

## A Midsummer Night's Dream

*A Midsummer Night's Dream* is the only text in this class where you will not have outside reading assigned. What does that mean to you? No reading homework! It also, however, means that your time will be freed up for some writing homework. Each day, after we read, you will be assigned a writing prompt and your homework will be to write one page on an assigned topic (that's typed, 12 point, double-spaced, standard margins). Does that mean you have to focus on this topic for an entire page? No. It means that you will use this prompt as a jumping off point. For example, in the play one of the characters, Hermia, is in love with a man named Lysander but her father refuses to let her marry him; instead, he insists she marry his pick: Demetrius. Your first journal assignment will be to discuss this situation. What do you think of it, and what would you do if your parents told you who you could or couldn't be friends with, date or marry? Now you may start out your journal talking about Hermia and Lysander, but I fully expect you to spend much more time talking about your own situations. These topics are jumping off points, so don't feel obligated to answer all the questions for each topic, but do address the gist.

1. Discuss Hermia's predicament. What do you think of arranged marriages? What would you do if your parents told you who you could and couldn't be friends with? What would you do if your parents arranged your dates, your marriage? Do you know anyone who thinks differently than you? Why might they?
2. Take a look at those rude mechanicals. Shakespeare spends a lot of time making fun of them. Why? Are there people in our society that we make fun of? Is it okay to make fun of a certain group? Why? Why not? What's the difference between laughing at someone and laughing with someone?
3. Pick any scene that we've read and change it from Shakespeare's English into any kind of slang or "traditional" English you want. You could use ghetto, country, valley girl, surfer, lawyer, etc.
4. Shakespeare has the fairies in the woods. Think about all the things that happen in woods in books, plays, movies, songs. What's with the woods? Talk about any time you've visited the woods. Have you had similar experiences (not necessarily fairies)?
5. There's a lot of fighting in this play: Tatiana and Oberon, Egeus and Hermia, Hermia and Helena, Hermia and Lysander, Hermia and Demetrius, even Theseus and Hippolyta. Are any of the fights worth it? Do they fight for good reasons? What are some good reasons that people fight? What are different ways that people fight? Describe a fight you've had.

6. Puck is rather a strange character. What do you think about him? What's his relationship with Oberon like? How about Titiania? Can you think of other films, books, plays, TV shows that have characters like Puck?
7. We've been watching several versions of the movie. Which one do you like best? Why? What's the best thing about it? What is the thing you like least?
8. You can cast your own movie version. Select current movie stars, those who have "passed on," and even your friends. Write up who you would cast in which role, and put them in costume too if you like.
9. Select any scene (or any number of scenes) and tell the story from the perspective of one of the characters. You can use dialogue, the character's thoughts, add actions, etc. Just think about how you would feel if something like this happened to you.
10. Write a scene that doesn't take place. Use any language you like and enlighten your reader on the thoughts of those characters. Be reasonable. You must set it in context (for example, it can't take place in outer space).
11. There are a lot of dualities in this play (opposites). What are some of them and speculate as to why there are so many?
12. "The course of true love never did run smooth" (I.i.135) so says Lysander. Why is this? Why is the road of love so often bumpy? What experiences (not necessarily personal) have you witnessed where love is a rough road. If it's a good thing, shouldn't it be easy?