



A Midsummer Night's Dream



A Midsummer Night's Dream

Teacher's Notes by Stuart Rathe

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This teaching sequence provides a scheme of work to accompany *A Midsummer Night's Dream* - an animated adaptation from **BBC Teach**.

Activities are suitable for both KS2 and KS3. The KS3 'extension' activities at the end of some lessons are suggested additional written activities for KS3 but may also be useful for pupils at KS2 who are exceeding expectations.

Home-learning activities. Some of the activities in the lesson sequences work well as KS2 home-learning activities. These are presented in dark blue. Additional home-learning ideas are presented in dark blue at the end of some of the lesson sequences.



1. Welcome to Athens

In this episode we are introduced to the mischievous sprite Puck, who acts as a storyteller, linking the different worlds of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (fairies, Athenians and Mechanicals). He tells us of the impending marriage of Duke Theseus and the Amazonian queen, Hippolyta. Their nuptial plans are interrupted by the arrival of Egeus, furious that his daughter Hermia is disobeying his orders to marry the man he has chosen for her.

Preliminary activity

Watch the clip and discuss these preliminary questions (based on reciprocal reading strategies) with your class to spark discussion:

Prediction: What kind of story is this going to be? What type of characters will we meet? What might happen next?

Link making: Does it remind you of anything else you have seen or read?

Clarification: Is there any part of it that you didn't understand? Was any of the vocabulary confusing?

Questioning: What will the themes of the story be? (Love, magic...) What are the qualities of a dream? Are dreams always enjoyable?

Drama starter activity: 'Fathers and children'

- Ask pupils to move slowly around the classroom or hall, trying to ensure they 'balance the space'. Ask them to think of themselves collectively as butter on a piece of toast. The toast must be evenly buttered. Look for and fill any gaps!
- Now ask the pupils to pair up.
- Tell them that you want them to show you a frozen picture of 'Father and child' and give them some time to devise it.

- Now ask the pupils to silently form their frozen pictures. Select some to show back to the rest of the group - ensuring that you choose a variety that represent different types of parent / child relationships. (The rest of the class can relax out of their tableaux when watching another pairing).
- Discuss the pictures of parenthood / childhood that emerge. It may be that some pupils have chosen to represent very young, dependent pupils with caring parents. Others may have chosen to show pupils being punished or admonished. Discuss the age ranges and the variety of relationships displayed.
- Ask the class: 'How does the relationship between child and parent change throughout life?'
- Anticipate that pupils may think about babies, teenage 'rebellion', about parents becoming grandparents and eventually about pupils caring for parents as they enter old age.

Main activity: Theseus and Hermia

Read the original Shakespearean version of Theseus' speech:

*What say you, Hermia? be advised fair maid:
To you your father should be as a god;
One that composed your beauties, 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.*

- Ask pupils to summarise the speech. Can they clarify anything they do not understand? (Note that the argument is that fathers are like gods to their children, having created them. A father has the power and the right to destroy a child, just as if they were a modelled wax figure).
- Discuss the following:
 - Are parents always right?



- Should you always obey your parents?
- Is it okay to disagree with your parents when you are an older child or adult?

- Hand out the 'Role on the wall' sheet for Hermia ([Page link to Resource Pack](#)) based on the first episode of the animation. This is a sheet to show how a character's inner and outer life differ.
- The role on the wall is divided into space INSIDE the character outline and OUTSIDE the character outline.
- Tell pupils that INSIDE the outline they should include the character's private thoughts, feelings and desires.
- OUTSIDE the outline they should include how the character shows herself to the outside world.
- Share the roles on the walls for the character of Hermia. What have we learnt about her in this episode? Expect pupils to say that on the inside Hermia is wilful, independent, romantic, daring, defiant, fair, passionate, loving' etc. On the outside they might note that she is obedient, articulate, fair, intelligent, diplomatic, etc.
- Pupils might write a character description of Hermia based on what they have learnt in this episode.

Further suggestions

Hermia's plight is contrasted with Helena's. Her boyfriend Demetrius has deserted her in favour of Hermia.

Show pupils examples of 'Agony Aunt' letters from local newspapers or online. Ask them to write an Agony Aunt letter from Helena to *The Athens Tribune*, complaining of her woeful experiences and telling the Agony Aunt what she has decided to do (tell Demetrius about Hermia and Lysander's flight to the woods).

When pupils have written their letters, they could swap letters with a partner and pen a response from the *Athens Tribune* Agony Aunt, advising Helena of what she should do in this situation. Does the Agony Aunt agree that telling Demetrius about Hermia and Lysander's plans is a good idea?

KS3 extension

Research the full Shakespearean scene. Write an essay comparing the draconian punishment of Hermia for disobeying her father (as evidenced in Theseus's speeches) and her expected servitude, with attitudes towards women and daughters today.

Home-learning suggestions

For every episode of the story use the reciprocal reading resource grid ([Page link to Resource Pack](#)) for pupils to complete after watching the animation. On this grid, pupils can write a summary of what happened in the animation, a prediction of what might happen next, make links to other things they have seen, read or experienced, and clarify the meaning of anything they did not fully understand.

2. The Rehearsal

In this episode we meet the 'Mechanicals', a group of Athenian tradesmen and hapless amateur actors, who are meeting to rehearse a play they are planning for Duke Theseus's wedding day. Principal among them are Mistress Quince (the play's director) and Nick Bottom the weaver (who desperately wants to play *all* the parts).

Drama starter: creating a character

Rudolf van Laban was a dance theorist who specialised in expressive forms of choreography. In drama, his unique ideas about a performer's use of space, weight and time have led to the creation of Laban 'efforts' which can help an actor create unique characterisations. In this drama starter, pupils explore a simplified version of Laban's theory to help them to define some of the characters in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*.

For the purposes of this starter, Laban's 'efforts' are reduced to three sets of movement alternatives.

Write the instructions on the board as below:

FAST	or	SLOW
DIRECT	or	INDIRECT
HEAVY	or	LIGHT

- Pupils must choose one style of movement from each category, in order to create their unique character movement. (Younger pupils may need you to demonstrate them. 'Indirect' can be thought of as moving to a fixed point in the room, but taking a meandering, indecisive route to get there. Remind pupils that 'Fast' means walking quickly and not running).
- Once pupils have played around with this, you can start to give very specific instructions - e.g. "I want you all to move in a 'Fast', 'Direct' and 'Light' way".
- Spotlight particular pupils. What character does this pupil seem to have created? ('Slow', 'Indirect', 'Light' might conjure a fairy, for example).
- Give other instructions. Try out different combinations.
- Now ask the pupils to think about characters from the story so far. How could they apply Laban efforts to create their characters? What combinations of movements could be used? To help pupils, you could summarise what we have learnt about the characters' personalities and physicality as follows, before they apply their own movements:

Bottom: extravagant, foolish, confident

Quince: long suffering, patient, efficient

Helena: frustrated, miserable, tall

Hermia: fierce, independent, romantic, little

Theseus: wise, kingly, powerful

- Take each character in turn, and spotlight individual pupils. Ask other pupils to see if they can guess what combination of Laban efforts the chosen pupil has used to create his or her part - eg "I think that your Helena is 'Fast', 'Direct' and 'Light'".

- You could layer in an extra element to this by having pupils choose their favourite character, and move around the space (using Laban efforts) whilst reciting a line. For example:

Bottom: Let me play all the parts!

Quince: No! You must only play Pyramus

Helena: The more I love the more he hateth me!

Hermia: Lysander and myself will fly this place!

Theseus: Obey your father!

Main activity: the 'Mechanicals'

Hand out the Mechanicals script ([Page link to Resource Pack](#)).

- Read through the script, which is an abridgement of the original Shakespeare text. Ask pupils to summarise the main points, using clarification skills to see if you can work out the meaning of any words or phrases that are unclear.
- Ask pupils to work in small groups to create their own version of the rehearsal, based on the abridged script. Watch back the performances.

Further suggestions

- Pupils could write their own version of the script, based on re-watching the animation and the script they have performed. They might use their own colloquial language, or a combination of modern language and some of their favourite Shakespearean phrases from the original script. Ask them to look carefully at the conventions of the script layout and reproduce this in their own scripted versions.

- Pupils who are ready to challenge themselves could write a narrative version of the story, using the conventions of speech punctuation rather than scripted exchanges.

KS3 extensions

- In the animation, the Mechanicals are made up of a mixture of men and women. In Shakespeare's time, all actors would have been male (even those playing female roles). Ask pupils to research Shakespearean theatre and produce an information text or non-chronological report.
- The Mechanicals are putting on a production of *Pyramus and Thisbe*, Ovid's classic tale of star-crossed lovers. This story has a strong influence on at least one other Shakespeare tale. Research the links between Shakespeare and the story of Pyramus and Thisbe and produce an information text or non-chronological report.

Home-learning suggestions

- Complete the reciprocal reading resource sheet.
- Pupils could create a poster advertising the terrible 'Mechanicals' acting troupe. Can they include drawings of the characters, based on the animated characters from this adaptation?



3. Into the Woods

In this episode we meet Oberon and Titania, the king and queen of the Fairies. They are engaged in an argument that has confused the harmony of the natural world and is making the seasons alter.

Oberon is angry that Titania will not give him one of her fairies to be his 'henchman' and instructs his servant Puck to use the juice of a special flower to enchant Titania. The next time she wakes from sleep, she will fall in love with whatever she sees, however hideous.

Whilst Puck is fetching the flower, Oberon sees Demetrius cruelly shunning the lovelorn Helena in the woods, and decides to intervene...

Drama starter: Oberon and Titania - follow the leader

- Divide the class into two equal groups.
- One group should act as the audience, one group the performers. They will swap roles later.
- The performers should choose one person to be the leader of the group. Ask that person to step out of the room, or aside.
- Instruct the rest of the group (secretly) that when the drama activity starts, they should follow their leader, very eagerly as if he or she was a popstar or famous sporting legend. Tell them they can't wait to get their leader's autograph. But every time the leader turns around, they should shrink away from him or her, flinching as if they are scared or nervous. Make sure that only the performing group hear this instruction, and not the audience group.

- Now bring back the leader and ask him or her to walk around the classroom space, filling all the space. Ask him or her to turn and look at the 'subjects' or followers periodically and hold their gaze for a count of five seconds, then continue to move around the space.
- Watch the drama unfold. Ask the audience if they can tell what the relationship between this leader and his / her subjects is. What kind of leader is this person? What happens every time he or she looks at the followers?
- Now the performers become audience and vice versa.
- Again, choose one person to be the leader of the group. Ask that person to step out of the room or aside. Instruct the rest of the group (secretly) that they should follow their leader - but in a more calm and gentle way. Whenever he or she turns around they should slowly reach out to their leader with outstretched arms, as if they are trying to reach out and hold their leader in a caress.
- Now bring back the leader and ask him or her to walk around the classroom space, filling all the space. Ask him or her to turn and look at the 'subjects' or followers periodically and hold their gaze for a count of five seconds, then continue to move around the space.
- Watch the drama unfold. Ask the audience if they can tell what the relationship between this leader and his / her subjects is. What kind of leader is this person? What happens every time he or she looks at the followers?



- To create a more detailed drama based on Oberon and Titania meeting, you can now ask all pupils to join the classroom or hall space in their two 'teams'.
- The two leaders could approach each other diagonally across the space (probably using the 'Indirect' Laban effort from the previous lesson. Every so often ask the leaders to look at their followers. The followers should react in the same way as before, either flinching or reaching out to their leader.
- When the two leaders finally reach each other, Leader A should say the line "I'll met by moonlight proud Titania..."
- Leader B should respond "What, jealous Oberon?"

Main activity: Oberon and Titania

- Hand out and read together the abridged script of Oberon and Titania's argument ([Page link to Resource Pack](#)).
- Discuss what is going on in the scene. The animation says that they are arguing over a fairy that Oberon wants. But the Shakespeare script explains it in more detail. Who is the fairy? Why is Titania so adamant that she should keep the child?
 - *Note for teachers. The fairy that Oberon wants as his 'henchman' is a changeling - half human / half fairy. It was the child of a human friend of Titania's who lived in India. Titania kept her company during her pregnancy, but the human woman died during childbirth and Titania made a promise to her that she would look after the half-human child. She will not give up the child to Oberon as it would be a breach of her promise to her friend.*
- What is happening to the seasons because of the argument? What impact is the lack of harmony in the fairy land having on the human world? Discuss.

- Can pupils convert the conversation between Oberon and Titania into modern language, using the additional information in the abridged script, and the animated version? Ask them to write their own Oberon and Titania conversation. They could use the comic strip resource to help them. ([Page link to Resource Pack](#)). Speech bubbles show where Oberon and Titania should speak. The first has been completed for pupils. Two pictures have captions rather than speech bubbles, where pupils can explain what is happening to the crops and the seasons.
- Once they have done this, pupils should work in pairs to create a duologue, acting out their version of the scripted argument (they could even introduce Laban movements to give characterisation to Oberon and Titania).
- Ask volunteers to show their Oberon and Titania arguments.

KS3 extension (also suitable as a home-learning activity)

There are numerous different filmed interpretations (both professional and amateur) of this scene available to view online. Carry out an online search for video content using the search term "Oberon and Titania Act 2, Scene 1". Watch different versions of the scene. Which interpretation was your favourite? Why?

4. The Wrong Athenian

In this episode we meet Hermia and Lysander again. They are lost in the woods and decide to sleep rough on the forest floor. Seeing the Athenians on the ground, Puck messes up the instructions from Oberon and places the flower's magic on Lysander's eyes instead of Demetrius' - with disastrous consequences!

Sorting activity starter

By now pupils are becoming familiar with some of the features of a Shakespearean comedy. Explain that Shakespeare's plays are broadly categorised as tragedies, comedies (like *A Midsummer Night's Dream*) and histories.

Cut out and give to pupils the sorting card activity ([Page link to Resource Pack](#)) and see if they can sort the cards into two categories: 'Features of a Shakespearean comedy' and 'Not features of a Shakespearean comedy'.

There is a case of mistaken identity	Lots of people die in a Shakespearean comedy	There are often romantic elements to the comedy
People fall in love despite obstacles in the way	The comedy is based on true events	There are always kings and queens in a Shakespeare comedy
There is always magic in a Shakespeare comedy	Comedy plots are full of complicated twists and turns	There are no female characters in a Shakespeare comedy
A girl decides to disguise herself as a boy	There are always wars and battles in Shakespeare's comedies	There is usually a very foolish character in the comedy
Shakespeare comedies have happy endings	Some of the jokes can be bawdy or rude	There are lots of puns or language jokes in a Shakespeare comedy

The green highlighted sections in the table above show the correct answers.

Some of the incorrect features belong to other Shakespearean genres:

- *Based on true events / wars and battles / kings and queens – many of Shakespeare's Histories contain these elements.*
- *Many people die - Shakespeare's Tragedies often contain this element.*
- *Although there are always female characters in Shakespeare's plays, it is worth noting that in Shakespeare's time, the parts would have been played by young men as women did not appear on stage.*
- *Magic does appear in some of Shakespeare's Comedies, but also appears in Tragedies (such as Macbeth) and Histories, and very often in his late plays such as Cymbeline, The Tempest and The Winter's Tale, which were all written for the magical indoor space of the Blackfriars theatre.*

Main activity: Demetrius and Helena

- [Cut out and distribute the short Demetrius / Helena scene below \(Page link to Resource Pack\):](#)

DEMETRIUS: I love thee not, therefore pursue me not.
Hence get thee gone and follow me no more

HELENA: You draw me, you hard-hearted adamant.

DEMETRIUS: I'll run from thee, and hide me in the brakes,
And leave thee to the mercy of wild beasts.



HELENA: The wildest hath not such a heart as you.

DEMETRIUS: I will not stay thy questions, let me go;
Or if though follow me, do not believe
But I shall do thee mischief in the wood

HELENA: I'll follow thee, and make a heav'n of hell
To die upon the hand I love so well

- Model with the pupils how to count out the number of syllables in the first line. You will find that there are ten syllables or beats in the line.
- Now ask the pupils to do the same for all subsequent lines.
- What do they notice?
- They should note that there are 10 beats per line. This regular rhythm is called *iambic pentameter*.

Note for teachers: Shakespeare often wrote in this 'blank verse', sometimes called iambic pentameter. The concept is actually very simple. It means that each line should have ten beats.

It helps to teach pupils that the rhythm is like a heartbeat, with a stress on the alternate syllables : De-DUM, De-DUM, De-DUM, De-DUM, De-DUM.

Characters who speak using this ten-beat pattern are usually the central characters in the story and they speak in this way when they are feeling very passionate and confident, or when the stakes are high. So, King Henry speaks this way when he gives a motivational speech to his troops, as does Richard III pleading for help in battle.

In this extract, the characters are having an animatedly heated discussion about love - another common theme of iambic blank verse.

It's very easy to write and speak in ten-beat lines because it mirrors the way that we talk to each other on a day to day basis - eg:

I'd LIKE to HAVE aNOther CUP of TEA.

I WONder IF my FRIENDS will PLAY footBALL?

What TIME is IT? I HOPE it's DINner TIME!

(The capitalisation shows where the stress falls in iambic pentameter).

- See if pupils can make up their own ten-beat lines about their school day or hobbies. Share some examples.

Written extension

- Ask pupils to see if they can come up with new insults from Demetrius to Helena using the iambic syllable pattern, OR:
- Ask pupils to see if they can come up with more declarations of love from Helena to Demetrius using the same iambic syllable pattern.
- Task pupils with creating their own Love poem or Hate poem based on the ten-syllable pattern.

Home-learning suggestions

- Complete the reciprocal reading resource sheet.
- Find out more about Shakespeare's comedies, tragedies and histories. How many can you research and categorise? What is your favourite plot? Which play(s) would you like to learn more about?

5. Oberon's Revenge

In this episode the Mechanicals meet in the woods to rehearse the play in secret. Puck has some fun by turning the comical Nick Bottom into a donkey-headed monstrosity. The other Mechanicals flee and the noise awakes the nearby Titania, whose enchanted eyes fall madly in love with the preposterous weaver.

Starter: headbands game

By this time, your pupils will have a good idea of the different characters in the play. Use the classic headband or post-it note game to get them to guess who they are. In maximum groups of ten, provide sticky notes, each with one of the following names written on it.

HERMIA	HELENA	LYSANDER	DEMETRIUS	THESEUS
PUCK	OBERON	TITANIA	BOTTOM	QUINCE

Ask each pupil to stick their note to their forehead without looking at it. They must now ask the other people on their table questions about themselves - but the questions must require 'Yes' / 'No' answers: eg

- 'Am I male?'
- 'Am I part of the fairy kingdom?'
- 'Am I taking part in an amateur play?'
- 'Does anyone put a love potion on my eye?' Etc.

Can pupils provide clues to other characters and guess which character they have been allocated?

Drama starter: 'conscience alley'

- Use a 'conscience alley' drama technique to become Oberon's conscience.
- One half of the class should be the 'devil' on Oberon's shoulder and the other half should be the 'angel' on his shoulder.
- Allocate a 'devil' or 'angel' role to each child and have them write down on a post-it note their reason, in role, for Oberon to either bewitch Titania with the love potion or to leave her alone.
- Then have them line up to create an alley for Oberon to walk down. The teacher should then walk down the alley in role as Oberon, pausing for each child to give his or her reason.
- Ensure that this is a structured exercise and that you pause for each 'angel' / 'devil' so that all pupils can hear every justification.

Likely 'devil' justifications

- You are the king. She is refusing to obey you! Exert your power!
- If you bewitch her then you can force her to give you the fairy henchman.

Likely 'angel' justifications

- You should STOP fighting to ensure the seasons return to normal.
- You are disrespecting her promise to the Indian woman that she befriended.
- You are being petty and childish. Act more like a king!



Main activity: cue scripts

- Ask pupils if they have ever acted in a play - perhaps the school play or in a production outside of school. What happens when you are given your script? (Pupils will probably answer that they go through the script and highlight all their lines).
- Explain that in Shakespearean times, actors weren't given a full script. Rather than give actors an entire script, cue scripts were used. These scripts *only* had the actor's *specific lines* and not the rest of the parts. So that an actor knew when to speak, the cue script also had the last few words from the previous actor's speech.
- In *A Midsummer Night's Dream* the exasperated amateur theatre director Peter Quince tells Francis Flute that 'you speak all your parts at once - cues and all!' In other words, Francis is just reading everything on his script, all in one go.
- Explain to pupils that they are going to use cue scripts just like the Mechanicals in the woods, just as Shakespeare's contemporaries did.
- The script we will use is part of the play we know well - the argument between Oberon and Titania.
- Tell the pupils to look at their cue scripts ([Page link to Resource Pack](#)). You will need to cut the cue card down the middle and distribute the two parts separately.
- Explain that Oberon speaks first.
- Other actors must wait until they hear the cue lines, which are offset to the right on their personal scripts.
- Only then should they say their line.
- This will likely take some practise!
- Can pupils work out how the cue script works from the instructions?
- Can selected pupil groups perform it for the class?

- This could be extended to a written exercise in which pupils write down a set of instructions on how to use a cue script, using chronological instructions, time connectives (eg 'Next' or 'After that...') imperative verbs, etc. They could finish with a 'review' of the cue script practice. What did they like about it? What did they dislike?

KS3 extension

An examination of themes. The themes of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* are a set of antitheses: Love and Hate, Order and Chaos, Reality and Dreams. Ask pupils to create a summary of story events (supported by quotations from the text if possible) for each of these antithetical themes.

Home-learning suggestion

- [Complete the reciprocal reading resource sheet.](#)

6. The Lovers' Quarrel

In this episode the confused lovers begin to fight in the woods. Now that Puck has accidentally anointed Lysander's eyes *and* correctly anointed Demetrius's eyes, both men are now in love with Helena. Hermia thinks that Helena has stolen her love from her, and Helena thinks that everyone is just playing a huge joke at her expense. Things soon degenerate into a slanging match...

Main drama activity

The argument between the lovers is often staged in such a way that the two men attempt to get between the two women to prevent them from hurting each other (or more specifically to protect Helena, whom they are both in love with at that time).

Divide pupils into groups of four to play Helena, Hermia, Lysander and Demetrius. You may wish to return to the Laban movement exercises from earlier in this lesson sequence to allow the pupils time to think about how their character will move.

- Give the pupil playing Hermia the Hermia insults card (paraphrased from the play).
- Give the pupil playing Helena the Helena insults card (paraphrased from the play).
- Give the two male lover pupils a copy of the Helena insults card too.
- Ask Helenas and Hermias to stand at opposite sides of the cleared classroom or hall space, with their Lysander and Demetrius in the middle (think of the game 'Piggy in the Middle' - with Lysander and Demetrius as the piggies).

Hermia's insult card

You juggler!

You thief of love

You've stolen my love's heart!

You're a painted maypole

You giant!

Canker blossom!

Helena's insult card

She might be little, but she is fierce

She's a bead!

She's an acorn!

She is something lower than me

Even though she's small, she could still reach up and scratch my eyes!

Puppet!

- Now give Hermia a beanbag or soft ball.
- Play will start with her.
- She should throw the ball at Helena and shout one of the insults from her card. The boys should try to intercept the ball. If they succeed, they can pick one of the insults from the Helena insults card and shout it at Hermia, then pass the ball back to Helena for her 'turn'.



- If Helena catches the ball or it is passed to her by one of the male lovers, she should throw an insult at Hermia. She should throw the ball as she throws the insult.
- The boys should not try to intercept the ball this time as they *want* the insult to land on Hermia!
- Play continues. Each time Hermia insults Helena, the boys try to intercept the ball and insult Hermia back (remembering to pass the ball back to Helena for her go).
- It should begin to feel that three of the lovers are ganging up on poor Hermia.
- After a while pupils can remove the ball from the game and simply play their insults (with the male lovers chipping in when they feel it is appropriate to attack Hermia).
- You might add in an extra direction at this point - telling the boys that they are protecting Helena from Hermia and that they must show how much they dislike Hermia in their movements, gestures and facial expressions.
- Pupils may start to vary the insults they use and go 'off script' - remembering that insults directed towards Hermia are that she is (a) small and (b) fierce and feisty. Insults directed towards Helena are that she is (a) tall and lanky and (b) has stolen Hermia's boyfriend.

Watch some of these drama games back and discuss:

- How did the character playing Hermia feel?
- How did the other characters feel? Were they empowered or ashamed of their behaviour?

Home-learning suggestion

- Complete the reciprocal reading resource sheet.



7. Lifting the Fog

In this episode Puck leads the lovers around the woods, exhausting them and eventually anointing Lysander's eyes with a remedy potion that makes him love Hermia again.

The four lovers are awoken by Theseus and Hippolyta's hunting party and Theseus invites them back to Athens for a triple wedding.

Meanwhile, Oberon releases Titania from the love spell and she is disgusted that she has been in love with a donkey. She and Oberon are reunited.

Main activities

Puck 'role on the wall'.

Based on what the pupils have discovered about Puck, can they create a role on the wall for the character of Puck ([Page link to Resource Pack](#)) and then hotseat him about his behaviour in the play. Initially the teacher could play the part of Puck, but pupils could be encouraged to take the hot seat themselves as the mischievous sprite. Encourage pupils to use open questions and to really challenge Puck about his behaviour in the play.

Design your own Puck.

The animated Puck in this adaptation is cute and friendly and acts as our guide through the story. Puck has been portrayed in many ways over the years and is sometimes a malevolent and dark character. Use the internet to find images of Puck from stage and screen.

Print some of these and ask your pupils to rank them according to preference. Why do they prefer some versions of Puck to others? Is a dark and terrifying Puck more or less effective than a light-hearted and mischievous Puck? Expect answers to vary - this is entirely down to personal preference. You can explain that these are the types of choices that film and stage directors make and all preferences are perfectly valid. This could lead to an activity in which pupils design and produce a narrative description of their own Puck character.

KS3 extension

Look at the original Shakespeare text of Oberon and Titania's speech as they discuss the abhorrence of Bottom's appearance and they are reconciled to each other. You will recall that passionate human characters in Shakespeare often speak in iambic pentameter (ten-beat lines).

- How does the speech of Oberon and Titania differ from human speech here?
- Ask pupils to research the term *trochaic tetrameter*. What is it, and why does Shakespeare sometimes use it? What type of characters use this speech pattern?
- Research and produce a report about use of different verse structures in Shakespeare's work.

Home-learning suggestion

- Complete the reciprocal reading resource sheet.



8. A Wedding Play

In this episode the three couples celebrate their wedding. The post-wedding entertainment is the truly terrible play of *Pyramus and Thisbe*, performed by the hapless Mechanicals. The story ends with Puck addressing the audience (us), hoping that we have enjoyed *A Midsummer Night's Dream* and asking for our friendship.

Drama starter: a fifteen-minute 'Dream' production

Now that the pupils know the whole story of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* create a whole-class, freeze-frame adaptation using the ten-point summary of the story ([Page link to Resource Pack](#)).

- Split pupils into groups of, say four, and distribute the ten-point strips evenly between groups.
- Each group then creates a freeze-frame for their part or parts of the story.
- The freeze-frames are shown back to the whole class in order, with one child (or all pupils in unison) reading out their strip before showing their freeze-frame.

Main activity

Write a newspaper article about the events of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*.

Discuss the features as follows:

- **Headline:** usually short and snappy, perhaps featuring alliteration or a pun.
- **By-line:** the name of the author of the article.

- **Orientation paragraph:** the first paragraph with details of the *who*, *what*, *when* and *where* of the story.
- **Main body:** lots more detail about the story, clarifying *how* and *why* things happened and usually including some quotes from key witnesses or people involved in the story.
- **Reorientation:** summarising the story at the end and perhaps including some additional details of what the characters are up to *now*.
- **Past tense:** this is something that has already happened.

Write down on the whiteboard the main characters that pupils want to interview for the newspaper report (anticipate that pupils will want to interview Bottom, Oberon, Titania, Puck, the lovers).

- In pairs, ask pupils to role play as news reporters, asking the characters questions to generate quotes for their newspapers - eg 'How did you feel when?' / 'What did you think about..?' / 'Were you surprised that..?'
- e.g. a reporter might ask Bottom: "How did you feel when the fairy queen fell in love with you?"
- For the purposes of differentiation, some learners might focus on just one aspect of the story (eg Bottom's transformation and performance in the play at the royal wedding). Other learners might try to incorporate multiple elements, such as the lovers in the woods *and* Oberon / Titania's story arc.

KS3 extension

Pupils could learn and perform the Puck monologue "If we shadows have offended..." (below). They could film the performance and upload it to a school VLE or other safe school online learning environment for feedback from peers and teachers.

They could write an accompanying piece analysing the speech. Is Puck still himself, or has he stepped out of the role to become the 'actor' who is portraying Puck? What does the actor mean by 'shadows'? What is the actor suggesting is so ephemeral (no more yielding than a dream)? What does he ask of the audience?

Pupils could research the theatrical term 'breaking the fourth wall'. Where does the term derive? How is the actor playing Puck 'breaking the fourth wall' here?

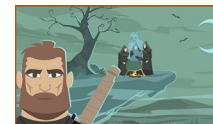
*If we shadows have offended,
Think but this, and all is mended,
That you have but slumber'd here
While these visions did appear.
And this weak and idle theme,
No more yielding but a dream,
Gentles, do not reprehend:
if you pardon, we will mend:
And, as I am an honest Puck,
If we have unearned luck
Now to 'scape the serpent's tongue,
We will make amends ere long;
Else the Puck a liar call;
So, good night unto you all.
Give me your hands, if we be friends,
And Robin shall restore amends.*

Home-learning suggestion

- In place of the freeze frame activity, cut up and mix up the ten story points and ask your child to put them in the correct order.

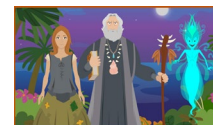
Follow-up home-learning recommendations

- If your child has enjoyed this story then they may also enjoy the historical fiction book *King of Shadows* by Susan Lewis (ISBN-10: 0099492350), a time travel adventure involving Shakespeare and Queen Elizabeth I, against the backdrop of Shakespeare's first production of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* at the Globe theatre.
- Try watching other *A Midsummer Night's Dream* adaptations for children. For example, **Shakespeare in Shorts** - a three-minute pop video animated version of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* - is a fun companion piece with this animation and will spark some interesting discussion. Other interesting productions include those from CBeebies and **Shakespeare: The Animated Tales**.
- Explore other Shakespeare stories and animations. **BBC Teach School Radio** offers the following resources - each with accompanying home-learning activity notes:



Macbeth

Animated in 8 episodes with comprehensive notes and follow-up activities.



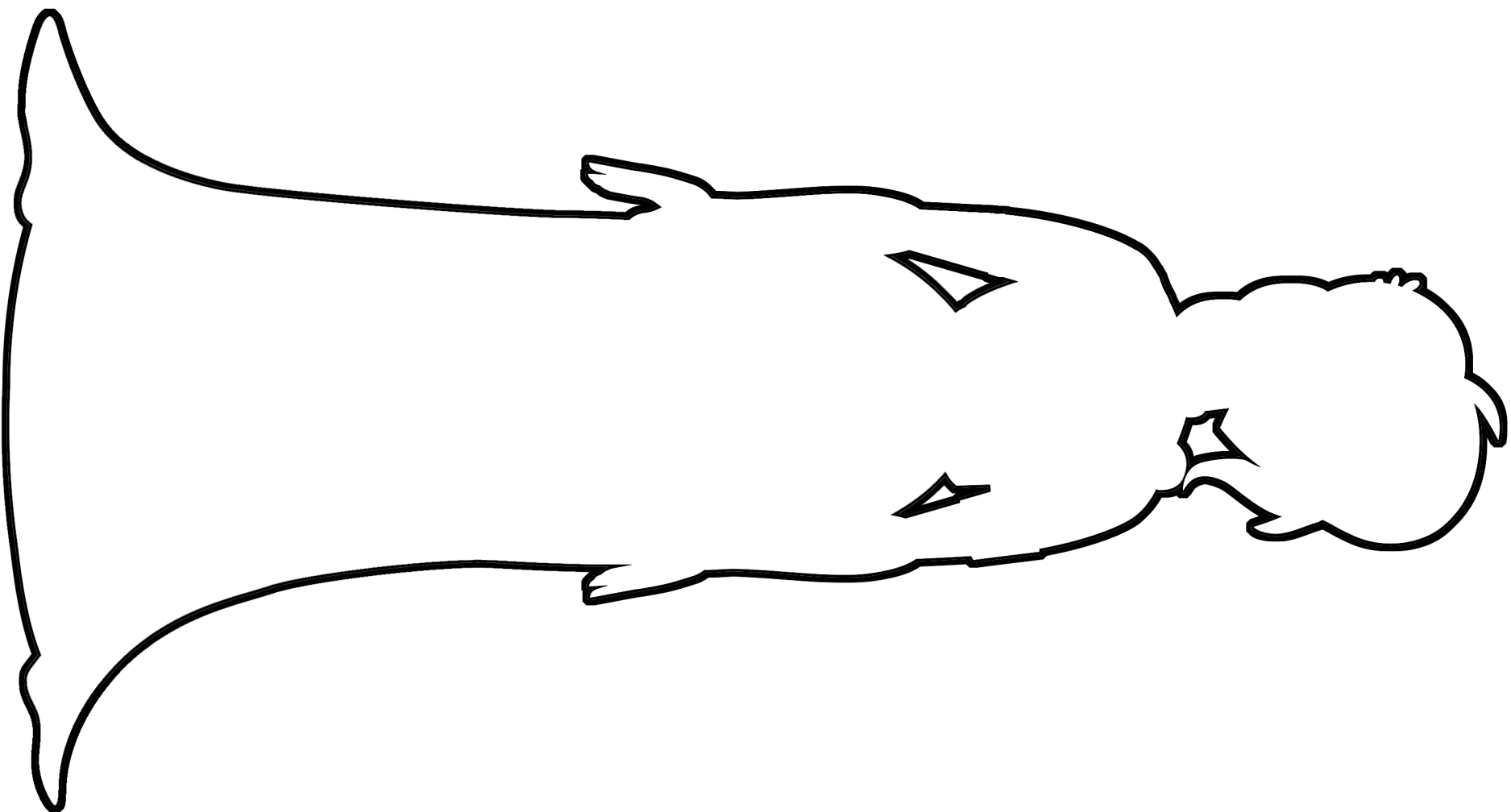
The Tempest

Another rich animation with comprehensive teacher / home study notes (to follow shortly).



Shakespeare Retold

Audio stories based on Shakespeare's works written by famous children's authors.



Reading Summary Sheet

My summary of the episode:

My predictions:

Selected words and phrases and what I think they mean:

Links I can make with other texts I have read or seen:

Any other notes:

QUINCE'S house. *Enter QUINCE, SNUG, BOTTOM, FLUTE, SNOUT, and STARVELING*

QUINCE
Is all our company here?

BOTTOM
You were best to call them generally, man by man, according to the script.

QUINCE
Here is the scroll of every man's name, which is thought fit, through all Athens, to play in our interlude - the most lamentable comedy, and most cruel death of Pyramus and Thisby.

BOTTOM
Now, good Peter Quince, call forth your actors by the scroll. Masters, spread yourselves.

QUINCE
Answer as I call you. Nick Bottom, the weaver.

BOTTOM
Ready. Name what part I am for, and proceed.

QUINCE
You, Nick Bottom, are set down for Pyramus.

BOTTOM
What is Pyramus? A lover, or a tyrant?

QUINCE
A lover, that kills himself most gallant for love.

BOTTOM
That will ask some tears in the true performing of it.

QUINCE
Francis Flute, the bellows-mender.

FLUTE
Here, Peter Quince.

QUINCE
Flute, you must take Thisby on you.

FLUTE
What is Thisby? a wandering knight?

QUINCE

It is the lady that Pyramus must love.

FLUTE

Nay, faith, let me not play a woman; I have a beard coming.

BOTTOM

Let me play Thisby too, I'll speak in a monstrous little voice. 'Thisne, Thisne,' 'Ah, Pyramus, lover dear! Thy Thisby dear, and lady dear!'

QUINCE

No, no; you must play Pyramus: and, Flute, you Thisby.

BOTTOM

Well, proceed.

QUINCE

Snug, the joiner; you, the lion's part: and, I hope, here is a play fitted.

SNUG

Have you the lion's part written? Pray you, if it be, give it me, for I am slow of study.

QUINCE

It is nothing but roaring.

BOTTOM

Let me play the lion too: I will roar, that I will make the duke say 'Let him roar again, let him roar again.'

QUINCE

You would fright the duchess and the ladies, that they would shriek; and that were enough to hang us all.

BOTTOM

I grant you, friends, that I will roar you as gently as any sucking dove; I will roar you like a nightingale.

QUINCE

You can play no part but Pyramus! And tomorrow night meet me in the palace wood, by moonlight.

There is a case of mistaken identity	Lots of people die in a Shakespearean comedy	There are often romantic elements to the comedy
People fall in love despite obstacles in the way	The comedy is based on true events	There are always kings and queens in a Shakespeare comedy
There is always magic in a Shakespeare comedy	Comedy plots are full of complicated twists and turns	There are no female characters in a Shakespeare comedy
A girl decides to disguise herself as a boy	There are always wars and battles in Shakespeare's comedies	There is usually a very foolish character in the comedy
Shakespeare comedies have happy endings	Some of the jokes can be bawdy or rude	There are lots of puns or language jokes in a Shakespeare comedy

DEMETRIUS

I love thee not, therefore pursue me not.
Hence get thee gone and follow me no more

HELENA

You draw me, you hard-hearted adamant.

DEMETRIUS

I'll run from thee, and hide me in the brakes,
And leave thee to the mercy of wild beasts.

HELENA

The wildest hath not such a heart as you.

DEMETRIUS

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

HELENA

I'll follow thee, and make a heav'n of hell
To die upon the hand I love so well

OBERON

Ill met by moonlight, proud Titania.

TITANIA

What, jealous Oberon!

Now with thy brawls thou hast disturbed our sport.

The seasons alter: the spring, the summer,

The childing autumn, angry winter, change

Their wonted liveries, and the mazed world,

By their increase, now knows not which is which:

And this same progeny of evils comes

From our debate, from our dissension;

We are their parents and original.

OBERON

Do you amend it then; it lies in you:

Why should Titania cross her Oberon?

I do but beg a little changeling boy,

To be my henchman.

TITANIA

Set your heart at rest:

The fairy land buys not the child of me.

His mother was a votaress of my order:

And, in the spiced Indian air, by night,

Full often hath she gossip'd by my side,

And sat with me on Neptune's yellow sands,

Marking the embarked traders on the flood,

When we have laugh'd to see the sails conceive

And grow big-bellied with the wanton wind;

Which she, with pretty and with swimming gait

Following, her womb then rich with my young squire,

Would imitate, and sail upon the land,

To fetch me trifles, and return again,

As from a voyage, rich with merchandise.

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.

OBERON

How long within this wood intend you stay?

TITANIA

Perchance till after Theseus' wedding-day.

If you will patiently dance in our round

And see our moonlight revels, go with us;

If not, shun me, and I will spare your haunts.

OBERON

Give me that boy, and I will go with thee.

TITANIA

Not for thy fairy kingdom. Fairies, away!

Exit TITANIA with her train

CUE SCRIPT: YOUR PART IS OBERON.

YOU SPEAK FIRST. WHEN YOU HEAR THE PARTS IN RED YOU MUST SAY YOUR LINES.

YOUR LINES

Ill met by moonlight, proud Titania.

.....**bed and company.**

YOUR LINES

Why should Titania cross her Oberon?
I do but beg a little changeling boy
To be my henchman.

.....**not the child of me.**

YOUR LINES

Give me that boy!

CUE SCRIPT: YOUR PART IS TITANIA.

YOU SPEAK SECOND. WHEN YOU HEAR THE PARTS IN RED YOU MUST SAY YOUR LINES.

.....**proud Titania.**

YOUR LINES

What, jealous Oberon? Fairies skip hence.
I have forsworn his bed and company.

.....**To be my henchman.**

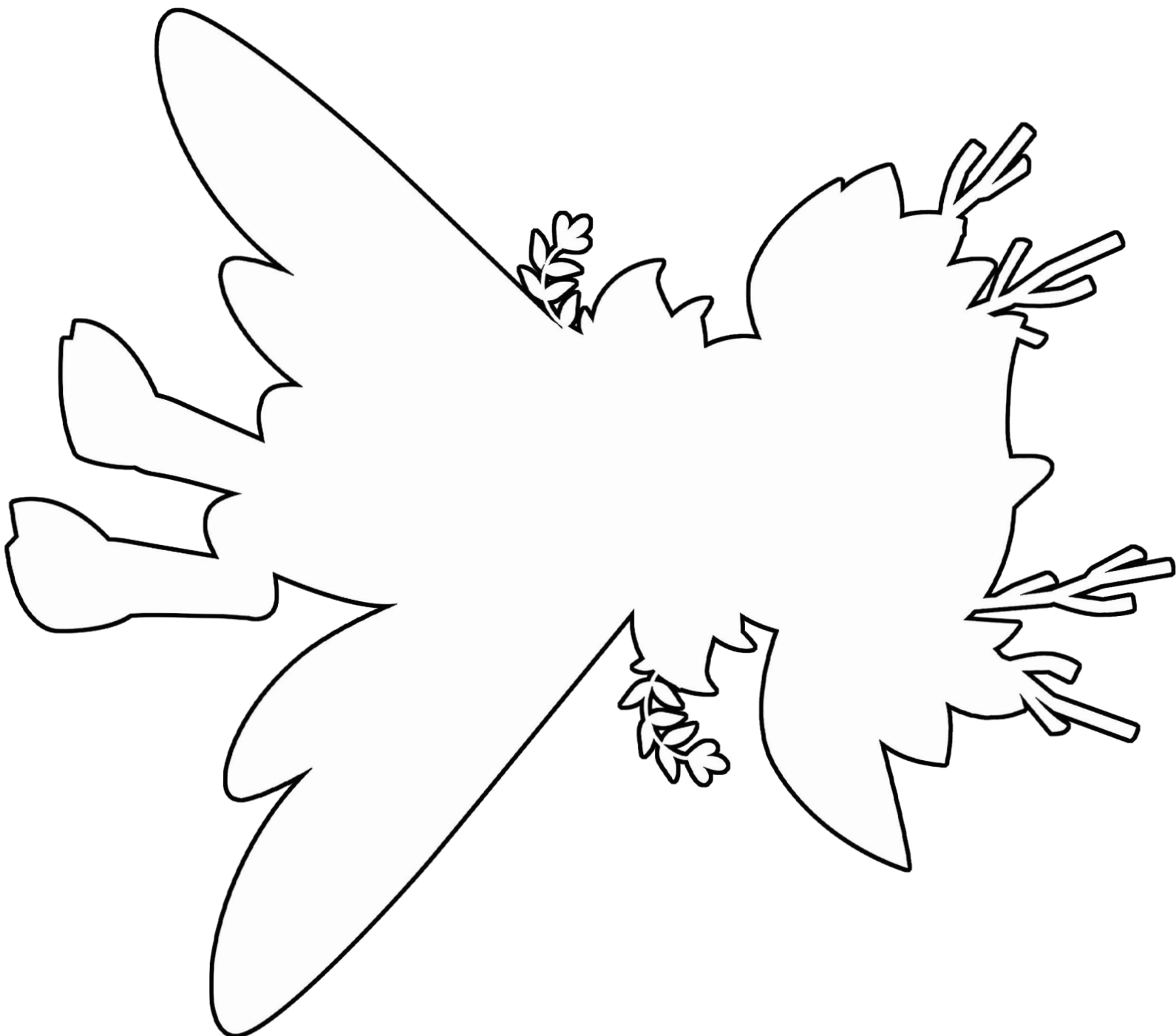
YOUR LINES

Set your heart at rest:
The fairyland buys not the child of me.

.....**that boy!**

YOUR LINES

Not for thy fairy kingdom. Fairies, away!



A Midsummer Night's Dream summary

- Duke Theseus is preparing for his wedding to Hippolyta, when he is interrupted by Egeus and his daughter Hermia, and two young men. Hermia wants to marry Lysander, but Egeus has chosen Demetrius to be her husband. Theseus tells Hermia she must obey her father.
 - Hermia and Lysander plan to run away together to the woods, to escape her father and marry in secret. They are joined by Demetrius's miserable ex-girlfriend Helena. Left alone, Helena decides she will tell Demetrius about Hermia and Lysander's plans.
 - A group of Athenian workmen get together to rehearse a play for the Duke's wedding. Among them is Nick Bottom, who wants to play every single part in the production.
 - In the forest, King Oberon and Queen Titania are arguing over a fairy that Oberon wants as his slave. The argument is having a negative impact on the seasons.
 - Oberon asks his servant Puck to fetch a magic flower which he will use to enchant Titania, so that she falls in love with the next live thing she sees. He also wants to use the flower on Demetrius, to make him fall in love with Helena.
 - The Mechanicals are rehearsing their play in the woods. Puck decides to play a trick on them by turning Nick Bottom into a donkey. The others run away, leaving Bottom alone. He wakes Titania (who has been enchanted with the magic flower) and she falls madly in love with him.
- Lysander and Hermia are lost in the woods. Puck mistakenly puts the love potion on Lysander's eyes. He wakes and sees Helena, falling madly in love with her. He leaves Hermia alone in the woods.
 - Oberon is furious with Puck for putting the love potion on the wrong Athenian. He makes Puck anoint the eyes of Demetrius, who wakes just as he sees Helena. The Athenian men argue about who loves Helena most until Puck sends the four lovers to sleep: Hermia paired with Lysander, and Helena paired with Demetrius.
 - Titania wakes up and Oberon releases her from her spell. She sees Bottom and is horrified to discover she has been in love with a donkey! She and Oberon are friends again, and Puck releases Bottom from his spell.
 - The four lovers marry each other, alongside Theseus and Hippolyta. They watch the Mechanicals perform their dreadful play.

1

Ill met by moonlight
proud Titania

2

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4

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