

*A Midsummer Night's Dream by William Shakespeare*  
Study Guide by Janet Somerville

**THEMATIC WARMUP**  
**RELATIONSHIP ROLEPLAY**

*Holly and Helen have been best friends since elementary school. They grew up in the same neighborhood, and treat each other like sisters. When Holly fell in love with Luke, Helen was a little envious of Holly's relationship, but she was also happy for her friend.*

*Holly wanted Helen to be as happy as she was, so she set Helen up with Luke's friend, David. David and Helen went out for a few months, but then David broke it off. Helen was distraught. She didn't know why he would dump her; he had said that he loved her.*

*This morning at school, Helen overheard one of David's friends say that David was in love with Holly.*

★ **Scene 1 ~ Helen and Holly**

Helen confronts Holly about David.

Holly must convince Helen that she is not interested in David.

★ **Scene 2 ~ David and Helen**

Helen must convince David to stay in their relationship.

★ **Scene 3 ~ Holly and Luke**

Holly asks Luke to help her convince Helen she doesn't like David.

Luke wants to go confront David.

★ **Scene 4 ~ Luke and David**

Luke confronts David about his feelings for Luke's girlfriend, Holly.

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Questions for discussion/homework:

What were the similarities/differences between the role play and the scene in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*?

- How do the characters handle the situation?
- How would you handle it?
- How would Helena be different if she were alive today? Hermia? Lysander? Demetrius?

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**Journal Writing** -- choose a character from the play (Helena, Hermia, Lysander, or Demetrius) and **write a 250-word entry in his or her diary about this situation.**

**ACT ONE, Scene One**

What Characters Want

- A) List all of the characters in the opening scene
- B) What does each character want?
- C) Cite proof from the play.

<i>Character Name</i>	<i>What He/She Wants</i>	<i>Proof</i>
e.g. Theseus	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- marry Hippolyta</li><li>  NOW</li><li>- he's impatient</li></ul>	"our nuptial hour draws on apace...but, O, methinks, how slow this old moon wanes!"

*ACT ONE, Scene Two*

1) Bottom's imagination is straightforward. He knows only the following two types of male roles: *a) the tragic grieving lover b) the raging tyrant.*

Write a detailed description of a popular entertainer or actor you know who Bottom would think plays the roles of each of these two types. Use 3-5 sentences for each.

*a) the tragic grieving lover*

*b) the raging tyrant*

2) During Shakespeare's time, actors frequently added "slapstick" touches. For example, the actor playing Bottom pretended that his sword got stuck as he tried to draw it from its sheath. Predict THREE other slapstick problems that could happen to Quince's players when they perform "Pyramus and Thisbe" as they try to manage their props, costumes and staging of the play.

## NARCISSISM

- used by Freud to describe a person who is completely SELF-ABSORBED
- recall the Myth of Narcissus who refuses love and is cursed to look at his image in a pool (our version of a mirror)
- WHY ARE THE FOLLOWING CHARACTERS POSSIBLY NARCISSISTIC?

Bottom	
Egeus	
Helena	

**ACT ONE: Creative Extension**

**You are going to create a thematic soundtrack for ACT ONE. Your theme is LOVE.**

Design an album cover and list at least 3 musical selections to accompany scenes in Act One. Will your songs be popular songs? Classical? Jazz? “Golden oldies?” Indicate where in the scene you would insert each piece. If the music has lyrics, provide some of them as well as the composer’s name.

**EVALUATION RUBRIC**

**Completeness** (album cover, at least 3 musical selections, description of where each piece is inserted, lyrics and composers listed)

5      6      7      8      9      10

**Creativity**

1      2      3

**Neatness**

0      1      2

**Total**      **/15 marks**

**ACT TWO, Scene One**

We meet the FAIRIES.

Queen Titania

King Oberon

Puck a.k.a. Robin Goodfellow

There is an ongoing conflict between Titania and Oberon. Their discord is reflected in the natural world and everything is not as it should be.

PATHETIC FALLACY: weather

**RHYTHM AND METER**

**ACT TWO, Scene One**

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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 *pass-ing fell* and *wrath*  
Be-*cause* that *she*, as *her at-ten-dant*, *hath*  
A *love-ly boy stol-en* from an *In-dian king*;  
She *nev-er had* so *sweet* a *chan-ge-ling*.  
And *jeal-ous O-ber-on* would *have* the *child*  
Knight of his *train*, to *trace* the *for-ests wild*.  
But *she* per-*force* with-*holds* and *lov-ed* boy,  
Crowns *him* with *flow-ers*, and *makes* him *all* her *joy*.  
And *now* they *nev-er meet* in *grove* or *green*,  
By *foun-tain clear*, or *span-gled star-light sheen*,  
But *they* do *square*, that *all* their *elves* for *fear*  
Creep *in-to a-corn cups* and *hide* them *there*.

**Memory Work**

Using the prompt words, copy out the passage you memorized from Act Two, Scene One.

Set your... \_\_\_\_\_

The fairyland \_\_\_\_\_

His mother \_\_\_\_\_

And in \_\_\_\_\_

Full \_\_\_\_\_

And sat \_\_\_\_\_

Marking \_\_\_\_\_

When \_\_\_\_\_

And grow \_\_\_\_\_

Which she, \_\_\_\_\_

Following \_\_\_\_\_

Would imitate \_\_\_\_\_

To fetch \_\_\_\_\_

As from a \_\_\_\_\_

But she, \_\_\_\_\_

And for \_\_\_\_\_

And for \_\_\_\_\_

*Act Two*

*Writing Assignment*

Pick TWO characters from this list:

- Oberon      - Titania      - Hermia      - Helena
- Demetrius   - Lysander      - Puck

Create a CHART in which you include the following information about the character up until the end of ACT TWO:

<i>Scene</i>	<i>What the character says or does...</i>	<i>What does this reveal about the character?</i>

## ACT TWO

### Small Group Activity: CONSIDER THE WHOLE ACT

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Every character in Act 2 has a problem or is in some sort of difficulty. **Choose ONE character and invent a product that might help the character solve his/her problem.** (e.g. What product could help Helena win Demetrius' love? What could help Puck get his boss Oberon's instructions straight?)

- a) Brainstorm below different approaches to selling the product.
- b) Discuss which sales pitch most suits the product you are creating.

The PITCH:

**Produce a commercial advertisement** for your product which you will act out next class. You may use props if you think they will help your pitch.

Your piece should be 15-30 seconds long.

## ***ACT THREE, Scene One***

### ***Pyramus and Thisbe***

- characters are concerned about the violence in their production
  - Pyramus kills himself with a sword
  - Lion roars
    - SOLUTION: provide a prologue explaining to the ladies in the audience that Bottom is NOT Pyramus but Bottom the Weaver; that Snug is NOT a lion, but Snug the joiner
- SPECIAL EFFECTS
  - Moonshine (open the casement window or have a person carry a lantern and play “Moonshine”)
  - Wall (have a human slap on plaster and hold his fingers to represent “the chink of the wall”)

### ***Bottom’s transformation***

- Puck uses his magic to turn Bottom into an ass (the mechanical are ironically afraid of him)

### ***BLIND LOVE***

***Love looks not with the eyes but with the mind  
And therefore is winged Cupid painted blind.***

- a)*** Titania’s love for Bottom (love juice)
  - b)*** Lysander’s love for Helena (love juice)
  - c)*** Helena’s love for Demetrius (lack of reason)
  - d)*** Demetrius’s love for Hermia (unrequited)
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### Titania’s treatment of Bottom

- has his tongue tied
- *out of the woods do not desire to go*
- has her train of fairies serve his physical needs

***ACT THREE, Scene One***  
***Homework assignment***

1) In ACT ONE Helena says, “love looks not with the eyes but with the mind.”

List as many examples of “blind love” from the play as you can.

2) Writers compare objects or other people to a character so they can communicate a character trait. If Helena was compared to a rock star, who might the rock star be? If Hermia was compared to an animal, which animal might it be? Give reasons for your choices.

3) Bottom wants to personalize the “wall” in “Pyramus and Thisbe.” What would a wall say if it were in one of the following places: English class; the gym; a room at home. Choose one and write a paragraph about “A Moment in the Life of a Wall.”

## ***ACT FOUR, Scene One***

THEME : Dream vs. Reality

- *Methought I was enamour'd of an ass*
  - Titania
- *Are you sure that we are awake? It seems to me that yet we sleep, we dream.*
  - Demetrius
- *I have had a most rare vision. I have had a dream, past the wit of man to say what dream it was...*
  - Bottom

### ***Love corrections***

- 1) Oberon restores Titania's former sight (her true love is for him)
- 2) Lysander (without the love potion sees clearly) loves Hermia
- 3)

★ Theseus overrules Egeus and allows the lovers to marry with him and Hippolyta.

## **ACT FOUR**

A) If you were the costume designer for the play, how would you costume each of the following groups:

- a) the people of the palace (Theseus, Hippolyta, Egeus, Hermia, Helena, Lysander and Demetrius)
- b) the artisans (Bottom, Snout, Flute, Snug, Quince, etc.)
- c) the fairies (Titania, Oberon, Puck)

1. Describe each costume in detail. Remember to consider the time period and place for which you are designing.
2. Sketch the costume for ONE of the characters. Be sure to colour it as well.

B) Bottom says he wants Quince to write a ballad called “Bottom’s Dream.” Pretend you have Quince’s talent for writing lyrics and write such a song that adheres to the following rhyming scheme:

1 <sup>st</sup> line	a	(8 syllables)
2 <sup>nd</sup> line	b	(6 syllables)
3 <sup>rd</sup> line	c	(8 syllables)
4 <sup>th</sup> line	b	(6 syllables)

*ACT FIVE, Scene One*

**Memory Work**

Using the prompt words, copy out the passage you memorized from Act Five, Scene One where Puck bids farewell to the audience.

If we \_\_\_\_\_

Think \_\_\_\_\_

That \_\_\_\_\_

While \_\_\_\_\_

And \_\_\_\_\_

No \_\_\_\_\_

Gentles, \_\_\_\_\_

If \_\_\_\_\_

And, \_\_\_\_\_

If \_\_\_\_\_

Now \_\_\_\_\_

We \_\_\_\_\_

Else \_\_\_\_\_

So, \_\_\_\_\_

Give \_\_\_\_\_

And \_\_\_\_\_

*A Midsummer Night's Dream* Acts IV and V Knowledge

Please respond in sentence form.

**PART A: IDENTIFICATION AND ANALYSIS (15 marks)**

For each of the following quotations: *identify the speaker, explain what the passage means and describe how it contributes to plot/theme/character development.*

- a) My Oberon! What visions have I seen!  
Methought I was enamour'd of an ass.
  
- b) I have had a most rare vision, I have had a dream, past the wit of man to say what dream it was: man is but an ass, if he go about to expound this dream. Methought I was,—there is no man can tell what.
  
- c) Come now; what masques, what dances shall we have,  
To wear away this long age of three hours  
Between our after-supper and bedtime?
  
- d) If we shadows have offended,  
Think but this and all is mended,  
That you have but slumbered here  
While these visions did appear.
  
- e) 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.

**PART B: WRITING RESPONSE**

**(10 marks)**

In the 1600s, a famous diarist named Samuel Pepys said after he saw *A Midsummer Night's Dream* performed in London that it was the dullest play Shakespeare ever wrote. Argue against Pepys' opinion by offering at least five specific examples from the play to show that it is an entertaining piece of theatre.