**A MIDSUMMER NIGHT’S DREAM**

**CLASS NOTES**

**Act 1 Scene 1 (p.17-23)**

* Setting: Ancient Athens, Greece
* Theseus and Hippolyta reveal that they will be married in 4 days.
* Line 8-11 (p.17) – “Four nights will quickly dream away the time, / and then the moon like to a silver bow, / new-bent in heaven, shall behold the night/ of our solemnities.”
* Theseus is impatient for the wedding, while Hippolyta is more relaxed. She tells Theseus to be patient.
* Line 4 – first introduction of the **moon symbol**.
* Theseus sends the Philostrate to go and stir up the celebrations throughout Athens
* Line 17-20 (p.17) – “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 revelling.”
* Egeus brings his daughter Hermia in front of the Duke in the hopes that Duke Theseus will force Hermia
* To marry Demetrius, the man who Egeus has chosen for her.
  + Egeus is extremely upset
  + Line 28 (p.18) – “This man hath bewitched the bosom of my child.”
    - With song, and fantasies, toys, trinkets, etc.
    - Egeus claims Lysander stole his daughter’s heart.
* Egeus’ character highlights how women were the **property** of their fathers until marriage, and then they were considered the property of their husbands.
  + Theseus says to Hermia – line 48 (p.18) – “To you, your father should be as a god,/ one that composed your beauties, yea and one,/ to whom you are but as a form in wax,/ by him imprinted, and within his power,/ to leave the figure, or disfigure it.”
    - This image of a statue of wax being molded and destroyed is extremely threatening.
* Egeus asks Theseus to fulfill the “ancient privilege of Athens” – force Hermia to marry Demetrius. If she doesn’t she would be forced to become a nun or she would be executed.
* Demetrius and Lysander are considered equal men in social standing, however, in order to fight for the right to marry Hermia, Lysander calls Demetrius out as cruel and of shallow moral character because he left Helena (after he had “wooed” her to chase after Hermia).
* Reference to Greek Goddess of virginity on p.19 – Diana/Athena – goddess of the nuns
  + Diana is associated with the moon
* Demetrius and Lysander argue over Hermia
  + Lysander, out of frustration says, “You have her father’s love, Demetrius. / Let me have Hermia. Do you marry him?”
    - The bond that Demetrius has is with Egeus and not Hermia…Lysander doesn’t see this as a fair type of love.
* The discussion over Hermia’s decision upsets Hippolyta
* All but Lysander and Hermia leave. They discuss their plans to run away together to ‘the wood’ 16 miles outside of Athens where the law cannot be upheld. They plan to live with Lysander’s widowed aunt.
* Theme: Complication of Love
  + P.20-21: Lysander and Hermia point out the complicated nature of love
    - Age, social status, war, obedience to family, etc. These are all complication for **true love**.
* Lysander and Hermia divulge the elopement plan to Helena.
* P.21-22 – Helena is portrayed as pathetic in her chase after Demetrius
  + She is **jealous** (theme) of Hermia’s beauty.
  + Very low self-confidence (in reality she is just as beautiful as Hermia)
  + Helena wishes she has Hermia’s looks, voice and mannerisms so that Demetrius would fall back in love with her.
* P.22 – Hermia discusses her frustration with Demetrius’ pursuit of her love.
  + Theme of the nature of love – Demetrius is a blind fool for loving someone who doesn’t love him back (foreshadows the incidents in the forest).
* P.22 (top half of page) – Juxtaposition (contrast) of Helena and Hermia’s characters
* P.23 –**soliloquy** – an act or instance of talking to oneself in a play; used in a play to allow the character to reveal his or her thoughts to the audience, but not to the other characters, by speaking as if to himself or herself.
  + Helena’s soliloquy reveals her jealousy of Hermia
  + It also reveals the hap-hazardous nature of love (**theme).** 
    - She indicates that Cupid is depicted as a child because his judgement in his love matches is left to chance. He matches people who should not be together, and thus he is not mature.
* P.23 – By telling Demetrius that Hermia plans to be unfaithful to him by running away with Lysander, Helena hoes he will turn his love back on her like he did before he met Hermia.

**Significant Quotes**

* Line 8-11 (p.17) – “Four nights will quickly dream away the time, / and then the moon like to a silver bow, / new-bent in heaven, shall behold the night/ of our solemnities.”
  + Moon symbolism
  + Hippolyta’s character is shown as patient in contrast to that of the impatient Theseus
* Line 17-20 (p.17) – “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 revelling.”
  + Atmosphere and mood are established … celebratory, light-hearted, etc.
* Line 28 (p.18) – “This man hath bewitched the bosom of my child.”
  + The word choice of ‘bewitched’ emphasizes the notion of magic within the play
    - Anything can happen
    - Also points to the idea that love can be controlled…but can it?
* Line 58 (p.18) – “I would my father looked but with my eyes.”
  + Hermia is desperate to marry Lysander. So much so that she is saucy with Theseus, and is willing to disobey her father to be with Lysander.
    - Line 64-66 (p.59) – “…that I may know the worst that may befall me in this case if I refuse to wed Demetrius.”
* Line 136 (p.20) – “The course of true love never did run smooth”
  + Theme – difficulty of love
* Line 204 (p.22) – “None, but your beauty. Would that fault were mine!”
  + Helena is superficial – she would settle for Demetrius to love her for her looks than for it to be true love.
* Line 237-242 (p.23) – “Love looks not with the eyes, but with the mind, / and therefore is winged 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.”

**Act 1 Scene 2 (p.24 -27)**

* Set in Athens at Peter Quince’s house
* A group of tradesmen, meeting as amateur actors
* They want to put off a play for Duke Theseus’ wedding.
* Peter Quince =carpenter = speaks the prologue of Pyramus and Thisbe (their play)
* Nick Bottom = weaver = plays Pyramus
* Francis Flute = bellows-mender = plays Thisbe (doesn’t want to play the girl)
* Snug = joiner = plays Lion (wants his lines right away because he is ‘slow’ … needs time to practice)
* Snout = tinker = plays Wall
* Starveling = tailor = plays Moonshine
* Peter Quince assigns the Bottom continues to interrupt him saying that he could play all of the parts of the play (Pyramus, Thisbe, Lion).
* Bottom is **extremely** egotistical/conceited.
  + Shows off by reciting the poem
  + Makes a big deal regarding the lion’s roar (so as not to “fright the ladies out of their wits”)
  + Concerned about the color of his beard, not the actual practice of the play
* The men plan to meet in the woods ‘tomorrow’ night…so they don’t have people watching their practice

**Act 2 Scene 1 (p.31 – 37)**

* Puck, in a conversation with a ‘fairy’, reveals to the audience his mischievous character as well as the argument that is taking place between the King and Queen of the fairies (Oberon and Titania)
  + The argument evolved through an argument over a ‘changeling boy’ who Titania swore to protect. Oberon, on the other hand, wants to make the boy his servant (‘knight of his train line 25).
  + Oberon and Titania have not been in each other’s presence since the argument started.
* Lines 32-60 - Puck is described through his pranks (i.e. taking the cream from milk so the workers couldn’t make butter, disorienting night wanderers, appearing as a footstool)
* Puck has many names – Puck Robin Goodfellow, Hobgoblin
  + This contributes to the **motif of mistaken identity**
* Oberon talks down to Titania
* P.32-33: Oberon and Titania fuel the argument as they discuss each other’s affairs
  + It is revealed that Titania once was romantically involved with Theseus, and Oberon was involved with Hippolyta (**theme of jealousy)**.
* Lines 88-119: Titania reveals that their argument has affected the weather.
* Line 123-124: Titania shows her character as a representative of a strong woman (stands up to Oberon)
* Line 123-139: Explains why Titania refuses to give up the changeling boy.
  + She has a fierce loyalty (character)
* Line 144: Moon imagery
* Line 146: Shows Titania’s strength of character
  + Incites Oberon’s rage and lust for revenge.
* Line 165: Moon symbol
* Line 168-177: Describes how the magic love potion is created by Cupid’s misguided arrow – from the flower known as love-in-idleness (pansy)
  + Symbolic name – a waiting love
* Line 180-191: Oberon reveals his plan to punish Titania (make her fall in love with a monster).
  + Oberon is cruel…he wants her to suffer and bend to his mercy (to admit defeat)
* Line 192: Indicates Helena’s pathetic character. Demetrius cannot get rid of her.
* Line 205: Irony – “And even for that do I love you the more.”
  + The less Demetrius loves Helena, the more she loves him.
    - This can also be seen as a form of juxtaposition – she follows him even though he threatens her.
* Line 206-214: Demetrius’ vow to abuse Helena.
* Line 241: When Demetrius says that he will do ‘mischief’ to Helena in the woods if she doesn’t stop following him (i.e. harm her), this **foreshadows** how Puck will eventually do mischief to the lovers in the forest.
* Line 242-246: This section is extremely telling of how women were perceived socially in ancient Athens. Women “cannot fight for love, as men may do.”
  + Women are limited and restricted in the ways that they can express their emotions and ideas.
* Line 247-248: These lines reveal how **naïve and stubborn** Helena’s character is when it comes to love.
  + She is willing to endure the fires of hell in her pursuit of Demetrius.
* Line 249-250, 251-273: These lines are important because it converges (joins) the plot of the fairies, the lovers, and the actors together.
  + Oberon decides to interfere with the lives of Demetrius and Helena, eventually causing mass confusion for the characters.

**Significant Quotes**

* Line 168-171 (p.35) – “Yet marked I where the bolt of Cupid fell./ It fell upon a little western flower,/ before, milk-white, now purple with love’s wound,/ and maidens call it, “love-in-idleness.”
* Line 205: Irony – “And even for that do I love you the more.”
* Line 206-214: Irony in Helena’s non-existent relationship with Demetrius
* Line 247-248 (p.37) “I’ll follow thee and make a heaven of hell,/ to die upon the hand I love so well.”
  + Helena is naïve
    - She will follow Demetrius and endure the repercussions

**Act Two, Scene 2:**

* Titania falls asleep to the sound of her fairy servants singing.
* The fairies leave and Oberon applies the magical juice of the flower to Titania’s eyelids.
  + This shows Oberon’s cruel nature and just how vindictive he is.
    - i.e. he wants her to fall in love with the most awful beast because Titania wouldn’t obey him and give up the young boy.
      * “Wake when some vile thing is near.” (ling 26-33 p.39)
      * This shows his excessive pride, vengefulness, and superiority complex
* Hermia and Lysander agree to rest in the wood until the next day.
* Hermia tells Lysander to find somewhere else to sleep because she wants to maintain her modesty/virtues (virginity).
  + This is a problem because they are not married yet.
  + With some hesitation Lysander agrees.
  + Line 40-41, 55-56: These lines show how the tradition of waiting till marriage to have sex is the ‘proper’ way to engage in a relationship.
    - This gives the audience some insight into how women were treated and supposed to act in Ancient Athenian Greece.
* The separation of Hermia and Lysander in the wood gives Puck the perfect opportunity to **mistake Lysander for Demetrius**.
  + Puck thinks that Hermia and Lysander are Helena and Demetrius because they are the only couple he has come across in the wood, and they are both wearing Athenian clothing as Oberon said they would be wearing.
* Line 59-60: Example of foreshadowing
  + When Hermia says, “Thy love ne’er alter till the sweet life end,” this is an example of irony as well because once the lovers fall asleep in this part of the scene, Hermia does in fact experience Lysander’s altered love because once he awakes he falls in love will Hermia.
* Puck places the flower juice on Lysander’s eyes (the wrong guy!)
* Line 87-101: This passage demonstrates Helena’s pathetic character, as well as the superficiality of her character.
  + Pathetic = She continues to put herself down by claiming that the only reason Demetrius loves Hermia is because of her beauty (a beauty that Helena does not see in herself).
    - i.e. “I am as ugly as a bear!” - line 93
  + Superficiality = Helena concentrates on the physical traits that separate her from Hermia instead of looking at the internal reasons why Demetrius does not love her.
* Helena enters the scene, and not seeing Hermia, runs to Lysander to see if he is sleeping, hurt (by Demetrius), etc. However, this causes Lysander to wake and fall in love with Helena!
* Line 110-113: Demonstrates the theme of the inconsistency of love
  + “CONTENT WITH Hermia? No, I do repent/The tedious minutes I with her have spent./ Not Hermia, but Helena I love).” (p.42)
* Line 121-137: This passage spoken by Helena demonstrates Helena’s low self-esteem. She thinks that Lysander is playing a trick on her (making fun of her when she is already heartbroken over Demetrius’ verbal abuse).
* Lines 144-155: This section reveals Hermia’s **dream** in which a snake eats her heart. This is ironic because little does Hermia know that Lysander has just left her for Helena. This is an action that will literally eat at her heart and torment her soul.

\*One major motif of this play that is also demonstrated in act two is the motif of **dreams**.

* Lysander is under a ‘spell’, as if it were a dream (also it took place while he was sleeping).
* Hermia’s nightmare
* Titania is sabotaged with the flower juice while asleep (you are vulnerable to the world when you sleep)

\*Major themes of this play are:

**Transformation, Illusion vs. Reality,** and the **Inconsistency of Love**