

The Story

- Athens – Daytime. Egeus is furious with his daughter, Hermia, because she **refuses**¹ to marry Demetrius, the man of his choice. You see, Hermia loves another: Lysander. Egeus **threatens**² his daughter for refusing to obey him. He tells her she has a choice: either death or live in a convent as a **nun**³ for the rest of her life. So Hermia and Lysander decide to **elope**⁴. They plan to run away together and meet in the wood that night.
- The young lovers tell Hermia’s friend, Helena, of their plan to marry. However, Helena is jealous of her friend and tells Demetrius of Hermia’s and Lysander’s plan. She knows Demetrius will go after them, and so she decides to follow Demetrius into the wood.
- The Wood – Nighttime. The Fairy King and Queen, Oberon and Titania, **quarrel**⁵. (See extract N^o 3) After their fight, the King tells his servant Puck to find a flower with a magic **juice**⁶. When this juice is **poured**⁷ into a sleeping person’s eyes, he or she will fall in love with the first creature - human or animal – he sees on **waking**⁸ up.
- Oberon sees Demetrius, followed by Helena. The Fairy King observes that Helena adores Demetrius, but that Demetrius cruelly **rejects**⁹ her love. Puck returns with the flower. Oberon gives Puck part of the flower and tells him to pour its juice into Demetrius’ eyes. He should then **fall in love**¹⁰ with Helena when he wakes up.
- Before Puck obeys his master, he meets Bottom who is rehearsing a play he plans to perform at the Duke of Athens’ wedding. Puck changes Bottom’s head into a donkey’s.
- Titania is asleep. Oberon pours the magic juice into his wife’s eyes.
- We see Hermia and Lysander lost in the wood. They fall asleep. Puck appears and, **mistaking**¹¹ Lysander for Demetrius, pours the juice into his eyes. Helena enters the scene. When Lysander wakes up, the first person he sees is Helena, so he falls in love with her.
- In another part of the wood, Titania wakes up. The first creature she sees is Bottom, with a donkey’s head. She falls madly in love with him.
- Angry with Puck, Oberon orders his servant to correct his mistake and pour the juice into Demetrius’s eyes. Puck obeys. Now BOTH Lysander and Demetrius are in love with Helena. Hermia and Helena quarrel. Lysander and Demetrius go off to **fight a duel**.¹²
- Oberon uses his magic to bring harmony to the lovers. Now only Demetrius is in love with Helena and Lysander remembers that he loves only Hermia. Oberon also **frees**¹³ Titania from his magic. She no longer loves Bottom and promises to be an obedient wife to Oberon. Bottom **recovers**¹⁴ his human head.
- The lovers decide to leave the wood and return to Athens where Demetrius promises to explain to Hermia’s father that he does not want to marry his daughter, thus freeing Hermia for Lysander.
- Bottom is still lost in the wood.

¹ to refuse = *negarse*

² to threaten = *amenazar*

³ a nun = *una monja*

⁴ to elope = *fugarse con un amante para poder casarse*

⁵ to quarrel = *reñir, pelear*

⁶ juice = *jugo*

⁷ to pour = *verter*

⁸ to wake (up) = *despertarse*

⁹ to reject = *rechazar*

¹⁰ to fall in love = *enamorarse*

¹¹ to mistake (for) = *confundir (con)*

¹² to fight a duel = *batirse en duelo*

¹³ to free = *liberar*

¹⁴ to recover = *recuperar*

What Happens When?

Below are some of the main events in the play. They are NOT in order. Read **The Story** again carefully and then number the events, from Nº 1 to 10, in the correct order. The first one is done for you.

- Puck changes Bottom into a donkey.
- Oberon and Titania have a fight.
- Hermia quarrels with Helena.
- Bottom meets Puck in the wood.
- Helena tells Demetrius about Hermia's plan.
- Egeus orders Hermia to become a nun. **1**
- Demetrius promises to talk to Hermia's father
- Demetrius speaks cruelly to Helena.
- Puck pours the magic juice into Lysander's eyes.
- Lysander and Demetrius are in love with Helena.

EXTRACT Nº 3: *In this scene, we see a quarrel between a husband and wife: Oberon and Titania, the King and Queen of the Fairies. Read it carefully and then answer the questions below:*

OBERON: Ill met by moonlight, proud Titania?

TITANIA: What? Jealous Oberon? I will not stay.
I have forsworn¹⁵ your bed and company.

OBERON: Stay where you are I say. I am your lord.

TITANIA: Then I must be your lady; but I know
That, in darkness of the night, you leave
Our woods to roam¹⁶ the streets of old Athens
In search of¹⁷ human females.

OBERON: Oh, my love,
How can you speak of infidelity
To me when your perfume is human sweat.¹⁸

TITANIA: All fantasies within your jealous mind,
My Lord. I haven't even left this wood
Since summer of last year, as well you know.
And 'til you learn to trust¹⁹ me once again,
I never will return unto our bed.

OBERON: How long do you intend to keep away?

TITANIA: Perhaps, my dear, forever and a day.

OBERON: Come back to me Titania and to our bed.

TITANIA: Not for your fairy kingdom¹. Fairies, away!
I shall explode if I do longer stay. (*Exits*)

OBERON: Go on your way and see how far you get.
I'll have revenge¹ for this injustice yet.

QUESTIONS AND DISCUSSION POINTS:

- Oberon says to Titania **"I am your lord."** What does that statement show about their relationship?
- What do you think Titania and Oberon are quarreling about?
- How did husbands treat their wives in Shakespeare's day?
- Would you describe Titania as "obedient"?
- Can you think of other Shakespeare plays in which the wives are expected to obey their husbands?
- What can you say about the style of the English in this extract? Can you compare it to modern English?

¹⁵ to forswear (PP: **forsworn**) = renunciar

¹⁶ to roam = *vagar, vagabundear*

¹⁷ in search of = *en busca de*

¹⁸ sweat = *sudor*

¹⁹ to trust = *confiar*

Opposites

There are many opposing THEMES (*ideas opuestas*) in this play that create both CONFLICT and HARMONY. Can you match the words in the different columns to make opposites?

When you have finished, decide whether these words are ADJECTIVES, VERBS or NOUNS.

sanity		marriage
divorce		reality
dream	←	fair (<i>justo</i>)
desire		happiness
heart		dark
unfair		uneducated
disorder		sun
discontent		order
moon		head
light		rebellion
educated		day
night		madness
obedience		repulsion

Answer: dream + reality - They are Nouns, but to *dream* is also a verb.

VOCABULARY PRACTICE

(You can use a dictionary to help you.)

1. What is the verb form of **obedient**?
2. What is the adjective form of **rebellion**?
3. What is the noun form of **dark**?
4. What is the adjective form of **reality**?
5. What is the verb form of **marriage**?
6. What is the adjective form of **repulsion**?
7. What is the adjective form of **happiness**?
8. What is the adjective form of **sanity**?
9. What is the verb form of **educated**?
10. What is the noun form of **fair**?