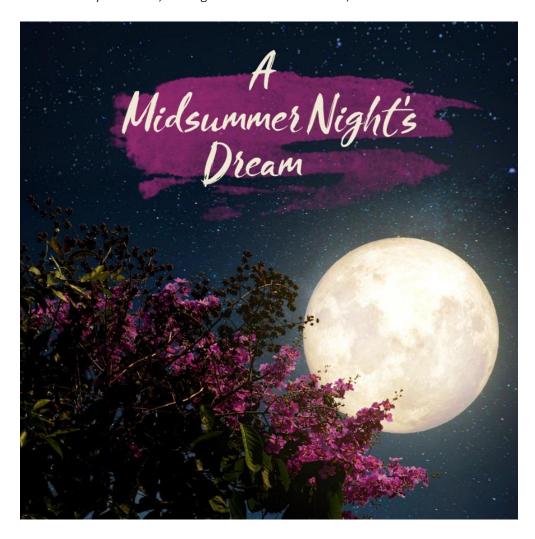
# Alliance Theatre

# institute

Study Guide: A Midsummer Night's Dream

Created as part of the Alliance Theatre's Dramaturgy by Students program by: Liz Davis, Manager of Education Services, Alliance Theatre



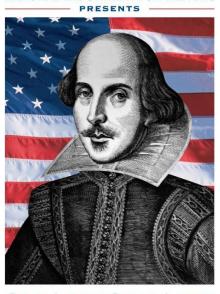
Adapted and Directed by: David Catlin
Based on *A Midsummer Night's Dream* by: William Shakespeare
September 5 – October 21, 2018
Atlanta Botanical Garden

# Table of Contents

Georgia Standards of Excellence (GSE)	3
About the	
Playwright: William Shakespeare	. 4
Venue: Atlanta Botanical Garden	. 5
Instructional Resources	
Vocabulary	6
Mythical Allusions	7
lambic Pentameter	. 8
Interpreting Shakespeare	. 9
Character Map	. 10
Dramatic Irony	11
Monologue Study	.12
Discussion Questions	.13
Written Response Prompts	
Works Cited	. 15

# Special Thanks:

# NATIONAL ENDOWMENT FOR THE ARTS





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Shakespeare in American Communities is a program of the National Endowment for the Arts in partnership with Arts Midwest.

# Georgia Standards of Excellence

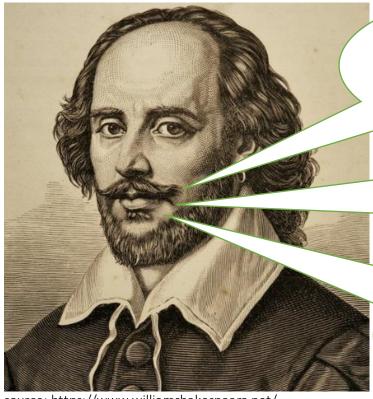
### English/Language Arts (Grades 6-12):

- ELAGSE6RL3: Describe how a particular story's or drama's plot unfolds in a series of episodes as well as how the characters respond or change as the plot moves towards a resolution.
- ELAGSE7RL3: Analyze how particular elements of a story or drama interact (e.g., how settings shape the characters or plot).
- ELAGSE8RL3: Analyze how particular lines of dialogue or incidents in a story or drama propel the action, reveal aspects of a character, or provoke a decision.
- ELAGSE8RL6: Analyze how differences in the points of view of characters and the audience or reader (e.g., created through the use of dramatic irony) create such effects as suspense or humor.
- ELAGSE9-10RL4: Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in the text, including figurative and connotative meanings; analyze the cumulative impact of specific word choices on meaning and tone (e.g., how the language evokes a sense of time and place; how it sets a formal or informal tone.)
- ELAGSE9-10RL5: Analyze how an author's choices concerning how to structure a text, order events within it (e.g., parallel plots), and manipulate time (e.g., pacing, flashbacks) create such effects as mystery, tension, or surprise.
- ELAGSE11-12RL4: Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in the text including figurative and connotative meanings; analyze the impact of specific word choice on meaning and tone, including words with multiple meanings or language that is particularly fresh, engaging, or beautiful. (Include Shakespeare as well as other authors.)
- ELAGSE11-12RL5: Analyze how an author's choices concerning how to structure specific parts of a text (e.g., the choice of where to begin or end a story, the choice to provide a comedic or tragic resolution) contribute to its overall structure and meaning as well as its aesthetic impact.

#### Theatre Art (Grades 6-8):

- TA6.CR.2: Develop scripts through theatrical techniques.
  - a. Identify the elements of a story.
  - b. Identify the theme and structure of a play.
  - c. Articulate creative ideas in oral and written forms.
- TA6.RE.1: Engage actively and appropriately as an audience member.
  - a. Identify the role of the audience in different environments.
- TA6.RE.2: Critique various aspects of theatre and other media.
- TA7.CR.1.b: Compare and contrast character types and relationships by analyzing character motivations, objectives, and goals.
- TA7.PR.1: Act by communicating and sustaining roles in formal and informal environments.
- TA8.CR.1: Organize, design, and refine theatrical work.
  - a. Differentiate the physical, emotional, vocal, and social dimensions of a variety of characters.
  - b. Compare the relationships and interactions between characters by analyzing character motivation (objectives, obstacles, strategy, action, stakes, outcome).
- TA8.PR.1.a: Demonstrate the physical, emotional, vocal, and social dimensions of a character in different types of theatre performances (e.g. rate, pitch, volume, inflection, posture, facial expression, motivation, physical movement).

# About the Playwright: William Shakespeare "The Bard"



Brevity is the soul of wit.

We know what we are, but know not what we may be.

If music be the food of love, play on.

source: https://www.williamshakespeare.net/

### Timeline:

- April 23, 1564: Born in Stratford-upon-Avon in Warwickshire, England
  - o Son of John Shakespeare, a glove-maker and Mary Arden (who had 8 children)
- 1578-1582 and 1585-1592: "The Lost Years" (these periods in his life are considered a mystery)
- 1582 (age 18): Married Anne Hathaway (age 26)
  - o They had 3 children: Susanna came first, followed by Hamnet and Judith (twins)
- 1592: Reputation as poet, playwright, and actor established in London, England
  - o Work includes: 38 plays (comedies, tragedies, histories), 2 narrative poems, 154 sonnets
  - o Founding member: The Lord Chamberlain's Men (later: The King's Men)
- 1597: Purchased a home called New Place in Stratford-upon-Avon
- 1599: Created his own theatre on the River Thames, called The Globe
- 1610: Retired from public life
- 1613: Finished last work
- April 23, 1616: Died (age 52); buried in Holy Trinity Church

"Shakespeare's legacy is as rich and diverse as his work; his plays have spawned countless adaptations across multiple genres and cultures, and his plays have had an enduring presence on stage and film. His writings have been compiled in various iterations of The Complete Works of William Shakespeare by different entities, which usually include all of his plays, his sonnets, and his other poems. From Stratford to London and beyond, William Shakespeare was and is one of the most important literary figures of the English language." -- Shakespeare Birthplace Trust

# About the Venue: At lanta Botanical Garden

### Did you know?

The Alliance Theatre is in the middle of its first renovation (see a time-lapse video <a href="here">here</a>) since opening its doors at the Woodruff Arts Center in 1968. The new Coca-Cola Stage at the Alliance Theatre will officially open in January, 2019 with a new musical production of Ever After.

Instead of choosing a single venue to house the 2017-2018 season (and part of the 2018-2019 season) while its new theatre was constructed, the theater company decided to "bring the action to the people" in 13 locations throughout the city of Atlanta. Learn more about the Alliance Theatre's On the Road season here: Alliance Theatre will scatter 2017-2018 shows around metro area (The Atlanta Journal-Constitution, March 8, 2017).

### Synopsis: A Midsummer Night's Dream at the Atlanta Botanical Garden

In a setting that even Shakespeare himself couldn't have imagined, the Alliance Theatre will produce a whimsical, outdoor production of A Midsummer Night's Dream at the Atlanta Botanical Garden. In Shakespeare's most popular comedy, two couples deal with love and all its complications — confusion, jealousy, and passion. Further hindering the couples on their way to happily ever after are a lively band of characters and challenging events, including a band of actors, wood sprites and elves, and a botched love potion! Directed by David Catlin, founding ensemble member of Lookingglass Theatre Company in Chicago.

#### Atlanta Botanical Garden

The mission of the Atlanta Botanical Garden is to develop and maintain plant collections for display, education, research, conservation and enjoyment. To learn more about the history of the Atlanta Botanical Garden, visit: https://atlantabg.org/about-us/mission-history



source: https://atlantabg.org/explore/art-in-the-garden

#### Considerations:

- **Pre-Show:** What makes this venue (setting) so appropriate for this particular play?
- **Post-Show:** Which natural elements (e.g. weather) contributed to the show that you saw, and how did that impact your overall impression of this piece of theater?

# Vocabulary

Word	Definition (Part of Speech)	Used In Context
Adieu	Goodbye (exclamation)	THISBY: And, farewell, friends.
		Thus Thisby ends—
		Adieu, adieu.
Alack	An expression of regret or	PYRAMUS: O night with hue so black!
	dismay (exclamation)	O night, whichever art when day is not!
		O night, O night! alack, alack
Bower	A pleasant, shady place (noun)	TITANIA: Tie up my love's tongue. Lead him to my bower.
Churl	A mean-spirited person (noun)	PUCK: Churl! Upon thy eyes I throw
		All the power this charm doth owe!
Confederacy	A league or alliance (noun)	HELENA: Lo, she is one of this confederacy!
Cur	An aggressive dog; a mongrel or	HERMIA: Out, dog! out, cur! Thou drivest me past the bounds
	mutt (noun)	And hast thou kill'd him sleeping? O brave touch!
		Could not a worm, an adder, do so much?
Girdle	A belt or cord worn around the	PUCK: I'll put a girdle 'round about the earth
	waist (noun)	In forty minutes.
Idle	Without purpose, pointless	PRUNE/PUCK:
	(adjective)	And this weak and idle theme,
		A wand'ring thought or daylit-dream.
Lob	One who is silly or unintelligent (noun)	MUSTARDSEED: Farewell, thou <i>lob</i> of spirits!
Mortal	A human being subject to death (noun)	TITANIA: I pray thee, gentle mortal, sing again!
Nuptial	Relating to marriage or	BOTTOM: The play and nuptials are now complete
	weddings (adjective)	
Nymph	A spirit or sprite (noun)	OBERON/BOTTOM: Fare well, nymph!
Progeny	A descendent, offspring (noun)	TITANIA: And this same progeny of evils comes
		From our debate, from our dissension—
		We are their parents and original.
Promontory	Land that juts into water (noun)	OBERON: Thou rememb'rest
•		Since once I sat upon a promontory
		Whilst a tempest raging did toss about a tiny bark
Vile	Wicked (adjective)	LYSANDER: [Awaking] And run through fire I will for thy sweet sake!
		Where is Demetrius? O, how fit a word
		Is that vile name to perish on my sword!
Vixen	A spiteful or argumentative	HELENA: She was a vixen when she went to school,
	woman (noun)	And though she be but little, she is fierce.
Wanton	An immodest or promiscuous	OBERON: Tarry, rash wanton, am not I thy lord?
	woman (noun)	

# Mythical Allusions







1 - Aphrodite

2 - Cupid

4 - Mermaid



3 - Faeries

**Aphrodite:** ancient Greek goddess of love, beauty, and fertility, who was also known as a goddess of the sea and a goddess of war. The Romans identified her as "Venus."

**Cupid:** ancient Roman god of love. The Greeks identified him as "Eros." He is the son of Mercury (messenger of the gods) and Venus (Aphrodite), and often appears "as a winged infant carrying a bow and a quiver of arrows whose wounds inspired love or passion in his every victim" (britannica.com).

**Faeries:** Usually well-intentioned, these tiny, mythical creatures intervene in the personal affairs of humans, often wreaking havoc.

**Mermaid:** a fabled marine creature that has the upper body of a woman and the tail of a fish. Sometimes called "Sirens," these legendary beings were very powerful and sometimes dangerous. They loved music and sang often, sometimes luring mortals to death by drowning.

#### Picture sources:

- 1 https://www.britannica.com/topic/Aphrodite-Greek-mythology
- 2 https://www.kidzworld.com/article/6425-all-about-cupid
- $3-\underline{https://www.ancient-origins.net/myths-legends-europe/secret-lives-elves-and-faeries-truth-behind-\underline{story-rev-robert-kirk-003195}$
- 4 https://www.britannica.com/topic/mermaid

#### Iambic Pentameter

W	hat	is	an	"la	m	b"	?

An "iamb" is two syllables (one unstressed – annotated: U; and one stressed – annotated: /).

For example, the word "amend" has two syllables (pronounced: uh-mend). When we say the word "amend," we do not stress the first syllable, and we do stress the second syllable. We can annotate that pattern like this:

Un/stressed: ∪ /

Word: a mend

Syllables: 1 2

# What is "lambic Pentameter"?

lambic Pentameter describes a line of verse with five iambs (10 syllables total). This poetic, rhythmic pattern resembles the sound of a beating heart or a trotting horse.

For example:

Un/stressed: U / U / U / U / U /

Line: Do you amend it then? It lies in you.

Syllables: 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

# Practice Annotating lambic Pentameter

Below is an excerpt from *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (spoken by TITANIA). Practice listening for and annotating the iambs in each line.

Remember: There should be ten marks per line: (5) U – unstressed syllables; and (5) / - stressed syllables. Additionally, these markings appear in an every-other pattern, like this: U/U/U/U/U

Line 1: Full often hath she gossip'd by my side,

Line 2: And sat with me on Neptune's yellow sands...

Line 3: And for her sake do I rear up her son,

Line 4: And for her sake I will not part with him.

# Interpreting Shakespeare

One strategy for interpreting Shakespeare's writing is translating his poetry into more familiar, contemporary language. Review the scenarios below. Then, translate Shakespeare's writing into contemporary language to better understand the dialogue (and current relationship) between each set of characters.

Scenario 1: Hermia and Lysander have run away to the forest.

Shakespeare's Writing	Contemporary Language
LYSANDER: Here, my sweet, the sharp Athenian law Cannot pursue us. If thou dost love me, Wilt swear and marry me tomorrow dawn?	LYSANDER: My love, we are safe from the law here. If you do love me, will you swear it, and marry me tomorrow morning?
HERMIA: I swear to thee by Cupid's strongest bow, By his best arrow with the golden head, By all the vows that ever men have broke, (A number more than ever women spoke), Tomorrow truly, will I marry thee.	Model: this one is already done! HERMIA:

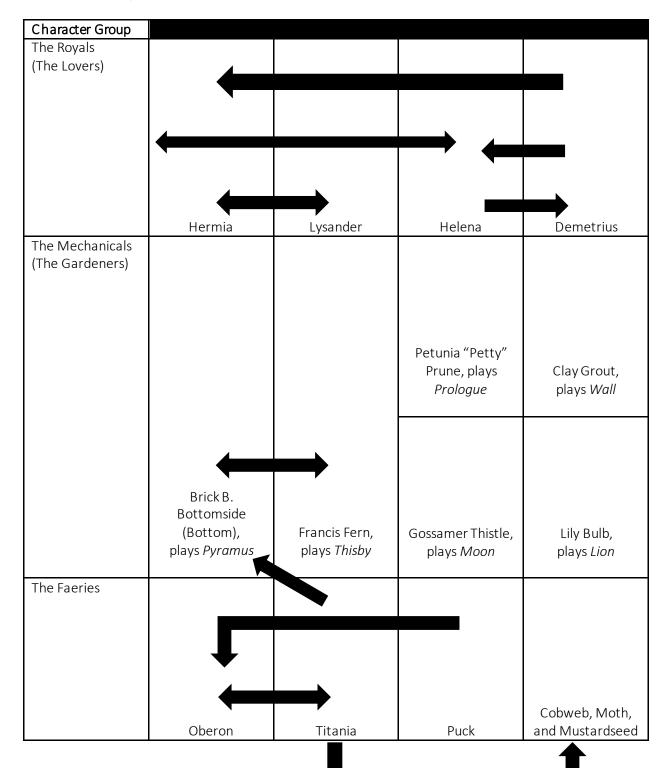
Scenario 2: Demetrius and Helena meet in the forest.

Shakespeare's Writing	Contemporary Language
DEMETRIUS: Tempt not too much the hatred of my spirit; For I am sick when I do look on thee.	DEMETRIUS:
HELENA: And I am sick when I look not on you. It is not night when I do see your face.	HELENA:
DEMETRIUS: I'll run from thee and hide me in the brakes, And leave thee to the mercy of wild beasts.	DEMETRIUS:
HELENA: The wildest hath not such a heart as you.  Spoke not you words of so sweet breath composed?  Did you not tell me once you loved me?	HELENA:
DEMETRIUS: You were the more deceived! I will not stay thy questions— let me go! Or, if thou follow me, do not believe But I shall do thee mischief in the wood.	DEMETRIUS:

# Character Map: The Royals (Lovers), Mechanicals (Gardeners), and Faeries

# Complete this Character Map by:

- 1. Illustrating each character as you envision him/her in your head; and
- 2. Describing the relationships between characters (in just 1-3 words) as indicated by the arrows.



**Dramatic Irony** occurs when a situation is fully understood by the audience, but is not understood by the characters in a play. Select four actors to perform the scene below.

#### Then, discuss:

- What information does the audience have, that the characters do not?
- What effect does this example of Dramatic Irony have on the audience?
- What choices did the actors make to add to the humor of this scene?

\_\_\_\_\_\_

DEMETRIUS: (awaking) O Helena, goddess, nymph, perfect, divine! To what, my love, shall I compare thine eyne? Crystal is muddy. O, how ripe in show Thy lips, those kissing cherries, tempting grow!

HELENA: O spite! O hell! I see you all are bent To set against me for your merriment! Can you not hate me, as I know you do, But you must join in souls to mock me too?

LYSANDER: You are unkind, Demetrius, be not so—For you love Hermia, this you know I know.

DEMETRIUS: Lysander, keep thy Hermia. I will none. If e'er I loved her, all that love is gone. Look where thy love comes—to her you must go!

Enter HERMIA running to embrace LYSANDER

HERMIA: Lysander! Why didst thou leave me so?

LYSANDER: Why should he stay, whom love doth press to go?

HERMIA: What love could press Lysander from my side?

LYSANDER: Lysander's love, that would not let him bide. Why seek'st thou me? Could not this make thee know, The hate I bear thee made me leave thee so?

HERMIA: The hate you bear me?!—It cannot be.

HELENA: Lo, she is one of this confederacy! Now I perceive they have conjoin'd all three To fashion this false sport, in spite of me. Injurious Hermia! Scornful maid!

HERMIA: I am amazed at your passionate words. I scorn you not. It seems that you scorn me.

### Monologue Study

A monologue is a long speech made by one character, most often to express their thoughts aloud, but sometimes to address another character (or the audience) directly. Review the (4) monologues from *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, below. Pick one to examine closely, with the option of presenting it to your class.

# Option 1

TITANIA: The færie-land buys not the child of me.
His mother was a votaress of my order.
And, in the spic'd Adriatic air, by night,
Full often hath she gossip'd by my side,
And sat with me on Neptune's yellow sands.
Then she, with pretty and with swimming gait
Her womb then rich with my young squire--did dive down
To fetch me sea stars from the bottom's deep,
But she, in the birthing of that boy, did die,
And for her sake do I rear up her son,
And for her sake I will not part with him.

## Option 2

OBERON: I know a bank where the wild thyme blows, Where oxlips and the nodding violet grows, Quite over-canopied with luscious woodbine, With sweet musk-roses and with eglantine. There sleeps Titania sometime of the night, Lull'd in these flowers with dances and delight, And there the snake throws her enamel'd skin, Weed wide enough to wrap a fairy in. And with the juice of this I'll streak her eyes, And make her full of hateful fantasies.

# Option 3

#### HERMIA:

Lower? LOWER!? Ay, that way goes the game!
Now I perceive that she hath made compare
Between our statures; she hath urged her height,
Her tall personage, to woo Lysander.
And are you grown so high in his esteem
Because I am so dwarfish and so low?
How low am I, thou painted maypole? Speak!
How low am I? I am not yet so low
But that my nails can reach unto thine eyes.

# Option 4

PYRAMUS: O night with hue so black!
O night, whichever art when day is not!
O night, O night! alack, alack, alack,
I fear my Thisby's promise is forgot!
And thou, O wall, O sweet, O lovely wall,
That stand'st between her father's ground and mine!
Thou wall, O wall, O sweet and lovely wall,
Show me thy nook to look through with mine eyne!

Show me the nook to look through with mine eyne!

Thanks, courteous wall!
But what see I? No Thisby do I see.
O wicked wall, through whom I see no bliss!
Cursed be thy stones for thus deceiving me!

## Considerations:

- What is the context in which this monologue takes place?
- How would you describe the character in this monologue (3 adjectives: beginning, middle, end)?
- Who is the character speaking to, and what is their relationship to that person/creature/thing?
- What is your character's goal or motivation in this moment?
- Memorize it. Rehearse it, adjusting your choices in voice and body movement.
- Share it with an audience.

### **Discussion Questions**



source: www.youmethoughts.com

- 1. What do you think of when you hear the name "William Shakespeare"?
- 2. Describe your sense of humor. What makes you laugh?
- 3. Part 1: Do you think parents (or other family members) should have a say in who their child dates or marries?

Part 2: In the beginning of the play, we learn that Hermia and Lysander are in love. However, Hermia's father wants her to marry Demetrius, and "the harsh law of Athens says that a father gets to decide who his daughter marries." If Hermia rebels against her father's wish, she is left with two choices: to become a nun or die. What does this scenario reveal about Hermia's status as a young woman?

4. Part 1: Do you believe in love at first sight?

Part 2: How does Shakespeare use the purple flower to comment on the concept of love, particularly "love at first sight"?

- 5. Imagine you are Helena's friend. What advice would you give her in the beginning of the play, when Demetrius asserts his hate for her?
- 6. A Midsummer Night's Dream contains three parallel plots. In David Catlin's adaptation, the character called Prune address the complexity of this plot immediately and directly.

"The plot isn't important!" Prune says. It's "all just nonsense. We all need a little nonsense. The best things in life don't actually make sense at all—Eating ice cream. Listening to love songs. Riding roller coasters. Staring at the moon. Falling in love. Owning a dog."

What is your reaction to this line? Do you agree or disagree with Prune? What other "best things in life" don't make any sense to you?

# Written Response Prompts

1. Re-read the excerpt below. What major theme does this passage illustrate, and which other sections of the text contribute to that theme?

TITANIA: Mine ear is much enamour'd of thy note. So is mine eye enthralled to thy shape, And thy fair virtue's force perforce doth move me On the first view to say, to swear-- I love thee.

BOTTOM: Methinks, mistress, you should have little reason for that. And yet, to say the truth-- Reason & Love keep little company together now-a-days.

- 2. Evaluate Shakespeare's comedic writing. On a scale of 1-5 (1 being not funny at all, and 5 being hilarious), how funny is *A Midsummer Night's Dream?* Justify your review with three clear citations from the play. Consider: Shakespeare's use of figurative language, dramatic irony, amusing insults, the playwithin-the-play, etc.
- 3. As a general rule of thumb, Shakespeare's comedies end in marriage. Review the resolution of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, below. Are you satisfied by this ending? Why or why not?

ALL (singing)

See me how you saw me Like when first you saw me Resolve me into a dew

**HERMIA & LYSANDER** 

I do.

**HELENA & DEMETRIUS** 

I do.

**OBERON & TITANIA** 

I do.

ALL

I do!

4. Compare/contrast Shakespeare's original work with David Catlin's adaptation of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. Identify three essential components of the play that were left unchanged, and three significant changes Catlin made to the play.



source: <a href="https://all-free-download.com">https://all-free-download.com</a>

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