

## **A Midsummer Night's Dream: Character Descriptions**

### **ATHENS**

**Theseus** - Duke of Athens. Theseus would be well-known to the audience as a figure from classical mythology, most famous for slaying the Minotaur and then abandoning the Cretan princess who helped him in that venture. In Midsummer he has recently returned from conquering the Amazons, a race of warrior women, and is about to marry Hippolyta, their Queen. Theseus is an extremely powerful ruler and conqueror, but out of his depth with marriage at the beginning of the play.

**Hippolyta** - The legendary warrior Queen of the Amazons engaged to marry Theseus. In Shakespeare's source (Plutarch) Hippolyta arranges her marriage to Theseus as part of a peace treaty ending a war between Athens and the Amazons. In Midsummer she is a peacemaker as well as warrior and a challenging match for Theseus.

**Lysander** - Young man of Athens in love with Hermia. He recklessly persuades Hermia to elope with him into the forest.

**Demetrius** - Young man of Athens in love with Helena, then Hermia, then Helena. Between his own fickle character and Puck's mischief, Demetrius is tossed back and forth between the women.

**Hermia** - Egeus's strong-willed daughter and childhood friend to Helena. Both Demetrius and Lysander are in love with her. She is in love with Lysander. Shows a ferocious side when she thinks Lysander has deserted her.

**Helena** - A good friend of Hermia's in love with Demetrius despite his humiliating rejection of her advances. Love has no pride.

**Egeus** - A classic blocking parent, Egeus tries to control his/her headstrong daughter's love life. Never goes well.

**Philostrate**- Theseus's Master of the Revels who organizes the wedding entertainment.

**The Mechanicals** – Working men/women of Athens who produce an entertainment for the royal wedding - a Classical tale of Pyramus and Thisbe. They are:

**Nick Bottom**- An overconfident weaver chosen to play Pyramus. During rehearsals, Puck and Oberon use magic to give him a donkey's head and make Queen Titania fall in love with him. He takes it in stride.

**Peter Quince**- A carpenter and the writer/director of "Pyramus and Thisbe."

**Francis Flute**- The bellows-mender cast as Thisbe.

Robin Starveling (m or f)- The tailor cast as Moonshine.

**Snug**- The joiner (carpenter) cast as Lion.

**Tom Snout**- The tinker (handyman) cast as the Wall, dividing Pyramus from Thisbe.

### **THE FOREST nature spirits**

**Puck – (AKA Robin Goodfellow)** A spirit from the English folk tradition. He delights in playing pranks on mortals; he is Oberon's out-of-control servant. He has a connection not only to the fairy and human worlds of the play, but also to the world of the audience.

**Oberon** - The King of the Fairies who rules with Titania. During the play they are fighting over custody of a child Titania adopts in India. Oberon loves his queen but, like Theseus, has a lot to learn about sharing power.

**Titania** - Queen of the Fairies who rules with Oberon. Poetically articulates the damage being done to the natural world because of her power struggle with Oberon. It will take a comic magical transformation that humiliates both Oberon and Titania to reconcile them and bring nature back into balance.

**Peaseblossom, Moth, Cobweb, and Mustardseed**— Fairies in Titania's court who interact invisibly with the humans. Comic skills needed. Some singing and dancing required