

# Synopsis

## A Midsummer Night's Dream

In *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, residents of Athens mix with fairies from a local forest, with comic results.

In the city, Theseus, Duke of Athens, is to marry Hippolyta, queen of the Amazons. Bottom the weaver and his friends rehearse in the woods a play they hope to stage for the wedding celebrations.

Four young Athenians are in a romantic tangle. Lysander and Demetrius love Hermia; she loves Lysander and her friend Helena loves Demetrius. Hermia's father, Egeus, commands Hermia to marry Demetrius, and Theseus supports the father's right. All four young Athenians end up in the woods, where Robin Goodfellow, who serves the fairy king Oberon, puts flower juice on the eyes of Lysander, and then Demetrius, unintentionally causing both to love Helena.

Oberon, who is quarrelling with his wife, Titania, uses the flower juice on her eyes. She falls in love with Bottom, who now, thanks to Robin Goodfellow, wears an ass's head.

As the lovers sleep, Robin Goodfellow restores Lysander's love for Hermia, so that now each young woman is matched with the man she loves.

Oberon disenchants Titania and removes Bottom's ass's head.

The two young couples join the royal couple in getting married, and Bottom rejoins his friends to perform the play.

## Measure for Measure

The Duke decides to temporarily step away from his leadership role, appointing a strict deputy named Angelo to govern in his absence. Instead of maintaining a fair and just rule, Angelo becomes excessively severe in enforcing the laws, imposing harsh punishments on the citizens for even minor misdemeanours.

Claudio is condemned to death by Angelo for engaging in premarital relations. Claudio's sister, Isabella, is a novice nun who passionately pleads for her brother's life. Angelo, taking advantage of his authority, proposes a morally reprehensible deal to Isabella – he'll spare her brother's life if she agrees to sleep with him.

The Duke, who has disguised himself as a Friar to observe what happens while he is away, tells Isabella about Mariana, a woman once betrothed to Angelo, who he abandoned.

The Duke, Isabella, and Mariana plan a "bed trick" - Isabella agrees to Angelo's demands, but at the last minute Mariana switches places with her, meaning Angelo actually sleeps with his devoted fiancée.

Angelo reneges on his deal to save Claudio and orders for his execution to go ahead anyway. The Provost and Duke hatch a plan - a "head" trick" - to send Angelo the head of a different prisoner who died of natural causes, and who looks uncannily like Claudio.

The Duke returns home, Angelo is forced to marry Mariana and Claudio reunites with his sister.