

# **A Midsummer Night's Dream**

by William Shakespeare

An adaptation by Ken Womble

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**Dedication**

The playwright would like to dedicate this adaptation to his wife, Sandy, for her incredible support; to all the actors, technicians and volunteers who took part in the original production; and to the memory of the master, William Shakespeare.

*"A Midsummer Night's Dream" (an adaptation) was first presented by St. Margaret's Episcopal School, San Juan Capistrano, California, in November 2001.*

Director: Ken Womble.

Production Coordinator: Gloria Fohrman.

Stage Managers: Michael Fohrman, Kendall Hacche, Chris Knight.

Lighting Designer: Justin Gagnon.

Costume Designers: Heather Murray, Sandra Kaiser, Sue Garber.

Set Designer: Wally Huntoon.

Choreographer: Holly Scheall-Mehling.

Musical Assistance: Kimberly Jeter, Ira Raibon, Lukas Schulze.

Production Assistants: Rex Bradley, Max Mahaffa, David Reese, Christina Smith.

**Original Cast**

**NICK BOTTOM:** Brad Ross

**OBERON:** James Quinn

**HELENA:** Katharine Delano

**LYSANDER:** Rahsaan Henderson

**THESEUS:** Alex Whitcomb

**PETER QUINCE:** Rebecca Holland

**ROBIN STARVELING:** Liz Murray

**SNUG:** Chris MacDonald

**PHILOSTRATE:** Angela Evans

**SINGING FAIRY:** Brittany Loewen

**FAIRIES:** Cortney Beverly, Alex Gangolli, Audrey Jacobsen, Meghan McGregor, Kaitlin McQuaide.

**PUCK:** Ashley Crawford

**TITANIA:** Nicola Buffa

**HERMIA:** Margot Garber

**DEMETRIUS:** David Smith

**HIPPOLYTA:** Angelique Thomas

**FRANCIS FLUTE:** Paul Moore

**TOM SNOUT:** Stephanie Adler

**EGEUS:** Chantal Osuna

**FIRST FAIRY:** Jenn Kaiser

### **STORY OF THE PLAY**

Shakespeare's classic comedy, "A Midsummer Night's Dream," is condensed, without losing the passion, humor, and magic that has made the play a theater favorite. This adaptation, while remaining true to the original, is cut to suit an audience of all ages. The play moves quickly, making it ideal for middle and high school productions.

This timeless story remains the same. Four young friends, two men and two women, are all in love, but with the wrong people. They chase each other in a fantasy world, a forest filled with fairies, donkeys, and love potions. Their journey makes for an outrageous romp that advances perfectly to climatic disaster, then masterfully completes in happy marriage. With Shakespeare's beautiful blend of reality and fantasy, you'll never want to wake from "A Midsummer Night's Dream."

### **CAST OF CHARACTERS**

**NICK BOTTOM:** A weaver, presenting Pyramus.

**PUCK, OR ROBIN GOODFELLOW:** Serves Oberon.

**OBERON:** King of the Fairies.

**TITANIA:** Queen of the Fairies.

**HELENA:** In love with Demetrius.

**HERMIA:** In love with Lysander.

**LYSANDER:** In love with Hermia.

**DEMETRIUS:** In love with Hermia.

**THESEUS:** Duke of Athens.

**HIPPOLYTA:** Queen of the Amazons, betrothed to Theseus.

**PETER QUINCE:** A carpenter, presenting The Prologue.

**FRANCIS FLUTE:** A bellows-mender, presenting Thisby.

**ROBIN STARVELING:** A tailor, presenting Moonshine.

**TOM SNOUT:** A tinker, presenting Wall.

**SNUG:** A joiner, presenting Lion.

**EGEUS:** Hermia's father.

**PHILOSTRATE:** Master of the Revels to Theseus.

**FIRST FAIRY**

**SINGING FAIRY**

**FAIRIES**

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**SETTING**

The setting is Athens, at the palace of Theseus, Quince the carpenter's house, and various parts of the woods. As is typical of Shakespeare, there are only a few stage directions, leaving the set, costumes, and time in the capable hands of the production team.

**PROPS AND COSTUMES**

There are very few specified props, such as scrolls, a dagger, a lantern, and juice from a flower. Costumes are also left undescribed, except for the donkey head, and Thisby's mask and mantle. There are several sound cues, mostly integrated into the fairy scenes.

**PLAYWRIGHT'S NOTES**

My goal in writing this adaptation was to streamline Shakespeare's play for high school actors. In this adaptation you will find the following:

**Clarity:** Through judicious cuts the story becomes clearer. As a result, audience members, especially those not familiar with the play, will find it easy to follow. Most monologues are cut to 12 lines or less. One exception is the character of Oberon, whose longer speeches are often key to the action.

**True to the original:** I took great pains not to change the main action of the story. Only duplicative and peripheral material is deleted. For example, in Act II, Scene 1, Bottom's description of the prologue he wants to write for the Mechanicals' play is cut. However, later, in Act V, Scene 1, we see the prologue performed by the characters Bottom discussed earlier.

**Great for actors:** Shortening the monologues had a very positive effect on our actors. It kept the interactions between characters strong and compelled the actors who weren't speaking to really listen and stay connected to the action of the scene.

**Speed:** The cuts allow the story to move more quickly, and it is hoped, to better hold the interest of young audience members.

**Length:** The play is shortened to an audience-friendly length. Our production ran one hour and forty minutes, including a fifteen-minute intermission. Rather than leaving the theatre drained, I believe audiences will leave wanting more!

During our run, we received lots of positive feedback about how fun the play was and its hilarious characters. But the most rewarding, for me, were audience comments about how they finally understood the story of "A Midsummer Night's Dream." I hope your production achieves the same results!

**ACT I**  
**Scene 1**

*(AT RISE: In Athens, at the Palace of Theseus. THESEUS and HIPPOLYTA enter.)*

THESEUS: Now, fair Hippolyta, our nuptial hour  
Draws on apace, four happy days bring in  
Another moon; but O! Methinks how slow  
This old moon wanes; she lingers my desires,  
Like to a step-dame, or a dowager  
Long withering out a young man's revenue.

HIPPOLYTA: Four days will quickly steep themselves in  
night;  
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: 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.

*(EGEUS, HERMIA, LYSANDER and DEMETRIUS enter.)*

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.  
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 rimes,  
And interchang'd love-tokens with my child:  
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,

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EGEUS: (*Cont.*) 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,  
Or to her death.

THESEUS: What say you, Hermia? Be advis'd, fair maid:

To you your father should be as a god;  
Demetrius is a worthy gentleman.

HERMIA: So is Lysander.

THESEUS: In himself he is;

But, in this kind, wanting your father's voice,  
The other must be held worthier.

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

THESEUS: Rather your eyes must with his judgment look.

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,  
Or else to wed Demetrius.

DEMETRIUS: Relent, sweet Hermia: and, Lysander, yield

Thy crazed title to my certain right.

LYSANDER: 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  
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;  
I am belov'd of beauteous Hermia:  
Why should I not then prosecute my right?  
Demetrius, I'll avouch it to his head,  
Made love to Nedar's daughter, Helena,  
And won her soul; and she, sweet lady, dotes,  
Devoutly dotes, dotes in idolatry,  
Upon this spotted and inconstant man.

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