A Midsummer Night’s Dream

Act I-Act III Study Guide

General

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1. From which day of the year does the play take its title? Why is this significant?

**Act One, Scene 1**

1. What is meant by “*Hippolyta, I woo’d thee with my sword.”* When will the wedding of Theseus and Hippolyta take place?

1. Why has Egeus brought his daughter and two suitors to Theseus? What does Egeus expect him to do?

1. What was the proper role for women/daughters in Athenian society according to Egeus and Theseus? What are the consequences for Hermia should she not comply with her father’s wishes?
2. Name three examples given by Egeus to illustrate how Lysander has “bewitched” Hermia.
3. Hermia claims that a union with Demetrius would be as an “unwished yoke” . Explain this comparison.
4. Of what does Lysander accuse Demetrius when he refers to him as a “spotted and inconstant man”?
5. What are two examples suggested by Lysander to show that true love has many obstacles.

1. What do Lysander and Hermia plan to do about their seemingly impossible situation?

**Act One, Scene 2**

1. Which part of the play written by Peter Quince does Bottom want to play? What does this reveal about his character?
2. Who is disappointed in his part? Why?
3. Why is the role of the lion so well-suited to Snug?
4. *“ . . . there we may rehearse most obscenely . . .”* Bottom often uses words incorrectly. What is the term used to describe these comical errors?

1. Where are the actors to meet the following night? Who else is meeting in these same woods at the same time?

**Act Two, Scene 1**

1. What does the reader find out about the current relationship between Oberon, King of the Fairies and Titania, Queen of the Fairies? What is the cause?
2. Provide two examples of ways in which Puck interacts with humans.
3. What effect has the quarrel of Oberon and Titania had: on nature, on the seasons, on humans?
4. Why does Titania want to keep the child? What comparison is made between the mortal worshipper of Titania and the trading ships?
5. What characteristics of Oberon are revealed in his demand to have the child?
6. How did the “love-in-idleness” receive its power? What is the magical power of this purple flower? What are Oberon’s plans for Titania?
7. What is the tone of Demetrius’ words to Helena in this scene? Describe her reaction to Demetrius. To what does she compare herself in ll. 209 - 217? How does she explain that, in her mind, it is not night and the woods are not deserted?
8. Who has overheard the fight between Helena and Demetrius? What does he resolve to do about it? How does he instruct Puck to recognize the pair?

**Act Two, Scene 2**

1. What are two “vile” things which Oberon mentions in his spell upon Titania?
2. Whom does Puck first anoint with the charmed flower?
3. What does Lysander mean when he says that he has changed “a raven for a dove”?
4. What is Helena’s reaction to Lysander’s sudden love for her? Of what does she accuse him?

1. Why is it ironic that Lysander claims that it is his reason that makes him love Helena?
2. Describe Hermia’s nightmare. How is her dream a reflection of reality?

**Act Three, Scene 1**

1. What aspects of the play do the troupe of mechanicals think will frighten the ladies? What remedy does Bottom suggest?
2. How are the actors going to manage the setting/scenery such as the moonlight and the wall?

1. Why do the rest of the actors run off when Bottom reappears?

1. What does Bottom mean when he says, *“This is to make an ass of me. . .”?* Why is this line ironic?
2. Bottom says, *“ . . . reason and love keep little company together nowadays.”* Why is this such an appropriate statement at this point in the play?
3. How does Titania react to Bottom’s song? What promises does she make him?

**Act Three, Scene 2**

1. How are Puck and Oberon going to correct Puck’s earlier mistake?
2. Of what does Helena accuse Hermia?

1. Helena uses the metaphor of a double \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ to illustrate the close friendship she once shared with Hermia.
2. Who is referred to as an “Ethiope”, a “puppet” and a “dwarf”?

1. What character traits are revealed in each during the struggle between Hermia and Helena?

1. What is Puck’s reaction to the conflict and confusion he has created?
2. What is Oberon’s plan to set things to right?
3. There are several interesting references or allusions made in the speeches on page 64:

 ✹According to myth, how does the moon travel across the sky?

 ✹Who is the goddess of the dawn?

✹Which spirits are “exiled” from the light and wander in the darkness of night?

1. How does Puck trick Demetrius and Lysander to avoid their duelling over Helena?

 **Part II – Quotations**

**Note the following for each quotation:**

1. *Speaker (Who is talking)*
2. *Meaning (The Literal translation of what is being said)*
3. *Significance (How the quote is important – may demonstrate character development, character traits, literary device(s), contribute to atmosphere, etc…)*

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 *“The course of true love never did run smooth” (Act One, Scene 1, 136)*

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 *“Love looks not with the eyes, but with the mind*

 *And therefore is winged Cupid painted blind..” (Act One, Scene 1, 237-8)*

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*“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.” (Act Two, Scene 1, 138-40)*

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*“ Content with Hermia? No, I do repent*

*The tedious minutes I with her have spent.” (Act Two, Scene 2, 110-11)*

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 *“For as a surfeit of the sweetest things*

 *The deepest loathing to the stomach brings” (Act Two, Scene 2, 136-7)*

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 *“And yet, to say the truth, reason and love keep*

 *little company together, now-a-days.” (Act Three, Scene 1, 133-4)*

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 “*Lord, what fools these mortals be” (Act Three, Scene 2, 115)*

For each of the following literary devices, define the term and provide an example from the play. Indicated the page and line reference.

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| Allusion | Oxymoron |
| Apostrophe | Anachronism  |
| Aside | Blank verse |
| personification | Pun |
| Dramatic Irony | Situational Irony |
| Verbal Irony | Malpropism |
| Soliloquy | Metaphor |
| Simile |  |

Quiz tips:

* Know the answer to any question on your review sheet
* Identify characters
* Identify the speakers of quotations
* Supply a key word from any quotation which should have been quoted in your review
* Analyze a key speech or soliloquy
* Answer content questions
* Know the literary terms and an example of each from Act I to act iii of the play