

William Shakespeare

A Midsummer Night's Dream



free Audiobook



William Shakespeare

A Midsummer Night's Dream



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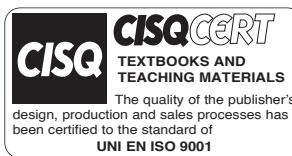
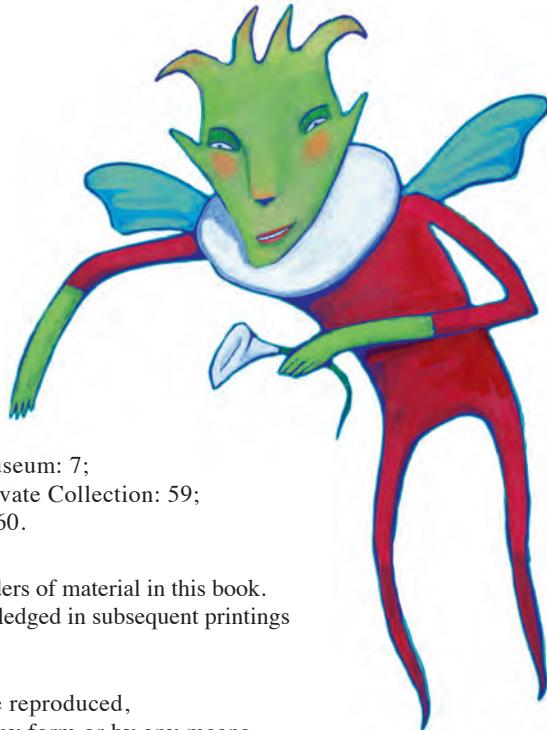
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FC First Certificate in English Examination-style exercises

T: GRADE 7 Trinity-style exercises (Grade 7)



The text is recorded in full.



William Shakespeare (1800-1803) by William Blake.

SHAKESPEARE'S LIFE

Very little is known about William Shakespeare's early life, despite the efforts of scholars to sort¹ legend and popular myth from historical fact. Thus, it is known that Shakespeare was born in Stratford-upon-Avon in April 1564. The exact date of his birth is uncertain, although many people like to believe that it was the 23rd of April, which is also St George's Day. Saint George is the patron saint of England.

Some facts about Shakespeare's family are well established. His father was an important man in the town. By profession he was a glove merchant, and he

1. **sort** : separate.

2. **mayor** [meər] : person who is elected to represent a city or town for a fixed period of time.



served as mayor ² of the town.

There is uncertainty about the kind of schooling the young Shakespeare received, although it seems likely that he attended the grammar school in the town.

When he was eighteen years old William Shakespeare married Anne Hathaway, who was older than him by eight years. They had three children: a daughter Susanna, and the twins Hamnet and Judith.

At some point after his marriage, Shakespeare went to London, where he became involved in a theatrical company, the Lord Chamberlain's Men. He was first an actor in the company, and then began to write plays for the stage. In total he wrote thirty-eight plays, including histories, comedies, Roman plays, and tragedies. He also wrote the most famous series of sonnets in the English language. Shakespeare's plays were gathered ¹ together and published after his death.

Shakespeare's theatrical company built the Globe Theatre in London in 1599. The Lord Chamberlain's Men changed their name to the King's Men in 1603, and from then on they received royal protection. The principal theatre of the King's Men was the Blackfriars, from 1609 onwards.

Shakespeare returned to Stratford-upon-Avon in 1610. He died there, a prosperous and respected man, on the 23rd of April 1616. Visitors to Stratford-upon-Avon can see the house where William Shakespeare was born, as well as Anne Hathaway's cottage and other buildings associated with the playwright. They can also see performances at the Royal Shakespeare Theatre in the town.



1. gathered : collected.



The Globe Theatre (c. 1600).

**1 Choose the correct answer A, B, C or D.**

1. When was Shakespeare born?
A 1532
B 1564
C 1546
D 1523

2. How old was Shakespeare when he married?
A 20
B 18
C 21
D 25

3. How many children did Shakespeare and Anne Hathaway have?
A 4
B 2
C 3
D 5

4. Shakespeare wrote different kinds of plays. What kinds of play did he *not* write?
A histories
B musicals
C tragedies
D comedies

5. When were Shakespeare's plays published?
A when he retired to Stratford-upon-Avon
B when he became famous
C after his death
D when he moved to London

6. What was the principal theatre of the King's Men after 1609?
A the Blackfriars
B the Royal Shakespeare
C the Globe
D the Stratford

Dramatis Personae

THESEUS	Duke of Athens
HIPPOLYTA	Theseus's fiancée
LYSANDER	2 young members of the Athens court,
DEMETRIUS	both in love with Hermia
HERMIA	in love with Lysander
HELENA	in love with Demetrius
EGEUS	Hermia's father
PHILOSTRATE	Theseus's master of revels
OBERON	King of the Fairies
TITANIA	Queen of the Fairies
A FAIRY	one of Titania's servants
PUCK	one of the King's servants
QUINCE	
BOTTOM	
FLUTE	
SNOUT	Athenian citizens
SNUG	
STARVELING	

PART ONE

Love and the Law



2

The Duke of Athens was called Theseus. He was very happy because he had fallen in love with Hippolyta, the Queen of the Amazons. They were going to be married in four days' time, and Theseus was impatient for the wedding day to arrive.

'If only these four days were over!' he said to Hippolyta. 'Then our happiness would begin.'

'They will soon pass,' she told him tenderly.¹ 'Four days are nothing. Be patient, Theseus.'

Theseus wanted the whole of Athens to celebrate his wedding, and he gave very clear instructions to Philostrate, his master of revels.²

'Make sure that everyone enjoys himself,' Theseus ordered. 'Organise some wonderful entertainment for the people of the city. My wedding must be a

1. **tenderly** : with affection.

2. **his master of revels** : someone who organises plays and other entertainment for an important person.

Love and the Law



happy and memorable event for Athens. I want the whole of Athens to take part in this great day, and to share my happiness with me.'

As Theseus was giving these orders, four people approached the Duke. One of them was an old man, Egeus. He greeted Theseus politely:

'I wish you long happiness, sir!'

Theseus smiled at Egeus. 'Thank you, Egeus. How are things with you, my friend?'

Egeus looked serious for a moment, and then he answered the Duke.

'To tell you the truth, things are not going well for me, Theseus,' he began. 'In fact I have come to you to help me resolve a problem. It concerns these young people with me.'

He pointed to the three young people who were standing beside him. There were two young men and a girl. The girl looked angry and defiant,¹ and the young men were glaring² at each other angrily.

'The problem is this,' Egeus told Theseus. 'Demetrius was going to marry my daughter here, Hermia. Everything was arranged between our two families. I approved of the marriage, and so did Demetrius's father.'

Demetrius nodded³ his head in agreement with Egeus.

'That's quite right, sir. Everything was arranged.'

'But then Lysander interfered with everything,' Egeus complained.

He turned to the other young man who was standing beside him.

'Don't argue now, young fellow, you know you interfered!' he said angrily. 'You brought Hermia presents, you wrote her poetry, you sang songs outside her window. You did everything you could to make her fall in love with you. And now she refuses to obey me – she says she won't marry Demetrius!'

Egeus frowned⁴ at Lysander. The young man looked back at him. He did not seem afraid. Then Hermia's father spoke to Theseus again.

'I have come to you, sir,' he said, 'to ask for justice. Hermia has refused to obey me. If she won't marry Demetrius, she should die. That is the law of

1. **defiant** : obstinate, rebellious.

2. **glaring** : looking angrily.

3. **nodded** : moved his head up and down in sign of agreement.

4. **frowned** : made an angry expression.







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Athens, as you know. Hermia belongs to me, and if she won't do what I tell her, she should die.'

Theseus thought hard for a moment. He did not approve of children who disobeyed their parents. Then he turned to Hermia.

'What have you got to say?' he asked. Then he raised a finger in warning. 'Before you reply,' he said sternly,¹ 'you should remember one thing. Your father made you – he has the right to destroy you if he chooses. Demetrius is undoubtedly a good man, and he would make a good husband for you. You should accept him, if that is what your father wishes.'

Hermia blushed.² It was difficult to tell if she was embarrassed or very angry. Then she decided to speak. She spoke in a very determined way.

'Lysander is also a good man,' she told the Duke, 'and Lysander is the man I love. I will never marry against my will.'

Theseus was angry at the girl's reply. He asked Hermia to think very carefully about what she would do. He told her that if she refused to obey her father she would be severely punished. She would either have to die, or to spend the rest of her life in a convent.³

'Very well, my Lord,' replied Hermia. 'I will die or I will go to a convent for the rest of my life. But one thing is certain – I will never marry Demetrius!'

This reply annoyed Theseus, but he was determined to give Hermia a chance to change her mind.

'Don't decide now,' Theseus told her. 'I will give you four days to make up your mind.⁴ But this I promise you. On the day of my own wedding, you will either die or go to a convent, or you will marry Demetrius.'

Lysander now began to argue with Egeus.

'Why are you so opposed to my love for Hermia?' he wanted to know. 'I am as good a man as Demetrius. I come from a noble family, as he does. I am rich, as he is. I love your daughter. Why don't you allow us to marry? Besides, Demetrius used to be in love with Helena. He made her fall in love with him. He broke her heart. He should marry Helena, not Hermia.'

1. **sternly** : in a serious, severe manner.

2. **blushed** : became red in the face.

3. **convent** : religious house for women.

4. **make up your mind** : decide.

Love and the Law



Demetrius looked angrily at Lysander. It was true that he had been in love with Helena, and that he had treated her very badly. He knew it, and he was ashamed of his past behaviour. But now he was in love with Hermia, and he was determined to marry her.

‘Enough!’ Theseus said to Lysander. ‘I have given my judgement. Hermia has four days to think about the matter.’¹

Egeus thanked Theseus for his judgement² in the case. He was sure that Hermia would choose to marry Demetrius, rather than face the penalty of disobedience.

‘And now, my old friend,’ said Theseus to Egeus, ‘I want to speak to you and Demetrius privately.’

‘With pleasure, sir,’ Egeus said.

‘Certainly, sir!’ Demetrius said.

‘Come with me, and we’ll discuss this matter together,’ Theseus commanded.

Theseus, Egeus and Demetrius went off together, leaving Hermia and Lysander alone. They were very sad at the punishment that faced Hermia, and they thought that Theseus was unjust. They did not know what to do. Then Lysander had an idea. He had an aunt who lived some distance away from Athens. They could go there and marry. The law of Athens could not touch them there.

‘If you really love me,’ he told Hermia, ‘you’ll run away with me. I’ll wait for you tomorrow night, in the wood near Athens. Then we’ll go to my aunt’s house. What do you think of the plan?’

Hermia promised that she would meet Lysander in the wood.

As the lovers were making their plan to escape from Athens, they were joined by Helena. Helena was very unhappy because she loved Demetrius.

‘Why does Demetrius love you?’ she asked Hermia with a sigh. ‘What have you done to make him fall in love with you, when he loved me before?’

Hermia smiled at her friend.

1. **matter** : (here) situation.

2. **judgement** : decision in a legal matter.



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'I'll tell you what I do,' she said. 'I ignore him – but he still loves me. I am rude ¹ to him – but he still loves me. The more I hate him, the more he loves me.'

Then Hermia told Helena what Theseus had said to her. Helena felt very sorry that her friend was in danger of such a severe punishment.

'Lysander and I are going to run away from Athens,' Hermia explained to her friend.

Helena thought about the lovers' plan to escape to the wood. Then she made a plan of her own.

'I'll tell Demetrius what Lysander and Hermia are going to do,' she decided. 'He's sure to follow Hermia into the wood. Perhaps he'll thank me for bringing him the news.'



1. **rude** : impolite.

Comprehension

1 Answer the following questions.

- a. Who is Theseus going to marry, and when will the marriage take place?
- b. What does Egeus want Hermia to do?
- c. Why is Egeus angry with Lysander?
- d. What does Hermia want to do?
- e. What does Demetrius want to do?
- f. What will happen to Hermia, if she refuses to obey her father?
- g. What is the accusation that Lysander makes against Demetrius?
- h. What do Lysander and Hermia decide to do?
- i. Lysander and Hermia tell Helena about their plan. What does Helena decide to do?

Vocabulary

2 There are many references to weddings and marriage in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. Complete the sentences below with the appropriate word from the box.

honeymoon bride wedding rings groom bridesmaids marry
 wedding reception engagement proposed best man engaged fiancé

John and Sally fell in love at first sight. They had only known each other for a week when John (1) to her.

‘Will you (2) me?’ asked John.

Sally accepted him straight away, and they became (3)

To celebrate their (4) they had a party and invited all their friends. Sally was proud to introduce John to her family.

‘Mum,’ she said, ‘this is John, my (5)’

Sally’s father was a bishop, so they asked him if they could have the (6) in the local cathedral.

The great day arrived, and John was very nervous. ‘Don’t worry,’ his sister said, ‘every (7) is nervous on the day – it’s normal.’

The church was full. ‘What a beautiful (8) !’ people whispered, when Sally entered. John’s friend Simon was the (9) and he carried the (10) Sally’s two sisters were the (11)

The (12) was in a hotel in the town centre. The couple went to America for their (13)

Listening



3 You will hear three short extracts from the original Shakespeare. Before you listen, read them and try to fill in the gaps below with words from the box. Then listen to the recording and check your answers.

death law himself marry eyes worthy
child house gentleman dispose looked Duke

Extract One

Egeus: And, my gracious
Be it so she will not ¹ here, before your grace
Consent to with Demetrius,
I beg the ancient privilege of Athens:
As she is mine, I may of her;
Which shall be either to this
Or to her according to our law
Immediately provided in that case.

Extract Two

Theseus: Demetrius is a gentleman.

Hermia: So is Lysander.

Theseus: In he is;
But in this kind, ² wanting your father's voice, ³
The other must be held ⁴ the worthier.

Hermia: I would my father but with my eyes.

Theseus: Rather your must with his judgement look.

1. **Be it so she will not** : if she won't.
2. **kind** : this type of argument.
3. **wanting your father's voice** : without your father's support.
4. **held** : regarded as, considered.

Extract Three

Lysander: Therefore hear me, Hermia.
 I have a widow aunt, a dowager¹
 Of great revenue, and she hath no –
 And she respects me as her only son.
 From Athens is her remote seven leagues –
 There, gentle Hermia, may I marry thee,²
 And to that place the sharp³ Athenian
 Cannot pursue us.

Writing

fce 4 Imagine that you are Lysander or Hermia. You decide to write a letter to Egeus telling him that you are running away from the city because of Theseus's decision. Tell him why you have decided to do this and who you are going with. How would you justify your behaviour? Write your letter. Do not write any postal addresses. Write between 120-180 words.

Speaking

5 Hermia says that she wishes her father could look at Lysander with the 'eyes' of love. Theseus argues that Hermia should look at Lysander with her father's 'judgement'.

- Do you think young people and their parents necessarily have different views of love?
- Do parents have the right to criticise their children's choice of boyfriends/girlfriends?
- What would you do if your family disapproved of the person you loved?

1. **dowager** : rich widow.

2. **thee** : you.

3. **sharp** : severe.