

MODIFIED SHAKESPEARE TEXTS

The point of these texts is to give 10-14 year olds a gentler introduction to Shakespeare than tackling a full text for the purposes of a production. Therefore, although the majority of the words are Shakespeare's, some of the more difficult words have been translated into a more recognizable form and sections of original text have been removed to make the play shorter. You will find that these modified versions of the text make the plotline clearer for children and, in no way, diminish Shakespeare's intentions. These plays are intended for production. Classroom study of Shakespeare plays will require the full text.

A MIDSUMMER NIGHT'S DREAM (SAMPLE)

THE FAIRIES AND THE ACTORS.

CAST LIST.

PUCK

A FAIRY

OBERON, KING OF THE FAIRIES

TITANIA, QUEEN OF THE FAIRIES

CHANGELING BOY (Non-speaking)

QUINCE

BOTTOM

FLUTE

STARVELING

SNOUT

SNUG

PEASEBLOSSOM

COBWEB

MOTH

MUSTARDSEED

FAIRIES – (Non-speaking but singing)

ELVES – (Non-speaking)

14 speaking parts, unlimited non-speaking.

**A MIDSUMMER NIGHT'S DREAM
THE FAIRIES AND THE ACTORS.**

*A woodland glade. A fairy is waving her wand over clumps of flowers.
Puck, the mischievous sprite enters.*

PUCK

How now, spirit! What are you doing and where are you going?

FAIRY

**Over hill, over dale,
Through bush and through brier
I do wander everywhere,
Swifter than the moon' sphere
And I serve the Fairy Queen.
To cast the dew upon the green
The cowslips tall her bodyguards be
In their gold coats spots you see.
Those are rubies, fairy presents
And in those freckles are their scents.
I must go and find some dewdrops here
And hang a pearl in every cowslips ear.
Farewell you clumsy spirit, I'll be away
The Queen and all her elves come here today.**

PUCK

**The King of Fairies will be here tonight
Take care your Queen keeps out of sight
For she has made the king quite mad
By keeping a little changeling lad,
A sweet boy, stolen from an Indian king
Queen Titania keeps him as her plaything.
Jealous Oberon would have the child
As one of his knights, in the forest wild.
But she won't part with the little boy
She says he is her pride and joy.**

So now they never meet in grove or green,
By fountain clear, or starlight's gleam.
If they meet, they only fight
And make their elves all hide with fright.

FAIRY

Are you not that shrewd and knavish sprite
Sometimes called Robin Goodfellow?
Also sometimes called Hobgoblin or Puck
Who works for farmers and brings them luck?
But aren't you sometimes to blame
For upset milk and spoiled grain?
And don't you sometimes frighten girls
And put poor men's heads in a whirl?

PUCK

That is me, I play tricks and jokes
And play games on the honest folks.
My job is to make King Oberon smile
And that can sometimes be a trial.
Sometimes I change into a stool
And sit there, waiting for some poor fool
To come along and sit on me.
And then I disappear you see.
The fool falls down upon his bum
And everyone thinks he is dumb.
The people laugh at such a jest
King Oberon likes that one the best.
Oh no! Look, fairy, here comes your Queen!

FAIRY

And there's your King! We must not be seen!

Puck and the Fairy hide. Oberon and Titania come on from opposite sides of the stage and glare at each other. Titania holds the changeling boy's hand. They are each followed by fairies and elves.

OBERON

Ill met by moonlight, proud Titania.

TITANIA

Ugh! Jealous Oberon! Come fairies, I will not stay here.

OBERON

Wait! I am your King! Do not turn your back on me!

TITANIA

And I am a Queen and may do as I please.

OBERON

All I want is that changeling boy,
To be my knight and not your toy.

TITANIA

There is no price that you could pay
To take this little boy away.

His mother was most dear to me
But she was mortal and not a fairy.

So, in giving birth, she did die

And her sweet child by me did lie.

And for her sake I do bring up her boy
And for her sake I will not part with him.

OBERON

How long will you stay in this wood?

TITANIA

My fairies and I shall dance all night
Come dance with us in the pale moonlight.

OBERON

Give me that boy and I will dance with you.

TITANIA

Not for your fairy kingdom. Come fairies, away!
We shall just argue more, if I longer stay.

(Titania and her fairies leave)

OBERON

Well please yourself and go your way
For this insult I shall make you pay.
Gentle Puck, I know you're near
Come out from hiding and come here.

(Puck appears)

PUCK *(Bowling)*

Master.

OBERON

Do you remember, not so long ago,
When I sat by the sea and listened to the mermaid's song?
She rode a dolphin and sang so beautifully
That the stormy seas grew quiet
And certain stars moved in the heavens
To hear the sea maid's music.

PUCK

I remember.

OBERON

I also saw, which you did not,
Cupid, flying, armed with his bow
Flying between the cold moon and the earth.
He took aim at a young girl and loosed a love arrow from his bow.
The arrow, if it had found its mark,
Would have made the girl love the first man that she saw.
But he missed her and I saw where his arrow fell.
It fell upon a little flower
Which turned from milky-white to purple.
The flower is called love-in-idleness.
Fetch me that flower; I need it now.
For the juice of it, when dropped upon the eyes in sleep
Will make a man or woman fall madly in love
With the next living creature that it sees.

PUCK

I'll put a girdle around the earth in forty minutes.

(Puck leaves)

OBERON

Once I have this juice,

I'll watch Titania when she is asleep

And drop the flower juice in her eyes.

The next creature that she sees when she awakes,

Be it lion, bear, wolf or bull,

Or meddling monkey or busy ape,

She will pursue it with undying love.

Then I shall make her hand over the changeling child to me.

But someone comes! I must disappear!

(Oberon leaves.)