

# WU?<sup>@</sup>therep

## A MIDSUMMER NIGHT'S DREAM

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**by William Shakespeare**

**Directed by Paul Mason Barnes**



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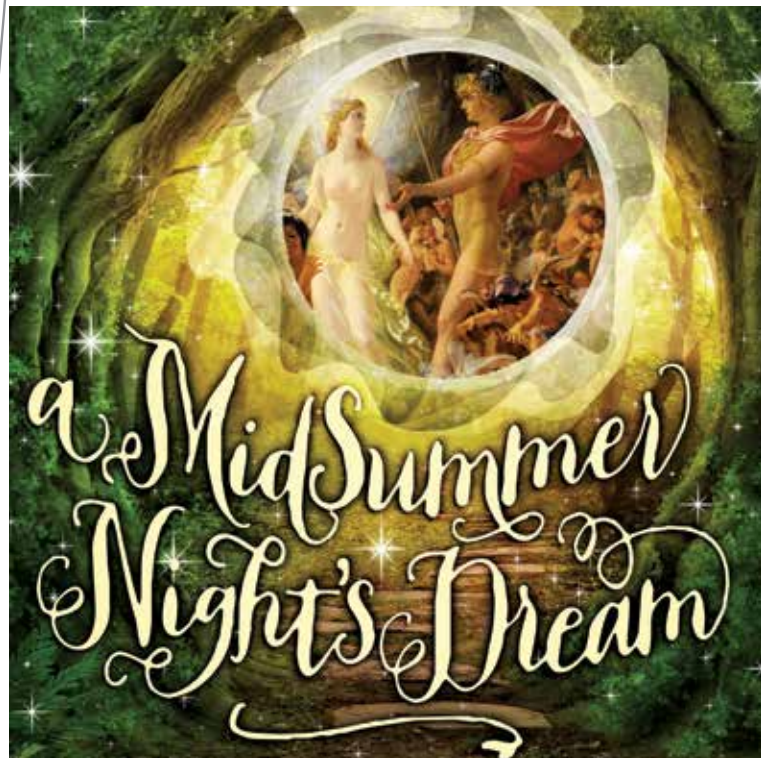


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# the 411

At The Rep, we know that life moves fast—okay, really fast. But we also know that some things are worth

slowing down for. We believe that live theatre is one of those pit stops worth making and are excited that you are going to stop by for a show. To help you get the most bang for your buck, we have put together **WU? @ THE REP**—an IM guide that will give you everything you need to know to get at the top of your theatergoing game—fast. You'll find character descriptions (**A/S/L**), a plot summary (**FYI**), biographical information (**F2F**), historical context (**B4U**), and other bits and pieces (**HTH**). Most importantly, we'll have some ideas about what this all means **IRL**, anyway.

## CU@therep!



### The Teacher's Lounge

In an effort to make our educational materials accessible to students and easy for educators to incorporate into the classroom, our study guide is written in a student-oriented format. We hope that you will circulate this guide among your students in the weeks preceding your visit to The Rep, encouraging them to browse it before and after class and as time allows, using it as a launch point for both pre- and post-performance discussions. You may also want to visit our website, [www.repstl.org](http://www.repstl.org), for additional information including activity suggestions and behind-the-scenes information. Any materials, either from this guide or from our website may be reproduced for use in the classroom.

**NEATO!**

As always, we appreciate your making live theatre a part of your classroom experience and welcome your feedback and questions.

## WELCOME!

The desire to learn, insatiable when awakened, can sometimes lie dormant until touched by the right teacher or the right experience. We at The Rep are grateful to have the opportunity to play a role supporting you as you awaken the desire for learning in your students.

This well-known Shakespeare classic has it all—romance, magic, rebellion, misadventure and resolution. Even more importantly, it has a wonderful messages about forgiveness, compassion and the power of dreams.

It would be a good idea to take a minute on the bus to give your students these quick theatre etiquette reminders:

- This show has one intermission; there will be time for bathroom breaks before the show and halfway through.
- The actors can hear the audience and appreciate the laughter, gasps and quiet attention to action. However, talking, moving around and eating is very distracting to others and can dampen the energy of what is happening on stage.
- Pictures, phone calls and texting are not allowed at any time during the performance.

Live theatre won't allow your students to take a passive role—they must work with us to create the experience which takes the learning deeper. Our unique ability to fuse words and images onstage allows your students to explore new ideas as well as excites their imaginations. We will do our part so your students will be stirred to understandings and self-awareness while delving into new and familiar worlds. You are doing your part by using The Rep to extend your intellectual and aesthetic curriculum. Thank you!

Marsha Coplon  
Director of Education

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# A/S/L

## THE ATHENIANS

THESEUS: Duke of Athens

HIPPOLYTA: Queen of the Amazons, betrothed to Theseus

PHILOSTRATE: Master of revels to Theseus

EGEUS: father of Hermia

HERMIA: daughter of Egeus, in love with Lysander

HELENA: friend of Hermia, in love with Demetrius

LYSANDER: in love with Hermia, then in love with Helena, then in love with Hermia again

DEMETRIUS: in love with Hermia...at first

## THE ACTING TROUPE

QUINCE: carpenter

SNUG: joiner

BOTTOM: weaver

FLUTE: bellowsmender

SNOUT: tinker

STARVELING: tailor

## THE FAIRIES

OBERON: Titania's husband and king of the fairies

TITANIA: Oberon's wife and queen of the fairies

CHANGELING CHILD: a boy whose mother recently died and left him in the care of her good friend, Titania

PUCK (ROBIN GOODFELLOW): servant to Oberon, general mischief-maker

PEASBLOSSOM, COBWEB, MOTH AND MUSTARDSEED: fairy attendants to Titania



*Scenic Design by James Kronzer*





## SPOILER ALERT!

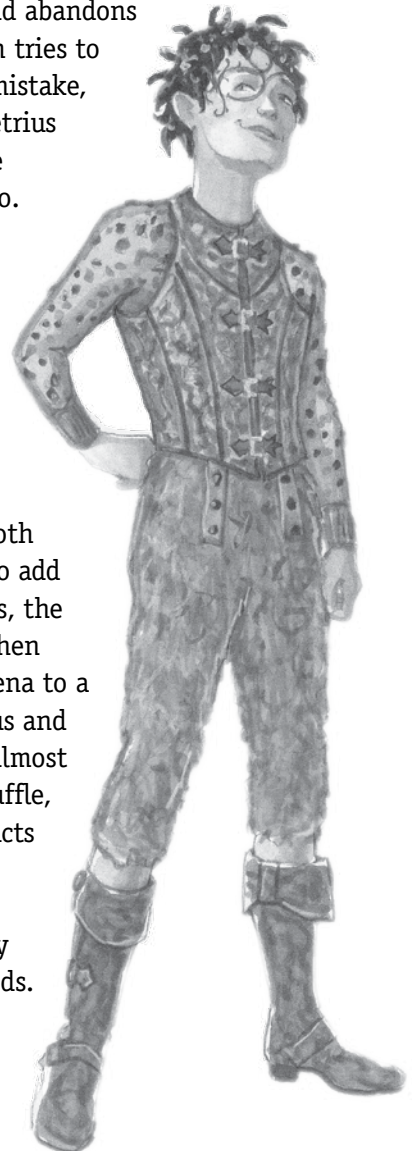
THESEUS, THE DUKE OF ATHENS, is set to marry Hippolyta, queen of the Amazons, and he's currently planning for the wedding, which includes a four-day celebration festival. He's speaking to Philostrate about finding entertainment for the occasion, when Athenian nobleman Egeus bursts in with his daughter Hermia and two young men named Demetrius and Lysander. Egeus rants that Hermia is rebelling against him; he has arranged a planned marriage to Demetrius, but Hermia has fallen in love with Lysander, whom she wants to marry instead. Egeus is enraged and demands that his daughter be punished by law, which states that if she refuses her father's wishes, she shall be put to death. Theseus instead comes up with a slightly more merciful alternative by telling Hermia that if she refuses her father and Demetrius, she'll go to a convent.

UNDERSTANDABLY WROUGHT with worry, Hermia and Lysander later plan to run away the next night and marry at the house of his aunt, who lives far away. They reveal their plans to Hermia's friend Helena, who is dealing with her own heartbreak; she was once engaged to Demetrius, but he broke it off after falling in love with Hermia, who has no interest in him. Wanting Demetrius' attention and hoping to gain his affection, Helena tells him about Hermia's and Lysander's planned elopement.

MEANWHILE, THERE'S a disagreement in the nearby woods between Titania, queen of the fairies, and her fairy king husband Oberon. Titania has just returned from India where she had been entrusted with the care of a changeling child after his mother died during childbirth. Oberon wants to make the boy a knight under his control, but Titania refuses. To get his revenge, Oberon tells his servant Puck to retrieve a magical flower and to spread the juice across Titania's eyelids while she's asleep, which will cause her to

fall in love with the first living thing she sees upon waking. Oberon also witnesses an interaction between Demetrius and Helena, who have followed Hermia and Lysander into the woods. Helena keeps promising Demetrius that she can love him better than Hermia can, but he cruelly rebuffs her. Deciding to also punish the young man's mean behavior, Oberon tells Puck to use the magical flower on him too. Puck dutifully obeys and obtains the flower. However, he encounters Lysander and Hermia while in the woods, and thinking Lysander is Demetrius, Puck applies the magic to him instead.

WHILE AWAKENING, Lysander happens to see Helena. The love potion seems to be effective, as Lysander falls deeply in love with Helena and abandons Hermia. Oberon tries to rectify Puck's mistake, and soon Demetrius ends up in love with Helena too. Helena, who you'd think would be thrilled at all the newfound attention, instead thinks Demetrius and Lysander are both mocking her. To add to her problems, the jilted Hermia then challenges Helena to a fight. Demetrius and Lysander also almost end up in a scuffle, but Puck distracts them both so that they each get individually lost in the woods. He is able to



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remove the charm from Lysander so that he returns to loving Hermia while Demetrius remains in love with Helena. Meanwhile, elsewhere in the forest, there is a small company of local craftsmen rehearsing a play for Oberon's wedding festival. Like the others, they're in a bit of a muddle, fighting amongst themselves and attempting to get their production in order.

IN ALL THIS MESS, Oberon achieves the original objective by applying the love potion to Titania. When she awakes, the first person she sees is Bottom, one of the actors/craftsmen whose head was recently transformed into that of an ass by Puck, and she dotes on him accordingly. While she's distracted, Oberon takes the boy. He then releases Titania from the spell and orders

Puck to change Bottom back to his original form. He also orders Puck to charm Hermia, Lysander, Helena and Demetrius so that when they wake the next day, they'll think the night's events were all a dream.

THESEUS, HIPPOLYTA and Egeus enter the woods on a morning hunt, encounter all four young lovers and take them back to Athens. With Hermia and Lysander still in love and with Demetrius now returning Helena's love, Theseus overrules Egeus' demands. Everyone celebrates with a group wedding and enjoys a hilarious play put on by the craftsmen, including Bottom. After the lovers go to bed, the fairies emerge to bless them with good fortune. Soon only Puck remains to ask for the audience's forgiveness and to remember the story as if it had only been a dream.

*Costume Design  
by Susan Branch  
Towne*





## ABOUT THE PLAYWRIGHT: WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE

The man, the myth, the legend, William Shakespeare was born in April 1564 in the town of Stratford-upon-Avon, England. His parents were Mary Arden, who came from an affluent Catholic family, and John Shakespeare, son of a farmer who was a successful glover by trade and eventual alderman.

It is believed Shakespeare was educated at King's New School in Stratford, a grammar school that taught the typical Elizabethan educational curriculum focusing on Latin grammar and literature classics. In 1582, at the age of 18, Shakespeare married a woman eight years his senior named Anne Hathaway (nope, not the modern-day movie star!). They had a daughter named Susanna in 1583 and twins Judith and Hamnet in 1585. Both his daughters lived into adulthood, but Hamnet passed away of unknown causes in 1596.

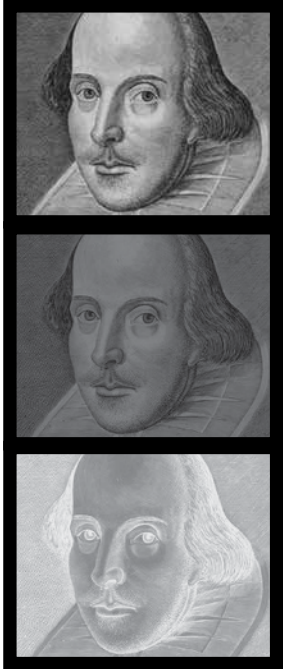
It is unclear if the marriage between Shakespeare and Anne was a happy one. Based on when they got married and when Susanna was born, Anne was likely pregnant during the wedding, and many have assumed Shakespeare was forced into marriage by her parents. He left his family to live in London sometime after his children were born, and in his will, he famously left Anne his "second best bed." Many have taken this as a slight, but others argue that because the best bed was usually for guests, the second best bed was meant to be the "marriage bed" and thus an affectionate gesture.

The historical records on Shakespeare's life are a bit spotty until he emerged as a professional in the theatre world of London in the early 1590s. He was successful not only as a playwright but also as an actor and even as a shareholder in an acting company called Lord Chamberlain's Men,

later named the King's Men, which built the Globe Theatre in 1599. Shakespeare wrote *Hamlet*, *Othello*, *King Lear* and *Macbeth* while the company was at the Globe, as well as the comedies *Twelfth Night* and *Measure for Measure*.

Shakespeare lived during and contributed to the English Renaissance, a cultural and artistic movement that began during his most successful years. Greek and Roman classics were being translated and printed, encouraging literary expression and inspiring artistic innovation. Besides the Globe and other local theatres, Shakespeare's plays were also often performed at court. Theatre flourished under the patronage of wealthy aristocrats, including Lord Chamberlain and James I, and was encouraged by none other than Queen Elizabeth I, who was very fond of theatre. London rapidly grew into a lively metropolis that was drawing thousands of new citizens each year. It appears that Shakespeare's success during his lifetime was attributed not only to his genius but also his ability to convey in his plays' settings and characters both the rural and urban lifestyles, marrying his own experiences of Stratford and London.

Shakespeare retired from his career on the stage sometime between 1610 and 1613. He returned home to Stratford where his wife, daughters and their husbands lived and where Shakespeare still owned property. He died there in 1616, the cause of which is unknown. Seven years later, his collected plays were published as a work known as the *First Folio*.





Sometimes it feels like the characters in Shakespeare's plays are speaking another language, but, as old as it might sound, that language is most definitely English! If you feel intimidated by the complicated word structure, don't fret—or as Will would say: "Be not afeard." Once you learn a few basic translation tricks, it's really just like learning a new dialect. See below for what some fancy, old-fashioned words/phrases mean in today's modern times:

*Art* = Are

*Ay* = Yes

*Anon* = soon

*Ere* = before

*Would* = Wish

*Give me leave to* = allow  
me to

*Alas* = unfortunately

*Adieu* = goodbye

*Sirrah* = sir

## DIFFERENT FORMS OF "YOU" AND "YOUR"

Shakespeare likes to say "you" in lots of fancy ways. Since his plays are so focused on dialogue between two characters, it's understandable that he would try to mix it up! However, they each represent a specific kind of "you." For example, when it's the subject of the sentence, you would say *thou* but when it's the object, you say *thee*. When addressing a group of people, it takes the plural form *ye*.

- Thou hast by moonlight at her window sung. . .
- There, gentle Hermia, may I marry thee. . .
- But fare ye well: 'tis partly my own fault. . .

There are also different iterations for "your." *Thy* precedes a noun that begins with a consonant, and *thine* precedes a noun that begins with a vowel. It helps to think of the same logic we use for "a" vs. "an."

- Now, when thou wakest, with thine own fool's eyes peep. . .
- Steal forth thy father's house to-morrow night. . .

## LOOK OUT FOR. . .

**Words that end in "-eth":** Just pay attention to the root of the word. For example, *speakeeth* = speak, *sayeth* = say, etc.

**Inverted sentences:** Instead of the subject being first, it is often after the verb. For example, *Full of vexation come I* = I come full of vexation.

**Metaphors:** It's important to not take every phrase literally. For example, Lysander asks Hermia why she's so upset and compares her expression to a flower—"How now, my love! Why is your cheek

so pale? How chance the roses there do fade so fast?"

**Allusions:** Often Shakespeare casually references an actual event, person, place or work of art. It's always fun when you get the reference! For example, when applying magic to Titania for the second time, Oberon references Cupid, the god of love, and Diana, goddess of chastity—"Be as thou wast wont to be; See as thou wast wont to see: Dian's bud o'er Cupid's flower; Hath such force and blessed power."





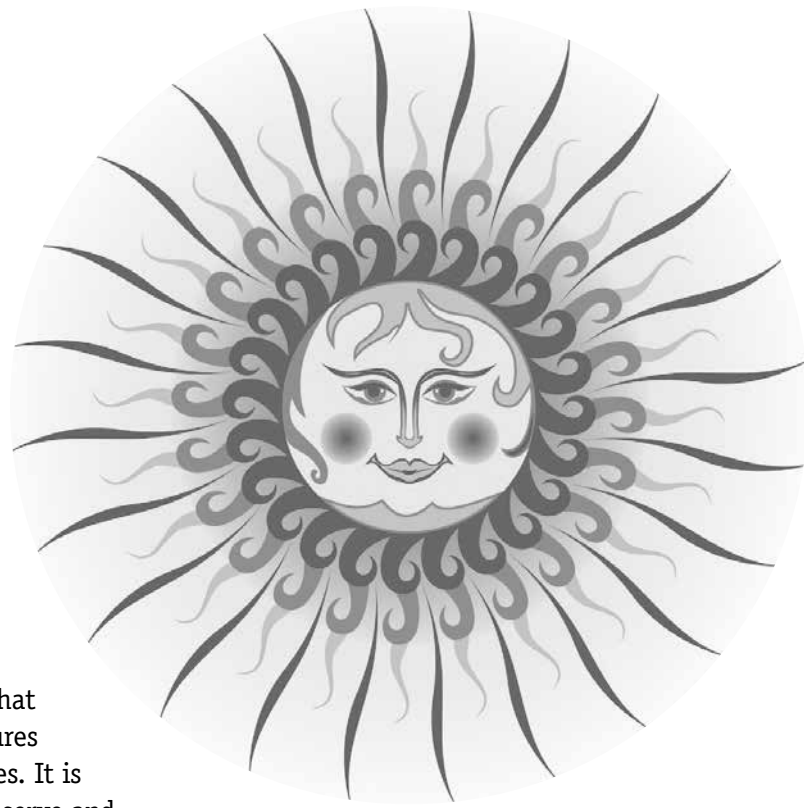
## SUMMER SOLSTICE

The “midsummer’s night” referenced in the play’s title refers to midsummer’s eve, also known as the summer solstice, which falls in June in the northern hemisphere when the sun is at its highest point, making for the longest day of the year. The summer solstice (its opposite, of course, being winter solstice—the shortest day of the year) is considered a sacred event that has been celebrated in several cultures around the world since ancient times. It is believed to be an opportunity to observe and become in sync with the natural cycles of the earth and universe. The summer solstice is also meant to celebrate the season that will culminate in the nourishing harvest. Read on to see what the summer solstice has meant to different cultures over time.

**ANCIENT GREEKS:** In many regions, the summer solstice celebrated the first day of the year, which included a festival named Kronia that celebrated the agricultural god Cronus. The festival offered an opportunity to turn the social code upside down as slaves could participate as equals or even be served by their masters.

**ANCIENT SLAVIC TRIBES:** Northern and Central American pagans honored the summer solstice with bonfires that were believed to have sacred powers. They banished evil spirits and determined the growth of that season’s crops by how high couples were able to jump across them. The bonfires were also believed to boost the sun’s energy and guarantee a good growing season.

**MAYA AND AZTECS:** Mayan ruins suggest a great reverence for the summer solstice as many temples and public structures were often aligned with the shadows cast by the summer solstice and winter solstice suns.



**ANCIENT CHINESE:** Summer solstice celebrations in ancient China emphasized femininity, Mother Earth, and the force called yin, while the winter solstice was a time to celebrate masculinity and yang.

**DRUIDS:** The Celtic religious leaders who valued harmony and the earth led ritual celebrations on midsummer’s eve. Many modern Druids (not to mention Wiccans and other neo-pagan groups) have celebrated the event by gathering for the solstices as well as the spring and autumn equinoxes at Stonehenge, the prehistoric stone monument in England that is thought to have been built as an astronomical observatory.

Want to celebrate the summer solstice with your friends and family? How would you do it? Think about how it’s supposed to represent nature and growth. Did any of the cultural commemorations above inspire you? Perhaps you would celebrate it by dancing or gathering at a bonfire or planting something? The options are endless! Be as creative as you wish.





## READ MORE ABOUT IT

We encourage you to explore the following books, movies and websites for more information. .



*A Midsummer's Night Dream*, 116 minutes, Fox Searchlight Pictures, 1999.

See Shakespeare's whimsical comedy come to life in this film adaptation that's faithful to the play's ethereal tone. It stars Stanley Tucci as Puck, Michelle Pfeiffer as Titania and Christian Bale as Demetrius.

*Get Over It*, 87 minutes, Miramax International, 2001.

Very loosely based on Shakespeare's play, this teen romantic comedy takes us into the drama on and off stage of a high-school musical called *A Midsummer Night's Rockin*

*Eve*. It features Kirsten Dunst, Zoe Saldana and Mila Kunis, among many other recognizable stars.

**No Fear Shakespeare** ([nfs.sparknotes.com](http://nfs.sparknotes.com))

Love the idea of reading Shakespeare but intimidated by the classical language? No fear! This website features Shakespeare's original language side-by-side with a facing-page translation of modern English, so you can make sure you're understanding the play's plot correctly!

[shakespeare-online.com](http://shakespeare-online.com)

This online resource is a one-stop shop for everything Shakespeare. You

can find many of his plays and sonnets here as well as the Bard's biographical information and analytical essays about his work.

**Sutherland, Tui T., *This Must Be Love*, HarperTeen, 2004.**

Best friends Helena and Hermia are involved in their New Jersey high school's production of *Romeo and Juliet*, but their lives, involving their recent love interests Dimitri and Alex, oddly resembles the plot of *Midsummer*. This novel features Shakespearean hijinks and plot twists but in a modern-day re-telling.

## BTW

### IF YOU LIKED THIS

If you enjoyed the humor of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, check out some of Shakespeare's other famous comedies.

If you like. . .

An underdog story in which a lower-class woman uses her cleverness to seduce her royal crush—Read: *All's Well That Ends Well* (1602-03)

A battle of the wits and finding love where you least expect it—Read: *Much Ado About Nothing* (1598-99)

A case of mistaken identity and ensuing hilarity—Read: *Twelfth Night* (1599-1600)

A complex and bold heroine who challenges society's limitations on women—Read: *As You Like It* (1599-1600)

A slapstick farce with puns and wordplay that happens to be about twins separated at birth—Read: *A Comedy Errors* (1592-93)





## SHAKESPEARE ALL AROUND

William Shakespeare is one of the most popular writers ever, and his work has permeated our culture so strongly that we may not even realize what was originally inspired by the Bard and his plays. Think you can guess which of the below books/movies/songs/musicals match the following Shakespeare plays? Give it a shot!

*Twelfth Night*

*Hamlet*

*Romeo and Juliet*

*Julius Caesar*

*Taming of the Shrew*

*Macbeth*

1. The 2012 young adult novel *The Fault in Our Stars*' title is a reference to a line from this tragedy that portrays the conspiracy against a Roman dictator. "The fault, dear Brutus, is not in our stars, But in ourselves, that we are underlings."

Answer: \_\_\_\_\_

2. The Hogwarts Choir in the third Harry Potter film *The Prisoner of Azkaban* (2004) sings a song called "Double, Double Toil and Trouble" the night students arrive at Hogwarts, which is an homage to a famous witches' scene in one of Shakespeare's darker tragedies.

Answer: \_\_\_\_\_

3. The plots of the teen movies *10 Things I Hate About You* (1999) and *She's the Man* (2006) are modern adaptations of two of Shakespeare plays, the first is about a tough, headstrong young woman and the second being about a resourceful, cross-dressing young woman.

Answer: \_\_\_\_\_

4. Tony and Maria, from the 1950s musical *West Side Story*, were inspired by the star-crossed lovers from this play.

Answer: \_\_\_\_\_

5. The 1994 Disney film *The Lion King* tells the story of a murdered king and his deceptive brother who tries to steal the throne from his nephew—a plot pulled almost directly from this Shakespeare play that takes place in Denmark with humans instead of Africa with lions.

Answer: \_\_\_\_\_

## FESTIVE FESTIVALS

ALTHOUGH IT'S BEEN A LONG TIME since Shakespeare lived, that doesn't mean his work and the unique culture it created cannot be enjoyed live. Shakespeare festivals have become immensely popular in our modern culture. As theatre organizations that stage Shakespeare works on an ongoing basis, Shakespeare festivals likely originated in the playwright's hometown of Stratford-upon-Avon in the late 19th century. And lots of cities currently host them! The Oregon Shakespeare festival in Ashland, Oregon, founded in 1935, is one of the country's oldest, and in addition to performances, it also offers backstage tours, lectures, classes, pre- and post-show discussions. In fact, many festivals try to host performances on a stage physically reminiscent of those in the Bard's time. The Hofstra Shakespeare Festival, founded in 1951 at Hofstra University, performs its plays on a 5/6 life-sized replica of the original Globe stage.

ST. LOUIS HAS ITS OWN award-winning Shakespeare Festival that seeks to make Will's work available to all with its mission "to produce professional Shakespeare theatre, culminating in a free production in Forest Park, and to celebrate both Shakespeare's language and the artists he has inspired." Shakespeare Festival St. Louis is a nonprofit organization that, since its initial two-week run in 2001 that attracted 33,000 audience members, has grown into a year-round institution that annually produces more than 250 public performances for nearly 100,000 patrons and students.

THE FESTIVAL OFFERS performing tours at local schools as well as opportunities for you to get involved, including youth acting training and summer camps. The organization also offers a variety of programs for local neighborhoods to get in on the action including SHAKE 38, in which all of Shakespeare's 38 plays are performed by 38 different groups in different neighborhoods and locations, including bars, coffee shops and even street corners; as well as Shakespeare in the Streets, in which a Festival-selected creative team leads a neighborhood in developing an original play based on Shakespeare's works that reflects that neighborhood's character.

THOUGH PROBABLY the most popular part of Shakespeare Festival St. Louis is the annual free festival in Forest Park, which is the only free outdoor professional theatre in St. Louis. You can rent one of the festival's chairs or find your own seat to enjoy the main production, and if you go early enough, the 90-minute Green Show, which includes a 20-minute version of the mainstage show for children and features local musicians, jugglers, clowns, and a family craft area.

IF YOU'VE BEEN a lifelong Shakespeare fan or if your interest was just recently piqued by this production of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, it would definitely be worth your while to check out a Shakespeare festival!





**Hermia:** *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. ...*

**Helena:** *I will not trust you, I,  
Nor longer stay in your curst company.  
Your hands than mine are quicker  
for a fray,  
My legs are longer though, to run away.*

- \* Although it appears that Helena and Hermia are about to come to blows, their exchange in this scene is comedic. It's interesting that earlier in the play Helena discusses her physical appearance as compared to Hermia to try and explain why Demetrius loves her friend more (O, were favor so, Yours would I catch, fair Hermia, ere I go; My ear should catch your voice, my eye your eye, My tongue should catch your tongue's sweet melody), and now they're each describing their physical attributes as in how they can physically overcome the other—Hermia clawing at Helena's eyes vs. Helena running away. At first Hermia is described as fair when it appears both men love her, but now when they seem to reject her, she is viewed as apparently too short. Why do you think Shakespeare does this? How important are looks when it comes to love?

**Theseus:** *Lovers and madmen have  
such seething brains,  
Such shaping fantasies, that apprehend  
More than cool reason ever comprehends.  
The lunatic, the lover and the poet  
Are of imagination all compact:  
One sees more devils than vast  
hell can hold,  
That is, the madman: the lover,  
all as frantic,*

*Sees Helen's beauty in a brow of Egypt:  
The poet's eye, in fine frenzy rolling,  
Doth glance from heaven to earth,  
from earth to heaven;  
And as imagination bodies forth  
The forms of things unknown, the  
poet's pen  
Turns them to shapes and gives to  
airy nothing  
A local habitation and a name.*

- \* This monologue seems to really sum up a major subject in the play—fantasy and the power of one's imagination. It seems that Theseus is criticizing the imagination for making things seem like something they're not, but the descriptions of what lovers and madmen create in their minds sound quite beautiful. What do you think is Shakespeare's purpose in this? Why is it important to be rooted in reality but to also dream?
- Puck:** *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...*
- \* Puck speaks directly to the audience at the end of the play, asking for forgiveness for any offense made and telling us that if we were truly upset by the story, we should just pretend it was all a dream. This seems to add a certain kind of lightheartedness to the play as if to say "it's not meant to be taken seriously!" For someone who could write heart-wrenching tragedies, Shakespeare was also a genius at good-natured levity. Why do you think this fits well for the play's tone?