

Humor in a midsummer night's dream analysis



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Shakespeare uses many different ways to portray humor in his play "A Midsummer Night's Dream." Puck is a mischievous, outgoing fairy who just likes to have fun. He often makes silly mistakes, the most memorable one being that he put the love juice in the wrong man's eyes! So instead of Demetrius falling in love with Helena, Lysander does. Then Puck makes Demetrius fall in love with Helena too.

This creates a whole mess of dramatic irony, for all the lovers know not what happened, and fight amongst each other for Helena's love, which is the exact opposite of what happened before. Hermia, puzzled and bewildered, says, "I am amazed, and know not what to say" (3. 2. 344). This is humorous to the audience and to the reader, for they know what is going on but the confused characters do not. Shakespeare also uses Bottom to demonstrate dramatic irony.

When Puck decides Bottom is the worst actor ever, he puts an ass's head on Bottom (which is also verbal humor due to Bottom's name). Bottom, unaware of this transformation, innocently asks, "Why do they run away? This is a knavery of them to make me afeared," (3. 1. 13) which is humorous to the audience and to the reader, for we know what happened to Bottom but he does not while he wanders aimlessly and confused. The rude mechanicals in the play are extremely humorous, for they are not the most intelligent and use (unintended) verbal irony.

They mess up on spelling, grammar, and everything the author of 'Pyramus and Thisby' wanted for his play to be. When Bottom says "Thisby, the flowers of odious savors sweet" (3. 1. 83), he was supposed to say 'odors'

instead of ' odious'. Odors would mean sweet-smelling but odious means horrible and repulsive, and would completely change the meaning of the sentence into a humorous mess-up. Humor is a large reason for the success of this play, and the mix of all types of humor makes this a good comedy and tragedy.