

Boekverslag A Midsummer Night's Dream (William Shakespeare)

Marc Franken

©havovwo.nl

(nov 2009)

A Midsummer Night's Dream

By: William Shakespeare

Publisher: Penguin Books Ltd

Year: 1982

Composed around 1595, 1596, first printed in 1600.

Title.

The story in fact is acted out in the woods in Athens on a midsummer night, hence the name.

The Author.

William Shakespeare was born in Stratford-upon-Avon around April 23 1564 and died April 23 1616.

He was an English play writer and poet.

He is seen by many as the greatest writer England produced, not only because of his literature but also because of its enormous influence to the English language.

A lot of expressions, words and quotes are still commonly used.

Shakespeare wrote 38 tragedies, historical books and comedies.

He wrote 154 sonnets and some longer poems.

Generally the community agrees that all his material is written around 1585 to 1610.

Literature

The play is from the renaissance period.

Genre

It's a comical romance play.

Index

Summary

The book starts of with an unusual long introduction to the reader, it shows the reader that if seen as a play it needs to be conducted in a certain way to enjoy it.

Previous versions before 1935 received bad critics.

A Midsummer Night's dream is one of the small group of plays in which Shakespeare appears not to have depended upon already existing narrative material.

Maybe he picked up information about the characters Theseus and Hippolyta in Chaucer's *The Knights Tale*.

Shakespeare's goal was to create characters to suit his own needs, not to describe characters from an historical point of view.

Probably it was written as a play, entertaining a wedding.

The play starts:

Hermia wants to have Lysander as her husband but her father wants her to marry Demetrius, they stand before Theseus.

Theseus tells her the choice is either to die, become a Nun or marry Demetrius.

So Hermia and Lysander flee but are betrayed by Helene who wants to win the love of Demetrius.

Oberon the king of the fairies and his wife Titania arrive to be present at the wedding of Theseus and Hippolyta.

Oberon and Titania are grown apart because Titania refuses to give up her servant to Oberon, to be Oberon's squire.

Boekverslag A Midsummer Night's Dream (William Shakespeare)

Marc Franken

©havovwo.nl

(nov 2009)

He arranges a juice to be made by Puck from a flower that when taken by someone induces instant infatuation to the first person they see when they wake up.

The plan is to give this to Tatiana so she is distracted and he can force her to give up her servant.

By mistake Puck also uses the potion on Demetria and Lysander, they both fall in love with Helena.

Puck turns the head of a bold player named Nick Bottom in the head of a donkey.

When Tatiana wakes up and sees Nick, she falls in love with him, is distracted and gives up her servant to Oberon.

Now that Oberon achieves his goal the spells are released, except for Demetrius's , Demetrius's spell is allowed to continue his love for Helena.

Now that Demetrius is not more in love with Hermia, Theseus breaks Egeus's demand for Hermia to marry him and organises a group wedding.

The lovers then decide that the happenings from that night must have been a dream, a midsummer nights dream.

Characters

Hippolyta, Queen of the Amazons, betrothed to Theseus.

Theseus, Duke of Athens.

Egeus, Hermia's father

Hermia, Egeus's daughter, in love with Lysander.

Lysander, loved by Hermia.

Demetrius, suitor of Hermia.

Helena, in love with Demetrius.

Philostrate, Theseus's Master of the Revels.

Oberon, King of the Fairies.

Titania, Queen of the Fairies.

Puck, or Robin Good fellow

Fairies:

Peaseblossom

Cobweb

Moth

Mustardseed

Clowns

Nick Bottom, a weaver.

Peter Quince, a carpenter.

Francis Flute, a bellows-mender.

Robin Starveling, a tailor.

Tom Snout, a tinker.

Snug, a joiner.

Boekverslag A Midsummer Night's Dream (William Shakespeare)

Marc Franken

©havovwo.nl

(nov 2009)

Time and order.

The story takes place around the period of it's written, 1695.

Place/Space

The story takes place, somewhere in the woods of Athens.

Background

Theme

It's a love story.

Motto

The motto should be that love has it's way but the play is a comedy and should not be taken seriously. Love though is the subject of comedy a reminder that we need to be lighthearted when it comes to rivalry between lovers.

Use of language

First I thought that it would be difficult to read, it turned out not to be difficult at al, probably because it's a play and the public needs to be entertained without the use of difficult phrases. Some phrases and words aren't used much nowadays.

Perspective

It's a play, so all text is spoken through the eyes of the person in question.

Opinion

The play can be read without a dictionary but I would recommend to use one in the beginning.

It's a romantic comedy, but right at the beginning a situation is created where someone is given a choice to follow the will of her father or to die or live a celibate life as a nun.

This brings you right in the play, you want to know what happens next.

Beautiful English poetry like phrases are used to tell the story and is used by the players to express their thoughts, will and demands.

Finally, all ends well, so it's also a feel good story, but with a surprising plot.

I would like to see the play to see how it's played-out, some good acting is needed for this.

The play is a comedy, which would surely be true if one would see it well performed.

The book in itself is off course also a comedy but you wouldn't tumble over and laugh your head of.

Marc Franken