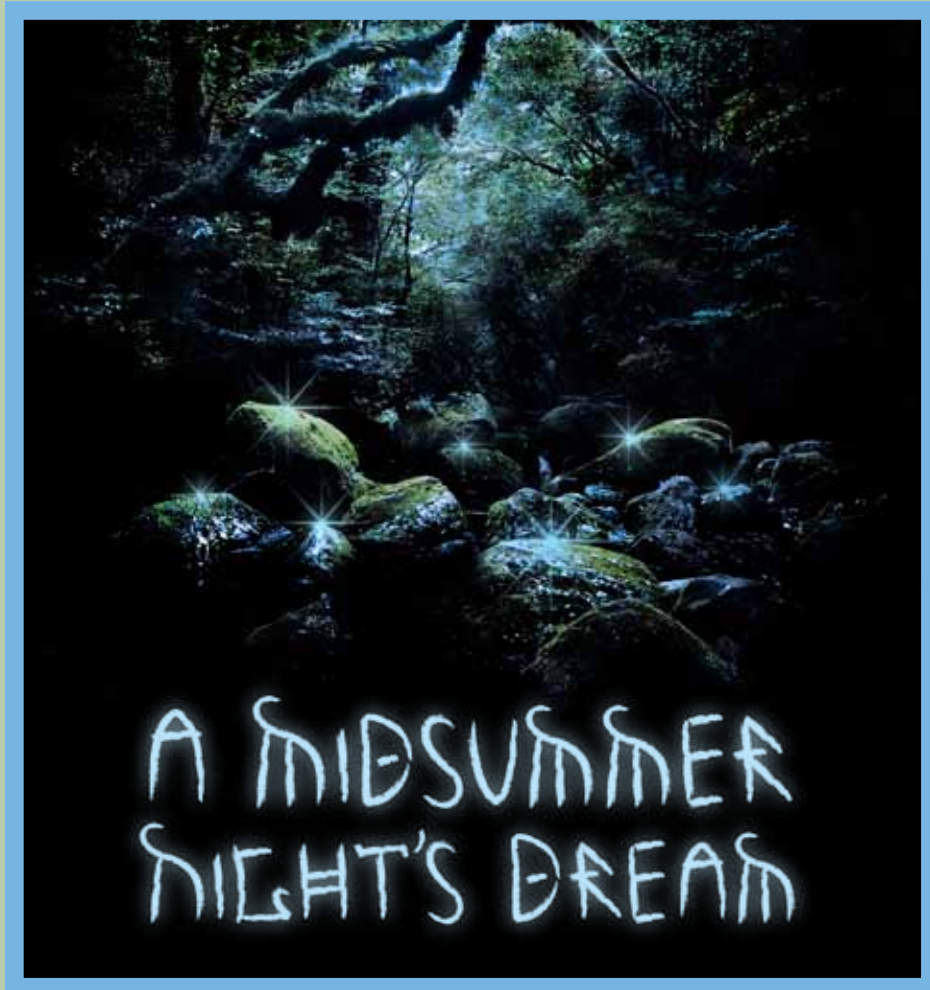


EDUCATOR RESOURCE GUIDE



www.seattleshakespeare.org/education
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SEATTLE SHAKESPEARE COMPANY

Dear Educator,

Welcome to year of transition.

Seattle Shakespeare Company has gone through a host of transitions this summer. We are in the middle of a search for a new Artistic Director, our Education programs are under new leadership, we are producing two plays at the Intiman Playhouse venue, and even our administrative offices have shifted around!

How fitting, then, to kick off the 2011–2012 season with *A Midsummer Night's Dream*! In this show, all of the characters venture into the forest and come out changed. The play is all about transitions, decisions, and growth.

This show is also all about love. As director Sheila Daniels mentions when talking about this show, this play addresses loving other people, loving your family, loving yourself, and loving the theater with the fervor that Bottom does.

As the new Education Director here, I wanted to thank you for sharing your love of theater and Shakespeare with your students. We have a great season coming up, starting with *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, followed by Shakespeare's Roman tragedy of *Coriolanus*, all about loyalty, family, and ego. During the *Coriolanus* run, we will also be presenting special student matinees of our touring *Romeo and Juliet* at the Center House Theatre. Then in February we will be presenting *Pygmalion*, our first play by George Bernard Shaw, and finishing up our season with *As You Like It*, a romantic Shakespeare comedy.

Thank you for joining us for our 2011–2012 Student Matinees, and I hope you enjoy the show!

Best,



Michelle Burce
Education Director

Sponsors:

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SYNOPSIS

Theseus, the Duke of Athens, and Hippolyta, the Queen of the Amazons, are preparing for their wedding day. Egeus arrives and begs the Duke to force his daughter Hermia to marry Demetrius. Hermia has other plans, and tells the Duke that she has every intention of marrying the good hearted Lysander. The Duke informs Hermia that if she does not marry Demetrius she will be put to death.



Hermia and Lysander by John Simmons

Hermia refuses, and she and Lysander plan to steal away into the nearby forest together. She tells her best friend Helena of her plans. Helena is madly in love with Demetrius and is jealous of his affection for Hermia. In the hopes of winning some favor with Demetrius, Helena tells him where Hermia and Lysander are going. Demetrius storms after them, hotly pursued by Helena.

Meanwhile, a troop of tradesmen, or “rude mechanicals,” collect themselves together in order to distribute parts for a play they wish to perform in honor of Theseus and Hippolyta’s wedding day. Bottom, the biggest talker and most enthusiastic of them all, expresses his desire to play every part in the play, but to no avail. Each tradesman receives his script and agrees to meet later that day to rehearse the play.

In the forest Oberon, King of the Fairies, and Titania, the Queen of the Fairies, are arguing over custody of a changeling boy that Titania has obtained. When Titania refuses to give the boy to Oberon, he orders a fawn named Puck to find the Love-in-Idleness flower. When applied to the eyes while sleeping, the juice of this magic plant will insure that the receiver will fall in love with the first thing he or she sees.

As Puck goes to carry out Oberon’s instructions. Demetrius and Helena enter the forest. Oberon witnesses the unrequited love that Helena has for Demetrius. When Puck returns, Oberon gives him some of the flowers and orders him to put the juice of the magic

flower in the eyes of the “Athenian youth.” Puck finds an “Athenian youth” and applies the potion to his eyes — unfortunately he mistakes Lysander for Demetrius, and anoints the wrong eyes! Helena enters and when Lysander wakes, she is the first thing he sees, causing him to fall hopelessly in love with her. Helena continues searching for Demetrius, now pursued by a love-sick Lysander.

The troop of actors is rehearsing their play. During a break, Puck enters and puts a spell on Bottom, changing him into a donkey (an “ass”). Bottom’s transformation scares off the rest of the players. Titania wakes from the noise and sees Bottom. She immediately falls in love with him despite his appearance as an ass.

Due to Puck’s attempt to correct his earlier misapplication of the love potion, Demetrius and Lysander are now both in love with Helena — and hate Hermia. Helena is hurt because she believes that the three others are playing a joke on her by pretending to love her. In a fury, Oberon orders Puck to right his wrong and cause each of the young Athenians to fall in love with the correct person.

After Oberon has had his fill of amusement with Titania being in love with an ass, he releases her from the spell and the two make peace with each other.

Puck is left to clean up the mess he has made. He changes Bottom back into a human, and lulls the quarreling lovers to a clearing where they all fall asleep. He applies a different herb to Lysander’s eye, removing the love potion.



A Midsummer Night's Dream by Edwin Landseer, 1857

In the morning, Theseus, Hippolyta, and Egeus are taking a walk in the woods when they run across the sleeping lovers. They awaken to fall in love with the right partner — Lysander back with Hermia, and Demetrius with Helena. Egeus is furious to find Lysander and Hermia together, but Demetrius gives up his claim to Hermia, saying that he only loves Helena. Theseus overrules Egeus, saying that Hermia will be allowed to marry Lysander, and everyone heads to the palace for the wedding celebrations.

Theseus and Hippolyta, Lysander and Hermia, Demetrius and Helena are all married. The troop of actors is chosen to entertain the couples with a wacky rendition of “Pyramus and Thisbe.” Oberon and Titania bless the eternal love of the couples.

CHARACTERS

There are four distinct groups of people within our play: the world of the court, the lovers, the mechanicals, and the fairy kingdom.

The Athenian Court

THESEUS: Duke of Athens and warrior who defeated the Amazons and won their queen, Hippolyta, for his bride.

HIPPOLYTA: Queen of the Amazon warriors defeated by, and beloved of, Theseus.

EGEUS: The controlling father of Hermia who begs Theseus to punish her with the law of Athens if she refuses to marry Demetrius.

PHILOSTRATE: Theseus' judgmental Master of Revels.

The Lovers

HERMIA: The strong-willed daughter of Egeus, passionately in love with Lysander; childhood best friend to Helena.

LYSANDRA: A poetic Athenian in love with Hermia

HELENA: The self-doubting, tall girl devoutly in love with Demetrius; childhood best friend to Hermia

DEMETRIUS: The Athenian soldier who has broken his betrothal to Helena to marry Hermia. He also has been chosen by Hermia's father, Egeus, to be Hermia's husband.

The Mechanicals

NICK BOTTOM: A weaver; Pyramus in the play

ROBIN STARVELING: A tailor; Moonshine in the play

FRANCIS FLUTE: A bellows mender; Thisby in the play

TOM SNOUT: A tinker; Wall in the play

PETER QUINCE: A carpenter, Prologue in the play

SNUG: A joiner; Lion in the play

The Fairy Kingdom

OBERON: The King of the Fairies

TITANIA: The Queen of the Fairies and guardian of the changeling child.

PUCK: A fairy; Oberon's servant

PEASEBLOSSOM: A fairy

COBWEB: A fairy

MOTH: A fairy

MUSTARDSEED: A fairy

MIDSUMMER AT A GLANCE

Settings:

The ancient Greek city-state of Athens and nearby woods in late June. The play takes place over the course of one night and the following day.

Date Written: Probably between 1594 and 1596

Probable Main Sources:

No single main source, but Shakespeare did base parts of the play on *The Knight's Tale*, by Geoffrey Chaucer (1340?-1400). Chaucer's story has an entirely different plot, but the setting two of the main characters—Theseus and Hippolyta—are the same. Other sources Shakespeare used include:

- *The Golden Ass*, by Apuleius (2nd Century A.D.) is a possible source for Bottom's transformation.
- *Life of Theseus*, by Plutarch (46?-120?); and possibly *King James the Fourth*, by Robert Greene (1560?-1592) both give insight into the life of Theseus.
- *Pyramis and Thisby*, the play within the play, is based on passages in *Metamorphoses* (Book IV), by Ovid (43 B.C.-17 A.D.).
- The character Puck appeared as Robin Goodfellow in a 1593 play, *Terrors of the Night*, by Thomas Nashe (1567-1601). Edmund Spenser referred to a devilish sprite called Pook in *Epithalamium* (1595), and Shakespeare may have adopted Pook and changed his name to Puck.

Publication Dates:

1600, First Quarto; 1619, Second Quarto; 1623 First Folio

Significance of Title:

Midsummer Day, the feast of John the Baptist, occurred on June 24 and was a holiday in England, a time for feasting and merriment. Midsummer night was thought to be the one day of the year when spirits were especially powerful. Fairies, hobgoblins and witches held their festival on Midsummer Night. To dream about Midsummer Night was to dream about strange creatures and strange happenings, and also when people dreamed of their true love or went insane. People believed that flowers gathered on Midsummer Night could work magic.

Main Themes:

While *A Midsummer Night's Dream* is a comedy, its themes are profound. What is love, and why do people fall in and out of love? How is love related to identity? Are lovers in control of themselves and their desires? What is more real – the "daylight" world of reason, rationality, and law, or the "nighttime" world of passion and chaos?

Number of Words in Public-Domain Text: 17,200

SAME-SEX PARTNERSHIPS

In Seattle Shakespeare Company's fall production of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, our director Sheila Daniels has cast the typically male role of Lysander as a woman, making her relationship with Hermia a same-sex partnership that Hermia's father, Egeus, strongly objects to.

In the United States and around the world, same-sex partnerships have been hotly debated for the past fifty years. Gay rights movements have sprung up from San Francisco to Washington, D.C. What follows is a very brief history of the gay rights movement in the United States.

In **1926**, the New York Times became the first major news publication to use the word "homosexuality."

Senator Joseph McCarthy, well-known for rooting out communists and spies in the U.S., also targeted homosexuals during his term in the **1950's**. President Eisenhower passed a law in **1953** barring homosexuals from holding jobs in the federal government.

Illinois became first state to decriminalize homosexual acts between two consenting adults in **1962**. The first known gay student organization was founded at Columbia University in New York in **1966**.

In **1969**, a police raid of a known gay bar in Greenwich Village in New York City provoked what became known as the Stonewall riots. This was seen as the start of the gay rights movement in the U.S. and around the world.

A same-sex couple in Minnesota applied for a marriage license in their county in **1970**, and was denied. They appealed the ruling all the way to the Supreme Court, where they were also denied. In **1971**, they applied for a marriage license in another Minnesota county, and their request was granted. They were married in a Methodist church in Minneapolis.

In San Francisco in **1977**, the openly gay politician Harvey Milk was elected to the board of supervisors and made national news. He sponsored a civil rights bill to end sexual orientation discrimination, and it was passed into law. By November of that year, both Milk and San Francisco Mayor George Moscone had been assassinated by Dan White.

In **1987**, the book *And the Band Played On: Politics, People, and the AIDS Epidemic* by Randy Shilts was released and became a best-seller. It emphasized that neglect of the gay community was what had allowed the disease to spread and be perceived as a "gay disease."

The "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" policy was instituted in the American Military in **1993**, allowing homosexuals to join the military provided that they did not advertise their sexual orientation or commit homosexual acts while enlisted.

In **1996**, the U.S. Defense of Marriage Act (DoMA) was signed into law, stating that no state or the federal government was required to consider a same-sex relationship to be "marriage," even if it was considered so in another state.

Vermont became the first state in **2000** to legalize same-sex civil unions. These unions were stated to have all of the same benefits, privileges, and responsibilities as spouses, but stopped short of referring to them as a "marriage."

In San Francisco in **2004**, the first same-sex marriages were performed, as legalized by the newly elected mayor Gavin Newsom. These were later nullified by the U.S. Supreme Court.

From **2004 to 2011**, many states have been legalizing civil unions, domestic partnerships, or marriages between same-sex couples. Massachusetts, Connecticut, New Jersey, Oregon, Iowa, Vermont, the District of Columbia, New York, and many other states begin providing official sanction of same-sex couples, and providing them with varying levels of benefits.

In **2008** voters in several states, including California, passed Proposition 8, which banned same-sex marriage.

In **2010**, Proposition 8 was ruled as violating the 14th Amendment's Equal Protection clause, paving the way for gay marriage in several states. Later that year, the "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" policy of 1993 was repealed, which will allow for openly gay Americans to begin serving in the U.S. Military once the repeal is approved and goes through a waiting period.

PRE-SHOW REFLECTIONS

Put yourself into the shoes of the characters you are about to meet. Write a journal entry about one or more of the following prompts.

Describe a time when you watched a performance where everything went wrong. Did you laugh at the performers, laugh with the performers, feel sorry for them, or something else?

Why do young people in love sometimes experience conflict with their parents?

Describe a time when you “lost yourself” in a crush, only later to realize you were acting “like a fool”?

How would you feel if someone you liked suddenly stopped liking you?

POST-SHOW DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

For some questions, there are multiple right answers, and students are welcome to disagree with each other. Discuss as a class and encourage students to defend their views.

At the end of the play, several of the characters look back in disbelief about their previous loves/infatuations. What do you think Shakespeare is saying about love?

- Shakespeare is saying that love comes and goes quickly, and sometimes people don't make good decisions when choosing who to love.
- Shakespeare is saying that once you fall in love for real, all previous infatuations look foolish.
- Shakespeare is saying that love makes people behave in ways that they would not normally act.

A “round” character is one who is fully-developed and undergoes a change during the course of the play. A “flat” character is one who can be important to the plot, but does not undergo any change. Who are some of the “round” or “flat” characters in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*?

- The four lovers are round characters, because they learn about themselves and how they behave when love does them wrong. They also realize that they have all been foolish in love, and come out of the forest as more mature partners.
- Bottom is a round character, because he has a mysterious transformation in the woods and comes out of it more appreciative of his fellow actors.
- Titania and Oberon are round characters, because they eventually make peace and renew their love for each other.
- Theseus and Hippolyta, Egeus, and the Mechanicals are all flat characters because they seem pretty much the same at the end of the play as at the beginning.

Describe the character of Puck and his role in the play.

- Puck is irresponsible. He makes mistakes and messes things up.
- Puck is a trickster. He likes to intentionally create chaos.
- Puck is very reasonable and is our narrator through the story. He recognizes that the lovers are foolish and that the actors take themselves too seriously.

How is Oberon's magical flower like real love? How is it different?

- Oberon's flower is like real love because it causes people to do crazy things. It makes people devote themselves to each other, and even ignore character faults. Sometimes love is just as fickle as the flower.
- It is different from love because it can be controlled by third party. It also is very fickle, and can be applied or removed easily. The flower also has sudden effects, and causes people to act on their emotions more suddenly than love might.

What unfortunate events could have turned *A Midsummer Night's Dream* from a comedy into a tragedy? Would it have taken a lot, or just a little?

- If Egeus had forced Hermia to marry Demetrius or become a nun.
- If Demetrius had hurt Helena for following him into the forest.
- If Demetrius and Lysander had tried (or succeeded) to kill each other.
- If Puck left the love-potion on both Demetrius and Lysander, leaving Hermia all alone and Helena distrustful of their truth.
- If Theseus had forced Hermia to marry Demetrius at the end of the play, despite both of their objections.

PLACING THE PRODUCTION



Set inspiration.



Athenians Helena, Egeus, and Lysandra. Rendering by Jennifer Zeyl.



Titania.
Rendering by Jennifer Zeyl.

When asked to talk about this production of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, director Sheila Daniels is quick to point out that the word "love" is used 144 times in the script. The play, she tells us, is about love in all of its forms — good, bad, and ugly. There is love of other people, love of oneself, love of the theater, love of one's family, and more, woven throughout the show.

In setting the play in Classical Athens — the original location that Shakespeare chose for this play — Sheila discovered that Athens was not just the seat of democracy, but also a bawdy culture where

all types of love were allowed. This play is inspired by Athens and its rules, morals, and clothing. The feel of Classical Athens will come out at the beginning of the play during the court scenes. At the same time, Sheila stresses that this is not a play that is just about the ancient Greeks. It is a living story that addresses the idea of love both then and now.

In the play, two worlds collide: the world of the court, and the world of the forest. The court is a place that starts out very stark. It has order, straight lines, and clean blue costumes for the Athenians.



Headpiece by local artist Mandy Greer.

Set inspiration.



Fairy inspiration.



Oberon.
Rendering by Jennifer Zeyl.

The forest has a very different feel. It is a beautiful place, but also wild and dangerous. Retreating to the forest is an extreme choice because it is not a happy or safe place. Our set designer described it saying, "It's the last chance for you to do what you need to do." Sheila Daniels has based her ideas of the forest on images from the movie "Pan's Labyrinth," a dark and almost imaginary place where eerie creatures live and strange things happen.

In this production, the troupe of fairies led by Oberon and Titania are not your typical fairies with wings and bells. Instead, they

are creatures of the earth. They aren't imagined as human, but as animated parts of the forest. They will literally build the forest onstage, and will be a presence that adds to the visual and audio experience of the play.

More than anything else, Sheila is hoping to make this play immediate for herself, the actors, and the audience. She wants to take the audience on a journey from the court into the forest and back, and everyone who goes with her will come out just a little bit changed.

ANCIENT ATHENIAN CULTURE

William Shakespeare set his play *A Midsummer Night's Dream* in Classical Athens, a setting which has been adopted by our director Sheila Daniels. In preparing to produce this play, Dramaturg Thea Roe researched how love was dealt with in Athenian culture. This information may be useful to share with students to help them understand why Egeus demands that Hermia marry Demetrius, and what the relationship is between Theseus and Hippolyta.

Marriage in Athens

The purpose of marriage in Classic Athens was to produce legitimate heirs. The de-emphasis of love or partnership between spouses during this period is distinct in contrast to the ideals of Archaic Greece before or Roman Greece after.

General:

- Marriages were arranged for the financial or political gain of families — even among lower-class tradesmen. Engagements were negotiated between fathers and bridegrooms with the contract “I pledge [women’s name] for the purpose of producing legitimate children.” There were legal and financial penalties for breaking off betrothals.
- Women typically married at 14–15 years old. Men were generally 25–35.
- Husbands were expected to find companionship and sexual gratification outside of marriage with adolescent males, brothel prostitutes, concubines, or courtesans — sex with another man’s wife was strictly forbidden as it threatened “to undermine the whole social order.” Athenian ‘citizen’ women remained legal minors their entire lives, first as wards of their male relatives and later their husbands.
- Wives were physically segregated from contact with men and restricted to their homes. Men spent most of their time outside the home.

Concerning Hippolyta:

- Since only the children of two citizen parents were considered legitimate and marriage existed to produce legitimate heirs, Athenians could only legally marry other Athenians.
- Foreign women could live with men as Pallake (common law wives). In Classical literature many pallake were highborn captives of war. Contemporary texts suggest that pallake were considered very similarly to wives — with legal protections and absence of overt stigma.



Antonio Canova’s depiction of the Greek myth in which Eros (the god of romantic love) revives Psyche (representing the human soul) with a kiss.

Romantic Love in Athens:

While Athenians did not encourage romantic love within marriage, their writers discuss and ponder the nature of romantic love so exhaustively it’s downright Shakespearean. Plato’s *Symposium* (one of his two most famous works) centers on a discussion of romantic love between Athens’ greatest philosophers and playwrights during a night of drinking. Athenians believed that love:

- Love is dichotomous. It can be base or noble. It is found not only between humans but (reasoned by the physician Eryximachus) anywhere there is harmony and balance between opposites. The harmony between hot/cold or dry/wet humors regulates the seasons and the flora and fauna of nature.
- Even the Gods excuse lovers for breaking promises since people in love cannot be held accountable for their actions or words. Human law, in reflection, should accommodate love where it can.
- Love is its own entity and an outside force that acts upon individuals. It can possess a person (with their welcome or invade their thoughts against their will) and it can stay them or leave suddenly of its own accord.
- Love can hurt, even when it’s going well. “Burned by honey” is a lovely phrase describing this.

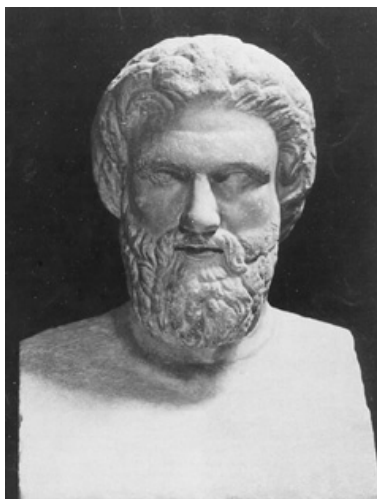
In directing this play, Sheila felt that it should be a celebration of love in many forms. One of those that has been added is a same-sex relationship between Hermia and Lysandra (changed from the male character "Lysander"). Same-sex relationships existed in Classic Athens, particularly between males. Men were considered better, more intelligent, more creative, and more noble than women, so any love involving men was thought to be greater than love that involved a woman. These relationships were never to replace male-female marriages, but were expected to exist in tandem.

Romantic relationships between females were referenced less often in classical writings. This probably indicates a lack of interest by male writers more than a lack of practice during that time. Although the relationships portrayed in the play will be tender, and will follow the story that Shakespeare wrote, the following background may be helpful in discussing this director choice with your students.

Lesbianism in Athens:

- In contrast to instances of male homosexuality in Athens, there is scant reference to female homosexuality. Considering that most written record from the time was by an intellectual elite that idealized pederasty, the lack of references to female homosexuality probably reflects lack of interest by the authors of the period more than a lack of practice.
- The comic playwright, Aristophanes, sketches a sweet and fanciful explanation of love in Plato's Symposium with one of the few direct references to lesbianism in Athenian literature. He tells a fable about how all humans were once round with four legs, four arms, and two heads each. They were very happy. There were three sexes: male, female, and hermaphroditic. Unfortunately these early humans tried to overthrow Olympus, so Zeus had each split in two. Now that humans are no longer whole, we are driven to connect with our appropriate other halves. The original three sexes explain heterosexuality as well as male and female homosexuality. Aristophanes ends the tale with a plea to understand the fable's serious moral:

"But what I am trying to say is this — that the happiness of the whole human race, women no less than men, is to be found in the consummation of our love, and in the healing of our dissevered nature by finding each his proper mate. And if this be a counsel of perfection, then we must do what, in our present circumstances, is next best, and bestow our love upon the natures most congenial to our own."



Athenian playwright Aristophanes.

- Evidence of lesbianism from before Classic Athens: The lyrics of the poet/musician Sappho from the early 6th century B.C.E. are overt in portraying female homosexuality across the full romantic narrative — infatuation, the joy of reciprocated love, the hurt of unreciprocated love, the sadness of a relationship that has come to an end.
- Evidence of lesbianism from after Classic Athens: During the 3rd century B.C.E. the ideal of marriage in both Greek and Roman culture shifted to value romantic love and partnership. By making marriage a union for romance to thrive in, homosexual romance could find a place in marriage. Lifelong homosexual partnerships began to become an option in place of heterosexual marriage rather than in tandem with it — weddings were even held attended by friends and family. Though these new freedoms in Rome did not extend to women (lesbianism was seen as an abomination and treated with clitorectomies) the wealth of outcry against lesbians is evidence of their existence and their ambition to attain the same tolerance as male homosexuals.

The Supernatural in Athenian Culture:

The Athenians believed in a pantheon of Gods and Goddesses who had constant influence on the human world. Animal sacrifice and divinations were regular rituals that sustained the personal bond between an individual and deity — and Athenians did believe that relationship was attended to from both sides. Deities took interest in human lives and could be motivated by care or malice to intervene in the outcome of events.

Mortals could also be caught in the path of quarrels between deities that could cause personal tragedy, natural disasters, or influence the fate of city-states and kingdoms.

“THE ART OF TABLEAU” ACTIVITY

This activity allows the entire class to have an experience with text that is usually spoken by only one character. The students will play with Shakespeare’s image-rich text physically. They may explore the sounds of the words and what those sounds

do to their bodies and imaginations (even if they don’t know what it means). It can help the students discover new layers and meanings both with words they already know and words that are new to them.

Time: 30 minutes

Student Skills: Taking direction, listening, working together

Instructions – Part 1, Sculpting:

Divide students into pairs. Have them all work (space permitted) on one side of the room. Number the students 1 and 2. Student 1 will act as the sculptor and Student 2 will act as the clay. Ask the sculptors to “sculpt” the clay into an image of someone greeting another person (this should take no more than two minutes). Once the sculptors have finished, have them cross to the other side to observe their work as a whole (the “clay” remain frozen).

Ask for feedback from the sculptors: **What do they see? What does each “statue” think about the person she/he is greeting? How are you getting that information? What could make a stronger picture?**

Now reverse the roles, this time in an image of someone leaving or saying goodbye to another person. Again ask the sculptors to cross the room, then observe each others’ work and discuss what they see. Go one step further this time, asking the class to give feedback of the experience, both as sculptor and sculptee.

Instructions – Part 2, The Scene:

Now we are going to relate the tableau experience to the scenes in the play. Explain to your students that they are now going to work in larger groups, taking on specific characters and situations found in a specific scene from *Hamlet*. There will be one director per scene. The whole process is collaborative. They will have 5–10 minutes to work on their tableaux. Then each tableau will be shared with the class. Before beginning, students should understand that the tableau’s objective is to clearly tell the main event in the scene. Each character should have his/her own distinct reaction to the situation.

Assign groups in the following numbers for specific scenes in the play. Assign one volunteer in each group to be the director. Have the director give out the parts. Directors should ask for volunteers in each role first before assigning.

If the students have the script, they can quickly read the scene out loud to each other, each taking on their newly cast roles. (This will add 5 minutes to the exercise, but can be fun for the actors.) If the students do not have the script, they can work from the synopsis in their study guides. When these are shared, go through the tableaux in chronological order, as they appear in the play.

Note: If you have extra time, the students can take three different moments in their scene, make a tableau for each, and present them one right after the other as a living slide show.

SCENE

Act 1, sc. i: In the court – A father’s complaint

7 students: 6 characters, plus 1 director

Characters: Hippolyta, Theseus, Egeus, Hermia, Lysander, Demetrius

Moment: Egeus tries to convince Theseus to force Hermia to marry Demetrius.

Act 1, sc. ii: In the town – A play well cast

7 students: 6 characters, plus 1 director

Characters: Quince, Bottom, Flute, Snout, Starveling, Snug

Moment: Bottom wants to play the Lion too!

Act 2, sc. i: In the woods – Ill met by moonlight

6 students: 5 characters, plus 1 director (you may add extra fairies to either Oberon’s or Titania’s train if you have extra students)

Characters: Puck, Peaseblossom, Oberon, Titania, Changeling child

Moment: Oberon demanding Titania give him her changeling child.

Act 3, sc. i: In the woods – Bottom is translated

8 students: 7 characters, plus 1 director

Characters: Quince, Bottom, Flute, Snout, Starveling, Snug, Puck

Moment: Puck ushers in Bottom, transformed with a donkey head.

Act 3, sc. i: In the woods – Fighting for Helena

5 students: 4 characters, plus 1 director

Characters: Helena, Demetrius, Lysander, Hermia

Moment: Hermia enters to find Demetrius and Lysander fighting over Helena.

“LIVING SCENE” ACTIVITY

This activity allows the entire class to have an experience with text that is usually spoken by only one character. The students will play with Shakespeare’s image-rich text physically. They may explore the sounds of the words and what those sounds

do to their bodies and imaginations (even if they don’t know what it means). It can help the students discover new layers and meanings both with words they already know and words that are new to them.

Time: 20 minutes

Student Skills:

- Listening
- Choice-making
- Working Together
- Supporting one another
- Speaking text
- Giving positive feedback to peers

Instructions:

Ask for a volunteer to speak the monologue below. Explain that the “**Speaker**” won’t be reading the text from the page, but another volunteer will be feeding them the words while standing behind them. Ask for a volunteer to “feed” words to the Speaker.

Instruct the “**Feeder**” to stand behind the Speaker and read them one line at a time from the page. The Feeder only needs to speak loud enough for the Speaker to hear them. Once the Feeder has spoken the line to the Speaker of the monologue, the Speaker will speak their line for the rest of the class to hear.

Ask for a volunteer to be the “**Scholar**.” Explain that the Scholar will have a dictionary and anytime anyone doesn’t know a word, they can call on the Scholar. First, let the class suggest definitions. Then have the scholar look up the word and read the definition out loud for the entire class to hear. See how close or how far the students’ ideas of the meaning were to the definition.

Let the rest of the class know that they will bring the language to life! Ask them to focus on the images within the monologue. How can they make them physically come to life? For example, the other classmates can play the character(s) the Speaker is talking to, the character(s) the Speaker describes in the speech; the objects and events mentioned in the speech, the environment . . . the possibilities are endless!

Before the Speaker begins, set the scene or the playing space. This will get the students in the game before it’s even begun. Invite them into the scene by asking questions! “Who wants to be Titania’s fairies?” “Can we have three fairies?” or “Who wants to play Oberon, the Fairy King, to whom Titania is speaking?” You can ask to have a train of his fairies, too. “Do you want a changeling child? A Puck?” We leave it up to the imaginations of you and your class.

If the students are not jumping in right away, keep asking questions. When you hear a possibility in the speech for a student to play something, ask for it. “Who can be the hill? The dale? The fountain? The sea?” Then once they’re in the scene, ask questions to invite them to explore the character they’ve chosen. “What

sounds do fairies make? Do brooks make? Do winds make? How do they move?”

Encourage them to do anything with the words! There is no right or wrong. No judgment. Only exploration. Ask your students “How do these words make you feel?” “What kind of action do they inspire?” “Move in the space as the image moves you.”

Once you have gone through the whole speech, begin again with everyone repeating what they just did when they hear their “part” spoken in the speech.

Afterwards, ask them what they discovered. “How did it feel to physicalize the words?” “Is it more alive?” “How many more images do you see in the speech now versus when they first read it from the page?” “How has the speech changed for you?” “What do you hear now that you didn’t at first read?” “Did you get other images in your head by acting this one out?” “What could come next?”

TEXT

TITANIA

These are the forgeries of jealousy,
And never since the middle Summer spring
Met we on hil, in dale, forrest, or mead,
By paved fountaine, or by rushie brooke,
Or in the beached margent of the sea,
To dance our ringlets to the whistling Winde,
But with thy braules thou hast disturb’d our sport.
Therefore the Windes, piping to us in vaine,
As in revenge, have suck’d up from the sea
Contagious foggess: Which falling in the Land,
Hath everie petty River made so proud,
That they have over-borne their Continents.

Adapted with permission from Tennessee Shakespeare Company.

“ROMEO AND PYRAMUS, JULIET AND THISBE” ACTIVITY

This activity explores Shakespeare’s death scenes through imagery, diction, and meter. The story that the “Mechanicals” from *A Midsummer Night’s Dream* perform at the end of the show for Theseus is a very similar story to that of *Romeo and Juliet*. In both, young lovers are kept apart by their fathers, and in trying to be united they both die tragic deaths. In fact, Shakespeare

used Ovid’s story of “*Pyramus and Thisbe*” as a main source for writing *Romeo and Juliet*!

The biggest difference is that Romeo and Juliet are very tragic characters, while in *A Midsummer Night’s Dream*’s version Pyramus and Thisbe are comic characters. How does the same story have such a different effect on an audience?

Instructions: Pass out the four speeches — death scenes of Romeo, Pyramus, Juliet, and Thisbe. Have students read the speeches out loud. Look over the plot summaries if students need help remembering the context of these speeches.

Divide the students into small groups. Have half of the groups look at Juliet’s death, and the other half look at Thisbe’s death. Ask students to look at the imagery that Shakespeare uses for the two different deaths, and then to recreate that image in a silent tableau, drawing, or other silent recreation. Discuss how these two deaths can look quite different.

Now have half of the groups look at Romeo’s death and half at Pyramus’s death. Have students act out the word “die” as used in different death scenes. Use different diction when reading the word out loud. Discuss how the same word can have very different effects.

Instruct the class to look at the last few lines of each death scene, and determine how the meter is different between comic scenes and tragic scenes. Discuss the ways that different rhythms contribute to the comic or tragic effects of the death scenes.

Now that students have examined these four speeches closely, have volunteers act out the four speeches — using the imagery, diction, and meter to inform their choices about how to play the speeches. How are these four speeches different from each other?

Did students identify the different effects of the elements of poetry on the speeches? Did they gain an appreciation for Shakespeare’s craft? Were they able to perform the speeches in a more nuanced way after the exercise?

THISBE

Asleep, my love?
 What, dead, my dove?
 O Pyramus, arise!
 Speak, speak. Quite dumb?
 Dead? Dead? A tomb
 Must cover thy sweet eyes.
 These lily lips,
 This cherry nose,
 These yellow cowslip cheeks,
 Are gone, are gone!
 Lovers, make moan;
 His eyes were green as leeks.
 O Sisters Three,
 Come, come to me
 With hands as pale as milk.
 Lay them in gore,
 Since you have shore
 With shears his thread of silk.
 Tongue, not a word!
 Come, trusty sword,
 Come, blade, my breast imbrue!
(Thisbe stabs herself)
 And, farewell, friends.
 Thus Thisbe ends.
 Adieu, adieu, adieu.
(Thisbe falls)

JULIET

O comfortable Friar, where is my lord?
 I do remember well where I should be,
 And there I am. Where is my Romeo?
 ...
 What’s here? A cup closed in my true love’s hand?
 Poison, I see, hath been his timeless end—
 O churl, drunk all, and left no friendly drop
 To help me after! I will kiss thy lips.
 Haply some poison yet doth hang on them,
 To make die with a restorative.
(She kisses him)
 Thy lips are warm!
 ...
 Yea, noise? Then I’ll be brief. O happy dagger,
 This is thy sheath. There rust, and let me die.
(She takes Romeo’s dagger, stabs herself, and dies)

“ROMEO AND PYRAMUS, JULIET AND THISBE” TEXTS

ROMEO

O my love, my wife,
 Death, that hath sucked the honey of thy breath,
 Hath had no power yet upon thy beauty.
 Thou art not conquered. Beauty's ensign yet
 Is crimson in thy lips and in thy cheeks,
 And death's pale flag is not advanced there.—
 Tybalt, liest thou there in thy bloody sheet?
 O, what more favor can I do to thee
 Than with that hand that cut thy youth in twain
 To sunder his that was thine enemy?
 Forgive me, cousin. — Ah, dear Juliet,
 Why art thou yet so fair? Shall I believe
 That unsubstantial death is amorous,
 And that the lean abhorred monster keeps
 Thee here in dark to be his paramour?
 For fear of that I still will stay with thee
 And never from this palace of dim night
 Depart again. Here, here will I remain
 With worms that are thy chambermaids. O, here
 Will I set up my everlasting rest,
 And shake the yoke of inauspicious stars
 From this world-wearied flesh. Eyes, look your last.
 Arms, take your last embrace. And, lips, O, you
 The doors of breath, seal with a righteous kiss
 A dateless bargain to engrossing death.
 Come, bitter conduct, come, unsavory guide!
 Thou desperate pilot, now at once run on
 The dashing rocks thy sea-sick weary bark!
 Here's to my love.

(Drinking)

O true apothecary,
 Thy drugs are quick. Thus with a kiss I die.

(Dies)

PYRAMUS

Sweet Moon, I thank thee for thy sunny beams.
 I thank thee, Moon, for shining now so bright,
 For by thy gracious, golden, glittering gleams,
 I trust to take of truest Thisbe sight.
 But stay! O spite!
 But mark, poor knight,
 What dreadful dole is here!
 Eyes, do you see!
 How can it be!
 O dainty duck! O dear!
 Thy mantle good—
 What, stained with blood?
 Approach, ye Furies fell!
 O Fates, come, come,
 Cut thread and thrum,
 Quail, crush, conclude, and quell!

...

Come, tears, confound!
 Out, sword, and wound
 The pap of Pyramus;
 Ay, that left pap,
 Where heart doth hop.
 (Pyramus stabs himself)
 Thus die I, thus, thus, thus.
 Now am I dead;
 Now am I fled;
 My soul is in the sky.
 Tongue, lose thy light!
 Moon take thy flight!

(Moonshine exits)

Now die, die, die, die, die.

(Pyramus falls)

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By William Shakespeare | Directed by David Quicksall

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Bred for the battlefield, the triumphant soldier Coriolanus discovers he is out of his depths when elected to the Roman Senate where the politics can be twice as treacherous as warfare. Behind his rapid rise is his powerful mother who raised him to be a warrior of no equal. Shakespeare makes politics personal in this tragedy by plumbing the depths of emotions between mother and son, pride and patriotism, ego and honor.

Wed	Thurs
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Thurs
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(Mar 8)

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Wed	Thurs
June 6	June 7
June 13	June 14
(June 20)	(June 21)

Performed at the Center House Theatre.

All titles, dates and artists subject to change. Dates in parentheses are tentative matinees.

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