

The truth about true love

Business



Through acts of deceit, tricksters from Maupassant's "The Jewelry" and Shakespeare's *A Midsummer Night's Dream* change the perception of others.

The trickery of Mrs. Lantin and Puck, respectively, transforms others' opinions on love. While both victims of this guile eventually favor superficial displays of affection, as indicated by the influence of theatricality in their lives, Mr. Lantin recognizes the truth in his preferences, whereas Demetrius's clarity of thought remains an illusion. In Shakespeare's work, Mrs. Lantin's jewelry for her theater visits reveals the deception in her simplicity, leading Mr.

Lantin to grapple with his appreciation for artificiality. Initially, Mr. Lantin is attracted to Mrs. Lantin because of her "angelic shyness...

and the slight smile" (Maupassant 67) that supposedly is a reflection of her simple nature. Mrs. Lantin's lies lead Mr. Lantin to think that she only "w[ears] necklaces of false pearls [and] bracelets of false gold" to the theater (Maupassant 68). He believes that she avoids squandering money on elaborate jewelry and materialistic items due to her humility. His perception of his wife, which has been based on the austerity of her jewelry, changes when he realizes that her jewelry is in fact real and has been given by another man, one of Mrs.

Lantin's secret lovers. The jewelry changes the way Mr. Lantin views her smile from shy to sly, but oddly, his next wife, who is "upright...

ma[k]e[s] his life miserable" (Maupassant 73). After remarrying, and for the first time in his life, Mr. Lantin [goes] to the theater without feeling bored by

the performance. Recognizing how the fakeness of theater mimics his ex-wife's personality, Mr. Lantin gradually acknowledges and actively pursues his desire for artificiality while in his second marriage.

Puck's deceptive tricks similarly make Demetrius happier with artificiality rather than reality, but unlike Mr. Lantin, Demetrius does not recognize that his contentment is based on an illusion. By applying nectar to lovers' eyes, which alters feelings between the first characters who meet eyes, Puck triggers fabricated love. Demetrius is a victim of Puck's tricks, claiming that his old love for Hermia is immature and worthless: " it is my love to Hermia, / Melted as the snow, seems to me now, / As the remembrance of an idle gaud / Which in my childhood I did dote upon" (4. 1. 170-74).

However, it is simply a dream—Demetrius has not truthfully turned from a child loving Hermia to an adult adoring Helena. This same blanket hiding the truth is evoked when Puck tells the audience members who may have not enjoyed the play to pretend that it is a dream: " And this weak and idle theme, / No more yielding but a dream" (5. 1. 445). Puck's effects on Demetrius demonstrate that love mimics theater, as it is easy to lose track of genuine relationships and instead act like someone completely different in both.

Although both Mr. Lantin and Demetrius change the way they view love after being manipulated, only Demetrius continues to live happily as he lives with artificiality while experiencing an everlasting illusion. By using trickery to alter others' perceptions, Mrs. Lantin and Puck both exemplify how love can be feigned, just like theater can. After being victimized by perception-

changing tricks, both Mr. Lantin and Demetrius find themselves happy when they encounter artificiality.

However, while Demetrius lives in false contentment due to his nectar-induced trance-like state, only Mr. Lantin consciously chooses to pursue such superficiality, particularly through theater.