

## Short Synopsis

"A Midsummer Night's Dream," William Shakespeare's most popular comedy, was written around 1594 or 95. It portrays the adventures of four young lovers and a group of amateur actors, their interactions with woodland fairies and a duke and duchess. Taking place in a mythical Athens and an enchanted forest, there is a handsome fairy king, a misguided parent, star-crossed lovers, a weaver who's transformed into a half-donkey, wood sprites and elves. This work is widely performed around the world, and no wonder - it's about the world's most popular pastime, falling in love. But as Puck knows, falling in love can make fools of us all.

## Medium Synopsis

"A Midsummer Night's Dream" deals with the universal theme of love and its complications: lust, disappointment, confusion, marriage. The plot focuses on three parallel stories: the trials and experiences of two sets of lovers camping in a magical forest, the world of the Fairy King and Queen and their elves, and a group of rough craftsmen attempting to stage a production of "Pyramus and Thisby" for the wedding of the Duke of Athens.

Hermia is in love with Lysander, but her father wants her to marry Demetrius. To escape the arranged marriage, she and Lysander elope into the woods. Demetrius follows them, and he is pursued by Helena, who nurses an unrequited passion for him. A love quadrangle develops among the young lovers when mischievous Puck plays Cupid. "The course of true love never did run smooth" says Lysander. Meanwhile, a group of amateur actors rehearses a badly-written play in the woods, and soon all find their lives changed by the doings of Oberon and Titania, the warring king and queen of the fairies. Magic, action, love and humor are the ingredients for this unforgettable spell.

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## Long Synopsis

"A Midsummer Night's Dream" William Shakespeare's most popular comedy, was written around 1594 or 95. Dealing with the universal theme of love and its complications: lust, disappointment, confusion, marriage, it features three interlocking plots, connected by a celebration of the wedding of Theseus, Duke of Athens and the Amazonian queen Hippolyta.

In the opening scene, Hermia refuses to comply with her father Egeus's wish for her to marry his chosen man, Demetrius. In response, Egeus quotes to Theseus an ancient Athenian law whereby a daughter must marry the suitor chosen by her father, or else face death or lifelong chastity as a nun. Hermia and her lover Lysander therefore decide to

elope by going camping in the forest. Hermia informs her best friend Helena, but Helena has recently been rejected by Demetrius and decides to win back his favor by revealing the plan to him. Demetrius, followed doggedly by Helena, chases Hermia, who, in turn, pursues Lysander, from whom she becomes separated.

Meanwhile, Oberon, king of the fairies, and his queen, Titania, arrive in the same forest to attend Theseus and Hippolyta's wedding. Oberon and Titania are estranged because Titania refuses to give her Indian page-boy to Oberon for use as his henchman, since the child's mother was one of Titania's worshippers. Oberon seeks to punish Titania's disobedience and recruits the mischievous Puck (also called Robin Goodfellow) to help him apply a magical juice from a flower called love-in-idleness, which makes the victim fall in love with the first living thing they see when they wake up. Oberon applies the juice to Titania in order to distract her and force her to give up the page-boy.

Things become more complex when Oberon encounters the Athenian lovers and tells Puck to use the magic to aid their love lives. Due to Puck's errors, Hermia's two lovers temporarily turn against her in favor of Helena. The four pursue and quarrel with one another, losing themselves in a smog of Puck's doing and in a maze of their romantic entanglements. Meanwhile, a band of "rude mechanicals" (lower-class craftsmen) have arranged to perform a crude play about Pyramus and Thisby for Theseus's wedding, and they venture into the forest to rehearse. Nick Bottom, a stage-struck weaver, is spotted by Puck, who transforms his head into that of a donkey. Titania is awakened by Bottom's singing, and she immediately falls in love with him. She treats him as if he were a nobleman and lavishes attention upon him. While in this state of devotion, she encounters Oberon and, during a dance with Oberon, gives him the Indian boy.

Having achieved his goal, Oberon releases Titania and orders Puck to remove the ass's head from Bottom. The magical enchantment is removed from Lysander but it is allowed to remain on Demetrius, so that he may reciprocate Helena's love. The fairies then disappear, and Theseus and Hippolyta arrive on the scene during an early morning hunt. They wake the lovers and, since Demetrius no longer loves Hermia, Theseus overrules Egeus's demands and permits the two couples to marry. The lovers decide that the night's events must have been a dream. After they exit, Bottom awakes, and he too decides that he must have experienced a dream "past the wit of man to say what dream it was." In the ruins of Athens, Theseus, Hippolyta, and the lovers watch the craftsmen-players perform the badly-written play "Pyramus and Thisby." It is badly performed and ridiculous but gives everyone pleasure regardless, and after the mechanicals dance a Bergomask (rustic dance), everyone retires to bed. Finally, as night falls, Oberon and Titania bless the house, its occupants, and the future children of the newlyweds, and Puck delivers an epilogue to the audience asking for applause.

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**Don't resist the spell**