

# A midsummer night's dream analysis example



**ASSIGN  
BUSTER**

A Midsummer's Night Dream was produced under the reign of Queen Elizabeth I, she never married as she thought a man would take away all her power as Queen. Commoners used to refer to her as the 'Fairy Queen'. This was because her clothes were so elegant and beautiful.

This may have something to do with the Fairy Queen Titania in a Midsummer's Night Dream. They almost mirror each other in their similarities with clothing and their authority over men. Shakespeare may have done this in his portrayal of Titania's power over Oberon. The Government sometimes used plays for propaganda in this era. Some people would use them to send secret messages to another, but most of the people used plays for a source of news and entertainment.

Historians also believe his plays were greatly influenced by his good friends the Earl of Essex and the Earl of Southampton. In a MSND there are a group of Actors who play the parts of the 'Mechanicals', they are a small theatre group made up of weavers, potters and other things alike. They prepare a small play to be performed in front of royalty, the royalty is made up of people such as Lysander. The 'Mechanicals' are made of these Actors: - Starveling, who is shown to be slightly grumpy and maybe the most dominant in the group alongside Bottom; Flute is a young man who seems to lag behind the others in the ways of wit and growth, as he is worried about his part in MSND playing the part of Thisbe and is anxious that he may have to cut off his beard in order to play the part; Snug is very anxious to learn his part but soon finds he is a lion and is only to growl! Snout has an enquiring mind and plays the part of Wall; and finally there is Bottom, a simple weaver but also an ambitious, an outgoing actor whose 'over' enthusiasm of acting, does not

always help. Quote Act I Scene II Bottom " An I may hide my face, let me play Thisbe too I'll speak in a monstrous little voice: ' Thisne Thisne', ' Ah Pyramus my lover dear, thy Thisbe dear and lady dear'", he says this after taking the part of Pyramus and then later on he also tries to ask for the part of the lion as well! I'm going look closely at ACT I scene II; I will explain how I would direct a MSND scene.

It would be set in the dark ages, I think this is a good idea as it fits well with the fairies, I would also be able to use the Mechanicals as poor peasants - to help them look like average people. I would have all the Mechanicals arrive in the scene slightly dragging their feet and talking in tired voices, sighing a lot too. This is empathising on the fact they have to spend their lunch arranging a play that they expect will get no where. They would be wearing brown cloths with some brown leather as well, this will make them look very average and show they have almost no social standing, Bottom shall be wearing an old suit, this still shows he's poor but also that he likes to look nice.

Bottom would be a big show off always making jokes, I also think that I might change Bottom to a Jester instead of a weaver this would give him the chance of having more wit. The other Mechanicals would be dull people that grunt and sigh a lot. The light for my set would be dim but not dark, so it looks like a miserable day. The scene would take place in the market centre, with a few people wandering about going about their daily occupations of selling turnips :). A crowd would slowly surround the actors, as they become louder and merrier. When the small boy pours wine over Bottom he loses his confidence, yet I would use this to Bottoms advantage.

He would laugh and make a joke of it and gain more respect from the crowd. So I would use Bottom as generally more popular and more a confident character. In the 20th Century Fox production of MSND Bottom is played by Kevin Kline. Kevin Kline plays Bottom as a sensitive person, especially toward public humiliation this is shown in Act I Scene II, when a small child climbs to the above scaffolding and pours two bottles of wine over Bottom while he is showing off to the crowd, this loses him the respect of the crowd and Bottom leaves with his head hanging. He is also the subject of ridicule in the town, this means everyone in the town thinks of him as just a joke and no one takes him seriously. In other versions of MSND such as Northern Broadsides Theatre Company the play is set in the 1990's.

The first Mechanical Scene shows the Mechanicals in work overalls and holding lunch boxes and thermos flasks. The person who plays Bottom is a fairly large person with a jolly red face. The scene is set at a construction site trying to put across that they are just simple workmen. In this version Bottom is played like his workmates in normal work overalls unlike in other versions where he usually wears a designer suit.

In a further version produced by a primary school a female plays Bottom in a dominating voice, they wear ordinary home clothes, it is also indicated that it is set in the 1990s as one child has a 'walkman' - this is of course Snout. If I were to act the part of Bottom I would portray him as a sensitive person caring about what people think of him. I would try to put across that I am very vain - always brushing back my hair and straightening my jacket. In the scenes with Bottom and Titania I would play Bottom in a dreamy state as if not quite knowing what was happening and I would try to hide my surprise

when I discover the large ears on my head, I would play this by using a high pitch tone of voice with a worried, perhaps quavering note. My clothing would be a very nice suit, probably white as it stands out and makes him look more important and exotic.

This would make him stand out from his workmates even though he is a weaver by trade. A MSND is a love story where three worlds collide, the world of the Mechanicals, the fairies and the royalty, with Bottom in the middle of all this. This work of Shakespeare, unlike some of his others, for example Romeo and Juliet and the tragic end of their love, the play ends with all loose ends tied up and everyone is happy at the end with big smiles on their faces. The words often used for this 'Deus ex Machina' this translates as 'loose ends tied up'. This play seems to highlight women's equality and their power over men.

This may also be linked with Elizabeth I as I said earlier. This indicates that the play would have been greatly influenced by her.