



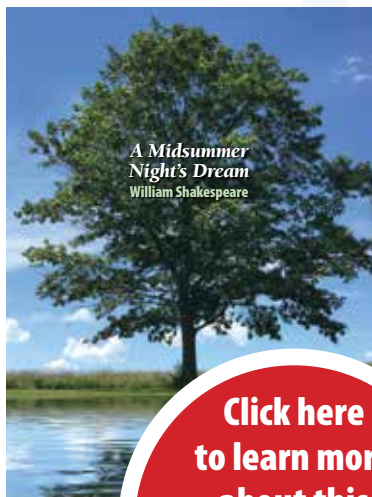
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*A Midsummer
Night's Dream*
William Shakespeare



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Response Journal

To The Student

Although we may read a novel, play, or work of non-fiction for enjoyment, each time we read one, we are building and practicing important basic reading skills. In our ever-more complex society, in which reading has become more and more crucial for success, this, in itself, is an important reason to spend time reading for enjoyment.

Some readers, however, are able to go beyond basic reading techniques and are able to practice higher thinking skills by reflecting on what they have read and how what they read affects them. It is this act of reflection—that is, stopping to think about what you are reading—that this journal is attempting to encourage.

To aid you, we have included writing prompts for each section; however, if you find something that you wish to respond to in the book more compelling than our prompts, you should write about that. We hope you enjoy reading this book and that the act of responding to what you have read increases this enjoyment.

After you read the indicated sections, choose the questions to which you will respond. Keep in mind that there are no right or wrong answers to these prompts, and there is no one direction in which you must go.

A Midsummer Night's Dream

Act One, Scene One

1. Theseus tells Hermia, "To you your father should be as a god." Clearly, Hermia's rights as a woman are limited. If you were Hermia, would you agree that a man should have complete control over your life, or would you want things to change? Pretend you are making a speech to a group of women very much like Hermia. Tell them how you think they should behave towards the men who are in power.
2. Hermia chooses Lysander, whom she truly loves, over Demetrius, whom her father favors. Why would someone choose to follow his or her heart rather than enter a "proper" relationship? Pretend you are Hermia's marriage counselor. Outline the reasons both for and against marrying both Lysander and Demetrius, and tell her which one you think she should choose.

A Midsummer Night's Dream

6. “The course of true love never did run smooth,” says Lysander. Throughout history, the best-laid plans of young couples in love have been ruined by circumstances beyond the lovers’ control. Think of other frustrated lovers who appear in books, movies, songs, or television shows. Write a dialogue between some of these couples and Hermia /Lysander in which they discuss their problems.

7. Does the relationship between Hermia and Lysander seem mature, or is it closer to “puppy love”? Write a brief version of Act One, Scene One in which Hermia and Lysander are ten years older. Does this change the way they speak and act?

8. Lysander and Hermia make plans to elope and avoid the certain punishment that awaits them in Athens. Is running away the right thing to do, in this case? Have you ever felt that the only way out of a bad situation was to run away? Write about a time when you or someone you knew solved a problem by running away.

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13. From the way they talk about acting, it is clear the rude mechanicals will be bad actors. Have you ever heard or seen really bad acting, singing or dancing? Could you tell in advance that the performer(s) would be bad? What made them bad? Write a short review of the performance in which you explain your opinions.

14. Quince instructs his group of actors to “meet tomorrow in the palace wood by moonlight.” Most of the play takes place at night. Why do you think this is? Think of five other stories that take place at night. How would each have been different if it had taken place during the day?

15. Bottom seems to think there are two ways he can “act”: he can either be a “tyrant” who makes dramatic speeches or a “lover” who makes the audience cry and get emotional. He also claims that he could play a woman just by making his voice higher. Pretend you are Bottom. Write “Bottom’s Guide to Acting” to help your fellow-tradesmen “learn to act.”

Act Two, Scene Two

25. Scene Two begins with the fairies' song of praise and protection for Titania. Write your own song of praise for Titania using any form of modern music (rap, country, rock, etc.).
26. Puck mistakenly anoints the eyes of Lysander with the love potion. It is a case of mistaken identity. Has anyone ever mistaken you for someone else? Have you ever mistaken someone for one of your friends or family? How did it make you feel? Write a paragraph describing your emotions and how you handled the situation.
27. Lysander wants to lie down near Hermia, but she says it wouldn't be proper. As we saw earlier, she does not always follow the laws laid down by her society. Write a letter to a young child explaining why a person might choose to follow some laws, but not others. Include at least one reference to Hermia in your letter.