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Advanced Placement in  
English Literature and Composition

Teaching Unit  
Individual Learning Packet

*A Midsummer  
Night's Dream*

by William Shakespeare

Written by Rebecca Grudzina

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# *A Midsummer Night's Dream*

## Objectives

*By the end of this Unit, students will be able to*

1. define comedy as a dramatic genre;
2. analyze the structure of a comic plot;
3. define by example the concept of a Green World Comedy;
4. analyze the sources of humor in the play;
4. differentiate between blank verse, rhymed verse, heroic couplets, and prose as used in the play;
5. analyze the effect of changes in rhythm and rhyme scheme on tone, mood, and characterization;
6. respond to multiple choice questions similar to those that will appear on the Advanced Placement in English Literature and Composition exam;
7. respond to writing prompts similar to those that will appear on the Advanced Placement in English Literature and Composition exam;
8. offer a close reading of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* and support all assertions and interpretations with direct evidence from the text, from authoritative critical knowledge of the genre, or from authoritative criticism of the play.

# *A Midsummer Night's Dream*

## Introductory Lecture

### HISTORY OF THE PLAY

Probably composed in 1595 or 1596, *A Midsummer Night's Dream* is one of Shakespeare's early comedies, and it was written around the same time that he was beginning to work on *Romeo and Juliet* (hence the theme of thwarted lovers and the farcical graveyard suicide scene in the play-within-the-play). It is unique among most of his other plays in that it does not include any historical figures. Nor is the plot "borrowed" from another body of literature, folklore, or history.

Still, the play is generally regarded as one of Shakespeare's "most learned" plays, drawing on bits of information culled from a variety of sources:

- Plutarch's lives
- Ovid's *Metamorphosis*
- medieval French romance
- Chaucer
- Greek mythology

Many scholars believe that Shakespeare wrote *A Midsummer Night's Dream* as a light entertainment to accompany a marriage celebration, even though the couple for whom it was meant to be performed is not known. Still, there is a good deal of textual and background evidence to support this assertion: the wedding theme, the fairies' blessing of the wedding couples at the end of the play. But no evidence of this wedding performance exists. It is absolutely known, however, that *A Midsummer Night's Dream* was performed in London by the Lord Chamberlain's Men.

The feast of John the Baptist was celebrated as an English festival on June 24 (Midsummer Day) Astronomically, this is the day/night of the Summer Solstice, when the sun reaches its highest point in the sky. It is the shortest night of the year. (The Winter Solstice occurs six months later—near Christmas—and marks the lowest point of the sun and the longest night.) It was believed that, on Midsummer Night, fairies and witches held their festival. The Feast of John the Baptist was celebrated with bonfires, music, and dancing. It seems appropriate that Shakespeare would choose this season for his magical wedding comedy.

## STRUCTURE OF THE PLAY

### The Five-Act Play

Elizabethan playwrights generally followed the convention of the five-act play. The current (twenty-first century) convention for plays, movie, and television shows is the three-act play, in which the first and second acts are sometimes combined to give the appearance of two acts.

**Act I** typically contains the exposition, all necessary introductory information, as well as the audience's introduction to the main characters. The main conflict is established—by the **inciting incident**— and the audience is prepared for the action in subsequent acts.

In *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, we meet the four lovers and the “Mechanicals” who will occupy most of our attention throughout the play. (NOTE: We do not meet the fairies until Act II, so we can see some of the liberties Shakespeare takes with the established structure.)

We witness the inciting incident—Egeus brings his daughter to court to impose the penalty of law on her for her disobedience—and we learn the conflicts between father and daughter, and women and suitors.

**Act II** propels the plot by introducing the **complicating action**—additional circumstances or problems related to the main issue. The main conflict starts to develop, and characters are presented in greater detail.

In *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, these complications come in the form of Oberon, Titania, and Puck, Oberon and Titania's feud, Oberon's well-intentioned meddling into mortal affairs, and Puck's legitimate mistake.

**Act III** sees the plot reach its climax. A crisis occurs when the deed is committed that will lead to the dénouement, and this brings about a **reversal (peripety)** in the plot.

Again, *A Midsummer Night's Dream* is a comedy, and Shakespeare felt free to take liberties with convention, so this play does not have a true reversal or climax. The most tense part of the action, however, is in III, ii, when it seems as though Lysander and Demetrius will fight to the death. Still, even this threat of bloodshed is more farcical than potentially tragic.

**ACT IV** contains primarily those events (**falling action**) that lead to the dénouement.

In *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, the appropriate spells are removed, the right men are in love with the right women, and Oberon is given the Indian boy for his retinue. Theseus allows Demetrius to drop his suit to marry Hermia, and all three couples return to Athens for their triple ceremony.

Act V contains the dénouement and does not really advance the plot at all. The three couples are married. The mechanicals are selected to perform their play, and a reconciled Oberon and Titania bless the marriages and any children that might result.

Puck ends the play with the apology and a request for applause.

Comedies in the Middle Ages and Renaissance often ended with an **apology** (“If we shadows have offended/Think but this, and all is mended...”). Of the two genres, comedy and tragedy, it is comedy that advocates change; comedy that exposes weaknesses and pokes fun; comedy that is most likely to offend. Throughout history, various forms of comedy have been—and continue to be—banned and censored far more than other forms of dramatic literature. Even twenty-first century political correctness specifies which jokes can be told, and which jokes cannot—which segments of society can be the object of humor, and which cannot. Therefore, since to offend a noble or royal might mean the loss of one’s patron—or worse—the playwright would end his play with a note that no offense was meant, and hopefully none was taken.

## The Green World Comedy

*A Midsummer Night's Dream* is an example of what Shakespearean critic Northrop Frye calls a "Green World Comedy." The action of the Green World comedy begins typically in a city, a place of human habitation, human reason, and human law. In *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, that city is Athens, the cradle of Western philosophy and rational thought.

Into this world of human law and reason comes some illogic, some *unreason* that disrupts the equilibrium. In this case, Egeus enters with his complaint against Hermia. As the text so clearly points out, there is no *logical* reason for Egeus to prefer Demetrius to Lysander:

I am, my lord, as well derived as he,  
As well possess'd; my love is more than his;  
My fortunes every way as fairly rank'd,  
If not with vantage, as Demetrius';  
And, which is more than all these boasts can be,  
I am beloved of beauteous Hermia:  
Why should not I then prosecute my right? (I, i)

This illogic is the occasion for characters' flight from the city—the world of human law and rationality—into the forest (the green world), where natural law, not human reason, reigns. Each character has his or her own reason for fleeing into the forest: Hermia and Lysander are eloping; Demetrius is chasing them; Helena is pursuing *him*.

The entire comic plot occurs in the *wilderness*, where human law does not apply. Toward the end of the Green World Comedy, the action returns to the City, and reason is restored, *but it is never exactly the same reason as before the flight into the green world*. In *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, Demetrius has been "convinced" to drop his suit to marry Hermia, Theseus sees no reason to *force* the two to marry (despite Egeus' insistence), and the three couples wed in a triple ceremony.

The Green World is a place of magic, transformation, and discovery. It is also a place of incongruities, where cultures clash, and things and people seem to be out of their element. In this forest outside of Athens, the fairy and mortal worlds meet. The worlds of Athenian nobility and labor-class occupy the same space. Bottom is transformed, identities are confused, and the established relationships of the four lovers are turned upside down

The "natural law" of the Green World, can also be said to include human nature uninhibited by the mores of society, represented by the city. In this Green World, all of the characters act in surprising ways, ways that none of them would allow within the limits of the city of Athens: Demetrius and Lysander, always rivals, now are mortal enemies; Helena shamelessly chases Demetrius; Lysander becomes too amorous with Hermia; and Hermia violently attacks her childhood friend Helena.

Still, everything is resolved, and the characters—renewed and altered—return to their world of law and reason.

## CHARACTERS

**Hippolyta** was one of the queens of the Amazons, a warrior race of women who were descended from Ares, the god of war. According to some sources, Hippolyta herself was Ares' daughter.

Hippolyta's first mention in Greek mythology is when she was kidnapped by Theseus. When Theseus first arrived at the land of the Amazons, they expected no harm, so Hippolyta came to his ship bearing gifts. Once she was aboard, however, Theseus set sail for Athens, claiming her as his bride.

This act sparked an *Amazonomachy*—a legendary battle between the Athenians and Amazons. Most of the great heroes in ancient Greece fought in an Amazonomachy, which some believe represent the “civilized” Greeks' never-ending fight against “barbarism.”

In Act I, scene i, Theseus admits to Hippolyta:

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.

Eventually, Hippolyta bore Theseus a son, who was called Hippolytus. Theseus, however, cast her aside for his second wife, Phaedra. (Some sources say that Hippolyta died before Theseus married Phaedra.)

**Theseus**—Aegeus, an ancient king of Athens, married Aethra the daughter of the king of a small city southwest of Athens. When Aethra became pregnant, Aegeus returned to Athens. He buried his sandals and sword under a huge rock and told Aethra that, when their son grew up, he should move the rock and take the weapons as evidence of his royal parentage.

When Theseus grew up and moved the rock, his mother revealed to him his father's identity. She insisted that he take the weapons and claim his birthright. On his way to Athens, Theseus completed six tasks:

- the defeat of Periphetes, “the clubber,” who beat his opponents into the Earth. Theseus took his staff.
- the defeat of Sinis, who captured travelers, tied them between two pine trees that had been bent down to the ground, and then let the trees go, tearing his victims apart. Theseus killed him by his own method.
- the slaying of the Crommyonian sow, an enormous pig, that had been bred by an old woman named Phaea, and was devastating the surrounding countryside.



- the defeat of Sciron, an elderly robber, who forced travelers along a narrow pathway to wash his feet. When they knelt, he kicked them off the cliff behind them, where they were eaten by a sea monster. Theseus pushed him off the cliff instead.
- the defeat of Cercyon, who challenged travelers to a wrestling match. After he beat them, he killed them. Theseus beat Cercyon at wrestling and then killed him.
- Finally, Theseus defeated Procrustes, who had a bed that he offered to travelers. He then made them fit into it, either by stretching them or by cutting off their feet. Theseus tricked Procrustes into lying in his own bed and killed him.

Probably Theseus' most famous adventure is his slaying the Minotaur of Crete and successfully finding his way out of the Minotaur's labyrinth. Theseus had promised his father Aegeus that, if he succeed in this quest, he would return with a white sail on his ship. Theseus forgot, however, to hoist the white sail, and Aegeus killed himself out of grief. Theseus ascended to his father's throne, but guilt over Aegeus' death would not allow him to claim the title of king. He became the Duke of Athens instead.

**Puck**—A **puck** (or **pook**) is a mischievous nature spirit. Originally a pre-Christian trickster, conceived of in Old English as **puca**, whom the Christians later referred to as “devil,” Puck was a kind of half-tamed woodland sprite, who led travelers astray with echoes and lights in the night.

An old wives' tale claims that, if a person “[spoke] of the Devil,” he would appear. Superstitious people therefore bestowed on Puck the nickname of “Robin Goodfellow” or “Hobgoblin.” As Robin, however, the Puck was considerably less malevolent—more mischievous and sometimes even helpful. If he took a liking to someone, Puck might do minor housework—fine needlework or butter-churning—which he could easily undo again if he chose, for whatever reason.

When we first meet Puck, the Fairy who encounters him in the beginning of Act II says:

Either I mistake your shape and making quite,  
Or else you are that shrewd and knavish sprite  
Call'd Robin Goodfellow: are not you he  
That frights the maidens of the villagery;  
Skim milk, and sometimes labour in the quern  
And bootless make the breathless housewife churn;  
And sometime make the drink to bear no barm;  
Mislead night-wanderers, laughing at their harm?  
**Those that Hobgoblin call you and sweet Puck,**  
**You do their work, and they shall have good luck:**  
Are not you he?

Puck/Robin then describes some of the pranks he is famous for pulling:

... 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 wither'd dewlap pour the ale.  
The wisest aunt, telling the saddest tale,  
Sometime for three-foot stool mistaketh me;  
Then slip I from her bum, down topples she,  
And 'tailor' cries, and falls into a cough;  
And then the whole quire hold their hips and laugh,  
And waxen in their mirth and neeze and swear  
A merrier hour was never wasted there.

The Scots called this domestic spirit a brownie.

The transformation of this spirit into a member of the Fairy Royal Court, specifically as Oberon's jester and errand-sprite, seems to be Shakespeare's innovation.

**Oberon**, also **Auberon**, is King of Shadows and Fairies and Consort to Titania, Queen of the Fairies. His status as king of the elves probably originates with the character of Alberich (elbe="elves," "reix=rex="king"), a sorcerer in Merovingian legends. (The Merovingians were a powerful tribe that eventually ruled Gaul in what is now northern Italy, France, and western Germany.)

The name "Oberon" first appears in literature in the first half of the 13th century and comes from the fairy dwarf Oberon who helps the hero of a French epic entitled *Les Prouesses et faitz du noble Huon of Bordeaux*.

Huon has accidentally killed the son of the emperor Charlemagne. As a penalty, he must complete a series of "impossible" tasks. Traveling through a forest, he meets Oberon, and, even though he has been warned to avoid the dwarf, his courtesy compels him to return Oberon's greeting. As a result, Oberon agrees to help the young hero complete his quest.

This Oberon is described as a dwarf, but he is also very handsome. It is explained that, at his christening, an offended fairy cursed him to be small. She later relented and gave him great beauty.

**Titania**—In traditional folklore, the fairy queen is not named. Shakespeare apparently takes the name from Greek myth in which the daughters of Gaia (earth) and Uranus (sky) are collectively known as "Titanides."

## LANGUAGE IN THE PLAY

In *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, Shakespeare displays his masterful command of language to help establish character, as well as create tone and mood.

The standard “speech” of Elizabethan theatre was blank verse, lines of unrhymed iambic pentameter, as in the opening scene of the play:

### THESEUS

Now, fair / Hip-pol/-y-ta, / our nup/-tial hour  
Draws on / a-pace;/ four hap/-py days / bring in  
A-no/-ther moon:/ but, O, / me-thinks,/ how slow  
This old / moon wanes!/ she ling/-ers my / de-sires,  
Like to / a step/-dame or / a dow/-a-ger  
Long wi/-ther-ing / out a / young man / revenue.—*irregular*

### HIPPOLYTA

Four days / will quick/-ly steep / them-selves / in night;  
Four nights / will quick/-ly dream / a-way / the time;  
And then / the moon,/ like to / a sil/-ver bow  
New-bent / in hea/-ven, shall / be-hold / the night  
Of our solemnities.—*irregular*

. . .

### EGEUS

Full of / vex-a/-tion come / I, with / com-plaint  
A-gainst / my child,/ my daugh/-ter Her/-mi-a.  
Stand forth, / De-me/-tri-us./ My no/-ble lord,  
This man / hath my / con-sent / to mar/-ry her.

For the Elizabethan playwright and audience, iambic pentameter was the rhythm that most closely imitated natural speech, so blank verse was natural speech rendered artistic.

During periods of great emotion, however, or in scenes in which Shakespeare desires a lighter, more comic feel, the characters speak in rhymed iambic pentameter, often heroic couplets. Look at Hermia's impassioned speech in I, i, after Theseus has told her she must obey her father, face a death penalty, or live her life as a nun:

HERMIA

My good Lysander!—*irregular*  
I swear / to thee, / by Cu/-pid's strong/-est bow,  
By his / best ar/-row with / the gold/-en head,  
By the / sim-pli/-cit-y / of Ve/-nus' DOVES,  
By that / which knit/-teth souls / and prosp/-ers LOVES,  
And by / that fire / which burn'd / the Carth/-age QUEEN,  
When the / false Troy/-an un/-der sail / was SEEN,  
By all / the vows / that e/-ver men / have BROKE,  
In num/-ber more / than e/-ver wo/-men SPOKE,  
In that/ same place/ thou hast/ ap-point/-ed ME,  
To-mor/-row tru/-ly will / I meet / with THEE.

LYSANDER

Keep promise, love. Look, here comes Helena.

*Enter HELENA*

HERMIA

God speed / fair Hel/-e-na! / whith-er / a-WAY?

HELENA

Call you / me fair?/ that fair / a-gain / un-SAY.  
De-me/-trius loves / your fair: / O hap/-py FAIR!—*irregular rhythm*  
Your eyes / are lode/-stars; and / your tongue's / sweet AIR  
More tune/-a-ble / than lark / to shep/-herd's EAR,  
When wheat / is green, / when haw/-thorn buds / ap-PEAR.

Notice, in the above scene, how Helena picks up Hermia's rhyme scheme and continues her own lament in couplets.

The fairies, being magical, of course, speak primarily in heroic couplets:

PUCK

The king / doth keep / his re/-vels here / to-NIGHT:  
Take heed / the queen / come not / with/-in / his SIGHT;  
For O/-ber-on / is pas/-sing fell / and WRATH,  
Be-cause / that she / as her / at-tend/-ant HATH  
A love/-ly boy, / stolen from / an In/-dian KING;—*irregular rhythm*  
She ne/-ver had / so sweet / a chang/-e-LING;—*irregular, forced rhythm*

during their feud, however, Oberon and Titania address each other in the blank verse of the mortals:

**TITANIA**

Then I / must be / thy la/-dy:/ but I / know  
When thou / hast stolen / a-way / from fair/-y land,—*irregular*  
And in / the shape / of Cor/-in sat / all day,  
Play-ing / on pipes / of corn / and vers/-ing love  
To a/-morous Phil/-li-da. / Why art / thou here,—*irregular rhythm*  
Come from / the far/-thest Steppe / of In/-d-ia?  
But that,/ for-sooth,/ the boun/-cing Am/-a-zon,  
Your busk/-in'd mis/-tress and / your war/-rior love,—*irregular*  
To The /-seus must / be wed/-ded, and / you come  
To give / their bed / joy and / pros-per/-i-ty.

**OBERON**

How canst / thou thus / for shame,/ Ti-tan/-i-a,  
Glance at / my cred/-it with / Hip-pol/-y-ta,  
Know-ing / I know / thy love / to The/-se-us?  
Didst thou / not lead / him through / the glim/-mering night—*irregular*  
From Per/-i-gen/-ia, whom / he rav/-ish-ed?  
And make / him with / fair AEgle / break his / faith, —*irregular*  
With Ar/-i-a/-dne and / An-ti/-op-a?

The only notable variations from the blank verse are instances in which a character sings a song—in which case the rhythm and rhyme scheme will be governed by whatever music Shakespeare intended the song to be sung to—the rhythm of the play-within-a-play and the dialogues of the Rude Mechanicals.

The Mechanicals speak consistently in prose. Their humor comes more from characterization—Bottom's overzealous bossiness and malapropisms, Snug's timidity, their mis-assumptions about their own ability to perform a play, and from puns and malapropisms ("Ninny's tomb" for "Ninus' tomb," "odious" for "odours," and so on).

Pay special attention to any apparently intentional shifts in the rhythmic pattern of the lines, and changes in the rhyme scheme. These are Shakespeare's clues—like stage directions—to tell the actor and audience that he is attempting to achieve a specific effect.

## Practice Free Response Questions

### Practice Free Response Question 1

Read the following passage from Act I, scene ii. In a well-organized essay, analyze the source(s) of comedy in the scene.

Do not merely summarize the plot.

**QUINCE**

Is all our company here?

**BOTTOM**

You were best to call them generally, man by man, according to the scrip.

**QUINCE**

Here is the scroll of every man's name, which is thought fit, through all Athens, to play in our interlude before the duke and the duchess, on his wedding-day at night.

**BOTTOM**

First, good Peter Quince, say what the play treats on, then read the names of the actors, and so grow to a point.

**QUINCE**

Marry, our play is, The most lamentable comedy, and most cruel death of Pyramus and Thisby.

**BOTTOM**

A very good piece of work, I assure you, and a merry. Now, good Peter Quince, call forth your actors by the scroll. Masters, spread yourselves.

**QUINCE**

Answer as I call you. Nick Bottom, the weaver.

**BOTTOM**

Ready. Name what part I am for, and proceed.

**QUINCE**

You, Nick Bottom, are set down for Pyramus.

**BOTTOM**

What is Pyramus? a lover, or a tyrant?

**QUINCE**

A lover, that kills himself most gallant for love.

**BOTTOM**

That will ask some tears in the true performing of it: if I do it, let the audience look to their eyes; I will move storms, I will condole in some measure. To the rest: yet my chief humour is for a tyrant: I could play Ercles rarely, or a part to tear a cat in, to make all split.

The raging rocks  
And shivering shocks  
Shall break the locks  
Of prison gates;  
And Phibbus' car  
Shall shine from far  
And make and mar  
The foolish Fates.

This was lofty! Now name the rest of the players. This is Ercles' vein, a tyrant's vein; a lover is more condoling.

**QUINCE**

Francis Flute, the bellows-mender.

**FLUTE**

Here, Peter Quince.

**QUINCE**

Flute, you must take Thisby on you.

**FLUTE**

What is Thisby? a wandering knight?

**QUINCE**

It is the lady that Pyramus must love.

**FLUTE**

Nay, faith, let me not play a woman; I have a beard coming.

**QUINCE**

That's all one: you shall play it in a mask, and you may speak as small as you will.

**BOTTOM**

An I may hide my face, let me play Thisby too, I'll speak in a monstrous little voice. 'Thisne, Thisne;' 'Ah, Pyramus, lover dear! thy Thisby dear, and lady dear!'

**QUINCE**

No, no; you must play Pyramus: and, Flute, you Thisby.

**BOTTOM**

Well, proceed.

**QUINCE**

Robin Starveling, the tailor.

**STARVELING**

Here, Peter Quince.

**QUINCE**

Robin Starveling, you must play Thisby's mother.  
Tom Snout, the tinker.

**SNOUT**

Here, Peter Quince.

**QUINCE**

You, Pyramus' father: myself, Thisby's father: Snug, the joiner; you, the lion's part: and, I hope, here is a play fitted.

**SNUG**

Have you the lion's part written? pray you, if it be, give it me, for I am slow of study.

**QUINCE**

You may do it extempore, for it is nothing but roaring.

**BOTTOM**

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.'

**QUINCE**

An you should do it too terribly, you would fright the duchess and the ladies, that they would shriek; and that were enough to hang us all.

**ALL**

That would hang us, every mother's son.

**BOTTOM**

I grant you, friends, if that you should fright the ladies out of their wits, they would have no more discretion but to hang us: but I will aggravate my voice so that I will roar you as gently as any sucking dove; I will roar you an 'twere any nightingale.



**QUINCE**

You can play no part but Pyramus; for Pyramus is a sweet-faced man; a proper man, as one shall see in a summer's day; a most lovely gentleman-like man: therefore you must needs play Pyramus.

**BOTTOM**

Well, I will undertake it. What beard were I best to play it in?

**QUINCE**

Why, what you will.

**BOTTOM**

I will discharge it in either your straw-colour beard, your orange-tawny beard, your purple-in-grain beard, or your French-crown-colour beard, your perfect yellow.

**QUINCE**

Some of your French crowns have no hair at all, and then you will play bare-faced. But, masters, here are your parts: and I am to entreat you, request you and desire you, to con them by to-morrow night; and meet me in the palace wood, a mile without the town, by moonlight; there will we rehearse, for if we meet in the city, we shall be dogged with company, and our devices known. In the meantime I will draw a bill of properties, such as our play wants. I pray you, fail me not.

**BOTTOM**

We will meet; and there we may rehearse most obscenely and courageously. Take pains; be perfect: adieu.

**QUINCE**

At the duke's oak we meet.

**BOTTOM**

Enough; hold or cut bow-strings.

*Exeunt*

## Practice Free Response Question 2

Read the following passage from Act III, scene ii. In a well-organized essay, examine the impact of Puck's mistake and his reaction to the knowledge of his mistake on the action and mood of the overall play.

Avoid plot summary.

**OBERON**

Stand close: this is the same Athenian.

**PUCK**

This is the woman, but not this the man.

. . .

**OBERON**

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.

**PUCK**

Then fate o'er-rules, that, one man holding troth,  
A million fail, confounding oath on oath.

**OBERON**

About the wood go swifter than the wind,  
And Helena of Athens look thou find:  
All fancy-sick she is and pale of cheer,  
With sighs of love, that costs the fresh blood dear:  
By some illusion see thou bring her here:  
I'll charm his eyes against she do appear.

**PUCK**

I go, I go; look how I go,  
Swifter than arrow from the Tartar's bow.

*Exit*

**OBERON**

Flower of this purple dye,  
Hit with Cupid's archery,  
Sink in apple of his eye.  
When his love he doth espy,  
Let her shine as gloriously  
As the Venus of the sky.  
When thou wakest, if she be by,  
Beg of her for remedy.

*Re-enter PUCK*

**PUCK**

Captain of our fairy band,  
Helena is here at hand;  
And the youth, mistook by me,  
Pleading for a lover's fee.  
Shall we their fond pageant see?  
Lord, what fools these mortals be!

**OBERON**

Stand aside: the noise they make  
Will cause Demetrius to awake.

**PUCK**

Then will two at once woo one;  
That must needs be sport alone;  
And those things do best please me  
That befall preposterously.

*Enter LYSANDER and HELENA*

### Practice Free Response Question 3

Read the following passage from Act V and then write a well-organized essay in which you analyze the relationship between the plot and characters of the play-within-the play and the primary plot and characters of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*.

Avoid plot summary.

*Flourish of trumpets*

*Enter QUINCE for the Prologue*

#### **Prologue**

If we offend, it is with our good will.  
That you should think, we come not to offend,  
But with good will. To show our simple skill,  
That is the true beginning of our end.  
Consider then we come but in despite.  
We do not come as minding to contest you,  
Our true intent is. All for your delight  
We are not here. That you should here repent you,  
The actors are at hand and by their show  
You shall know all that you are like to know.

#### **THESEUS**

This fellow doth not stand upon points.

#### **LYSANDER**

He hath rid his prologue like a rough colt; he knows  
not the stop. A good moral, my lord: it is not  
enough to speak, but to speak true.

#### **HIPPOLYTA**

Indeed he hath played on his prologue like a child  
on a recorder; a sound, but not in government.

#### **THESEUS**

His speech, was like a tangled chain; nothing  
impaired, but all disordered. Who is next?

*Enter Pyramus and Thisby, Wall, Moonshine, and Lion*

### Prologue

Gentles, perchance you wonder at this show;  
But wonder on, till truth make all things plain.  
This man is Pyramus, if you would know;  
This beauteous lady Thisby is certain.  
This man, with lime and rough-cast, doth present  
Wall, that vile Wall which did these lovers sunder;  
And through Wall's chink, poor souls, they are content  
To whisper. At the which let no man wonder.  
This man, with lanthorn, dog, and bush of thorn,  
Presenteth Moonshine; for, if you will know,  
By moonshine did these lovers think no scorn  
To meet at Ninus' tomb, there, there to woo.  
This grisly beast, which Lion hight by name,  
The trusty Thisby, coming first by night,  
Did scare away, or rather did affright;  
And, as she fled, her mantle she did fall,  
Which Lion vile with bloody mouth did stain.  
Anon comes Pyramus, sweet youth and tall,  
And finds his trusty Thisby's mantle slain:  
Whereat, with blade, with bloody blameful blade,  
He bravely broach'd his boiling bloody breast;  
And Thisby, tarrying in mulberry shade,  
His dagger drew, and died. For all the rest,  
Let Lion, Moonshine, Wall, and lovers twain  
At large discourse, while here they do remain.

*Exeunt Prologue, Thisby, Lion, and Moonshine*

### THESEUS

I wonder if the lion be to speak.

### DEMETRIUS

No wonder, my lord: one lion may, when many asses do.

### Wall

In this same interlude it doth befall  
That I, one Snout by name, present a wall;  
And such a wall, as I would have you think,  
That had in it a crannied hole or chink,  
Through which the lovers, Pyramus and Thisby,  
Did whisper often very secretly.  
This loam, this rough-cast and this stone doth show  
That I am that same wall; the truth is so:  
And this the cranny is, right and sinister,  
Through which the fearful lovers are to whisper.

**THESEUS**

Would you desire lime and hair to speak better?

**DEMETRIUS**

It is the wittiest partition that ever I heard  
discourse, my lord.

*Enter Pyramus*

**THESEUS**

Pyramus draws near the wall: silence!

**Pyramus**

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 Thisby'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!  
*Wall holds up his fingers*  
Thanks, courteous wall: Jove shield thee well for this!  
But what see I? No Thisby do I see.  
O wicked wall, through whom I see no bliss!  
Cursed be thy stones for thus deceiving me!

**THESEUS**

The wall, methinks, being sensible, should curse again.

**Pyramus**

No, in truth, sir, he should not. 'Deceiving me'  
is Thisby's cue: she is to enter now, and I am to  
spy her through the wall. You shall see, it will  
fall pat as I told you. Yonder she comes.

*Enter Thisby*

**Thisby**

O wall, full often hast thou heard my moans,  
For parting my fair Pyramus and me!  
My cherry lips have often kiss'd thy stones,  
Thy stones with lime and hair knit up in thee.

**Pyramus**

I see a voice: now will I to the chink,  
To spy an I can hear my Thisby's face. Thisby!

**Thisby**

My love thou art, my love I think.

**Pyramus**

Think what thou wilt, I am thy lover's grace;  
And, like Limander, am I trusty still.

**Thisby**

And I like Helen, till the Fates me kill.

**Pyramus**

Not Shafalus to Procrus was so true.

**Thisby**

As Shafalus to Procrus, I to you.

**Pyramus**

O kiss me through the hole of this vile wall!

**Thisby**

I kiss the wall's hole, not your lips at all.

**Pyramus**

Wilt thou at Ninny's tomb meet me straightway?

**Thisby**

'Tide life, 'tide death, I come without delay.

*Exeunt Pyramus and Thisby*

**Wall**

Thus have I, Wall, my part discharged so;  
And, being done, thus Wall away doth go.

*Exit*

**THESEUS**

Now is the mural down between the two neighbours.

**DEMETRIUS**

No remedy, my lord, when walls are so wilful to hear  
without warning.

**HIPPOLYTA**

This is the silliest stuff that ever I heard.

**THESEUS**

The best in this kind are but shadows; and the worst  
are no worse, if imagination amend them.

**HIPPOLYTA**

It must be your imagination then, and not theirs.

**THESEUS**

If we imagine no worse of them than they of  
themselves, they may pass for excellent men. Here  
come two noble beasts in, a man and a lion.

*Enter Lion and Moonshine*

**Lion**

You, ladies, you, whose gentle hearts do fear  
The smallest monstrous mouse that creeps on floor,  
May now perchance both quake and tremble here,  
When lion rough in wildest rage doth roar.  
Then know that I, one Snug the joiner, am  
A lion-fell, nor else no lion's dam;  
For, if I should as lion come in strife  
Into this place, 'twere pity on my life.

**THESEUS**

A very gentle beast, of a good conscience.

**DEMETRIUS**

The very best at a beast, my lord, that e'er I saw.

**LYSANDER**

This lion is a very fox for his valour.

**THESEUS**

True; and a goose for his discretion.

**DEMETRIUS**

Not so, my lord; for his valour cannot carry his  
discretion; and the fox carries the goose.



**THESEUS**

His discretion, I am sure, cannot carry his valour;  
for the goose carries not the fox. It is well:  
leave it to his discretion, and let us listen to the moon.

**Moonshine**

This lanthorn doth the horned moon present;—

**DEMETRIUS**

He should have worn the horns on his head.

**THESEUS**

He is no crescent, and his horns are  
invisible within the circumference.

**Moonshine**

This lanthorn doth the horned moon present;  
Myself the man i' the moon do seem to be.

**THESEUS**

This is the greatest error of all the rest: the man  
should be put into the lanthorn. How is it else the  
man i' the moon?

**DEMETRIUS**

He dares not come there for the candle; for, you  
see, it is already in snuff.

**HIPPOLYTA**

I am awear of this moon: would he would change!

**THESEUS**

It appears, by his small light of discretion, that  
he is in the wane; but yet, in courtesy, in all  
reason, we must stay the time.

**LYSANDER**

Proceed, Moon.

**Moonshine**

All that I have to say, is, to tell you that the  
lanthorn is the moon; I, the man in the moon; this  
thorn-bush, my thorn-bush; and this dog, my dog.

**DEMETRIUS**

Why, all these should be in the lanthorn; for all these are in the moon. But, silence! here comes Thisby.

*Enter Thisby*

**Thisby**

This is old Ninny's tomb. Where is my love?

**Lion**

[Roaring] Oh—

*Thisby runs off*

**DEMETRIUS**

Well roared, Lion.

**THESEUS**

Well run, Thisby.

**HIPPOLYTA**

Well shone, Moon. Truly, the moon shines with a good grace.

*The Lion shakes Thisby's mantle, and exit*

**THESEUS**

Well moused, Lion.

**LYSANDER**

And so the lion vanished.

**DEMETRIUS**

And then came Pyramus.

*Enter Pyramus*

**Pyramus**

Sweet Moon, I thank thee for thy sunny beams;  
I thank thee, Moon, for shining now so bright;  
For, by thy gracious, golden, glittering gleams,  
I trust to take of truest Thisby sight.

But stay, O spite!

But mark, poor knight,

What dreadful dole is here!

Eyes, do you see?

How can it be?

O dainty duck! O dear!

Thy mantle good,

What, stain'd with blood!

Approach, ye Furies fell!

O Fates, come, come,

Cut thread and thrum;

Quail, crush, conclude, and quell!

**THESEUS**

This passion, and the death of a dear friend, would  
go near to make a man look sad.

**HIPPOLYTA**

Beshrew my heart, but I pity the man.

**Pyramus**

O wherefore, Nature, didst thou lions frame?

Since lion vile hath here deflower'd my dear:

Which is—no, no—which was the fairest dame

That lived, that loved, that liked, that look'd  
with cheer.

Come, tears, confound;

Out, sword, and wound

The pap of Pyramus;

Ay, that left pap,

Where heart doth hop:

*Stabs himself*

Thus die I, thus, thus, thus.

Now am I dead,

Now am I fled;

My soul is in the sky:

Tongue, lose thy light;

Moon take thy flight:

*Exit Moonshine*

Now die, die, die, die, die.

*Dies*

**DEMETRIUS**

No die, but an ace, for him; for he is but one.

**LYSANDER**

Less than an ace, man; for he is dead; he is nothing.

**THESEUS**

With the help of a surgeon he might yet recover, and prove an ass.

**HIPPOLYTA**

How chance Moonshine is gone before Thisby comes back and finds her lover?

**THESEUS**

She will find him by starlight. Here she comes; and her passion ends the play.

*Re-enter Thisby*

**HIPPOLYTA**

Methinks she should not use a long one for such a Pyramus: I hope she will be brief.

**DEMETRIUS**

A mote will turn the balance, which Pyramus, which Thisby, is the better; he for a man, God warrant us; she for a woman, God bless us.

**LYSANDER**

She hath spied him already with those sweet eyes.

**DEMETRIUS**

And thus she means, videlicet—

**Thisby**

Asleep, my love?  
What, dead, my dove?  
O Pyramus, arise!  
Speak, speak. Quite dumb?  
Dead, dead? A tomb  
Must cover thy sweet eyes.  
These My lips,  
This cherry nose,  
These yellow cowslip cheeks,  
Are gone, are gone:  
Lovers, make moan:  
His eyes were green as leeks.  
O Sisters Three,  
Come, come to me,  
With hands as pale as milk;  
Lay them in gore,  
Since you have shore  
With shears his thread of silk.  
Tongue, not a word:  
Come, trusty sword;  
Come, blade, my breast imbrue:  
*Stabs herself*  
And, farewell, friends;  
Thus Thisby ends:  
Adieu, adieu, adieu.

*Dies*

**THESEUS**

Moonshine and Lion are left to bury the dead.

**DEMETRIUS**

Ay, and Wall too.

## BOTTOM

[Starting up] No assure you; the wall is down that parted their fathers. Will it please you to see the epilogue, or to hear a Bergomask dance between two of our company?

## THESEUS

No epilogue, I pray you; for your play needs no excuse. Never excuse; for when the players are all dead, there needs none to be blamed. Marry, if he that writ it had played Pyramus and hanged himself in Thisby's garter, it would have been a fine tragedy: and so it is, truly; and very notably discharged. But come, your Bergomask: let your epilogue alone.

*A dance*

#### Practice Free Response Question 4

A common comedic device is the misidentification of characters—confusion of twins, switched identities, etc. In a well-structured essay, analyze Shakespeare’s use of this device and its impact on the plot and meaning of the play.

Do not simply summarize the plot.

#### Practice Free Response Question 5

Several of William Shakespeare’s comedies are categorized as “Green World” comedies. In a well-written essay, analyze the structure of *A Midsummer Night’s Dream* and describe the relationship between the play’s form and meaning.

Do not merely summarize the plot.

## Practice Multiple Choice Questions

### Practice Multiple Choice Questions 1 - 5

Carefully read the passage below from Act I, scene i before answering the multiple choice questions that follow.

EGEUS

Happy be Theseus, our renowned duke!

THESEUS

Thanks, good Egeus: what's the news with thee?

EGEUS

Full of vexation come I, with complaint  
Against my child, my daughter Hermia.

- 5 Stand forth, Demetrius. My noble lord,  
This man hath my consent to marry her.  
Stand forth, Lysander: and my gracious duke,  
This man hath bewitch'd the bosom of my child;  
Thou, thou, Lysander, thou hast given her rhymes,  
10 And interchanged love-tokens with my child:  
Thou hast by moonlight at her window sung,  
With feigning voice verses of feigning love,  
And stolen the impression of her fantasy  
With bracelets of thy hair, rings, gawds, conceits,  
15 Knacks, trifles, nosegays, sweetmeats, messengers  
Of strong prevailment in unhardened youth:  
With cunning hast thou filch'd my daughter's heart,  
Turn'd her obedience, which is due to me,  
To stubborn harshness: and, my gracious duke,  
20 Be it so she; will not here before your grace  
Consent to marry with Demetrius,  
I beg the ancient privilege of Athens,  
As she is mine, I may dispose of her:  
Which shall be either to this gentleman  
25 Or to her death, according to our law  
Immediately provided in that case.

THESEUS

What say you, Hermia? be advised fair maid:  
To you your father should be as a god;  
One that composed your beauties, yea, and one  
30 To whom you are but as a form in wax  
By him imprinted and within his power  
To leave the figure or disfigure it.  
Demetrius is a worthy gentleman.

HERMIA

So is Lysander.



THESEUS

- 35 In himself he is;  
But in this kind, wanting your father's voice,  
The other must be held the worthier.

HERMIA

I would my father look'd but with my eyes.

THESEUS

Rather your eyes must with his judgment look.

HERMIA

- 40 I do entreat your grace to pardon me.  
I know not by what power I am made bold,  
Nor how it may concern my modesty,  
In such a presence here to plead my thoughts;  
But I beseech your grace that I may know  
45 The worst that may befall me in this case,  
If I refuse to wed Demetrius.

THESEUS

- Either to die the death or to abjure  
For ever the society of men.  
Therefore, fair Hermia, question your desires;  
50 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,  
For aye to be in shady cloister mew'd,  
To live a barren sister all your life,  
55 Chanting faint hymns to the cold fruitless moon.  
Thrice-blessed they that master so their blood,  
To undergo such maiden pilgrimage;  
But earthlier happy is the rose distill'd,  
Than that which withering on the virgin thorn  
60 Grows, lives and dies in single blessedness.

HERMIA

So will I grow, so live, so die, my lord,  
Ere I will my virgin patent up  
Unto his lordship, whose unwished yoke  
My soul consents not to give sovereignty.

THESEUS

- 65 Take time to pause; and, by the next new moon—  
The sealing-day betwixt my love and me,  
For everlasting bond of fellowship—  
Upon that day either prepare to die  
For disobedience to your father's will,  
70 Or else to wed Demetrius, as he would;  
Or on Diana's altar to protest  
For aye austerity and single life.

DEMETRIUS

Relent, sweet Hermia: and, Lysander, yield  
Thy crazed title to my certain right.

LYSANDER

75 You have her father's love, Demetrius;  
Let me have Hermia's: do you marry him.

EGEUS

Scornful Lysander! true, he hath my love,  
And what is mine my love shall render him.  
And she is mine, and all my right of her  
80 I do estate unto Demetrius.

LYSANDER

I am, my lord, as well derived as he,  
As well possess'd; my love is more than his;  
My fortunes every way as fairly rank'd,  
If not with vantage, as Demetrius';  
85 And, which is more than all these boasts can be,  
I am beloved of beauteous Hermia:  
Why should not I then prosecute my right?  
Demetrius, I'll avouch it to his head,  
Made love to Nedar's daughter, Helena,  
90 And won her soul; and she, sweet lady, dotes,  
Devoutly dotes, dotes in idolatry,  
Upon this spotted and inconstant man.

THESEUS

I must confess that I have heard so much,  
And with Demetrius thought to have spoke thereof;  
95 But, being over-full of self-affairs,  
My mind did lose it. But, Demetrius, come;  
And come, Egeus; you shall go with me,  
I have some private schooling for you both.  
For you, fair Hermia, look you arm yourself  
100 To fit your fancies to your father's will;  
Or else the law of Athens yields you up—  
Which by no means we may extenuate—  
To death, or to a vow of single life.  
Come, my Hippolyta: what cheer, my love?  
105 Demetrius and Egeus, go along:  
I must employ you in some business  
Against our nuptial and confer with you  
Of something nearly that concerns yourselves.

EGEUS

With duty and desire we follow you.

*Exeunt all but LYSANDER and HERMIA*

## Practice Multiple Choice Questions

### Practice Multiple Choice Questions 1 - 5

1. All of the following are probably true of Lysander and Demetrius EXCEPT
  - (A) Lysander is of higher social standing.
  - (B) Lysander has energetically pursued Hermia.
  - (C) Lysander is a well-spoken gentleman.
  - (D) Demetrius is a fickle lover.
  - (E) Demetrius appealed to Egeus rather than wooing Hermia.
2. Egeus' choice of Demetrius for Hermia's husband is comic because
  - (A) Demetrius is a clown.
  - (B) it is exaggerated and unreasonable.
  - (C) Lysander would be the better choice.
  - (D) Theseus disapproves of the match.
  - (E) it is contrary to Hermia's choice.
3. The repetition of "thou" in lines 9 and 11 is an example of which rhetorical device?
  - (A) anaphora
  - (B) anadiplosis
  - (C) conduplicatio
  - (D) polysyndeton
  - (E) asyndeton
4. The Duke's support of Egeus' suit is an example of
  - (A) the power of jealousy.
  - (B) wrath and malice.
  - (C) fear of reprisal.
  - (D) rule of law.
  - (E) divine right of kings.
5. What does the passage suggest is Hippolyta's reaction to Theseus' judgment?
  - I. disapproval
  - II. disappointment
  - III. alarm
  - (A) I above
  - (B) II above
  - (C) III above
  - (D) I and II above
  - (E) II and III above

## Practice Multiple Choice Questions 6 - 10

Carefully read the passage below from Act I, scene i before answering the multiple choice questions that follow.

HELENA

- How happy some o'er other some can be!  
Through Athens I am thought as fair as she.  
But what of that? Demetrius thinks not so;  
He will not know what all but he do know:  
5 And as he errs, doting on Hermia's eyes,  
So I, admiring of his qualities:  
Things base and vile, folding no quantity,  
Love can transpose to form and dignity:  
Love looks not with the eyes, but with the mind;  
10 And therefore is wing'd Cupid painted blind:  
Nor hath Love's mind of any judgement taste;  
Wings and no eyes figure unheedy haste:  
And therefore is Love said to be a child,  
Because in choice he is so oft beguiled.  
15 As waggish boys in game themselves forswear,  
So the boy Love is perjured every where:  
For ere Demetrius look'd on Hermia's eyne,  
He hail'd down oaths that he was only mine;  
And when this hail some heat from Hermia felt,  
20 So he dissolved, and showers of oaths did melt.  
I will go tell him of fair Hermia's flight:  
Then to the wood will he to-morrow night  
Pursue her; and for this intelligence  
If I have thanks, it is a dear expense:  
25 But herein mean I to enrich my pain,  
To have his sight thither and back again.

Exit

6. The major contrast in this passage is between  
(A) love and hate.  
(B) sight and blindness.  
(C) love and sight.  
(D) madness and reason  
(E) daylight and darkness.
7. The archaic word *eyne* (line 17) is used to  
(A) preserve the rhyme scheme.  
(B) complete a couplet.  
(C) establish Helena's character.  
(D) maintain the comic mood.  
(E) preserve the metric pattern.

8. When Helena says, "Love is perjured every where," (line 16) she means
- (A) Cupid is fickle and unfaithful.
  - (B) men swear false love by Cupid's name.
  - (C) she herself will betray the man she loves.
  - (D) she has been betrayed by the man she loves.
  - (E) Demetrius lied when he swore love to Hermia.
9. Helena's motive for revealing Hermia's elopement is to
- (A) foil Hermia and Lysander's plan.
  - (B) send Demetrius on a futile chase.
  - (C) elope with Demetrius herself.
  - (D) win Demetrius' gratitude and love.
  - (E) punish Hermia for stealing Demetrius.
10. Helena's frequent reference to the organs of sight probably foreshadows all of the following EXCEPT
- (A) confused identities.
  - (B) love at first sight.
  - (C) altered appearances.
  - (D) escape and chase.
  - (E) inaccurate perception.

## Practice Multiple Choice Questions 11 - 15

Carefully read the passage below from Act II, scene i before answering the multiple choice questions that follow.

*Enter, from opposite sides, a Fairy, and PUCK*

**PUCK**

How now, spirit! whither wander you?

**Fairy**

- Over hill, over dale,  
Thorough bush, thorough brier,  
Over park, over pale,  
5 Thorough flood, thorough fire,  
I do wander everywhere,  
Swifter than the moon's sphere;  
And I serve the fairy queen,  
To dew her orbs upon the green.  
10 The cowslips tall her pensioners be:  
In their gold coats spots you see;  
Those be rubies, fairy favours,  
In those freckles live their savours:  
I must go seek some dewdrops here  
15 And hang a pearl in every cowslip's ear.  
Farewell, thou lob of spirits; I'll be gone:  
Our queen and all our elves come here anon.

**PUCK**

- The king doth keep his revels here to-night:  
Take heed the queen come not within his sight;  
20 For Oberon is passing fell and wrath,  
Because that she as her attendant hath  
A lovely boy, stolen from an Indian king;  
She never had so sweet a changeling;  
And jealous Oberon would have the child  
25 Knight of his train, to trace the forests wild;  
But she perforce withholds the loved boy,  
Crowns him with flowers and makes him all her joy:  
And now they never meet in grove or green,  
By fountain clear, or spangled starlight sheen,  
30 But, they do square, that all their elves for fear  
Creep into acorn-cups and hide them there.

**Fairy**

- Either I mistake your shape and making quite,  
Or else you are that shrewd and knavish sprite  
Call'd Robin Goodfellow: are not you he  
That frights the maidens of the villagery;  
35 Skim milk, and sometimes labour in the quern  
And bootless make the breathless housewife churn;  
And sometime make the drink to bear no barm;  
Mislead night-wanderers, laughing at their harm?  
Those that Hobgoblin call you and sweet Puck,  
40 You do their work, and they shall have good luck:  
Are not you he?

**PUCK**

- Thou speak'st aright;  
I am that merry wanderer of the night.  
I jest to Oberon and make him smile  
45 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  
50 And on her wither'd dewlap pour the ale.  
The wisest aunt, telling the saddest tale,  
Sometime for three-foot stool mistaketh me;  
Then slip I from her bum, down topples she,  
And 'tailor' cries, and falls into a cough;  
55 And then the whole quire hold their hips and laugh,  
And waxen in their mirth and neeze and swear  
A merrier hour was never wasted there.  
But, room, fairy! here comes Oberon.

11. The service the fairy performs for her queen is to  
(A) travel the world as a messenger.  
(B) herald the queen's arrivals.  
(C) tend the queen's flower garden.  
(D) lay out the queen's jewelry.  
(E) sprinkle dew on the flowers.
12. Of what conflict do the fairy and Puck become aware?  
(A) The king and queen both plan to assemble that night.  
(B) The queen has a new serving boy whom the king wants.  
(C) Oberon and the queen are feuding.  
(D) Puck cannot resist playing practical jokes.  
(E) The queen's attendant has stolen a little Indian boy.

13. How does the fairy recognize Puck?
- (A) She recognizes him by sight.
  - (B) She asks who he is.
  - (C) He identifies himself to her.
  - (D) He causes churned butter to liquify.
  - (E) She calls him Hobgoblin.
14. The fairy and Puck's exchange in lines 31-57 serves what function?
- (A) It introduces the conflict.
  - (B) It introduces Oberon's character.
  - (C) It introduces Puck's character.
  - (D) It foreshadows future comic events.
  - (E) It provides comic relief.
15. The passage suggests that, physically, the fairies are
- (A) invisible.
  - (B) lavishly dressed.
  - (C) inexplicably strong.
  - (D) human-sized and similarly featured.
  - (E) smaller than flowers and acorns.



## Practice Multiple Choice Questions 16 - 20

Carefully read the passage below from Act II, scene i before answering the multiple choice questions that follow.

OBERON

Tarry, rash wanton: am not I thy lord?

TITANIA

Then I must be thy lady: but I know  
When thou hast stolen away from fairy land,  
And in the shape of Corin sat all day,  
5 Playing on pipes of corn and versing love  
To amorous Phillida. Why art thou here,  
Come from the farthest Steppe of India?  
But that, forsooth, the bouncing Amazon,  
Your buskin'd mistress and your warrior love,  
10 To Theseus must be wedded, and you come  
To give their bed joy and prosperity.

OBERON

How canst thou thus for shame, Titania,  
Glance at my credit with Hippolyta,  
Knowing I know thy love to Theseus?  
15 Didst thou not lead him through the glimmering night  
From Perigenia, whom he ravished?  
And make him with fair Aegle break his faith,  
With Ariadne and Antiopa?

TITANIA

These are the forgeries of jealousy:  
20 And never, since the middle summer's spring,  
Met we on hill, in dale, forest or mead,  
By paved fountain or by rushy brook,  
Or in the beached margent of the sea,  
To dance our ringlets to the whistling wind,  
25 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  
30 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;  
The fold stands empty in the drowned field,  
35 And crows are fatted with the murrion flock;  
The nine men's morris is fill'd up with mud,  
And the quaint mazes in the wanton green  
For lack of tread are undistinguishable:  
The human mortals want their winter here;  
40 No night is now with hymn or carol blest:  
Therefore the moon, the governess of floods,

TITANIA (Cont.)

Pale in her anger, washes all the air,  
That rheumatic diseases do abound:  
And thorough this distemperature we see  
45 The seasons alter: hoary-headed frosts  
Far in the fresh lap of the crimson rose,  
And on old Hiems' thin and icy crown  
An odorous chaplet of sweet summer buds  
Is, as in mockery, set: the spring, the summer,  
50 The chiding autumn, angry winter, change  
Their wonted liveries, and the mazed world,  
By their increase, now knows not which is which:  
And this same progeny of evils comes  
From our debate, from our dissension;  
55 We are their parents and original.

TITANIA

Set your heart at rest:  
The fairy land buys not the child of me.  
His mother was a votaress of my order:  
And, in the spiced Indian air, by night,  
60 Full often hath she gossip'd by my side,  
And sat with me on Neptune's yellow sands,  
Marking the embarked traders on the flood,  
When we have laugh'd to see the sails conceive  
And grow big-bellied with the wanton wind;  
65 Which she, with pretty and with swimming gait  
Following,—her womb then rich with my young squire,—  
Would imitate, and sail upon the land,  
To fetch me trifles, and return again,  
As from a voyage, rich with merchandise.  
70 But she, being mortal, of that boy did die;  
And for her sake do I rear up her boy,  
And for her sake I will not part with him.

OBERON

How long within this wood intend you stay?

TITANIA

Perchance till after Theseus' wedding-day.  
75 If you will patiently dance in our round  
And see our moonlight revels, go with us;  
If not, shun me, and I will spare your haunts.

OBERON

Give me that boy, and I will go with thee.

TITANIA

Not for thy fairy kingdom. Fairies, away!  
80 We shall chide downright, if I longer stay.

*Exit TITANIA with her train*

16. Each of the following is a result of Oberon and Titania's feuding EXCEPT
- (A) floods.
  - (B) rotting crops.
  - (C) pestilential fogs.
  - (D) diseased cattle.
  - (E) fierce wind storms.
17. Oberon and Titania each accuse the other of
- (A) spoiling their moonlight festivities.
  - (B) causing unnatural weather.
  - (C) kidnapping human babies.
  - (D) having affairs with humans.
  - (E) feuding with one another.
18. The passage suggests that the cause of Oberon and Titania's feud is
- (A) Oberon's jealousy.
  - (B) Titania's selfishness.
  - (C) the stolen Indian boy.
  - (D) the unnatural, foul weather.
  - (E) Theseus' wedding to Hippolyta.
19. In her speech (lines 58-69), Titania compares trading ships to
- (A) fairy priestesses.
  - (B) swimmers.
  - (C) merchant vessels.
  - (D) Neptune's waters.
  - (E) pregnant women.
20. According to Oberon, all of the following are former lovers of Theseus EXCEPT
- (A) Hippolyta.
  - (B) Perigenia.
  - (C) Aegle.
  - (D) Ariadne.
  - (E) Antiopa.

## Practice Multiple Choice Questions 21 - 25

Carefully read the passage below from Act II, scene ii before answering the multiple choice questions that follow.

*Enter LYSANDER and HERMIA*

**LYSANDER**

Fair love, you faint with wandering in the wood;  
And to speak troth, I have forgot our way:  
We'll rest us, Hermia, if you think it good,  
And tarry for the comfort of the day.

**HERMIA**

- 5 Be it so, Lysander: find you out a bed;  
For I upon this bank will rest my head.

**LYSANDER**

One turf shall serve as pillow for us both;  
One heart, one bed, two bosoms and one troth.

**HERMIA**

- 10 Nay, good Lysander; for my sake, my dear,  
Lie further off yet, do not lie so near.

**LYSANDER**

- O, take the sense, sweet, of my innocence!  
Love takes the meaning in love's conference.  
I mean, that my heart unto yours is knit  
So that but one heart we can make of it;  
15 Two bosoms interchained with an oath;  
So then two bosoms and a single troth.  
Then by your side no bed-room me deny;  
For lying so, Hermia, I do not lie.

**HERMIA**

- Lysander riddles very prettily:  
20 Now much beshrew my manners and my pride,  
If Hermia meant to say Lysander lied.  
But, gentle friend, for love and courtesy  
Lie further off; in human modesty,  
Such separation as may well be said  
25 Becomes a virtuous bachelor and a maid,  
So far be distant; and, good night, sweet friend:  
Thy love ne'er alter till thy sweet life end!

LYSANDER

Amen, amen, to that fair prayer, say I;  
And then end life when I end loyalty!

30 Here is my bed: sleep give thee all his rest!

HERMIA

With half that wish the wisher's eyes be press'd!

*They sleep*

*Enter PUCK*

PUCK

Through the forest have I gone.

But Athenian found I none,

On whose eyes I might approve

35 This flower's force in stirring love.

Night and silence.—Who is here?

Weeds of Athens he doth wear:

This is he, my master said,

Despised the Athenian maid;

40 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

45 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.

*Exit*

*Enter DEMETRIUS and HELENA, running*

21. Part of the humor of this scene is based on the punning of what word?
- (A) turf
  - (B) lie
  - (C) knit
  - (D) oath
  - (E) troth
22. For comic effect, what language convention does Shakespeare alter?
- (A) The rhythm is iambic pentameter.
  - (B) The scene is written in couplets.
  - (C) Lysander and Hermia both speak in puns.
  - (D) The scene is written in blank verse.
  - (E) The scene is written in rhymed verse.
23. Which word best describes Hermia's behavior in this scene?
- (A) coy
  - (B) shrewish
  - (C) confused
  - (D) defiant
  - (E) loving
24. Which word best describes Lysander's attitude in this scene?
- (A) lost
  - (B) despondent
  - (C) loving
  - (D) apologetic
  - (E) amorous
25. The audience realizes the nature of the comic plot at the moment when
- (A) Puck puts the love-juice on Lysander's eyes.
  - (B) Hermia prays their love will never end.
  - (C) Helena enters with Demetrius.
  - (D) Puck exits without seeing Demetrius.
  - (E) Puck sees Lysander and Hermia sleeping separately.

## Practice Multiple Choice Questions 26 - 30

Carefully read the passage below from Act III, scene i before answering the multiple choice questions that follow.

*Re-enter PUCK, and BOTTOM with an ass's head*

**BOTTOM**

If I were fair, Thisby, I were only thine.

**QUINCE**

O monstrous! O strange! we are haunted. Pray, masters! fly, masters! Help!

*Exeunt QUINCE, SNUG, FLUTE, SNOUT, and STARVELING*

**PUCK**

I'll follow you, I'll lead you about a round,  
Through bog, through bush, through brake, through brier:

- 5 Sometime a horse I'll be, sometime a hound,  
A hog, a headless bear, sometime a fire;  
And neigh, and bark, and grunt, and roar, and burn,  
Like horse, hound, hog, bear, fire, at every turn.

*Exit*

**BOTTOM**

Why do they run away? this is a knavery of them to make me afeard.

*Re-enter SNOUT*

**SNOUT**

- 10 O Bottom, thou art changed! what do I see on thee?

**BOTTOM**

What do you see? you see an asshead of your own, do you?

*Exit SNOUT*

*Re-enter QUINCE*

**QUINCE**

Bless thee, Bottom! bless thee! thou art  
translated.

*Exit*

**BOTTOM**

I see their knavery: this is to make an ass of me;  
15 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.

*Sings*

20 The ousel cock so black of hue,  
With orange-tawny bill,  
The throstle with his note so true,  
The wren with little quill,—

**TITANIA**

[Awaking] What angel wakes me from my flowery bed?

**BOTTOM**

[Sings]

25 The finch, the sparrow and the lark,  
The plain-song cuckoo gray,  
Whose note full many a man doth mark,  
And dares not answer nay;—  
for, indeed, who would set his wit to so foolish  
30 a bird? who would give a bird the lie, though he cry  
'cuckoo' never so?

**TITANIA**

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

**BOTTOM**

Methinks, mistress, you should have little reason for that: and yet, to say the truth, reason and  
love keep little company together now-a-days; the more the pity that some honest neighbours  
will not make them friends. Nay, I can gleek upon occasion.

**TITANIA**

40 Thou art as wise as thou art beautiful.

**BOTTOM**

Not so, neither: but if I had wit enough to get out of this wood, I have enough to serve mine  
own turn.



**TITANIA**

Out of this wood do not desire to go:  
Thou shalt remain here, whether thou wilt or no.

- 45 I am a spirit of no common rate;  
The summer still doth tend upon my state;  
And I do love thee: therefore, go with me;  
I'll give thee fairies to attend on thee,  
And they shall fetch thee jewels from the deep,  
50 And sing while thou on pressed flowers dost sleep;  
And I will purge thy mortal grossness so  
That thou shalt like an airy spirit go.  
Peaseblossom! Cobweb! Moth! and Mustardseed!

*Enter PEASEBLOSSOM, COBWEB, MOTH, and MUSTARDSEED*

**PEASEBLOSSOM**

Ready.

**COBWEB**

- 55 And I.

**MOTH**

And I.

**MUSTARDSEED**

And I.

**ALL**

Where shall we go?

**TITANIA**

- Be kind and courteous to this gentleman;  
60 Hop in his walks and gambol in his eyes;  
Feed him with apricocks and dewberries,  
With purple grapes, green figs, and mulberries;  
The honey-bags steal from the humble-bees,  
And for night-tapers crop their waxen thighs  
65 And light them at the fiery glow-worm's eyes,  
To have my love to bed and to arise;  
And pluck the wings from Painted butterflies  
To fan the moonbeams from his sleeping eyes:  
Nod to him, elves, and do him courtesies.

**PEASEBLOSSOM**

- 70 Hail, mortal!

**COBWEB**

Hail!

**MOTH**

Hail!

**MUSTARDSEED**

Hail!

**BOTTOM**

I cry your worship's mercy, heartily: I beseech your worship's name.

**COBWEB**

75 Cobweb.

**BOTTOM**

I shall desire you of more acquaintance, good Master Cobweb: if I cut my finger, I shall make bold with you. Your name, honest gentleman?

**PEASEBLOSSOM**

Peaseblossom.

**BOTTOM**

80 I pray you, commend me to Mistress Squash, your mother, and to Master Peascod, your father.  
Good Master Peaseblossom, I shall desire you of more acquaintance too. Your name, I beseech you, sir?

**MUSTARDSEED**

Mustardseed.

**BOTTOM**

85 Good Master Mustardseed, I know your patience well: that same cowardly, giant-like ox-beef hath devoured many a gentleman of your house: I promise you your kindred had made my eyes water ere now. I desire your more acquaintance, good Master Mustardseed.

**TITANIA**

Come, wait upon him; lead him to my bower.

The moon methinks looks with a watery eye;

And when she weeps, weeps every little flower,

Lamenting some enforced chastity.

26. All of the following are sources of humor in this scene **EXCEPT**
- (A) puns
  - (B) dramatic irony
  - (C) mischief
  - (D) character misidentification
  - (E) character naivety
27. The difference between Titania's and Bottom's speech is
- (A) blank verse and free verse.
  - (B) blank verse and prose.
  - (C) heroic couplets and prose.
  - (D) rhymed verse and prose.
  - (E) rhymed verse and blank verse.
28. Lines 43-47 suggest that Titania's personality would be characterized as
- (A) strong-willed.
  - (B) wrathful.
  - (C) jealous.
  - (D) capricious.
  - (E) vengeful.
29. Titania's "love" for Bottom emphasizes what theme of the play?
- (A) madness and reason
  - (B) love and blindness
  - (C) love as madness
  - (D) love at first sight
  - (E) irrationality of love
30. All of the following are ways Titania expresses her "love" **EXCEPT** that she
- (A) feeds him.
  - (B) promises to transform him.
  - (C) provides him with servants.
  - (D) sings to him.
  - (E) takes him to her home.

## Multiple Choice Answers With Explanations

1. All of the following are probably true of Lysander and Demetrius EXCEPT
  - (A) **Lysander is of higher social standing.**  
Lysander: I am, my lord, as well derived as he,  
As well possess'd;
  - (B) Lysander has energetically pursued Hermia.  
Egeus: Thou, thou, Lysander, thou hast given her rhymes,  
And interchanged love-tokens with my child:  
Thou hast by moonlight at her window sung,  
With feigning voice verses of feigning love,  
And stolen the impression of her fantasy  
With bracelets of thy hair, rings, gawds, conceits,  
Knacks, trifles, nosegays, sweetmeats, messengers  
Of strong prevailment
  - (C) Lysander is a well-spoken gentleman.  
All of Lysander's dialogue establishes his articulate nature.
  - (D) Demetrius is a fickle lover.  
Lysander: Demetrius, I'll avouch it to his head,  
Made love to Nedar's daughter, Helena,  
And won her soul;
  - (E) Demetrius appealed to Egeus rather than wooing Hermia.  
Clearly, had Demetrius appealed to Hermia, he would not have gained Egeus' approval.
2. Egeus' choice of Demetrius for Hermia's husband is comic because
  - (A) Demetrius is a clown.  
Both Lysander and Demetrius are gentlemen.
  - (B) **it is exaggerated and unreasonable.**  
As Lysander's speech indicates, there is no reasonable reason for Egeus to prefer Demetrius. In fact, Lysander would be the better choice given Demetrius' history with Helena.
  - (C) Lysander would the better choice.  
This is true, but a simply poor choice is not an element of comic conflict. An exaggerated and unreasonable choice is.
  - (D) Theseus disapproves of the match.  
His approval or disapproval is irrelevant. He simply enforces Egeus' choice.
  - (E) it is contrary to Hermia's choice.  
This could be a source of tragedy as much as comedy.

3. The repetition of “thou” in lines 9 and 11 is an example of which rhetorical device?
- (A) anaphora  
Tempting, but anaphora applies to repetition at the beginning of successive sentences.
- (B) anadiplosis  
Anadiplosis is the repetition of the words at the end of one sentence at the beginning of the next.
- (C) **conduplicatio**
- (D) polysyndeton  
Polysyndeton is a list with conjunctions before each item.
- (E) asyndeton  
Asyndeton is list with *no* conjunctions.
4. Theseus’ support of Egeus’ suit is an example of
- (A) the power of jealousy.  
This would beg the question of who is supposed to be jealous of whom?
- (B) wrath and malice.  
This would apply to Egeus’ willingness to have Hermia so severely punished for her disobedience not to Theseus.
- (C) fear of reprisal.  
Again, the question would remain of who would seek reprisal against whom.
- (D) **rule of law.**  
Theseus: For you, fair Hermia, look you arm yourself  
To fit your fancies to your father’s will;  
Or else the law of Athens yields you up—  
Which by no means we may extenuate—  
To death, or to a vow of single life.
- (E) divine right of kings.  
This might be tempting, but Theseus is identified as duke, not king; and he later admits that even he is subject to the ancient law.
5. What does the passage suggest is Hippolyta’s reaction to Theseus’ judgment?
- I. disapproval  
II. disappointment  
III. alarm
- (A) I above  
Clearly, Hippolyta has a reaction strong enough for Theseus to comment on, but it is not clear enough that this is the specific reaction.
- (B) II above  
Clearly, Hippolyta has a reaction strong enough for Theseus to comment on, but it is not clear enough that this is the specific reaction.
- (C) III above  
Clearly, Hippolyta has a reaction strong enough for Theseus to comment on, but it is not clear enough that this is the specific reaction. However, given Hippolyta’s character, alarm does seem less likely than I and II.
- (D) **I and II above**  
Theseus: Come, my Hippolyta: what cheer, my love?
- (E) II and III above  
Again, while disapproval (I) and disappointment (II) seem within reason or Hippolyta’s character, alarm (III) does not.

6. The major contrast in this passage is between  
 (A) love and hate.  
 (B) sight and blindness.  
 (C) **love and sight.**  
 Love looks not with the eyes, but with the mind;  
 And therefore is wing'd Cupid painted blind:  
 Nor hath Love's mind of any judgement taste;  
Wings and no eyes figure unheedy haste:  
 (D) madness and reason  
 (E) daylight and darkness.
7. The archaic word *eyne* (line 17) is used to  
 (A) preserve the rhyme scheme.  
 This is tempting, but too vague.  
 (B) **complete a couplet.**  
 For ere Demetrius look'd on Hermia's eyne,  
 He hail'd down oaths that he was only mine;  
 (C) establish Helena's character.  
 This is the only noticeable use of a blatantly archaic word.  
 (D) maintain the comic mood.  
 The use of archaic words is not a comic element.  
 (E) preserve the metric pattern.  
 This would not require an archaic term.
8. When Helena says, "Love is perjured everywhere," (line 16) she means  
 (A) Cupid is fickle and unfaithful.  
 Helena's problem is not with Cupid's fickleness, but Demetrius'. Cupid is blind, not fickle.  
 (B) **men swear false love by Cupid's name.**  
 Helena's lament is that Demetrius first swore love to her and then to Hermia.  
 (C) she herself will betray the man she loves.  
 There is nothing to suggest this.  
 (D) she has been betrayed by the man she loves.  
 This is true, but is not as satisfactory an answer as B.  
 (E) Demetrius lied when he swore love to Hermia.  
 There is no evidence to suggest this. He may sincerely love her.
9. Helena's motive for revealing Hermia's elopement is to  
 (A) foil Hermia and Lysander's plan.  
 (B) send Demetrius on a futile chase.  
 (C) elope with Demetrius herself.  
 (D) **win Demetrius' gratitude and love.**  
 I will go tell him of fair Hermia's flight:  
 Then to the wood will he to-morrow night  
 Pursue her; and for this intelligence  
If I have thanks, it is a dear expense:  
But herein mean I to enrich my pain,  
To have his sight thither and back again.  
 (E) punish Hermia for stealing Demetrius.

10. Helena's frequent reference to the organs of sight probably foreshadows all of the above **EXCEPT**
- (A) confused identities.  
Puck is looking for an Athenian and a maiden. He has nothing but sight by which to find the person he is supposed to enchant.
  - (B) love at first sight.  
This is how the flower's love juice operates.
  - (C) altered appearances.  
Bottom will be given the head of an ass before Titania falls in love with him.
  - (D) **escape and chase.**  
This is an important plot element, but has nothing to do with eyes and sight.
  - (E) inaccurate perception.  
Again, there is the misidentification of the Athenians, Bottom's transformation, and the fact that the two men fall in love with the "wrong" woman.
11. The service the fairy performs for her queen is to
- (A) travel the world as a messenger.  
This is the means, not the end.
  - (B) herald the queen's arrivals.  
She tells Puck that Titania will be there that night, but this is hardly enough to make her a herald.
  - (C) tend the queen's flower garden.  
This may be tempting, but is too vague.
  - (D) lay out the queen's jewelry.  
The pearl reference is a metaphor and image for the moonlight on the dew.
  - (E) **sprinkle dew on the flowers.**  
And I serve the fairy queen,  
To dew her orbs upon the green.
12. Of what conflict do the fairy and Puck become aware?
- (A) **The king and queen both plan to assemble that night.**  
The fairy knows that Titania will be there, and Puck knows that Oberon will be, but this is the first time they are aware that both will be there at the same time.
  - (B) The queen has a new serving boy whom the king wants.  
Puck tells the fairy this story.
  - (C) Oberon and the queen are feuding.  
Puck also tells the fairy about this.
  - (D) Puck cannot resist playing practical jokes.  
This is not a conflict in the scene.
  - (E) The queen's attendant has stolen a little Indian boy.  
This is a misinterpretation of what Puck tells the fairy.

13. How does the fairy recognize Puck?
- (A) **She recognizes him by sight.**  
Either I mistake your shape and making quite,  
Or else
  - (B) She asks who he is.  
 She recognizes him first and *guesses* who he is.
  - (C) He identifies himself to her.  
 This occurs only after she identifies him.
  - (D) He causes churned butter to liquify.  
 That is names as one of his tricks, but he does not play it on her.
  - (E) She calls him Hobgoblin.  
 She acknowledges that that is one of his names, but it is not how she recognizes him.
14. The fairy and Puck's exchange in lines 31-57 serves what function?
- (A) It introduces the conflict.  
 The conflict between Oberon and Titania is not the central conflict of the play.
  - (B) It introduces Oberon's character.  
 This is a situation, not a character statement.
  - (C) **It introduces Puck's character.**  
 The exchange provides a great deal of exposition about Puck, Robin Goodfellow, and Hobgoblin.
  - (D) It foreshadows future comic events.  
 The fact that Oberon and Titania are feuding will be the impetus of much of the comic plot, but there is no clear suggestion in this scene *what* those events will entail.
  - (E) It provides comic relief.  
 There is no comic relief in a comedy.
15. The passage suggests that, physically, the fairies are
- (A) invisible.  
 We later learn that they can make themselves invisible, but this is not their natural state, nor is it suggested in this scene.
  - (B) lavishly dressed.  
 All of the jewelry and royal clothing references are actually flower and other natural imagery.
  - (C) inexplicably strong.  
 There is no evidence to suggest this.
  - (D) human-sized and similarly featured.  
 Of course, in reality, the actors are, but there are several flower references that indicate the fairies are small.
  - (E) **smaller than flowers and acorns.**  
 Puck: ...all their elves for fear  
 Creep into acorn-cups and hide them there.  
 The fairies are small enough to fit into acorn-cups (or tops)



16. Each of the following is a result of Oberon and Titania's feuding **EXCEPT**
- (A) floods.  
Titania: every pelting river made so proud  
That they have overborne their continents
  - (B) rotting crops.  
Titania: the green corn  
Hath rotted
  - (C) pestilential fogs.  
Titania: the winds, piping to us in vain,  
...have suck'd up from the sea  
*Contagious fogs...*
  - (D) diseased cattle.  
Titania: crows are fatted with the murrion flock
  - (E) **fierce wind storms.**  
The winds mentioned supply the fairies' dance music. They are not suggested as fierce storms.
17. Oberon and Titania each accuse the other of
- (A) spoiling their moonlight festivities.  
Titania blames Oberon's tantrums for this.
  - (B) causing unnatural weather.  
Titania blames Oberon's tantrums for this.
  - (C) kidnapping human babies.  
Oberon accuses Titania of this.
  - (D) **having affairs with humans.**  
Titania accuses Oberon of dallying with Hippolyta and Phillida. Oberon accuses Titania of having an affair with Theseus.
  - (E) feuding with one another.  
This is the *result* of their mutual accusations.
18. The passage suggests that the cause of Oberon and Titania's feud is
- (A) Oberon's jealousy.  
This might be tempting—Oberon is, after all, jealous of the Indian boy; but it is not as specific and satisfactory an answer as C.
  - (B) Titania's selfishness.  
Titania explains that she is not being selfish, but that the Indian boy is the son of a devotee whom Titania promised to care for.
  - (C) **the stolen Indian boy.**
  - (D) the unnatural, foul weather.  
This is the result of the feud, not the cause.
  - (E) Theseus' wedding to Hippolyta.  
This is why both Oberon and Titania are in the area.

19. In her speech (lines 58-69), Titania compares trading ships to
- (A) fairy priestesses.  
Titania describes the pregnant votaress in comparison to the wind in the ships' sails, not vice versa.
  - (B) swimmers.  
The pregnant votaress pretends to swim on the beach in imitation of the ships.
  - (C) merchant vessels.  
The trading ships *are* merchant vessels.
  - (D) Neptune's waters.  
The reference to Neptune is that Titania and her votaress sat on "Neptune's sands" (the beach) to gossip and watch the ships.
  - (E) **pregnant women.**  
...the embarked traders on the flood,  
When we have laugh'd to see the sails conceive  
And grow big-bellied with the wanton wind;
20. According to Oberon, all of the following are former lovers of Theseus EXCEPT
- (A) **Hippolyta.**  
Hippolyta is Theseus' *current* lover and betrothed.
  - (B) Perigenia.  
Titania describes her as "whom he ravished."
  - (C) Aegle.  
She is a nymph, daughter of Panopeus, for whom Theseus left Ariadne.
  - (D) Ariadne.  
She is the daughter of King Minos of Crete. Theseus seduced her to learn the secret of the labyrinth and then abandoned her.
  - (E) Antiopa.  
According to Titania, Antiopa was another woman whose trust Theseus violated for the sake of his love for Aegle.
21. Part of the humor of this scene is based on the punning of what word?
- (A) turf
  - (B) **lie**  
HERMIA  
Nay, good Lysander; for my sake, my dear,  
Lie [down to sleep] further off...do not lie [down to sleep] so near.  
LYSANDER  
...For lying [down to sleep] so, Hermia, I do not [tell a] lie.  
HERMIA  
...If Hermia meant to say Lysander [told a] lied.  
But, gentle friend, for love and courtesy  
Lie [down to sleep] further off; in human modesty,
  - (C) knit
  - (D) oath
  - (E) troth

22. For comic effect, what language convention does Shakespeare alter?
- (A) The rhythm is iambic pentameter.  
This is the language convention, not an alteration.
  - (B) The scene is written in couplets.  
Much of it is, but not all of it.
  - (C) Lysander and Hermia both speak in puns.  
There is at least one pun, but this has nothing to do with any language convention.
  - (D) The scene is written in blank verse.  
Blank verse is unrhymed, and this scene rhymes.
  - (E) **The scene is written in rhymed verse.**  
The Elizabethan convention was, of course, blank verse. While the scene is not written *entirely* in couplets (thus eliminating B), it is written in rhymed verse for a lighter, comic effect.
23. Which word best describes Hermia's behavior in this scene?
- (A) **coy**  
Her insistence that Lysander *not* sleep beside her can be described only as coy.
  - (B) shrewish  
She is adamant, but not mean or nasty, as is suggested by "shrewish."
  - (C) confused  
She is consistent and adamant in this scene.
  - (D) defiant  
Her words are forceful, but not strong enough to be considered defiant.
  - (E) loving  
Perhaps, but her emphasis on her modesty is more coy than loving.
24. Which word best describes Lysander's attitude in this scene?
- (A) lost  
They are lost, but this is not the governing attitude of Lysander's part of the conversation.
  - (B) despondent  
There is no evidence of this.
  - (C) loving  
This is tempting, but not in the sense of amorous (E).
  - (D) apologetic  
There is no evidence to support this.
  - (E) **amorous**  
The issue is Lysander's wanting to sleep with Hermia as her husband.

25. The audience realizes the nature of the comic plot at the moment when
- (A) Puck puts the love-juice on Lysander's eyes.  
This provides a hint, but does not *establish* exactly where the plot is going to lead.
  - (B) Hermia prays their love will never end.  
This foreshadows what might happen, but does not suggest specific plot events.
  - (C) **Helena enters with Demetrius.**  
With the love-juice on Lysander's eyes, now that Helena is on stage, it is apparent that Lysander will awake and see her.
  - (D) Puck exits without seeing Demetrius.  
Again, until Helena enters, we do not know exactly where the plot is going to lead.
  - (E) Puck sees Lysander and Hermia sleeping separately.  
Again, this is a *hint*, but not a specific, clear suggestion.
26. All of the following are sources of humor in this scene **EXCEPT**
- (A) puns  
There are puns on "ass" as well as most of the fairies' names.
  - (B) dramatic irony  
The audience knows that Bottom has been transformed, but Bottom does not.
  - (C) mischief  
Bottom's transformation is the result of Puck's mischief.
  - (D) **character misidentification**  
There is no misidentification, simply transformation and bewitched love.
  - (E) character naivety  
Bottom rather naively accepts the fairies' ministrations.
27. The difference between Titania's and Bottom's speech is
- (A) blank verse and free verse.  
Titania speaks in rhyme, not blank verse. Bottom speaks in prose.
  - (B) blank verse and prose.  
Titania speaks in rhyme, not blank verse.
  - (C) heroic couplets and prose.  
Titania speaks mostly in couplets, but not consistently.
  - (D) **rhymed verse and prose.**
  - (E) rhymed verse and blank verse.  
Bottom speaks in prose, not unrhymed iambic pentameter.

28. Lines 43-47 suggest that Titania's personality is  
 (A) **strong-willed.**  
 Bottom desires to leave the forest, but Titania essentially warns him not to.  
 (B) wrathful.  
 There is no occasion for wrath in this scene.  
 (C) jealous.  
 There is no occasion for jealousy in this scene.  
 (D) capricious.  
 She is bewitched and "enamored of an ass," but not necessarily capricious.  
 (E) vengeful.  
 There is no occasion for vengeance in this scene. (Oberon is the one seeking vengeance.)
29. Titania's "love" for Bottom emphasizes what theme of the play?  
 (A) Madness and reason.  
 (B) Love and blindness.  
 (C) Love as madness.  
 (D) **Love at first sight.**  
 All of the distractors are tempting, but the love juice affects the victim's sight, and Oberon's intent was for Titania to fall in love with something that looks grotesque—hence Puck's transformation of Bottom.  
 (E) Irrationality of love.
30. All of the following are ways Titania expresses her "love" EXCEPT  
 (A) she feeds him.  
 Feed him with apricocks and dewberries,  
 With purple grapes, green figs, and mulberries;  
 The honey-bags steal from the humble-bees,  
 (B) she promises to transform him.  
 And I will purge thy mortal grossness so  
 That thou shalt like an airy spirit go.  
 (C) she provides him with servants.  
 Nod to him, elves, and do him courtesies...Come, wait upon him;  
 (D) **she sings to him.**  
 She is awakened by his singing. She does not sing.  
 (E) she takes him to her home.  
 Come, wait upon him; lead him to my bower.

# *A Midsummer Night's Dream*

## Advanced Placement in English Literature and Composition Teaching Unit

### Study Guide Teacher's Copy

#### Act I, scene i

1. When will Theseus and Hippolyta be married?

*Theseus and Hippolyta will be married in four days, on the New Moon.*

2. Explain Theseus' comparison of waiting to a "step-dame or a dowager."

*Theseus is saying that waiting for the arrival of their wedding day is like a young man's waiting for his step-mother or dowager aunt to die so he can inherit the money.*

3. Contrast Theseus' attitude toward waiting with Hippolyta's.

*Theseus is impatient ("how slow / This old moon wanes!") while Hippolyta is very willing to wait ("Four days will quickly steep themselves in night;/Four nights will quickly dream away the time.")*

4. How did Theseus and Hippolyta become betrothed?

*Apparently, Theseus "won" his warrior bride in battle.*

5. What complaint does Egeus bring before Theseus?

*Egeus has chosen Demetrius as his daughter Hermia's husband, but she refuses to marry him, loving Lysander instead.*

6. What choice does Theseus offer Hermia?

*Hermia must either (1) marry her father's choice (Demetrius), (2) face death, or (3) cloister herself as a nun.*

7. For what reason does Egeus prefer Lysander?

*There is no apparent reason. Lysander and Demetrius are equal in social rank, breeding, etc.*

8. What fact in Demetrius' past might render him a less worthy choice for Hermia's husband?

*Before courting Hermia, Demetrius courted and won Helena, who still dotes on him.*

9. What plan do Lysander and Hermia devise?

*The next night, they will elope. Lysander has a widowed aunt on the other side of the forest, beyond Theseus' jurisdiction. There they can be married.*

10. How does Hermia's speech change after Lysander reveals his plan?

*In her excitement and happiness, Hermia switches from blank verse to heroic couplets.*

11. What effect is created by Helena's picking up Hermia's rhyme scheme?

*Shakespeare indicates that the two young women are essentially indistinguishable from one another, just as Lysander and Demetrius are.*

12. What does Helena decide to do?

*She will tell Demetrius of Lysander and Hermia's planned elopement.*

## Act I, scene ii

1. Who are the six characters in this scene and what are they planning?

*They are six craftsmen of Athens, and they are preparing a play to offer to Theseus as an entertainment at his wedding.*

2. Why do these men speak in prose?

*The prose indicates that they are not educated or sophisticated.*

3. What are the sources of comedy in this scene?

*First is the contradiction of "rude mechanicals" attempting an endeavor like a play. Then, there is the reluctance of the men to accept assigned roles, and the seriousness with which they approach their project. Most obvious is Bottom's overeager desire to play every role.*

4. What do we learn about Francis Flute?

*Flute is most likely the youngest man in the company. First, only boys or young men were chosen to play women in the Elizabethan theater. Secondly, he protests being assigned Thisby's role because he is just beginning to grow his beard.*

5. Why must Bottom play Pyramus?

*Quince says that Pyramus was “sweet-faced...proper...lovely...[and] gentlemanly.” Therefore, Bottom is probably a handsome man with a gentle voice despite his overzealousness. NOTE: Some students may interpret Quince’s justification for Bottom’s playing Pyramus as flattery to quiet him down. This is also an acceptable interpretation.*

6. Where and when do the mechanicals plan to meet to rehearse?

*They will meet the next night in the woods outside of Athens.*

## **Act II, scene i**

1. What is the purpose of the exchange between Puck and the fairy?

*The exchange is largely exposition: Puck’s identity, the fact that Oberon and Titania are feuding, and the reason for their feud are explained.*

2. Why are Oberon and Titania feuding?

*Titania has recently gained a little Indian boy for her retinue, and Oberon wants the boy for his.*

3. What is the nature of Oberon and Titania’s relationship?

*Their marriage seems to be characterized by feuding, jealousy, infidelity, and distrust. She tells her fairies that she has “forsworn his bed.” He calls her a “wanton” (a promiscuous woman), and they accuse each other of a series of infidelities.*

4. What does Titania claim are the results of their feud?

*The natural world is upset. The seasons are confused. Rivers are flooded. Crops and cattle are dying.*

5. Why is Titania adamant about not giving Oberon the Indian boy?

*The boy is not an ordinary, kidnapped changeling, but the son of one of Titania’s favorite devotees who died in childbirth. Because the mother and Titania were so close, Titania promised her she would bring up the boy.*

6. In their feud, who seems to be the most unreasonable?

*Oberon is jealous of the Indian boy, even after Titania explains the situation to him. She seems to offer reconciliation and invites him to dance with her and her retinue, but he spoils the mood by demanding the child again.*



7. What is the purpose of Oberon's reminding Puck about the singing mermaid and the flower struck by arrow?

*This is exposition for the audience's benefit to know what the properties of the love-flower are and how it gained those properties.*

8. What is significant about the way the love-juice works?

*Sprinkled on the eyes, the juice makes the person fall in love with the first thing he or she sees upon awaking. The focus is, again, on love and sight.*

9. What coincidence promises or threatens to complicate the comic plot of the play?

*While Oberon is waiting for Puck to arrive with the love-flower, Helena and Demetrius enter. Had Oberon not been waiting for the flower for his revenge on Titania, he would not have been in a position to decide to "help" Helena.*

10. Why does Oberon announce that he is invisible?

*This is the only way the audience will know.*

11. What complication in the plot is likely given the story facts we have so far?

*Given that the four lovers are in the woods and that Oberon has the love juice, it is likely that, in trying to help Helena, there will be a confusion of identities and the wrong people will fall in "love at first sight" with the wrong people.*

12. How does Oberon identify Demetrius and Helena for Puck?

*He identifies them simply as "an Athenian" and "a sweet Athenian lady."*

## **Act II, scene ii**

1. How does language contribute to the comedy of this scene?

*The scene is written in rhymed verse as opposed to blank verse or prose.*

2. What low comedy does Shakespeare employ in this scene?

*First, there is the situational humor of an eager Lysander wanting to sleep with Hermia, even before their wedding, while a modest Hermia wants them to sleep separately.*

*Second, is the series of puns on "lie" (as in to recline to sleep) and "lie" (as in to tell an untruth).*

3. What are the “weeds of Athens” Puck refers to?

*“Weeds” is a term for clothing. Lysander and Hermia are dressed in Athenian garments.*

4. Explain how accident and coincidence continue to create the comic effect of the scene and the play.

*It is by accident that Puck—seeing an Athenian youth and maiden—mistakes Lysander for Demetrius and places the love juice on the wrong eyes.*

*It is by coincidence that (again) Demetrius and Helena enter the same part of the forest where Lysander and Hermia are sleeping. It is by coincidence that Helena is the first person Lysander sees when he awakes.*

5. What can the audience infer about Hermia and Helena’s physical appearance?

*Lysander’s metaphor of the raven and the dove suggest that Hermia may be dark while Helena is fair.*

6. On what mildly suspenseful note does Act II end?

*Titania is anointed with the love juice and we wait to see with what vile creature she will become enamored. Lysander now loves Helena, but she believes he is cruelly tormenting her. Hermia has been abandoned in the woods.*

### **Act III, scene i**

1. Having reached the third act of the play, what should the reader expect from the plot?

*The reader can expect some sort of high point or climax.*

2. Again, how does language indicate the social and educational levels of the mechanicals?

*The mechanicals are still speaking in prose to indicate their lack of sophistication.*

3. What is comic about the mechanicals’ expectation of how their play will be received?

*The mechanicals overestimate their ability to the extent that they believe the audience will believe the play is real and will be horrified by the violence and the lion.*

4. What is comic about the mechanicals’ concerns with the staging of their play?

*They do not seem to grasp the concept of feigning or creating a semblance of reality. When the play calls for a scene in moonlight, they worry about being able to perform in actual moonlight. When a scene takes place beside a wall, they worry about being able to construct a wall at the palace.*

5. Why does the rehearsal of the play attract Puck's attention?

*There are two reasons. First, the rehearsal is taking place very near where Titania is sleeping, and he feels an obligation to watch over his queen. Secondly, he still needs to fulfill Oberon's command that he arrange for Titania to awake and fall in love with something grotesque.*

6. What comic device does Shakespeare employ when he has Bottom read, "odious savours sweet," instead of "odours savours sweet"?

*This is sort of a malapropism, the unsophisticated misuse of one word in place of another, correct word.*

7. What is ironic about Bottom's transformation?

*Bottom's name is, of course, "Bottom," and, from the very beginning of their plans for the play, he has acted like an "ass." This transformation is a sort of visual pun, as well as an example of dramatic irony in that the audience knows of Bottom's transformation, but Bottom does not.*

8. What elements of farce does Shakespeare utilize in this scene?

*The play rehearsal is farcical in that the men have no idea what they are doing, almost as if none of them has ever seen a play before—not knowing whether, or when, to enter, wanting multiple prologues to explain that the play is not real, their uncertainty about how to stage the play, Bottom's bossiness, the use of malapropisms, etc.*

*The running of the mechanicals on and off stage is farcical almost to the point of slapstick.*

*The dramatic irony and visual pun are farcical.*

*The disparate image of the queen of the fairies falling in "love" with the unintelligent, unsophisticated, ass-headed weaver is pure farce.*

9. Contrast Titania's speech with Bottom's.

*As she has throughout the play, Titania is speaking in rhymed verse, and Bottom—as he has throughout the play—is speaking in prose.*

10. Explain the low humor in Bottom's initial exchanges with Titania's retinue.

*Bottom's introduction to Titania's fairies is humorous in that he takes their names literally: Cobweb—as a gauzy thread for stitching or binding a cut.*

*Peaseblossom—child of squash and the pea pod.*

*Mustardseed—as the source of mustard, a condiment for beef.*

## Act III, scene ii

1. What further complication to the Athenian lovers plot occurs in this scene?

*Puck and Oberon become aware of Puck's error and now Demetrius is also enchanted by the love-juice.*

2. What does Hermia fear? Why?

*Hermia fears that Demetrius has killed Lysander. There is no other reason for Lysander to have left Hermia alone and unprotected in the forest.*

3. How contrite is Puck for his mistake?

*Not a bit. He is eager to see how it will play out with Lysander and Demetrius both loving Helena.*

4. Why do Hermia and Helena quarrel?

*Hermia believes Helena has stolen Lysander from her, and Helena believes Hermia has set everyone against her to mock her.*

5. What action is implied by Demetrius' telling Lysander, "If she cannot entreat, I can compel"?

*Demetrius is threatening Lysander with violence.*

6. What is further implied about Hermia's and Helena's appearance? How is it implied?

*Lysander calls Hermia an "Ethiope," and "tawny Tartar," implying that she is dark-skinned.*

*Helena calls her a "puppet," to which Hermia responds that she is being mocked because she is small. Similarly, Helena refers to Hermia as "lower" than herself. She also calls Hermia "little," though a shrew.*

*Lysander calls her a "dwarf," "a minimus," "an acorn," and "a bead," all suggesting Hermia's diminutive stature.*

*By comparison, Hermia calls Helena a "painted maypole" suggesting that she is tall and thin, at least by comparison to Hermia..*

7. How close does this comedy come to being a tragedy?

*In the scene when Lysander and Demetrius' rivalry threatens violence, the swordfight could very easily give the play a tragic turn.*

8. How does Oberon prevent this tragedy?

*Oberon instructs Puck to keep Lysander and Demetrius apart until they both fall asleep, and the spells can be reversed.*

9. Explain what is going on in the action.

*Puck disguises himself as Lysander to lure Demetrius and as Demetrius to lure Lysander until both fall asleep.*

10. At what point in the plot structure does this act end?

*The climax has passed—the confrontation of the four lovers—the spells have been reversed (except for Demetrius’ loving Helena), and the couples will be ready to return to Athens when they awake.*

## Act IV, scene i

1. What does Oberon confess to Puck while watching Titania and Bottom asleep?

*While Titania was enamored of Bottom, Oberon confronted her with this most recent—and undeniable—infidelity. In her penitence, she agreed to give Oberon the Indian boy, who is now a part of Oberon’s retinue.*

2. What is implausible about Theseus’ explanation for the lovers’ being in the woods?

*Theseus attributes their being there to wanting to observe the “rite of May,” when throughout the play—and by the title—Shakespeare has suggested that the play takes place in June.*

3. What other inconsistency is there in this scene?

*Theseus remembers that this is the day Hermia was to make her choice, i.e. Theseus and Hippolyta’s wedding day. Yet, that day was four days off in I,i and this morning can—at most—be only the third day. The wedding and Hermia’s choice should actually take place the next day.*

4. How is the action of the scene with Theseus and the lovers typical of a Shakespearean festival comedy?

*There is a general sense of reconciliation among all of the warring parties except for one. Egeus is the one who is not reconciled to the developments in the play.*

5. How is this reconciliation reached, and why is Egeus upset?

*Demetrius admits that he no longer loves Hermia and wishes to return to Helena. Theseus rules against Egeus' suit, thus allowing Demetrius to marry Helena and Lysander to marry Demetrius.*

6. How do the lovers remember the events of the night before?

*They remember it all as a dream.*

7. How does Bottom remember his experiences?

*He also recalls them as a dream.*

## **Act IV, scene ii**

1. What is significant about the action's return to Athens.

*The enchanted, natural-world, irrational part of the plot is ended; and we have returned to the world of human law and reason.*

## **Act V**

1. What theme is reinforced by Hippolyta and Theseus' exchange at the beginning of this scene?

*The theme of love and madness is reinforced by Hippolyta and Theseus' reaction to the lovers' tale.*

2. Why does Theseus agree to see the mechanicals' play despite Philostrate's protests?

*As a ruler, Theseus understands that it is the intention in the gift, greeting, or show of respect and affection that matters more than the delivery.*

3. What are the sources of humor in the play-within-the play?

- (1) *the players continually “break character” to respond to the audience’s, often rude, comments about the play and the performances;*
- (2) *the script itself is comic;*
- (3) *the players’ performances are riddled with errors: “If we offend, it is with our good will...,” “see a voice...,” “hear my Thisby’s face...,” “Ninny’s tomb” instead of Ninus’s tomb—a mistake they’d made earlier;*
- (4) *Lion (Snug) delivers his prologue to explain that he is not really a lion;*
- (5) *Moonshine seems to want to speak, although he apparently has no lines to deliver;*
- (6) *Bottom pops up from being “dead” to explain the aftermath of the play: the wall is torn down, and the fathers repent of their feud.*

4. Explain the pun in Theseus’ line: “No die, but an ace, for him; for he is but one.”

*In a deck of cards (and many dice games), the ace of each suit counts as the one. The two of each suit is also called a deuce. Since Pyramus/Bottom is a single person, he is not a die/deuce, but an ace.*

5. Explain the end of the play.

*After the play-within-the-play and the Bergomask dance, the three bridal couples retire to bed, and Oberon and Titania and their fairies bless the couples and their offspring. Puck then offers his Apology to the audience, requesting applause instead of condemnation.*

6. What is the purpose of an Apology at the end of a comedy?

*Comedies, because they poke fun at a person, group, or social value, are potentially offensive and much more subject to authoritarian censorship than other forms of literature. Therefore, it was a convention to end the comedy with an Apology, asking for the audience’s indulgence if anything in the play offended anyone in the audience.*

# *A Midsummer Night's Dream*

## Advanced Placement in English Literature and Composition Teaching Unit

### Study Guide Student Copy

#### Act I, scene i

1. When will Theseus and Hippolyta be married?
2. Explain Theseus' comparison of waiting to a "step-dame or a dowager."
3. Contrast Theseus' attitude toward waiting with Hippolyta's.
4. How did Theseus and Hippolyta become betrothed?
5. What complaint does Egeus bring before Theseus?



6. What choice does Theseus offer Hermia?
7. For what reason does Egeus prefer Lysander?
8. What fact in Demetrius' past might render him a less worthy choice for Hermia's husband?
9. What plan do Lysander and Hermia devise?
10. How does Hermia's speech change after Lysander reveals his plan?
11. What effect is created by Helena's picking up Hermia's rhyme scheme?
12. What does Helena decide to do?

## Act I, scene ii

1. Who are the six characters in this scene and what are they planning?
2. Why do these men speak in prose?
3. What are the sources of comedy in this scene?
4. What do we learn about Francis Flute?
5. Why must Bottom play Pyramus?
6. Where and when do the mechanicals plan to meet to rehearse?

## Act II, scene i

1. What is the purpose of the exchange between Puck and the fairy?
2. Why are Oberon and Titania feuding?
3. What is the nature of Oberon and Titania's relationship?
4. What does Titania claim are the results of their feud?
5. Why is Titania adamant about not giving Oberon the Indian boy?
6. In their feud, who seems to be the most unreasonable?

7. What is the purpose of Oberon's reminding Puck about the singing mermaid and the flower struck by arrow?
8. What is significant about the way the love-juice works?
9. What coincidence promises or threatens to complicate the comic plot of the play?
10. Why does Oberon announce that he is invisible?
11. What complication in the plot is likely given the story facts we have so far?
12. How does Oberon identify Demetrius and Helena for Puck?

## Act II, scene ii

1. How does language contribute to the comedy of this scene?
2. What low comedy does Shakespeare employ in this scene?
3. What are the “weeds of Athens” Puck refers to?
4. Explain how accident and coincidence continue to create the comic effect of the scene and the play.
5. What can the audience infer about Hermia and Helena’s physical appearance?
6. On what mildly suspenseful note does Act II end?

### Act III, scene i

1. Having reached the third act of the play, what should the reader expect from the plot?
2. Again, how does language indicate the social and educational levels of the mechanicals?
3. What is comic about the mechanicals' expectation of how their play will be received?
4. What is comic about the mechanicals' concerns with the *staging* of their play?
5. Why does the rehearsal of the play attract Puck's attention?

6. What comic device does Shakespeare employ when he has Bottom read, “odious savours sweet,” instead of “odours savours sweet”?
7. What is ironic about Bottom’s transformation?
8. What elements of farce does Shakespeare utilize in this scene?
9. Contrast Titania’s speech with Bottom’s.
10. Explain the low humor in Bottom’s initial exchanges with Titania’s retinue.

### Act III, scene ii

1. What further complication to the Athenian lovers plot occurs in this scene?
2. What does Hermia fear? Why?
3. How contrite is Puck for his mistake?
4. Why do Hermia and Helena quarrel?
5. What action is implied by Demetrius' telling Lysander, "If she cannot entreat, I can compel"?



6. What is further implied about Hermia's and Helena's appearance? How is it implied?
7. How close does this comedy come to being a tragedy?
8. How does Oberon prevent this tragedy?
9. Explain what is going on in the action.
10. At what point in the plot structure does this act end?

### Act IV, scene i

1. What does Oberon confess to Puck while watching Titania and Bottom asleep?
2. What is implausible about Theseus' explanation for the lovers' being in the woods?
3. What other inconsistency is there in this scene?
4. How is the action of the scene with Theseus and the lovers typical of a Shakespearean festival comedy?
5. How is this reconciliation reached, and why is Egeus upset?
6. How do the lovers remember the events of the night before?
7. How does Bottom remember his experiences?

### Act IV, scene ii

1. What is significant about the action's return to Athens.

## Act V

1. What theme is reinforced by Hippolyta and Theseus' exchange at the beginning of this scene?
2. Why does Theseus agree to see the mechanicals' play despite Philostrate's protests?
3. What are the sources of humor in the play-within-the play?
4. Explain the pun in Theseus' line: "No die, but an ace, for him; for he is but one."
5. Explain the end of the play.
6. What is the purpose of an Apology at the end of a comedy?

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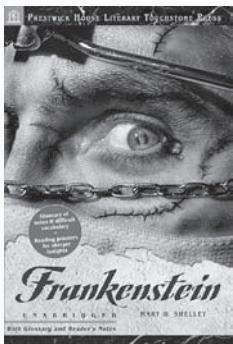
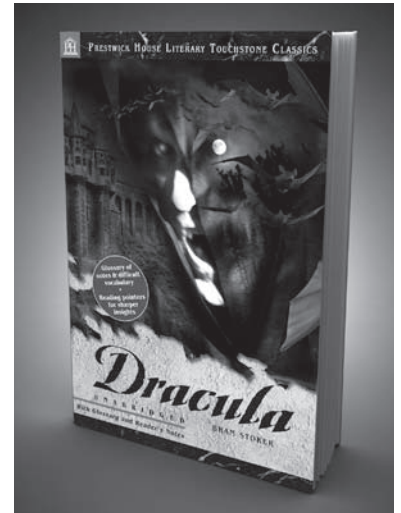
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