

YEAR 7 KNOWLEDGE ORGANISER: *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (c.1595-1596)

Context: Shakespeare's Ideas

- Shakespeare's education involved learning about ancient Greek myths and legends. A lot of his works (including *A Midsummer Night's Dream*) were heavily influenced by this.
- Shakespeare may be questioning the impact of male power on women, and women's lack of free will when living in a patriarchal society.
- Shakespeare may be highlighting the consuming power of desire, by exploring the things people do and the ways they act when they are in love (or *think* they are in love!)
- Shakespeare may be exploring the importance of free will, and having the ability to freely make your own decisions.

Key Knowledge – Big Questions

You need to know the answers to the following questions. Sample answers can be found on your [Big Question Answer](#) document.

- Who was Shakespeare and what was his life like?
- Where and when is *A Midsummer Night's Dream* set?
- What is the plot to 'A Midsummer Night's Dream'?
- How is a play different to a novel?
- What are the effects of the love potion?
- How can we analyse how Demetrius treats Hermia?
- What are the consequences of the love potion?
- How can we select effective quotations to support analytical paragraphs?
- How does Oberon plan to resolve the conflict created by the love potion?

Plot

Act 1: Hermia and Lysander love each other but are not allowed to marry, so decide to run away to the forest to get married in secret. Demetrius wants to marry Hermia. Helena loves Demetrius so Helena tells Demetrius about the plan. They follow Hermia and Lysander into the forest.

Act 2: In the forest, Oberon and Titania are arguing. Oberon sees Demetrius and Helena arguing and commands Puck to use the potion on the Athenian man to make him fall in love with Helena. However, the first Athenian man Puck sees is Lysander, so he puts the love potion on him. Lysander falls madly in love with Helena.

Act 3: Puck sees Bottom in the forest and transformed his head into a donkey's head. He puts the love potion on Titania, who falls in love with Bottom. Puck puts the love potion on Demetrius so that he falls in love with Helena. As a result, both men love Helena so there is chaos. Puck eventually drops a herb in Lysander's eyes to put him back to normal.

Acts 4 and 5: Oberon finds Titania and Bottom and decides that he has had enough fun. Puck drops a herb in her eyes, she wakes and leaves with Oberon. The lovers return to Athens where Bottom and the other actors perform their play at the wedding of the three happy couples: Theseus and Hippolyta, Lysander and Hermia and Demetrius and Helena.

Characters

Theseus The duke of Athens. He is a strong and strict ruler of the city.

Hippolyta Theseus's bride. She was a fearless warrior.

Egeus Hermia's stubborn father who wants her to marry Demetrius or be put to death.

Hermia Egeus's daughter who is in love with Lysander.

Lysander

Before the love potion: He is in love with Hermia and runs away to the forest with her.

After the love potion: Falls in love with Helena.

Demetrius

Before the love potion: He wants to marry Hermia and is disgusted by Helena's love.

After the love potion: Falls in love with Helena. He never has the effects of the love potion removed from him.

Helena Hermia's friend who is desperately in love with Demetrius.










Oberon The king of the fairies who controls the love potion.

Titania The fierce queen of the fairies who falls in love with Bottom when the love potion is put on her.

Bottom An actor who has his head turned into a donkey. Titania falls in love with him when she is under the love potion's influence.

Puck Oberon's mischievous servant who puts the potion on people's eyes.






Key Vocabulary

Word	Meaning	Image
chaos	a situation where there is no order and everyone is confused	
conflict	a serious disagreement, battle or struggle between two sides or ideas.	
mock	to make fun of someone	
resolve	to solve a problem or difficulty	
patriarchy	a society where men hold the power and women are usually excluded or oppressed (patriarchal society)	
severe	very strict or harsh	
soliloquy	a speech in a play that the character speaks to themselves or to the audience, rather than to the other characters	
unrequited love	when a person doesn't love someone back	
vulnerable	describes something or someone in a situation where they can be easily harmed	

Other Useful Vocabulary

Word	Meaning
brutal	describes something or someone very cruel and violent
malicious	describes someone who does or says things that are meant to upset someone
naïve	describes someone who doesn't have the experience of how complicated life can be and therefore trusts people too much
victim	someone who has been harmed, often by other people

Useful Quotations

Oberon, describing the flower that creates the love potion.	'Before milk-white, now purple with love's wound'	
Oberon, describing the power of the love potion.	'Will make man or woman madly dote Upon the next live creature that it sees'	
Helena, to Demetrius.	'I am your Spaniel ... The more you beat me, I will fawn on you'	
Demetrius to Helena (before the love potion)	'I am sick when I do look on thee'	
Demetrius (after the love potion)	'My love to Hermia melted as the snow'	
Hermia, to Helena	'You canker-blossom, you thief of love!'	