



## The Story of Midsummer Night's Dream

This is a story of love, mixed-up identities, fairies with love potions, and antics in the forest!

Once upon a time, the great Duke of Athens, Theseus, was preparing for his marriage to Hippolyta, Queen of the Amazons. It was to be a grand affair with four days of merriment and festivities. Egeus, a nobleman interrupts Theseus at court to present his daughter, Hermia, and two young men, Demetrius and Lysander. Egeus had planned on having Hermia marry Demetrius (who loves her), but the stubborn daughter refuses to comply because she says she is in love with Lysander. Egeus asks for Theseus to punish the girl if she does not obey his wishes.



Theseus settles the matter by giving Hermia until the day of his wedding to consider her options, warning her that if she does not obey her father, she could be sent to a convent or even executed.

Hermia and Lysander decide to escape to Athens the very next night and get married in the house of his aunt. They tell their plan to Helena, who was once engaged to Demetrius and who still loves him even though he rejected her after meeting Hermia. Helena goes behind Hermia's back and tells Demetrius that Hermia and Lysander are planning to elope. When Hermia and Lysander sneak off into the woods, Demetrius secretly follows them...and Helena follows him!

Deep in the woods, there are other characters. There is a band of fairies, led by Oberon and Titania, the Queen and King of the fairies. There is also a group of craftsmen from Athens who are rehearsing a play that they plan to perform at the marriage of Theseus and Hippolyta.

The Queen of the fairies had just returned from India is fighting with the King over a young Indian prince who Titania brought back with her. The King wants him to be a knight, but the Queen doesn't. Angry at his wife, Oberon tells his servant, Puck, to find a magical flower that can be spread over a person's eyelids while they are sleeping, that causes the person to fall in love with the first thing he/she sees upon waking. Oberon tells Puck that he plans on using it on the Queen.

Having seen Demetrius acting cruelly toward Helena, Oberon also orders Puck to use the flower on Demetrius. But Puck confuses Lysander with Demetrius and uses it on him instead. This

causes Lysander to fall in love with Helena—abandoning Hermia! Puck tries to fix the situation, but his plan backfires and results in both Lysander and Demetrius convinced they love Helena! Hermia becomes so jealous that she tries to challenge Helena to a fight. Lysander and Demetrius also get into a fight, but Puck confuses them by mimicking their voices and leading them deep into the forest where each becomes lost.

Titania wakes up (having been sprinkled with the juice of the flower) and falls in love with Bottom, one of the craftsmen who was rehearsing the play. Puck had transformed Bottom's head into that of a donkey, and Titania ends up following around the donkey-headed man, doting on him hand and foot.

Eventually, Puck spreads the love potion on Lysander's eyelids and by morning, he is back in love with Hermia. Demetrius now loves Helena, and when Theseus and Hippolyta discover the sleeping lovers in the forest, they take them back to Athens to be married.

After a group wedding, everyone watches Bottom and his fellow craftsmen perform their play, which is a hilarious version of Pyramus and Thisbe.

When the play is over, the lovers go to bed and the fairies come out to bless the sleeping couples with a protective charm. They leave, but Puck stays. He asks the audience to forgive them all and tells them to remember the play as if it had been a dream.

