5 B **You also need to relax your body, before you act. Follow these instructions with your group.**

- 1 Stand in a circle.
- 2 Don't laugh.
- 3 Choose a person to go into the centre.
- 4 That person must act the part of a cat.
- 5 The first person to laugh has to go into the centre and act like a cat, too.
- 6 If no-one laughs, congratulations, you're ready to act!



# Act One

## 2 Scene One

*Athens. Theseus's palace\*.*

*[Enter Theseus, Hippolyta, Philostrate and Servants.]*

THESEUS. Well, Hippolyta. Four days! We're getting married in four days!

HIPPOLYTA. I know. It's very near.

THESEUS. The days seem\* very long.

HIPPOLYTA. Yes, but the days and nights will pass.

THESEUS. You're right. Philostrate, come here. Servants, come here!

PHILOSTRATE. Yes, my Lord?

SERVANTS *[together]*. Yes, my Lord?

THESEUS. Go out into the streets. Tell everyone to prepare. They must prepare for our wedding. Everyone must be happy!

PHILOSTRATE and SERVANTS. Yes, my Lord!

*[Exeunt\* Philostrate and Servants.]*

THESEUS. Oh, Hippolyta. I love you so much. This wedding day must be very special.

*[Enter Egeus, Hermia, Lysander and Demetrius.]*

EGEUS. I'm happy to see you, Theseus. You're a great man and a great duke\*.

**palace** where a king or queen lives  
**seem** give the idea that

**exeunt** theatre instruction: more than one person leaves

**duke** (here) the 'king' of Athens

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THESEUS. Thank you, good Egeus. How are you?

EGEUS. Terrible! It's my daughter, Hermia.

THESEUS. Hermia? Come here, Hermia. [*Hermia stands in front of Theseus.*] But she's such a good girl.

EGEUS. No, she isn't. She's the opposite. She wants to marry Lysander! [*Lysander steps forward.*]

THESEUS. What's the problem? Lysander isn't married. He comes from a good family.

EGEUS. Yes, but Hermia must marry Demetrius. [*Demetrius steps forward.*]

THESEUS. Ah, I understand the problem. Hermia, your father wants you to marry Demetrius.

HERMIA. I don't want to marry Demetrius! I don't love him. I want to marry Lysander!

EGEUS. NO! NO! NO! You're MY daughter. You'll marry Demetrius!

THESEUS. Now, Hermia. What do you say? Demetrius is a good man.

HERMIA. But I love Lysander!

THESEUS. But your father must decide. You have three choices\*. Number one, marry Demetrius. Number two, never get married. Number three, die. Think about these choices. Give me your answer on my wedding day.

DEMETRIUS. I'll always love you, Hermia.

LYSANDER. You were in love with Helena last year. No, you love Hermia's father. And her father loves you!

EGEUS. Yes, I love him like a son. Hermia is MINE. She'll marry Demetrius.

**choice** things to choose from

## William Shakespeare

THESEUS. I've given Hermia time to think. Demetrius and Egeus, come with me. Hippolyta, come with me, too. I want to talk to you all. I want to talk about our wedding.

*[Exeunt Theseus, Hippolyta, Demetrius and Egeus.]*

LYSANDER. Oh, Hermia. Don't be sad. It's always the same. The course of true love never did run smooth\*.

HERMIA. But, we love each other; there must be something we can do.

LYSANDER. There is something we can do. I have an aunt. She's very rich and she doesn't have any children. I'm her favourite nephew\*. She'll help us, I'm sure. There's only one problem.

HERMIA. What?

LYSANDER. We must leave Athens. She lives far away from here. You must leave your father. Then we can get married. Meet me tomorrow, in the woods.

HERMIA. I'll meet you there, in the woods. I love you.

*[Enter Helena.]*

HERMIA. Helena. You seem sad.

HELENA. Of course I'm sad! Demetrius loves you. He doesn't love me. What can I do? I love him, he doesn't love me.

HERMIA. Well, I don't love him. Don't worry, Lysander and I are leaving Athens.

HELENA. Leaving?

LYSANDER. Yes, we're going. We're going tomorrow night. We're going to get married. No-one can stop us.

HERMIA. We're meeting in the woods tomorrow night. So, Helena, good luck. Demetrius is yours. Lysander, I must go. I'll see you tomorrow.

Shakespeare sets the first part of the play in the ancient city of Athens as it gives an idea of law and order, very different from the woods used later in the play.

**The course ... smooth** (quotation) people in love meet many problems  
**nephew** your brother's or sister's son

**Theseus gives Hermia three choices to think about.**





[Exit *Hermia*.]

LYSANDER. Bye bye, my love. Until midnight, tomorrow.

[Exit *Lysander*.]

HELENA. They're so happy. Why can't I be happy? Everyone in Athens thinks I'm beautiful. I'm as beautiful as *Hermia*. *Demetrius* doesn't love me. But why? He loved me before he loved her. I know what I must do. I must tell *Demetrius* about their plan. Then he'll go to the woods tomorrow night. He'll be happy. Then he'll love me.

\*\*\*

## Scene Two

*A room in a cottage\* near Athens.*

[Enter *Snug*, *Bottom*, *Flute*, *Snout*, *Quince* and *Starveling*: a group of workmen who want to put on a play\*. They want to celebrate\* the duke's wedding.]

QUINCE. Everybody's here. Let's start.

BOTTOM. Why are we here?

QUINCE. We're going to put on a play.

BOTTOM [*very excited*]. Excellent. Why?

QUINCE. For Duke Theseus's wedding.

BOTTOM. Excellent. And what's the play?

QUINCE. The Terrible Story of Young *Pyramus* and his *Thisbe*: a very Funny Tragedy.

SNUG. Oh good! It's funny.

BOTTOM. Shh! And who are the actors?

QUINCE. You, Nick Bottom, are *Pyramus*.

BOTTOM. Excellent. And who's *Pyramus*?

**cottage** a small house usually in the country  
**put on a play** plan and do a play

**celebrate** do something nice to remember  
a special day

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QUINCE. He's a lover. He kills himself.

BOTTOM. Excellent. I can do that. The audience\* are going to cry!

Just wait until I kill myself.

QUINCE. Francis Flute.

FLUTE. Here!

QUINCE. You're Thisbe, a beautiful woman. Pyramus loves you.

FLUTE. I don't want to be a woman! Look at my new beard. I don't want to shave\* my beard off!

QUINCE. Well, you're a woman. You're going to speak in a very high voice\*. So are you, Robin Starveling. You're a woman, too. Thisbe's mother. Tom Snout?

SNOUT. Yes?

QUINCE. You're Pyramus's father and I'm Thisbe's father. Snug, you're the lion.

SNUG. I'm not sure. Is it a difficult part? Do I have to learn a lot of lines\*? I'm not very intelligent\*. It'll take me a long time to learn a lot of lines.

QUINCE. No, no. There are no lines. You don't have to speak at all. You just have to roar\* like a lion.

BOTTOM. I want to be a lion! [*Roars like a lion.*]

QUINCE. No, Bottom. You're too good. There will be ladies\* in the audience. We don't want them to be afraid.

BOTTOM. I want to be Thisbe, too.

QUINCE. Oh, Bottom. You can't be Pyramus and Thisbe!

STARVELING. And the lion!

FLUTE. I don't want to be a girl. Why do I have to be a girl? Look at my beautiful beard.

During the Elizabethan period, only men could be actors, so all women's parts were played by men or boys.

**audience** the people who watch a play or film

**shave** (of a man) cut the hair off your face

**voice** you use your voice to speak or sing

**lines** the words actors have to learn

**intelligent** clever

**roar** make a noise like a lion

**lady** a polite way of talking about a high class woman

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BOTTOM. I'll wear a beard. What sort of beard shall I wear? A yellow one? A red one? A *gold* one?

QUINCE. Good. That's decided. We know who the actors are, we know the name of the play. Let's meet in the woods tomorrow night. Then we can practise. I think we're going to need a lot of practice.

BOTTOM. See you tomorrow, everyone. Adieu\*! Adieu!



For Review Only

**adieu** goodbye (in French)

The workmen are talking about the play and what parts they'll have.





## After-Reading Activities • Act One

### Stop & Check

1 Are these sentences true (T) or false (F)? Correct the false ones.

- |  | T                        | F                                   |
|--|--------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| Theseus and Hermia are getting married.                      | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| <u>Theseus and Hippolyta are getting married.</u>            |                          |                                     |
| 1 Egeus is Hermia's father.                                  | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>            |
| 2 Theseus gives Hermia two choices.                          | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>            |
| 3 Egeus loves Demetrius.                                     | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>            |
| 4 Helena is sad, because she's in love with Lysander.        | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>            |
| 5 Bottom and his friends want to put on a play for the duke. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>            |
| 6 Bottom doesn't want to play a woman's part.                | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>            |

### Reading & Speaking

2 A Put these sentences into chronological order.

- a ☐ You learn your lines
- b ☐ You act in front of an audience
- c ☐ You choose a part
- d ☒ You choose a play
- e ☐ You practise a lot

2 B 21st Century Skills

Work in pairs. Ask and answer these questions.

- Have you ever had a part in a play?
- (if yes) What play? Did you enjoy it?
- Have you ever seen a play in the theatre?
- (if yes) What play? Did you enjoy it?



## Writing **A2 KEY**

- 3** Hermia is planning to run away with Lysander. Write the note she leaves for her father. Say

- Where she's going
- Why she's leaving
- How she's feeling

**Write 25 words or more.**



### Pre-Reading Activities • Chapter Two

## Listening

- 4 A** Look at the two rhymes from the beginning of Act Two. Think of words that could fill the gaps.

FAIRY.

Over hills and ..... *mountains* ..... green  
I serve Titania, Fairy Queen.  
I must **(1)** ..... and paint some flowers,  
A lot of work for so few **(2)** .....  
The Queen herself is coming soon,  
In the light of this lovely **(3)** .....

PUCK.

Oberon, her husband, is here **(4)** .....  
Oh good, I think there'll be a fight!  
Oberon is very cross,  
He really **(5)** ..... to be the boss.

- 3 4 B** Listen and write the words you hear.