

Excerpt terms and conditions



This excerpt is available to assist you in the play selection process.

You may view, print and download any of our excerpts for perusal purposes.

Excerpts are not intended for performance, classroom or other academic use. In any of these cases you will need to purchase playbooks via our website or by phone, fax or mail.

A short excerpt is not always indicative of the entire work, and we strongly suggest reading the whole play before planning a production or ordering a cast quantity.

Dramatic Publishing

SIXTY-MINUTE SHAKESPEARE



A MIDSUMMER NIGHT'S DREAM

by Cass Foster

PERFORMANCE LICENSING

Amateur and stock acting rights to this work are controlled exclusively by DRAMATIC PUBLISHING without whose permission in writing no performance may be given. Royalty must be paid every time a play is acted before an audience whether or not it is presented for profit and whether or not admission is charged. For royalty rates, applications and restrictions go to www.dramaticpublishing.com or contact us at DRAMATIC PUBLISHING, 311 Washington St., Woodstock IL 60098, (815) 338-7170, plays@dramaticpublishing.com.

SIXTY-MINUTE SHAKESPEARE



A MIDSUMMER NIGHT'S DREAM

by Cass Foster



from A MIDSUMMER NIGHT'S DREAM
by WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE

© Copyright 2003

published by
Five Star Publications, Inc.
Chandler, Arizona

SIXTY MINUTE SHAKESPEARE
A MIDSUMMER NIGHT'S DREAM

by
Cass Foster

First Edition 1990. Second Edition 1997. Third Edition 1998.
Fourth Edition 2000. Fifth Edition 2001. Sixth Edition 2003.
All rights reserved. Printed in the United States of America.

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Shakespeare, William, 1564-1616.

A midsummer night's dream / (abridged) by Cass Foster. — 1st ed.

p. cm. — (Classics for all ages) (The Sixty-Minute Shakespeare)

Summary: A condensed version of Shakespeare's play about the strange events that take place in a forest inhabited by fairies who magically transform the romantic fate of two young couples.

ISBN: 1-877749-37-0

1. Man-woman relationships — Greece — Athens— Drama (1. Plays)	
I. Cass Foster, 1948-	. II. Title. III. Series. IV. Series:
Foster, Cass, 1948-	Sixty-minute Shakespeare.
PR2827. A25 1997	97-24577
822.3'3—dc21	CIP AC

No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording, or otherwise, without the prior written permission of the publisher, except to quote a brief passage in connection with a review written for broadcast or for the inclusion in a magazine or a newspaper.

Cover Design by Barbara Kordesh
Paul M. Howey, Copy Editor
Sixth Edition edited by Gary E. Anderson

© 1990, 1997, 1998, 2000, 2001 and 2003 by Cass Foster

Five Star Publications, Incorporated
P.O. Box 6698

Chandler, AZ 85246-6698

website: www.FiveStarPublications.com/books/60MinuteShakespeare
e-mail: shakespeare@FiveStarPublications.com

To Mom
Thanks for everything

**Welcome to
THE SIXTY-MINUTE SHAKESPEARE**

Thanks to the progressive thinking of so many curriculum developers, Language Arts people and the splendid film work being done by directors such as Kenneth Branagh and Franco Zeffrelli, there has been a phenomenal growth in interest in Shakespeare.

No playwright, past or present, approaches the brilliance and magnitude of William Shakespeare. What other individual has even come close to understanding and then dramatizing the human condition? Just for the fun of it, I am listing (following these introductory remarks) a sample of themes and images so richly developed in the canon of his plays.

Shakespeare's characters are so well-rounded and beautifully constructed that it is common to see them as actual historical figures. When someone mentions Hamlet, Iago, Ophelia, or Puck, we immediately experience images and emotions that come from memories of people we know. We may feel compassion, frustration, sorrow, or pleasure.

As one of the wealthiest people of his times, Shakespeare earned his living as a playwright, theatre manager, actor, and shareholder in the Globe Theatre. He worked tirelessly to entertain. (Theatres presented a new play every day and the average new play had a total of only ten performances over an entire season.) He rebelled against the contemporary theatrical standards (the neo-classical principles that limited dramatic structure throughout France and Italy), he took plots from other published works (making them uniquely his own), and he created a spectacle (without the use of elaborate scenery) to captivate audiences of all social levels.

Imagine the challenge in quieting a crowd of three thousand in a theatre where vendors sell wine, beer, ale, nuts, and cards; where there is no intermission; where birds fly overhead; and where audience members stand near performers. Such was the setting in which Shakespeare's plays were originally staged.

The world's most familiar and successful wordsmith used language to skillfully create images, plot, and a sense of music and rhythm. The purpose behind this series is to reduce (not contemporize) the language. The unabridged Shakespeare simply isn't practical in all situations. Not all educators or directors have the luxury of time to explore the entire text. This is not intended to be a substitute for a thorough study of Shakespeare. It is merely a stepping stone.

I challenge each of you to go beyond the *Sixty-Minute* versions. Use the comfort, appreciation, and self-confidence you will gain to go further. Be proud of the insights and knowledge you acquire, but do not be satisfied. The more you read, the more you gain.

May each of you be blessed with an abundance of good health and happiness. I thank you for your interest in our work and hope you are pleased with what we have done.

May the Verse Be With You!

A COUPLE OF STAGING CONSIDERATIONS

Scenery

There are two excellent reasons theatres rarely use much scenery when staging Shakespeare. The first is related to the number of changes required. If we have to wait every five to ten minutes to watch scenery struck and set up, we end up watching a play about moving lumber. The second is because the audience will lose sight of what the play is about. Audiences need a couple minutes to adjust to the new scenic look of a dazzling waterfall and lush forest. By the time they take it all in and start paying attention to what the actors are saying, it is time to set up the next scene and the audience will be lost.

Location is normally established through dialogue and the use of a few simple props: a throne-like chair for the king's court, a long table with benches for an inn, or a bed for the queen's bed chamber. The key is to keep it simple.

Pacing

You will want to keep things moving all the time. That doesn't mean actors should talk and move quickly; it simply means one scene should flow smoothly to the next without delay or interruption.

As Scene One ends, the actors pick up their props and walk off. Actors for Scene Two enter from a different direction with their props and begin dialogue as soon as they enter the acting area, putting their props in place as they speak. Yes, the audience will still have view of the actors in the first scene, but they will gladly accept this convention if it means taking fifteen minutes off performance time.

TWO HIGHLY RECOMMENDED WEB SITES

www.ShakeSpirit.com

A revolutionary site offering Shakespeare gifts,
teaching assistance, resources and quotes.



www.ShakespeareLRC.com

SHAKESPEARE LEARNING RESOURCE CENTER.
Free Library Dedicated to Shakespeare
and the Performing and Visual Arts.



**IMAGES AND THEMES TO LOOK FOR
IN THE VARIOUS PLAYS**

Mistaken identity	Foils or opposites
Wisdom of fools	Spying
Insanity	Paranoia
Greed and corruption	Play-acting
Religious persecution	Justice
The elements	Heavenly retribution
The supernatural	Forgiveness
Darkness and light	Witchcraft
Loneliness or isolation	Mortality
Anti-Semitism	Self-destruction
Conspiracy	Black or white magic
Revenge	Animals
Hypocrisy	Nature
Abandonment	Reality vs. illusion
Pride	Astrological influence
Honor	Characters reforming
Violence	Old age
Bravery	Freedom
Rebellion	Usurping of power
Savagery	Fertility suppression
Seduction	Sexual misadventure
Disease or physical decay	Melancholy
Loyalty	Corrupt society
War	Love and/or friendship
Marriage	Multiple meanings of words
False accusations	Thought vs. action
Irresponsible power	Impetuous love
Destiny or fate	Role of women
Real or pretended madness	Human frailty
Ambition	Preparing for leadership
Tyranny	Charity/Betrayal

**THE COMPLETE WORKS
OF WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE**

1589 - 1591	Henry VI, Part 1, 2 and 3
1592 - 1593	Richard III
1593 - 1594	Titus Andronicus
1592 - 1594	Comedy of Errors
1593 - 1594	Taming of the Shrew
1594	The Two Gentlemen of Verona
1594 - 1595	Love's Labor's Lost
1594 - 1596	King John
1595	Richard II
1595 - 1596	A Midsummer Night's Dream
1595 - 1596	Romeo and Juliet
1596 - 1597	The Merchant of Venice
1597	The Merry Wives of Windsor
1597 - 1598	Henry IV, Part 1 and 2
1598 - 1599	Much Ado About Nothing
1599	Henry V
1599	Julius Caesar
1599	As You Like It
1600 - 1601	Hamlet
1601 - 1602	Twelfth Night
1601 - 1602	Troilus and Cressida
1602 - 1603	All's Well That Ends Well
1604	Measure for Measure
1604	Othello
1605	The Tragedy of King Lear
1606	Macbeth
1606 - 1607	Antony and Cleopatra
1607 - 1608	Timon of Athens
1607 - 1608	Pericles, Prince of Tyre
1607 - 1608	Coriolanus
1609- 1610	Cymbeline
1609 - 1610	The Winter's Tale
1611	The Tempest
1612 - 1613	Henry VIII
1613	Two Noble Kinsmen (Authorship in question)



23 April 1564 - 23 April 1616

*“If we wish to know the force of human genius,
we should read Shakespeare. If we wish to see the
insignificance of human learning, we may study
his commentators.”*

William Hazlitt (1778-1830) English Essayist. “On the Ignorance of the Learned,” in *Edinburgh Magazine* (July 1818).

COMMON QUOTES FROM THE BARD*Romeo and Juliet*

Parting is such sweet sorrow.
A plague o' both your houses.
O Romeo, Romeo! Wherefore art thou Romeo?

A Midsummer Night's Dream

Lord, what fools these mortals be.
The course of true love never did run smooth.
To say the truth, reason and love keep little company
together now-a-days.

As You Like It

All that glisters is not gold.
Love is blind.
All the world's a stage
And all the men and women merely players.
For ever and a day.

Twelfth Night

Some are born great, some achieve greatness, and some
have greatness thrust upon them.
Out of the jaws of death.
O, had I but followed the arts!
Many a good hanging prevents a bad marriage.

Henry IV, Part 1

The better part of valor is discretion.
To give the devil his due.
He hath eaten me out of house and home.

Henry VI, Part 2

Let's kill all the lawyers.

The Merry Wives of Windsor

Better three hours too soon than a minute too late.

Casablanca

This could be the start of a beautiful friendship.

Macbeth

Out, damned spot. Out, I say!
Screw your courage to the sticking place.

Hamlet

Something is rotten in the state of Denmark.
To be or not to be. That is the question.
The lady doth protest too much, methinks.
Good night, sweet prince, And flights of
angels sing thee to thy rest!

The Merchant of Venice

The devil can cite scriptures for his purpose.

Pericles

Few love to hear the sins they love to act.

Richard III

Now is the winter of our discontent.
Off with his head!
A horse! A horse! My kingdom for a horse.

Julius Caesar

Beware the ides of March.
Friends, Romans, countrymen, lend me your ears.
It was Greek to me.

Much Ado About Nothing

The world must be peopled. When I said I would die a
bachelor, I did not think I should live till I were married.

Measure for Measure

The miserable have no other medicine but only hope.

Troilus and Cressida

To fear the worst oft cures the worse.

The Comedy of Errors

Unquiet meals make ill digestions.

CAST OF CHARACTERS

Theseus, Duke of Athens

Egeus, father of *Hermia*

Lysander, in love with *Hermia*

Demetrius, in love with *Hermia*

Philostrate, Master of Revels to *Theseus*

Peter Quince, a carpenter; Prologue in the play

Snug, the joiner; Lion in the play

Nick Bottom, a weaver; *Pyramus* in the play

Francis Flute, a bellows mender; *Thisby* in the play

Tom Snout, a tinker; *Wall* in the play

Robin Starveling, a tailor; *Moonshine* in the play

Hippolyta, Queen of the Amazons, betrothed to *Theseus*

Hermia, daughter to *Egeus*, in love with *Lysander*

Helena, in love with *Demetrius*

Oberon, King of the Fairies

Titania, Queen of the Fairies

Puck, or *Robin Goodfellow*

Peaseblossom, Fairy

Cobweb, Fairy

Moth, Fairy

Mustardseed, Fairy

Other fairies if desired

Place

Athens and a wood near it

ACT I, SCENE 1.
THE PALACE OF THESEUS.

Enter Theseus and Hippolyta.

Theseus. Now, fair Hippolyta, our nuptial hour
Draws on apace. Four happy days bring in
Another moon but O methinks, how slow
This old moon wanes! She lingers^o my desires,
Like a stepdame, or a dowager,
Long withering out diminishes a young man's revenue.^o

Hippolyta. Four days will quickly steep themselves in
night,
Four nights will quickly dream away the time;
And then the moon, like to a silver bow new-bent in
heaven, shall behold the night
Of our solemnities.

Theseus. Hippolyta, I wooed thee with my sword,^o
And won thy love, doing thee injuries;
But I will wed thee in another key,
With pomp, with triumph, and with reveling.

Enter Egeus, Hermia, Lysander and Demetrius.

Egeus. Happy be Theseus, our renowned Duke!

Theseus. Thanks, good Egeus. What's the news with thee?

Lingers: delays. *Long withering out* diminishes his money (to support her)
Sword: captured Hippolyta by conquering the Amazons.

Egeus. Full of vexation come I, with complaint
 Against my child, my daughter Hermia.
 Stand forth, Demetrius. My noble Lord,
 This man hath my consent to marry her.
 Stand forth, Lysander. And, my gracious Duke
 This man hath bewitched the bosom of my child.
 Thou, thou, Lysander, thou hast given her rhymes,
 And interchanged love tokens with my child.
 I beg the ancient privilege of Athens:
 As she is mine, I may dispose of her,
 Which shall be either to this gentleman
 Or to her death, according to our law
 Immediately^o provided in that case.

Theseus. What say you, Hermia? Be advised, fair maid.
 To you, your father should be as a god.
 Demetrius is a worthy gentleman.

Hermia. So is Lysander.

Theseus. But in this kind, wanting your father's voice,^o the
 other must be held the worthier.

Hermia. I beseech your Grace that I may know
 The worst that may befall me in this case,
 If I refuse to wed Demetrius.

Theseus. Either to die the death, or to abjure forever the
 society of men. For aye, to be in a shady cloister mew'd,^o
 To live a barren sister all your life.

Hermia. So I will grow, so live, so die, my lord.

Immediately: expressly. *Voice:* approval. *Mew'd:* caged.

Theseus. Take time to pause; and, by the next new moon...
The sealing day betwixt my love and me,
For everlasting bond of fellowship...
Upon that day either prepare to die
For disobedience to your father's will,
Or else to wed Demetrius, as he would,
Or on Diana's alter to protest
For aye austerity and single life.

Exit Egeus, Hippolyta and Theseus.

Demetrius. Relent, sweet Hermia. And, Lysander, yield
Thy crazèd title^o to my certain right.

Lysander. You have her father's love, Demetrius;
Let me have Hermia's. Do you marry him.

Demetrius exit and Helena follow.

Lysander. How now, my love! Why is your cheek so pale?
How chance^o the roses there do fade so fast?

Hermia. Belike ^o for want of rain, which I could well bring
forth from the tempest of my eyes.

Lysander. Aye me! For aught that I could ever read,
Could ever hear by tale or history,
The course of true love never did run smooth.

Hermia. Oh hell! To choose love by another's eyes!

Crazed title: flawed claim. *How chance:* How does it come that?
Belike: perhaps.

Lysander. Hear me, Hermia.

I have a widow aunt, a dowager
Of great revenue, and she hath no child.
From Athens is her house remote seven leagues,
And she respects me as her only son.
There, gentle Hermia, may I marry thee
And to that place the sharp Athenian law
Cannot pursue us. If thou lovest me, then,
Steal forth thy father's house tomorrow night;
And in the wood, a league without the town,
Where I did meet thee once with Helena,
To do observance to a morn of May,
There will I stay for thee.

Hermia. My good Lysander!

I swear to thee, by Cupid's strongest bow,
By his best arrow with the golden head^o
In that same place thou hast appointed me,
Tomorrow truly will I meet with thee.

Lysander. Keep promise, love.

Lysander exits and Helena enters from another direction.

Hermia. G-d^o speed fair Helena! Wither away?

Helena. Call you me fair? That fair again unsay.
Demetrius loves your fair. ° O happy fair!

Golden head: Cupid's arrows with golden heads caused love, leaden ones caused dislike. *Fair:* beauty.

Helena. O, teach me how you look.

Hermia. I frown upon him, yet he loves me still.

Helena. O that your frowns would teach my smiles such skill.

Hermia. I give him curses, yet he gives me love.

Helena. O that my prayers could such affection move!

Hermia. The more I hate, the more he follows me.

Helena. The more I love, the more he hateth me.

Hermia. Take comfort. He no more shall see my face;
Lysander and myself will fly this place.
In the wood, where often you and I
Upon faint primrose bed were wont to lie,
Emptying of our bosoms of their counsel sweet,
There my Lysander and myself shall meet.
Farewell, sweet playfellow. Pray thou for us,
And good luck grant thee thy Demetrius! (*Exit Hermia.*)

Helena. Through Athens I am thought as fair as she. But what of that? Demetrius thinks not so. I will go tell Demetrius of fair Hermia's flight. Then to the wood will he tomorrow night pursue her; and for this intelligence^o If I have thanks, it is a dear expense: ^o But herein mean I to enrich my pain, To have his sight thither and back again. (*She exits.*)

Intelligence: piece of news. *Expense:* heavy cost gladly incurred.

ACT I, SCENE 2.
QUINCE'S HOUSE.

Enter Quince, Snug, Bottom, Flute, Snout and Starveling.

Quince. Is all our company here?

Bottom. You were best to call them individually, man by man, according to the scrip.

Quince. Here is the scroll of every man's name, which is thought fit, through all Athens, to play in our interlude^o before the Duke and Duchess, on his wedding day at night.

Bottom. First, good Peter Quince, say what the play treats on; then read the names of the actors.

Quince. Marry,^o our play is, "The most lamentable comedy, and most cruel death of Pyramus and Thisby."

Bottom. A very good piece of work, I assure you, and a merry. Now, good Peter Quince, call forth your actors by the scroll. Masters, spread yourselves.

Quince. Answer as I call you. Nick Bottom, the weaver.

Bottom. Ready. Name what part I am for, and proceed.

Quince. You, Nick Bottom, are set down for Pyramus.

Bottom. What is Pyramus? A lover, or a tyrant?

Interlude: dramatic entertainment. *Marry:* interjection (e.g. "Good heavens.")

Quince. A lover that kills himself, most gallant, for love.

Bottom. That love will ask some tears in the true performing of it: if I do it, let the audience look to their eyes. I will move Storms. Now, name the rest of the players.

Quince. Francis Flute, the bellows mender.

Flute. Here, Peter Quince.

Quince. Flute, you must take Thisby on you.

Flute. What is Thisby? A wand'ring knight?

Quince. It is the lady that Pyramus must love. *(All laugh.)*

Flute. Nay, faith, let me not play a woman. I have a beard coming.

Quince. That's all one.° You shall play it in a mask, and you may speak as small as you will.

Bottom. If I may hide my face, let me play Thisby too. I'll speak in a monstrous little voice, *(In a deep voice.)*

“Thisne, Thisne!” *(In a high-pitched voice.)*

“Ah Pyramus, my lover dear! Thy Thisby dear, and lady dear!”

Quince. No, no. You must play Pyramus, and, Flute, you Thisby.

That's all one: it makes no difference.

Bottom. Well, proceed.

Quince. Robin Starveling, the tailor.

Starveling. Here, Peter Quince.

Quince. Robin Starveling, you must play Thisby's mother.
Tom Snout, the tinker.

Snout. Here, Peter Quince.

Quince. You, Pyramus' father. Myself, Thisby's father.
Snug, the joiner, you the lion's part.

Snug. Have you the lion's part written? Pray you, if it be,
give it to me, for I am slow of study.

Quince. You may do it extempore, for it is nothing but
roaring.

Bottom. Let me play the lion too. I will roar so that I will
do any man's heart good to hear me.

Quince. An you should do it too terribly, you would fright
the Duchess and the ladies.

Starveling. That would hang us, every mother's son.

Bottom. I will roar as gently as any dove. I will roar as any
nightingale.

Quince. You can play no part but Pyramus.

Bottom. Well, I will undertake it.

Quince. Masters, here are your parts; and I am to entreat you, request you, and desire you, to con° them by tomorrow night; and meet me in the palace wood, a mile without the town, by moonlight. There we will rehearse, for if we meet in the city, we shall be dogged with company, and our devices° known. In the meantime I will draw a will of properties,° such as our play wants. I pray you, fail me not.

Bottom. We will meet; and there we may rehearse most obscenely° and courageously. Take pains, be perfect. Adieu.

Quince. At the Duke's oak we meet.

Con: study. *Devices:* plans. *Properties:* stage props. *Obscenely:* he means seemly or properly.

Please note:

Not everyone realizes it is not only illegal to photocopy copyrighted material, but by photocopying (and reducing sales) small publishing houses like ours will not be able to generate sufficient resources to create additional works. We appreciate your understanding and assistance.