

William Shakespeare's
A Midsummer Night's Dream

Edited by Lorna Stratton

CHARACTER DESCRIPTIONS

PRINCIPAL FEMALE ROLES

HIPPOLYTA, QUEEN OF THE AMAZONS / TITANTIA, QUEEN OF THE FAIRIES
(30's to early 40's) These roles are to be played by the same actor

Both queens are strong-willed women, at ease in ruling their kingdoms. Hippolyta's country has been conquered by Duke Theseus, to whom she is now engaged to be married. Titania is at odds with her partner, Oberon, and the fairy kingdom is out of sorts over their quarrel.

HERMIA (late teens to early twenties) (must be short in height)

Hermia is at odds with her straight-laced father, Egeus, who wants her to marry Demetrius, his choice for her. Hermia is in love with Lysander who is more free-wheeling and romantic. She is passionate and adventurous, with a strong temper.

HELENA (late teens to early twenties) (must be fairly tall)

Helena is Hermia's childhood friend but Helena is in love with Demetrius who has forsaken her when Egeus suggested he would be a good match for Hermia. She is determined to no longer take a backseat to others, and sets out to win back Demetrius by helping Hermia elope with Lysander.

SECONDARY ROLES

CHIEF FAIRY (early to mid teens)

She is the chief fairy to Queen Titania. Must be able to sing and to dance in a balletic style.

PEASEBLOSSOM, MUSTARDSEED, MOTH, COBWEB (pre to early teens)

Titania's 4 fairy attendants who entertain Bottom when he is in the fairy kingdom. Must be able to sing, and to dance in a balletic style. Should be small in stature and build.

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PRINCIPAL MALE ROLES

THESEUS, DUKE OF ATHENS / OBERON, KING OF THE FAIRIES
(30's to early 40's) Both roles to be played by the same actor

Theseus is a warrior ruler who has fallen in love with his latest conquest, Hippolyta, warrior queen of the Amazons. He tends to be old-school in his outlook. Oberon is strong-minded and likes to get his own way. He is not above using potions and tricks to do so. His high-handedness contributes not only to the embarrassment of Titania, but to the anguish of the mortal lovers. His partner in crime is Puck.

DEMETRIUS (late teens to early twenties)

Demetrius courted Helena until Hermia's father announced he would like him to marry his daughter. He is rather buttoned-down but willing to fight for what he wants. He is impatient, egotistical, tactless and occasionally cruel in his comments.

LYSANDER (late teens to early twenties)

Lysander is the romantic, free-wheeling young man who has caught Hermia's eye. They are desperately in love, and he suggests they elope to get out of her father's edict to marry Demetrius or spend the rest of her life in a nunnery. He sees himself as a dashing knight in shining armor.

KEY SECONDARY ROLES

PUCK (late teens to twenties)

Puck, or Robin Goodfellow, is King Oberon's chief fairy attendant and partner in crime. He loves to interfere in other's affairs and is quite cavalier about the fallout. He is very impulsive, fleet of foot, and a master at camouflage. His sense of humour is usually at the other person's expense.

"THE MECHANICALS" (3 of 6 players who put on the play within the play)

PETER QUINCE (adult: twenties to sixties)

Quince is the director of the play "Pyramus and Thisbe" which a mismatched group of local tradesmen plan to present as entertainment at the wedding reception of Duke Theseus and Queen Hippolyta. Quince is a carpenter by trade, but fancies himself a thesbian.

NICK BOTTOM (adult: twenties to sixties)

Bottom believes himself to be the best actor of the group, volunteering to play all the parts, but is restricted to that of Pyramus, the lead. He is a very melodramatic actor, making the most of his character's death scene. He is a victim of Puck's knavishness and odd sense of humour when he is given a donkey's head. He is a weaver by trade. Must be able to sing—or at least carry a tune.

FRANCIS FLUTE (adult: twenties to sixties)

Flute, the bellows mender, is entrusted with the role of Thisbe, Pyramus' lover. His blunderings in the role still manage to bring tears – and laughter—at Thisbe's fate.

SECONDARY ROLES

EGEUS (forties to sixties) (could double as Snug or Starveling)

Egeus is Hermia's father. He is straight-laced and old-fashioned. He chooses her fiancé and expects her to be both thrilled and acquiescent. He does not like to be thwarted.

“THE MECHANICALS” (remaining 3 of the group of actors)

TOM SNOOT (adult: twenties to sixties)

Snout is a tinker by trade, but plays the Wall which divides the two lovers, Pyramus and Thisbe. His stoic literalness, creates much hilarity.

ROBIN STARVELING (adult: twenties to sixties)

Starveling, a tailor by day, plays Moonshine by night. He has to put up with a great deal of heckling from the audience of newlyweds.

SNUG (adult: twenties to sixties)

Snug is a timid soul, but is pushed into playing the Lion which is supposed to have eaten the hapless Thisbe.

SUPPORTING ROLE

PHILOSTRATE (adult: forties to sixties) (could double as Snug or Starveling)

Philostrate is Theseus' major domo of the court. He looks after arranging for the entertainment for the wedding reception as well as the regular running of the household.

