

Reading Tips for *A Midsummer Night's Dream*



Review these Reading Tips for *A Midsummer Night's Dream*.

Summary for the excerpt: *A Midsummer Night's Dream* is a comedy. Various plot lines affect each other, but in the end, this play is intended to amuse. Rather than reading the entire play, you will focus on one scene. On p. 149 in your *Sightlines 10* textbook, you will study an excerpt taken from Act III, scene ii of the full play.

Helena and Hermia have been friends since they were kids. Helena lacks confidence, and she worries that people are making fun of her. Hermia is more confident and quite lovely. In this scene, Puck has been up to his usual pranks. Rather than Hermia receiving attention, Helena will be pursued by the two leading men: Demetrius and Lysander. When Hermia enters, she is truly surprised by what she sees. Helena believes Hermia is in on the joke, too, and she is very hurt by her friend's involvement. Read on to discover how this scene will end!

To make the most of your reading experience . . .

1. Find a quiet place to read. Be prepared to take your time. Do not rush.
2. Read for general ideas rather than festering over individual words.
3. Read one idea at a time. Do not stop at the end of the line; instead, stop when you reach a major punctuation point (?!:).
4. Read out loud.
5. If an idea seems confusing, consider this: Is it a word I don't know, or is the word order strange? If you do not know the word, try to guess at what it means by how it is used in the sentence. If it is a word order issue, try writing the line and re-ordering the words. Shakespeare wrote in iambic pentameter, which means he had to move words around for the sake of rhythm.
6. At the end of each speech, paraphrase what is being said.
7. You do not need to understand everything at once. As you work through your chart, you will ask questions and find answers as you read.
8. The oral recording will help you get a sense of how the characters feel about what they are saying, their circumstances, and the people around them. Do not hesitate to listen to the recording more than once!
9. Watch for connections between the characters in this scene and the modern play ("Lord, What Fools!") you just read. Although some differences are obvious, the modern play is based on Shakespeare's play.
10. When in doubt, ask for help. Your teacher is always happy to help you!



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