

A MIDSUMMER NIGHT'S DREAM

Introduction:

Shakespeare's "A MIDSUMMER NIGHT'S DREAM" is a comedy that gives the audience a lot of positive thoughts and happiness. The theme of this play is love, dream and patriarchy. In this play, Shakespeare portrays romantic love as blind and irrational. In this play, Shakespeare explores how people fall in love with those who appear beautiful to them.

Significance of the title A MIDSUMMER NIGHT'S DREAM:

The title itself tells the reader that the story takes place on midsummer night and the play is the product of character's dream. Through some of the characters Shakespeare tries to prove that what his characters experienced was nothing but only a dream. His characters enjoy a lot in midsummer time night. It is full of magic and dream.

Role of Puck:

Of all the characters, Puck played a significant role in this play. Because of his tricks on rehearsal, the play was turned into comedy and because of the mistakes he has committed; the play has some funny acts. Puck changes Bottom's head into that of an ass's head. Puck does this to prank Bottom, the overconfident weaver. Because of his trick, not only Puck but also the readers enjoyed a lot.

Puck plays his tricks not only on mortals but also on fairies. He uses the magical juice intended for human lovers on Titania, (the queen of fairies) so that she falls in love with Bottom as soon as she sees him. Fairies attending Bottom is one of the funniest scenes in this play. And Titania's service to Bottom is an example of Shakespeare's use of sense of humour.

Epilogue of the play:

Puck, one of the fairies tells the audience that if they didn't like what they saw, then ask them to consider the whole play as just a dream. This element of theatre is known as breaking the fourth wall, wherein, a character speaks directly to the audience and breaks the wall that exists between them. His words to audience explains the play:

"If we shadows have offended,
Think but this, and all is mended,
.....
And this weak and idle theme,
No more yielding but a dream."

Conclusion:

Like other comedies of Shakespeare, this play ends with the ringing of marriage bells. Marriage of three couples: Theseus - Hippolyta, Lysander - Hermia and Demetrius - Helena. The sense of illusion in this play gives the reader a fantastical experience rather than a heavy drama.

ROMEO AND JULIET

Introduction:

“For never was a story of more woe than this of Juliet and her Romeo”

William Shakespeare

Shakespeare’s **Romeo and Juliet** is a famous tragic play, which talks about family quarrel, love and reconciliation. This tragic play is about Romeo and Juliet who are deeply in love with each other but before starting their life, they have committed suicide. Role of fate plays a significant role in this play.

Significance of the Balcony scene:

In this scene both Romeo and Juliet express their feelings for each other. They have fallen in love, when they first met. But only in this scene both understand and express each other’s feelings. And through this scene, Shakespeare presents the hatred between two families.

“What’s in a name? That which we call a rose
By another name would smell as sweet.”

Both Romeo and Juliet feel that their family names are hindrance for their love.

Dramatic function of Mercutio’s speech:

Romeo’s short tempered, witty friend Mercutio links the comic and violent action of the play. He is initially presented as a playful rogue. Later his death functions as a turning point for the action of the play. He is the one who compels Romeo to fight with Tybalt. When Romeo is not willing, he voluntarily fights with Tybalt and meets his death. After his death, he becomes a tragic figure shifting the play’s direction from comedy to tragedy. Shakespeare’s use of pun at the time of Mercutio’s death is also important. When Romeo asks Mercutio about his wounds, he tells him that it is only a scratch and makes fun of it. And he says,

“Ay, ay, a scratch, a scratch, . . .
Ask for me tomorrow and you shall find me a grave man.”

Then he curses both the family- Montague and Capulet. He died only because of the feud. He utters, “A plague o’ both your houses!” It is said that because of the curse of Mercutio, Montague and Capulet have lost their son (Romeo) and daughter (Juliet).

Mercutio’s Queen Mab speech:

Mercutio’s Queen Mab speech is one of the most famous speeches in this play. In Act –I scene 4, Mercutio, Romeo and Benvolio are on their way to Capulet’s party. Romeo is love sick, and is in doubt whether it is right in going to the feast because he had a dream that night. Then Mercutio talks about Queen Mab by mentioning that dreams do not imitate reality but the fantasies of human beings. Queen Mab is referred as fairies’ midwife. Queen Mab brings dreams suited to each individual, and each dream she brings seems to descend into deeper brutality. For example, Lovers dream of love. Lawyers dream of law cases and making money. Soldiers dream of ‘cutting foreign throats’. To Mercutio, “Dreams are the children of an idle brain.”

Conclusion:

Through Montague and Capulet’s family, Shakespeare stresses the importance of unity. If they had united even in the beginning they wouldn’t have lost their children. He also talks about the role of fate and curse. They also play an important role in this play.

THE WINTER'S TALE

Introduction:

Shakespeare's **The Winter's Tale** is a comic play. It explores different kinds of relationship between family members, life partner and friends. King Leontes's jealousy is the reason for his pain, loss and sacrifice. Only in the end, Leontes is reunited with his wife and his daughter. Shakespeare talks about the theme of redemption and reconciliation in this family.

Camillo's Role in "The Winter's Tale":

Camillo is a Sicilian Lord. He is the trusted friend of Leontes, until the jealous King asks him to poison Polixenes. He helps Polixenes to run away to Bohemia and there he becomes King Polixenes's new friend and trusted advisor. Camillo's actions and reactions are very important in moving the plot. After 16 years, he advises Florizel and Perdita to run away to Sicily and he also visits his hometown with King Polixenes. He is the one who is responsible for the reunion of Polixenes and Leontes.

Role of Paulina in "The Winter's Tale":

Paulina is the strong female character in Shakespeare's "The Winter's Tale". She is queen Hermione's best friend. She helps to move the play into its magical denouement. She rebels against the chaos and injustice of her society. She is the one who united King Leontes with his family. At the end of the play, she brings Hermione back to life. She proves Ruskin's statement: "Shakespeare has no heroes only heroines."

Role of Autolycus:

Autolycus is one of the Shakespeare's more endearing rogues. He is good at singing. He is a trickster in Bohemia who robs the Shepherd's son, picks pockets in Act-IV. He arrives at the sheep – shearing festival as a pedlar. By selling ballads and knick –knacks and takes the opportunity to note the persons who are having money. He is a quick witted man and has the skill to turn any situation to his advantage. The only good thing he does in this play is he brings Shepherd and his son to Florizel's ship.

The Message of the Oracle:

Leontes's jealousy gives way to his tyrannous behaviour. For that, he loses his son Mamillius. His son falls and dies when his mother is imprisoned. The villain in Leontes' life is his jealousy. To prove that his actions are wrong, Shakespeare introduces the message from Divine. Divine intervention takes place in the form of message from the Delphi Oracle. Apollo's oracle is read aloud in the court of justice.

“Hermione is chaste; Polixenes blameless; Camillo a true subject;

Leontes a jealousy tyrant; his innocent babe truly begotten; and

The King shall live without an heir, if that which is lost be not found.”

At first, in his fury Leontes dismisses this divine intervention and he is punished for his jealousy. Later on, he feels sorry for his actions.

Conclusion:

Throughout the play Shakespeare portrays Leontes jealousy as an infectious disease. Through his character Shakespeare highlights the destructive nature of jealousy. Unlike Shakespeare's other plays, this play starts with the sense of humour, in the middle deals with tragedy and ends with the ringing of marriage bells.