

A Midsummer Night's Dream Actor Packet

Shakespeare's Life

- Stratford-Upon-Avon
 - Baptised 26 April 1564
 - Birthday celebrated 23 April 1564
 - Father was a glover, trader, and town councilman
 - Three brothers and four sisters (three died in childhood)
- Education
 - Junior school to learn letters
 - King's New School to learn Latin until 14 or 15
- Marriage and Children
 - Anne Hathaway
 - He was 18. She was 26.
 - Susanna and twins Hamnet and Judith
- Writing and Theatre
 - Closure of theatres in 1593
 - Lord Chamberlain's Men, renamed The King's Men
- Late Years
 - Retired to Stratford sometime after 1611
 - Died 23 April 1616 aged 52
 - Anne Hathaway died 1623
 - His line ended with his granddaughter Elizabeth in 1670
 - First Folio published posthumously in 1623

Glossary

Prologue

Puck: an imp or sprite

Revels: entertainment, festivity
(Puck/Robin).

Baseless fabric: substance without
foundation (Puck/Robin).

Rack: wisp of cloud (Puck/Robin).

Act 1 Scene 1

Nuptial: relation to marriage
(Theseus).

Feigning: a pun playing on the
definitions deceitful, desiring (faining),
and soft music (Egeus).

Abjure: renounce (Theseus).

Blood: passion, lineage, nobility,
ranking (Theseus, Lysander).

Diana: Greek Artemis. Virgin goddess
of the hunt and twin sister to Apollo
(Theseus).

Protest: vow (Theseus).

For aye: forever (Theseus)

Austerity: severity (Theseus).

Title: claim (Demetrius).

Estate: bestow (Egeus).

Avouch: guarantee (Lysander).

Made love to: wooed (not sexual)
(Lysander).

Spotted and inconstant: fickle
(Lysander).

Schooling: Advice (Theseus).

Extenuate: mitigate, alleviate
(Theseus).

Belike: probably (Hermia).

Beteem: grant (Hermia).

Misgraffèd: badly matched, improperly
grafted (Lysander).

Sympathy: agreement (Lysander).

Momentary: momentary (Lysander).

Ever: always (Hermia).

Dowager: widow with her late
husband's inheritance (Lysander).

Some o'er other some: in comparison
with others (Helena).

Eyne: eyes (Helena).

Dear: costly (Helena).

Act 1 Scene 2

Quince: carpenter's wedges

Snug: when two pieces of something
fit firmly together

Bottom: a piece of wood on which
thread is wound on a loom, an ass

Flute: referring to the sound bellows
make when they are in need of repair

Snout: the spout of a kettle

Starveling: in Shakespeare's time,
tailors were proverbially thin

Interlude: brief play (Quince).

Grow to a point: draw to a conclusion
(Bottom).

Condole: lament (Bottom).

Humor: inclination, the humors of the body (blood, yellow bile, black bile, phlegm) were said to affect one's disposition (Bottom).

Ercles: Hercules, a heroic stock-role (Bottom).

Rarely: excellently (Bottom).

Tear a cat: rant (Bottom).

Split: go to pieces (Bottom).

Shocks: blows (Bottom).

Phibbus: Apollo, Greek god who carried the sun across the sky in his chariot (Bottom).

One: irrelevant (Quince).

Small: high-pitched (Quince).

An: if (Bottom).

A play fitted: A well cast play (Quince).

Extempore: without preparation (Quince).

An 'twere: as though it were (Bottom)

Proper: handsome (Quince).

Perfit: perfect (in memorizing) (Bottom).

Hold or cut bowstrings: be present or quit (the troupe) (Bottom).

Act 2 Scene 1

Robin Goodfellow: an imp or sprite in folklore who would do housework if the wife was kind to him.

Thorough: through (Mustardseed).

Moon's sphere: it was thought that the moon and other planets of the solar

system were fixed in hollow transparent globes (Cobweb).

Orbs: fairy rings. Superstition states that if you step into a fairy ring you can be kidnapped by the fairies. They are actually created by mushrooms and decay (Moth).

Lob: bumpkin (Mustardseed).

Passing fell and wrath: fierce and angry (Robin).

Changeling: usually a child left by fairies in exchange for a stolen one. In this case, a stolen child (Robin).

Trace: range (Robin).

Perforce: forcibly (Robin).

Shrewd: mischievous (Peaseblossom, Helena 3.2).

Knavish: crude (Peaseblossom).

Wanton: impetuous creature, undisciplined (Oberon).

Henchman: page of honor (Oberon).

Set your heart at rest: abandon that idea (Titania).

Vot'ress: woman who has taken a vow to serve (usually religious) (Titania).

Spare: avoid (Titania).

Chide: quarrel (Titania).

Cupid: Greek Eros. God of love (Oberon).

Love-shaft: golden arrow used by Cupid (Oberon).

Love-in-idleness: pansy (Oberon).

Girdle: circle (Robin).

Wood: insane (Demetrius).

Adamant: hard, magnetic stone (Helena).

Speak you fair: speak kindly of you (Demetrius).

Brakes: thickets, bushes (Demetrius).

Oxlips: primrose and cowslip hybrid (Oberon).

Woodbine: honeysuckle (Oberon).

Muskroses: large, white roses (Oberon).

Eglantine: sweetbriar rose (Oberon).

Act 2 Scene 2

Roundel: circle dance (Titania).

Philomel: nightingale. In classical mythology a woman raped by her brother-in-law and transformed into a bird (Chorus).

Aloof: at a distance (Fairy).

Ounce: lynx (Oberon).

Pard: leopard (Oberon).

Troth: pledged faith (Lysander).

Human: courteous (Hermia).

Eyes be pressed: a good rest (Hermia).

Approve: test (Robin).

Churl: rude fellow (Robin).

Sleep his seat on thy eyelid: prevent him from sleeping (Robin).

Darkling: in darkness (Helena).

On thy peril: in risk of death (Demetrius).

Grace: reward (Helena).

Attractive: magnetic (Helena).

Keen: sharp (Helena).

An if: if (Hermia).

Of all: for the sake of all (Hermia).

Act 3 Scene 1

Pat: on the dot (Quince).

Tiring-house: dressing room (Quince).

Bully: jolly (Quince).

By 'r lakin: "By our ladykin." A mild oath referring to the Virgin Mary (Snout).

Parlous: perilous (Snout).

Pity of: a threat to (Bottom).

Casement: hollow opening (Bottom).

Disfigure: a blunder for figure (Quince).

Present: represent (Quince).

Loam: clay (Bottom).

Roughcast: mix of lime and gravel (Bottom).

Hempen homespuns: peasants dressed in coarse, homemade fabrics (Robin).

Toward: in preparation (Robin).

Ninny: fool (Flute).

Nunus: mythical founder of Nineveh whose wife founded Babylon (Quince).

Fair: handsome (Bottom).

Were: would be (Bottom).

You see an ass-head of your own: you see a figment of your own imagination (Bottom).

Translated: transformed (Quince).

Ouzel cock: male blackbird (Bottom).

Throstle: song thrush (Bottom).

Fair virtue's force: power of beauty (Titania).'

Turn: purpose (Bottom).

Rate: rank (Titania).

Mote: moth, speck (Titania).

Enforcèd: violated (Titania).

Act 3 Scene 2

Night-rule: revels (Oberon).

Close: drowsy (Robin).

Consecrated: sacred (Robin).

Patches: fools, known for wearing patchwork (Robin).

Mechanicals: rough workmen (Robin).

Athenian stalls: market stands (Robin).

Barren sort: witless lot (Robin).

Presented: acted (Robin).

Scene: stage (Robin).

Noll: head (Robin).

Mimic: burlesque actor (Robin).

Latched: anointed (Oberon).

Force: necessity (Robin).

Rebuke: reprimand (Demetrius).

O'er shoes in blood: having waded so far (Hermia).

Therefore: for that (Demetrius).

Look: be sure (Oberon).

Against: in readiness for when (Oberon).

Tartar: dark skinned "savages" from Asia Minor famous for their archery (Robin).

Apple: pupil (Oberon).

Fee: reward (Robin).

Fond: foolish (Robin).

Prepost'rously: ass backward (Robin).

Gentle: well-born (Helena).

Superpraise my parts: over praise my qualities (Helena).

Artificial: artfully skilled (Helena).

Incorporate: of one body (Helena).

Sad: serious (Helena).

Make mouths upon: make faces at (Helena).

Hold the sweet jest up: keep up the joke (Helena).

Argument: subject of merriment (Helena).

Hang off: let go (Lysander).

Sooth: truly (Helena).

Erewhile: a while ago (Hermia).

Juggler: trickster (Hermia).

Cankerblossom: worm that eats flower blossoms (Hermia).

Puppet: imitation (Helena).

Painted: over use of cosmetics (Hermia).

Something: somewhat (Helena).

Keen: sharp (Helena).

Knotgrass: creeping weed (Lysander).

Cheek by jowl: side by side (Demetrius).

Coil: turmoil (Hermia).

Long: because (Hermia).

Fray: fight (Helena).

Still: always (Oberon).

Shadows: fairy spirits (Robin).

Hie: hurry (Oberon).

Wrong: insults (Oberon).

Virtuous: potent (Oberon).

Wonted: normal (Oberon).

Recreant: coward (Robin).

Act 4 Scene 1

Amiable: loveable (Titania).

Coy: caress (Titania).

Provender: fodder (Bottom).

Woodbine: here meaning a different plant than honeysuckle (Titania).

Favors: love tokens (Oberon).

Peradventure: perhaps (Bottom).

Vaward: earliest part (Theseus).

Solemnity: ceremony (Theseus).

Saint Valentine: birds are said to choose their mates on this day (Theseus).

Jealousy: suspicion (Theseus).

Enmity: hostility (Theseus).

Amazèdly: confusedly (Lysander).

Gaud: worthless trinket (Demetrius).

Parted eye: double vision, crossed eyes (Hermia).

Act 5 Scene 1

Toys: trifles (Theseus).

Apprehend: conceive (Theseus).

Compact: composed (Theseus).

Toiled: taxed (Philostrate).

Unbreathed: unexercised (Philostrate).

Against: in preparation for (Philostrate).

Wretchedness: incompetence (Hippolyta).

O'ercharged: overburdened (Hippolyta).

Capacity: judgement (Theseus).

Prologue is addressed: the speaker of the prologue is ready (Philostrate).

Minding: intending (Quince).

Stand upon points: bother with niceties, respect punctuation (Theseus).

Government: control (Hippolyta).

Scorn: disgrace (Quince).

Hight: is called (Quince).

Stones: stones that make up wall, punning on testicles (Bottom).

Sensible: capable of feeling (Theseus).

Again: back, in return (Theseus).

'Tide: betide, to happen (Flute).

Shadows: likenesses without substance (Theseus).

Fell: fierce, skin (Snug).

Hornèd: crescent (Starveling).

Worries: gnaws on (Stage direction, Snug).

Dole: grid (Bottom).

Fates, Sisters Three: three Fates in Greek mythology spun and cut the threads of life (Bottom, Flute).

Thrum: a weaver term for part of a loom (Bottom).
Quail: overpower (Bottom).
Quell: kill (Bottom).
Pap: breast (Bottom).
Passion: passionate speech (Theseus).
Imbrue: stain with blood (Flute).
Bergomask dance: a rustic dance originating in Italy (Bottom).
Fordone: exhausted (Robin).
Sprite: ghost (Robin).
Hecate: goddess of moon, night, and the hearth. Often appeared in three forms: Cynthia as Heaven, Diana as Earth, and Proserpine as Hell (Robin).
Frolic: merry (Robin).

Gait: way, walk (Titania).
Several: separate (Titania).
Serpent's tongue: audience hissing (Robin).
Give me your hands: give me applause (Robin).

Definitions from *The Norton Shakespeare*, ed. Stephen Greenblatt et al, *W. W. Norton & Company*, 2016

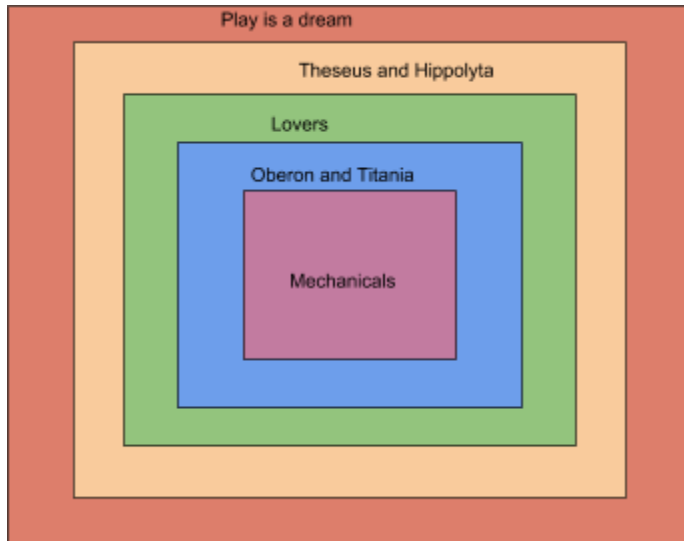
And
The Oxford English Dictionary,
www.oed.com

Production History

- Early Performance
 - In daylight with a simple thrust stage
 - Minimal scenery and props
 - Female roles played by boy apprentices
- Early Adaptation
 - *The Fairy Queen* by Henry Purcell 1692
 - Music and fewer than 600 lines of Shakespeare's original
 - *The Fairies* by David Garrick 1755
- 19th Century
 - Spectacle and music
 - Mme Lucia Vestris in 1840
- 20th Century
 - Harley Granville-Barker in 1914
 - Apron stage with two sets
 - Tyrone Guthrie at the Old Vic in 1937
 - Robert Lepage at the Royal National Theatre in 1992
 - Mud
- Film
 - 1935 Max Reinhardt with ballet
 - 1969 Peter Hall inspiration from 1962 RSC production
 - 1981 Elijah Moshinsky BBC TV
 - 1996 Adrian Noble
 - 1999 Michael Hoffman's Tuscan setting

Research

- Plot Structure
 - Shakespearean Comedy
 - Plot usually resolved in third act
 - Concludes in marriage or pairing of characters
 - "A Midsummer Night's Dream"



- Order and Disorder
 - Athens is Order
 - Forest is Disorder
 - Ending Athens is Order reformed by Disorder
 - The forest allows the lovers to process and release their chaotic energy and bring balance back to Athens.
 - Each character has something
 - Hermia: comprehend loss
 - Helena: comprehend gain
 - Lysander: understand fidelity
 - Demetrius: understand the rewards of fidelity
- Reality vs Imagination
 - Do we believe the fairies are real?
 - We are told they are nothing but shadows and actors by Puck
 - Bottom sees them and interacts with them

- We as the audience physically see them
 - "Shakespeare has reminded us that Quince and Company are only actors, spirits of Prospero who will melt into thin air" (Styan 16).
 - The Mechanicals remind us of theatre as a process of choices
 - Imagination and illusions may lead to spiritual truths
 - Logic is limited in seeing these due to literalism
- Shakespeare's Sources
 - Chaucer's "Knight's Tale"
 - Theseus and Hippolyta's marriage is a frame plot
 - Supernatural resolution
 - Chaucer: Saturn
 - Shakespeare: Fairies
 - Theseus as an agent of order
 - Shakespeare's theme differs from Chaucer
 - Chaucer: the beauty of life is from reason
 - Shakespeare: the beauty of life is from chaos
- Elizabethan Culture
 - Marriage is a spiritual and physical union governed by the husband
 - Hermia's choices from Theseus
 - Be sentenced to death
 - Marry Demetrius (death of freedom and choice)
 - Be sent to a nunnery (sexual death, death of power)
 - Female friendships devolve as male friendships evolve
 - Hermia and Helena lost their girlhood friendships
 - Demetrius and Lysander gain freedom from rivalry
 - "To you, your father should be as a god..." (Theseus 1.1)

For more information on:

- Shakespeare's Life
 - "Shakespeare's Life and Times." The Royal Shakespeare Company.
www.rsc.org.uk/shakespeares-life-and-times
- Language
 - The Online Oxford English Dictionary. www.oed.com
 - *Shakespeare Lexicon and Quotation Dictionary*. Alexander Schmidt.
www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/text?doc=Perseus%3Atext%3A1999.03.0079
 - "A Midsummer Night's Dream." *The Norton Shakespeare*. Ed. Stephen Greenblatt et al, W. W. Norton & Company, 2016
 - "A Midsummer Night's Dream." Folger Shakespeare Library.
www.folger.edu/midsummer-nights-dream
- Production History/Resources
 - The Royal Shakespeare Company's past productions of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*.
www.rsc.org.uk/a-midsummer-nights-dream/past-productions
 - "Stage History." RSC.
www.rsc.org.uk/a-midsummer-nights-dream/about-the-play/stage-history
- Order and Disorder
 - "Dream and Ritual Process in 'A Midsummer Night's Dream.'" Florence Falk. www.jstor.org/stable/41152903
 - "Shaping Fantasies: Figurations of Gender and Power in Elizabethan Culture." Louis Adrian Montrose. www.jstor.org/stable/2928384
- Reality and Imagination
 - "The Mystery of the Play Experience: Quince's Questions." J. L. Styan. From *Performing Texts*. www.jstor.org/stable/j.ctv5136rw.5
 - "A Midsummer Night's Dream: The Fairies, Bottom, and the Mystery of Things." Ronald F. Miller. www.jstor.org/stable/2869606

- "Imagination in 'A Midsummer Night's Dream.'" R. W. Dent.
www.jstor.org/stable/2867882
- "Identity Disfigured: 'A Midsummer Night's Dream.'" Barry Weller.
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- "The Human Body as a Performance Medium in Shakespeare: Some
Theoretical Suggestions from 'A Midsummer Night's Dream.'" Marie A.
Plasse. www.jstor.org/25111939
- Shakespeare's Sources
 - "Structure, Source, and Meaning in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*." John
S. Mebane. www.jstor.org/stable/40754686
 - "Shakespeare's Italian Dream: Cinquecento Sources for 'A Midsummer
Night's Dream.'" Robert W. Leslie. www.jstor.org/stable/41153774
 - "At the Crossroads of Myth: The Hermeneutics of Hercules from Ovid
to Shakespeare." Jeff Shulman. www.jstor.org/stable/2872769
- Elizabethan Culture
 - "A Midsummer Night's Dream and the Meaning of Court Marriage."
Paul A. Olson. www.jstor.org/stable/2871824
 - "Shaping Fantasies: Figurations of Gender and Power in Elizabethan
Culture." Louis Adrian Montrose. www.jstor.org/stable/2928384

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