

**A
MIDSUMMER
NIGHT'S
DREAM**

**MADE SUPER
SUPER EASY**

EVELYN SAMUEL

A Midsummer Night's Dream
Made Super Super Easy
First Edition Published by Evelyn Samuel
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www.EveSuperEasyBooks.com
evesupereasybooks@gmail.com

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DEDICATED TO

To my wonderful sister

Angie Emanuel

Thanks for being my Inspiration

REVIEWS

★★★★★ **A Comprehensive Study Guide**

Reviewed 21 October 2022

Brilliantly explores the mayhem and confusion interwoven by Shakespeare in his farcical play 'A Midsummer Night's Dream'! Highly recommended by my son!

★★★★★ **Clear and Concise Study Guide**

Reviewed 06 November 2022

Brilliant study guide to one of Shakespeare's most popular plays. All aspects of the play are explained in detail, and exam questions for each Act are included.

PREFACE

To all students reading my study guide **A MIDSUMMER NIGHT'S DREAM made super super easy**. I do hope that my wealth of information will assist you to achieve the highest possible grades. I have formulated a unique structure where detailed explanations are next to the text to make it super super easy for you to connect and understand the book, and to revise without the need to resort to more than one book.

Each ACT is defined by a Summary followed by in-depth explanations which are highlighted with relevant important quotes. Within the explanations, connotated meaning, imagery, symbolism, and linguistic devices are identified.

A detailed explanation of each main character in the book is provided so that the fabric of their relationships and interactions can be better understood. To further create understanding, the Structure, Form, Language, and Themes within the play are explored. Typical Exam questions are included to give some idea of the scope sought by the Exam Boards. Further details can be found in the Specification published by each Exam Board on their websites.

Good Luck with your studies and your exam results.

FOREWARD

What a super super easy way to study and understand Shakespeare's *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. No need to match text with explanation when both are next to each other.

I really enjoyed looking left at the text and right at the explanation. The structure and content of this fantastic study guide makes it possible to fully comprehend the storyline, characters, and themes created by Shakespeare in his fantasy comedy play *A Midsummer Night's Dream*.

I can without hesitation recommend this study guide to all students, and hope they gain as much insight, as I did, into Shakespeare's *A Midsummer Night's Dream*.

Teacher of English

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SHAKESPEARE

William Shakespeare was a renowned English playwright, poet, and actor born in 1564 in the town of Stratford-upon-Avon during the Elizabethan and Jacobean ages of British theatre.

The play *A Mid-Summer Night's Dream* is full of comical farce driven by potions and magical transformations comminating in lovers falling in love with the wrong partner and Athenian workmen experiencing mayhem when rehearsing a play for the duke of Athens forthcoming marriage celebrations. All initiated by the fairy King Oberon but muddled by his jester and attendant Puck who squeezes the love potion into the wrong lover's eyes. The mistake is corrected later by Oberon himself. Puck completes the task, by squeezing the potion into Lysanders' eyes, so that the lovers are paired with the correct partner: Lysander with Hermia, and Demetrius with Helena.

Further to this, Oberon squeezes the love potion into Titania eyes so that when she awakes, she would fall in love with Bottom whose head had been transformed by Puck into that of an Ass's head. Thus, ridiculing her for not releasing the stolen Indian boy to Oberon's care.

From the fairy wood back to the palace with Bottom's head restored, the workmen directed by Peter Quince perform a farcical rendition of the famous play *Pyramus and Thisbe*, the tale of two lovers whose only form of communication is to whisper through a hole in a wall inside King Ninus' Tomb. Tragically, Pyramus arrives to find a blooded shawl. Thinking that a lion has killed Thisbe and dragged her away to eat, he kills himself with his sword. Then Thisbe arrives. Finding *Pyramus* dead, she stabs herself to join him in death. The choice of play is to emphasis that true lovers stay together forever, in life or death.

As in Shakespeare's later play entitled *All well that ends well*, confusion is banished, and harmony is restored. The lovers do find their correct partner; Oberon secures the Indian boy; and the Athenian workmen are praised by Theseus for their splendid rendition which require no excuse because farcically when all the players are dead, there need none to be blamed.

Certainly, *A MidSummer Night's Dream* is one of Shakespeare's most ambitious but popular plays, written circa 1595 and first performed circa 1605.

Shakespeare indulges in a plethora of historical fact, Greek myth, ancient festivals, and supernatural fantasy resulting in a lovers' tale more sophisticated in imagination and plot than that published by Geoffrey Chancer in *The Knights Tale* or any other previous dramatist.

Historical Fact

The rediscovery of many classical Greek and Roman texts in the Elizabethan age spurred Shakespeare and other playwrights to adapt ancient themes into a form conducive to the preconceptions and expectations of their theatre audiences. In many of his plays, Shakespeare refers to the poems in Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, adapting them to create the comedy, tragedy, and supernatural element so loved by audiences at the time. The play *A Midsummer Night's Dream* endorses the status quo as the plot lurches from lovers' turmoil to supernatural mayhem to restoration where all issues are resolved, and harmony is restored. England had survived turmoil in religion and political events, defeating the Spanish Armada in 1588, and then entering the Golden Age. The many compliments directed at Queen Elizabeth I might indicate that the play was performed at some social event. In February 1596, the marriage celebration of the Queen's god-daughter Elizabeth Carey, is a likely event.

Greek Myth

By setting the play in ancient history, Shakespeare avoids any political, religious, social, or contentious issues in the Elizabethan era. Instead, it is left to the audience to make any connection with the past to events in their day. The age of heroes. Sir Francis Drake taking on the mighty Spanish Empire compared to Theseus defeating the Minotaur, both aided by women. The English Queen Elizabeth I and the Greek Ariadne the daughter of King Minos of Crete. The subservience of women: obedience and marriage not the nunnery as in the case of Hermia who intends to defy her father Egeus and elope with her lover Lysander, or the case of Hippolyta the Queen of the Amazon whose society rejects male dominance but is conquered by Theseus, taking her as his wife. Traits common to both Elizabethan and Greek societies.

Ancient Festival

To connect with the supernatural necessary to create the comedy and mayhem, Shakespeare uses the celebration of Midsummer as a backdrop where the isolation and spookiness of the wood allows the lovers to be separated and manipulated by Oberon the King of the fairies and his jester Puck. Their realm was the wooded night. Into the mix, are the players directed by Peter Quince with lead player Nick Bottom who head is turned into that of an ass by the sprite Puck, so that the potion squeezed by Oberon into his wife's eyes Titania will make her fall in love with the first creature she encountered, in this case the transformed Nick Bottom. Unbeknown to Oberon, Titania had already released the changeling boy. In remorse, Oberon squeezes a herb into Titania's eyes to release her from her love for Bottom. She is horrified at having loved such a creature. As in Greek times, as in Elizabethan times, and so in the supernatural world, the male may physically dominate the female form, but not in thought. Believers in pagan festivals and the fairy realm, belonged to the province of the lower classes in the Elizabethan era. The belief that an unbaptized infant could be stolen to serve in the fairy world, introduced the idea of a changeling.

CHARACTERS**LOVERS**

Theseus	Duke of Athens
Hippolyta	Queen of the Amazon about to wed Theseus
Demetrius	young nobleman betrothed to Hermia but finds love with Helena
Helena	in love with Demetrius
Lysander	young nobleman in love with Hermia
Hermia	in love with Lysander although expected by her father Egeus to wed Demetrius

FAIRIES

Puck	(Robin Goodfellow) jester and attendant to Oberon; fetches the western flower so Oberon can make a love potion; administers it by mistake to Lysander who falls in love with Helena; Re-administers it to Lysander so he now falls in love with Hermia
Oberon	King of the Fairies, determined to pair the lovers with their correct partner but also, to acquire Titania's stolen Indian boy (the changeling boy) as his henchman
Titania	Queen of the Fairies, made to falls in love with Nick Bottom by the potion squeezed into her eyes by Oberon, and later released from this love by the same method
Peaseblossom	an attendant to Titania who is instructed by her to attend the weaver Bottom who head is that of an Ass courtesy of Puck's magic on Oberon's orders
Cobweb	another attendant to Titania who is also instructed to attend Bottom
Moth	another attendant to Titania who is also instructed to attend Bottom
Mustardseed	another attendant to Titania who is also instructed to attend Bottom
Fairies	servant of Oberon and Titania

OTHERS

Egeus	father of Hermia demanding she wed Demetrius else suffer Athenian Law of death but is given the choice of life in a nunnery by Theseus as an alternative
Philostrate	master of ceremonies at Theseus' court

PLAYERS

- Peter Quince** a carpenter, directing and delivering the prologue to a play *Pyramus and Thisbe*, to celebrate the forthcoming wedding of Theseus to Hippolyta
- Nick Bottom** a weaver playing *Pyramus*, the lover of *Thisbe*. Mistakenly thinking she had been killed and dragged by *Lion*, takes his own life, in despair.
During a rehearsal in the wood outside Athens, Puck uses magic to transform Bottom's head into an ass so that later, Titania under the influence of the love potion squeezed into her eyes by Oberon, would make her fall in love with the monster Bottom. Oberon hoped to shame Titania for her love of such a creature as Bottom, making her relent and release the changeling boy to him.
- Francis Flute** a bellows-mender playing *Thisbe* [a man playing a woman], the lover of *Pyramus*, who stabs herself when she discovers *Pyramus* dead body at Ninus' (Ninny's) tomb where they used to converse through a hole in the wall of the tomb
- Tom Snout** a tinker playing *Wall*, who represent the inanimate tomb wall through which *Pyramus* and *Thisbe* would whisper.
- Robin Starveling** a tailor playing *Moonshine*, who represent the inanimate Moon
- Snug** a joiner playing *Lion*, the animal who *Pyramus* mistakenly thinks killed his lover *Thisbe*.

LOVE POTION

Used by Oberon to restore order to both the Fairy world and the Human world, the love potion is made from a little western flower pierced by Cupid's arrow, making any recipients madly dote upon the next live creature that it sees. Squeezed on the sleeping eyelids, the juice takes effect when the recipient awakes.

SYNOPSIS

ACT ONE

In **ACT 1**, the audience is introduced to an initial incident, termed **the Exposition**.

In **ACT 1 scene 1**, at the palace, the Duke of Athens **Theseus** and the Queen of the Amazons **Hippolyta** proclaim their love and cannot wait for the wedding day to arrive; **Theseus** instructing **Philostrate** his master of ceremonies to commence the celebrations.

Enter **Egeus**, **Hermia** his daughter, and her two suitors **Demetrius** and **Lysander**. **Egeus** is determined that **Hermia** wed **Demetrius** not her lover **Lysander**, so arrives to petition **Theseus** to enforce the ancient privilege of Athens, allowing him to dispose of his daughter either to **Demetrius** or to death. **Lysander** makes known to **Theseus** that **Demetrius** dumped **Helena** for **Hermia** and since **Hermia** does not love him, he is not a suitable suitor. **Theseus** tries to convince **Hermia** that **Demetrius** is a worthy gentleman, the alternative being to endure the livery of a nun. He gives her until the next new moon to obey her father's will, or to a vow of single life or accept death. **Theseus**, **Egeus**, and **Demetrius** depart, leaving **Hermia** and **Lysander** to contemplate their options, resulting in their plan to elope the following night into the wood outside Athens and seek shelter at **Lysander's** aunt remote house seven leagues away.

Enter **Helena** who loves **Demetrius**, learns from her rival **Hermia** her intention to elope with **Lysander**, and sees an opportunity to ingratiate herself with **Demetrius**, getting him to pursue **Hermia** with her at his side.

In **ACT 1 scene 2**, at the Athenian house of **Quince** a carpenter, enter the other players: **Snug** the Joiner who is destined to play *Lion*, **Bottom** the Weaver to play *Pyramus*, **Flute** the Bellows-mender to play *Thisbe*, **Snout** the Tinker to play *Wall*, and **Starveling** the Tailor to play *Moonlight*. **Quince** will direct the play *Pyramus and Thisbe* and read the prologue to celebrate the marriage of **Theseus** to **Hippolyta**. **Bottom** not convinced *Pyramus* is the part for him, offers to play all other parts. The players agree to reconvene for a secret rehearsal that night in the wood.

SYNOPSIS

ACT TWO

In **ACT 2**, the audience is introduced to a growth in tension, termed **the Rising Action**.

In **ACT 2 scene 1**, in the wood outside Athens, **Puck** the mischievous hobgoblin and jester to the fairy king **Oberon** learns that the fairy queen **Titania** will arrive soon but knows that **Oberon** is seething with jealousy because **Titania** withholds from his train a lovely changeling boy stolen from an Indian king, and now the king and queen never meet in grove or green, disrupting the harmony in the fairy world. The **fairies** consider **Puck** to be a shrewd and knavish sprite whose real name is **Robin Goodfellow**. He agrees relating have he brings mirth and merriment to all.

Enter **Oberon** from one direction and **Titania** from the other, each accusing the other of jealousy over ownership of the Indian boy and infidelity: **Oberon** with **Hippolyta**, **Titania** with **Theseus**. Although **Oberon** begs **Titania** to give him the little changeling boy, **Titania** justification for keeping him is that she reared the boy when his mother died, so he is not merchandise, to be traded. She tells **Oberon** to shun her if he cannot accept her decision. Exit **Titania**.

Oberon schemes to change **Titania's** decision to not give the Indian boy, instructing **Puck** to obtain a little western flower sanctified by Cupid's bolt, the juice of which on sleeping eyelids will make man or woman madly dote upon the next live creature that it sees. He plans to drop the **juice** into **Titania's** eyes, so that she would be embarrassed at her actions once he reversed the doting with another herb.

Enter **Demetrius** with **Helena** following. She tries to persuade **Demetrius** that her love for him is genuine, but he threatens mischief if she continues to pursue. He exits, determine to confront the lovers **Hermia** and **Lysander**.

Enter **Puck** with **Cupid's** flower. **Oberon** tells **Puck** he will streak **Titania's** eyes to make her full of hateful fantasies, and **Puck** must do the same to the man in **Athenian garment** so that he may be more fond on his lover than she upon him. **Oberon** instructs **Puck** to meet him next at the first cock crow.

In **ACT 2 scene 2**, in another part of the wood, the mayhem begins. **Titania's fairies** sing her to sleep and then depart with one **fairy** aloof to stand sentinel. Enter **Oberon** who squeezes the **potion** on the eyes of the sleeping **Titania**, inducing her to wake when some vile thing is nearby. Exit **Oberon**.

Enter the elopers **Lysander** and **Hermia**, weary from their travels. **Hermia** insists **Lysander** sleep not near but at a distance from her. They sleep.

Enter **Puck** who spies a man in an **Athenian garment**. Unfortunately, it is the wrong man, so instead of **Demetrius** receiving the **potion**, **Lysander** gets it instead. Exit **Puck**.

Enter **Demetrius** and **Helena**, running with **Demetrius** still rejecting **Helena's** love. She then spies **Hermia** and **Lysander** asleep. She approaches **Lysander** and commands him to wake, which he does but now under the influence of the **potion** immediately falls in love with her, remarking 'who will not change a raven (**Hermia**) for a dove (**Helena**)?' **Helena** is confused and tell him he mocks her, knowing that **Hermia** is his love. Exit **Helena**. Looking down on **Hermia** asleep, **Lysander** declares his loathing for her and his love for **Helena**. Exit **Lysander**. **Waking, Hermia** is perplexed by finding herself alone in the wood with no **Lysander** to be seen, oblivious to recent happenings.

SYNOPSIS

ACT THREE

In **ACT 3**, the audience is introduced to a climax, termed **the Climax**.

In **ACT 3 scene 1**, in another part of the wood at night, **Quince's** workmen **Bottom**, **Snout**, **Starveling**, **Snug** and **Flute** continue their rehearsal, debating how to make the play *Theseus and Thisbe* less tragic, less horrific, more farcical, and more acceptable to the ladies and to a marriage celebration.

Enter **Puck** who decides to be an auditor of the play. Exit **Bottom**. Exit **Puck** who remarks, a stranger *Pyramus* than ever played. The other workmen continue with the play.

Enter now **Puck** and **Bottom** with his **head** changed to that of an **Ass** by **Puck**. **Quince** and the other **workmen** are shocked, departing quickly. Exit **Puck**. **Bottom** is baffled by his fellow workmen's sudden exit, considering it knavery. Enter briefly, first **Snout**, then **Quince** to hint to **Bottom** the change, but not the nature of the change. **Bottom** is oblivious to the fact that his **head** is transformed into that of an **Ass**. Unphased, **Bottom** decides to sing about animals, wit, and foolishness.

Waking, **Titania** is captivated by the sound, commanding **Bottom** to sing again, and enthralled by his **Ass's head**. Exactly as **Oberon** planned, his queen in love with a hateful fantasy. **Titania** instructs **Bottom** not to go out of the wood, but to follow her, and be attended by her fairies: **Peaseblossom**, **Cobweb**, **Moth**, and **Mustardseed** who will lead him to her bower. Exit all.

In **ACT 3 scene 2**, in another part of the wood at night, **Oberon** muses over what extremity **Titania** will dote on.

Enter **Puck** to tell **Oberon** that **Titania** is in love with a monster, furnished by a band of Athenian workmen rehearsing a play intended for great **Theseus's** nuptial day, explaining he fixed an **ass's head** to *Pyramus*, causing the workmen to flee like wild geese, leaving **Titania** to discover on her awaking the first hideous creature **Bottom** as *Pyramus*. **Oberon** is pleased his plan is working better than expected, then asks **Puck** about the **potion** applied Athenian's eyes. **Puck** confirms it is done.

Enter **Demetrius** and **Hermia**. **Puck** tells **Oberon** that he recognises **Hermia** but not **Demetrius**. **Hermia** interrogates **Demetrius** as to his involvement in **Lysander's** disappearance, but he denies all knowledge, disheartened by **Hermia's** rejection of his love for her. Exit **Hermia**. **Demetrius** decides not to follow her but instead lie down and sleeps. **Oberon** berates **Puck** for mistakenly applying the **potion** to **Demetrius**, not **Lysander**. He sends **Puck** to find **Helena** and bring her here, so that when **Demetrius** awakes, he will fall in love with her. **Oberon** squeezes the juice on **Demetrius's** eyes.

Enter **Lysander** and **Helena**, with **Lysander** claiming **Demetrius** loves **Hermia** not her, and her claiming, not so. Waking, **Demetrius** spies **Helena** and immediately falls in love with her. She is confused as now both **Lysander** and **Demetrius** seek her love. She tells them they mock her.

Enter **Hermia**. Confusion and argument ensue, as the lovers try to unravel their predicament, accusing each other of betrayal. Exit first **Lysander** and **Demetrius**, then **Helena** followed by **Hermia**.

Enter **Oberon** and **Puck**, with **Oberon** accusing **Puck** of negligence or wilful knaveries in mistaking **Lysander** for **Demetrius**, but **Puck** defends himself as blameless since **Lysander** wore Athenian garments. **Oberon** instructs **Puck** to mimic **Demetrius'** voice to entrap **Lysander**. Similar, mimic **Lysander's** voice to entrap **Demetrius**. **Puck** reminds **Oberon** that this must be done with haste as night fades fast. **Oberon** directs him where to go but make no delay.

Enter **Lysander** responding to **Demetrius'** voice mimicked by **Puck**. Exit **Lysander** following **Puck**. Enter **Demetrius** responding to **Lysander's** voice mimicked by **Puck**. Exit **Demetrius** following **Puck**. Enter **Lysander** and sleeps.

Enter **Puck** and **Demetrius**. **Puck** makes **Demetrius** sleep. Enter **Helena** weary, and **Puck** makes her sleeps. Enter **Hermia** weary, and **Puck** makes her sleeps. **Puck** squeezes the **juice** on **Lysander's** eyes correcting his earlier mistake. When they awake, **Demetrius** will love **Helena**, and **Lysander** will love **Hermia**, as it should be. Aptly said by **Puck**: Jack shall have Jill, Naught shall go ill.

SYNOPSIS

ACT FOUR

In **ACT 4**, the audience is introduced to an unravelling of the story, termed **the Falling Action**.

In **ACT 4 scene 1**, in another part of the wood at night, **Bottom** with **Titania** and her fairy train including **Peaseblossom**, **Cobweb**, and **Mustardseed** arrive and sit down upon a flowery bed. **Oberon** follows at a distance. **Bottom** exhibiting ass's mannerisms requests **Cobweb** to kill a red-hipped humble-bee on the top of a thistle and bring him the honey-bag. Then, requests **Mustardseed** and **Peaseblossom** to scratch the hair about his face. **Titania** dotes by suggesting some music and food, then dismissing her fairies, declares how she loves **Bottom** and dotes on him. **Titania** and **Bottom** sleep.

Enter **Puck**. **Oberon** welcomes **Puck** and reveals to him his motives and intentions: he now pities Titania for her love of a hateful fool (Bottom), and regrets falling out with her, and now having been sent the changeling boy by her, tells Puck to transform the head of this Athenian swain (Bottom) from donkey to human, so that he may return to Athens thinking his ordeal was no more than a dream. **Oberon** then squeezing the **potion** into Titania's eyes reciting a ditty, commands her to wake which she does. **Titania** declares what visions she has seen, enamoured of an ass, and asks **Oberon** how came these things to pass, as her eyes do loathe this visage now. **Oberon** instructs **Puck** to remove the ass's head from **Bottom** and make the other **five Athenians** (Quince, Flute, Snout, Starveling, Snug) sleep more soundly. **Oberon** commands Titania to make music. **Puck** speaks to the sleeping **Bottom** that when he awakes, he will see things with his own foolish eyes. **Oberon** takes **Titania's** hand, and they dance and rock the ground where the sleepers be. **Puck** reminds **Oberon** he does hear the morning lark. Exit **Oberon** with **Titania** followed by **Puck**.

Enter **Theseus** with **Hippolyta** followed by **Egeus** and courtiers up to the mountain top while the hounds are uncoupled in the western valley; horns sounding and hounds barking. **Hippolyta** and **Theseus** discuss their experiences with hunting dogs of the Spartan kind. **Hippolyta** was with Hercules and Cadmus once, baiting a bear in Crete with Spartan hounds. **Theseus** describes the hounds' traits, each bark perfectly in tune with the others wherever in Crete, in Sparta, in Thessaly. He then observes the lovers asleep. **Egeus** recognises his daughter **Hermia**, and names the lovers but cannot say why they are there.

Theseus remarks to **Egeus** that is not this the day **Hermia** should give her answer, instructing the huntsmen to wake the lovers with their horns. The lovers wake-up and kneel before **Theseus**. **Lysander** cannot say how he came here, but he and **Hermia's** intent was to be gone from Athens to avoid the peril of the Athenian Law demanded by her father **Egeus**. In response, **Egeus** begs the Law. **Demetrius** explains that by whatever power, his love melted for **Hermia** even though he doted on her in childhood. Instead, the object and pleasure of his eye is only **Helena**. **Theseus** tells them they are fortunately met, and of this discourse they more will hear anon. To **Egeus**, he says he will override his wishes, and directs all to return to Athens where the three couples can celebrate with a feast. Exit **Theseus** with **Hippolyta**, and their train and **Egeus**. The lovers think they have experienced a dream, and having decided they are awake, follows Theseus to the temple in Athens. Exit the lovers.

Bottom wakes in the wood to find the other players have disappeared but realises he has had a strange dream which defied logic. He will get Peter Quince to write down this dream as a ballad and will sing it in the latter end of the play, before the duke, or sing it to *Thisbe* at her death.

In **ACT 4 Scene 2**, at the Athenian house of **Quince**, enter the other players: **Flute** as *Thisbe*, **Snout** as *Wall*, and **Starveling** as *Moonshine*; all concerned as to the whereabouts of **Bottom**, considering the play to be marred by his absence.

Enter **Snug** as *Lion*, with news of more than one marriage, making it possible to enhance their reputations as players if all goes well. Flute remarks, Bottom's performance is worth sixpence a day, and would have been gladly given by the duke himself.

Enter **Bottom** without warning, to the delight of **Quince**, and the other players. **Bottom** will not yet speak a word about his ordeal, but to tell them that the duke hath dined, they must get their apparel together, and meet him at the palace, as their play is to be performed. So clean linen for *Thisbe*; long nails for *Lion*; no onions nor garlic to be eaten; so sweet breath gives sweet comedy. The players depart to the palace.

ACT FIVE

In **Act 5**, the audience is introduced to resolution, termed **the Denouement**.

In **ACT 5 scene 1**, at the palace of **Theseus**. Enter **Theseus** with **Hippolyta** and **Philostrate** together with Lords and Attendants. In response to **Hippolyta**, **Theseus** remarks these lovers' tales are more strange than true, and does not believe these antique fairy fables, considering them to be fantasies of lovers and madmen with seething brains, not rational thought. Then citing how the lunatic, the lover, and the poet have strong imaginations that instil joy by some bringer (higher entity) or in the night, some fear when a bush is mistaken for a bear. **Hippolyta** is sure the lovers' story has merit however so strange. Enter the lovers: **Lysander**, **Demetrius**, **Hermia**, and **Helena**. **Theseus** greets the lovers and then contemplates what masques, what dances to wear this long age of three hours between after-supper and bedtime. He calls for **Philostrate** to say what abridgement to beguile the lazy time.

Enter **Philostrate** who hands **Theseus** a list of entertainments, asking him to choose from: firstly, the battle with the Centaurs, to be sung by an Athenian eunuch accompanied by the harp; secondly, the riot of the tipsy Bacchanals tearing the Thracian singer in their rage; thirdly, the thrice three Muses mourning for the death of learning; lastly, a tedious brief scene of young *Pyramus* and his love *Thisbe*. **Theseus** rejects but the last, comparing it to an anomaly of hot ice and wondrous strange snow. **Philostrate** informs **Theseus** that the play is some ten words long, with not one apt word, although in rehearsals his eyes did water with laughter. He tells **Theseus** the players are hard-handed men that work in Athens. Amateurs, whose performance is below par. Funny but not worth seeing. **Theseus** disagrees, deciding to hear the play, saying nothing can be amiss when based on honesty and hard work. Exit **Philostrate**. **Hippolyta** tells **Theseus** she loves not to see inexperienced impoverished amateurs embarrass themselves. In reply, **Theseus** assures her what mistakes they make, and what poor acting ensues, noble respect trumps merit. Even great clerks have fumbled their performance. Therefore, love and tonguetied simplicity can say more than the rattling tongue of saucy and audacious eloquence.

Enter **Philostrate** to introduce **Quince** as *Prologue*. Enter **Quince** with a flourish of trumpets, to show their simple skill to delight all. In response, **Theseus**, **Lysander**, and **Hippolyta** criticise Quince's prologue as childlike and a total mess.

Enter with a Trumpeter in front, **Bottom** as *Pyramus*, **Flute** as *Thisbe*, **Snout** as *Wall*, **Starveling** as *Moonshine*, and **Snug** as *Lion*. **Quince** as *Prologue* continues his discourse telling all to wonder on, till truth make all things plain. He introduces *Pyramus* the lover; then his lover the beautiful lady *Thisbe*; then *Wall* who did these lovers, sunder, and through a clink did whisper; then *Moonshine* with lanthorn, dog, and bush of thorn where did these lovers think no scorn to meet at Ninus' tomb, there to woo; finally, *Lion* who did stain *Thisbe's* mantle (veil) making *Pyramus* believe *Thisbe* was slain, causing him to kill himself, later to be found by her who then did draw his dagger and kills herself. Exit **Quince**, **Bottom**, **Flute**, **Starveling**, and **Snug**.