

A MIDSUMMER NIGHT'S DREAM SIDES

Please choose one side only from each play.

A MIDSUMMER NIGHT'S DREAM: SIDE A

Side A: Helena, any gender

Helena is hopelessly in love with Demetrius, but he isn't interested. In fact, for some time, he has been in love with Helena's best friend, Hermia — whose hand in marriage Demetrius has been promised. Despite his repeated rejection and betrothal to her bestie, Helena will not relent in her efforts to win his love.

After telling Demetrius that Hermia has eloped with Lysander into the forest, Helena had hoped Demetrius would look kindly on her for being a loyal informant. Instead, he has pursued them into the woods in a rage, and Helena has followed in the hopes that he may change his mind and switch his affections to her. It hasn't been going very well...

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| Helena | You draw me, you hard-hearted adamant;
But yet you draw not iron, for my heart
Is true as steel: leave you your power to draw,
And I shall have no power to follow you. |
| Demetrius | Do I entice you? do I speak you fair?
Or, rather, do I not in plainest truth
Tell you, I do not, nor I cannot love you? |
| Helena | And even for that do I love you the more.
I am your spaniel; and, Demetrius,
The more you beat me, I will fawn on you:
Use me but as your spaniel, spurn me, strike me,
Neglect me, lose me; only give me leave,
Unworthy as I am, to follow you.
What worser place can I beg in your love
Than to be used as you use your dog? |

A MIDSUMMER NIGHT'S DREAM: SIDE C

Side C: **Bottom**, any gender

Bottom is the resident acTOR of the am-dram theatre group, the Mechanicals. They have been tasked with performing a new play to mark the Duke and Duchess's wedding, and they are handing out parts.

As the de facto leader of the group, Quince, runs through the breakdown of each role, Bottom imagines himself as ideal casting for each and every one. When it comes to the romantic lead, however, he sees a real opportunity to showcase his acting prowess.

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

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

Bottom A lover, that kills himself most gallant for love. That 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, I will condole in some measure. To the rest. Yet my chief humour is for a tyrant: I could play Ercles rarely, or a part to tear a cat in, to make all split.

The raging rocks
And shivering shocks
Shall break the locks
Of prison gates;
And Phibbus' car
Shall shine from far
And make and mar
The foolish Fates.

This was lofty! Now name the rest of the players.

THE MOST PERILOUS COMEDIE OF ELIZABETH I SIDES

Please choose one side only from each play.

THE MOST PERILOUS COMEDIE OF ELIZABETH I: SIDE A

Side A: **Robert Dudley, the Earl of Leicester**, any gender

Robert Dudley is the darling of Tudor society. Quite unlike any other noble in Elizabeth's court, Dudley is an impresario who owns his own theatre company, The Earl of Leicester's Men. Dudley likes to think of himself as a consummate thespian — probably the greatest actor of his generation and a playwright to rival Shakespeare — although, in truth, his flare for the theatrical stems more from his own vanity than any real talent. Oh, and he also spearheads an undercover resistance group, with the sole purpose of knocking Elizabeth I off the throne...

In this scene, Dudley unveils to his fellow conspirators his new plan to usurp Elizabeth. After she has resisted his advances to marry him in real life, he comes up with a rather madcap alternative...

- Dudley** The success of our plot lieth in the play and more precisely the plot of the play. Behold! [Slams down a manuscript] The manuscript for Robert Dudley's new masterpiece: working title "The Queen and I"!
- Kingsley** Yes, I'm not loving that title—
- Dudley** It's perfect! The queen shall play the queen I and shall play I. This dramatical feast relates the tale of a lowly ragman who captures the heart of a radiant queen. The ragman is as disarming as a Medici prince and as dashing as — a Medici prince again — and he woos the unsuspecting monarch into marriage. [Strange and indiscernible accent] "Your Majesty, I beseech thee on bended knee" — I shall play him as a fellow of the West Country you see — "I beseech thee on bended knee to taketh my hand in marriage and forthwith transferreth all your titles and assets to me, your totally legal husband." For therein twisteth the plot, guys. The marriage shall be real! Ergo I shall be really king! Ergo the day shall be really won! Huzzah! Cue — curtain call. [Bows.]
- Kingsley** This is mad!—
- Dudley** Haven't finished the curtain call. [Finishes bowing] And: scene.

THE MOST PERILOUS COMEDIE OF ELIZABETH I: SIDE B

Side B: Elizabeth I, female

Fresh from her resounding victory over the Spanish Armada, Elizabeth I has never felt more secure and cocksure in her position as a strident monarch leading England into its golden era. However, her advisers don't see it that way. They worry that the Spanish threat hasn't gone away, and think the best way to stabilise her throne is to find her a husband as soon as possible. Elizabeth doesn't like this solution.

In this scene, her second-in-command Lord Burghley has brought her another token of love from her avid suitor, Lord Dudley. He uses it as another opportunity to broach the question of marriage, a conversation the queen is growing rather tired of having to shut down.

- Elizabeth** Ah another creepy gift from Lord Dudley. Yes, that's what my day was missing, perfect. [Reads the gift card] "My love for you burneth hot like a flame; oh think on me when you snuff out your candles." [Throws it away] Tosser.
- Burghley** I think he would make an excellent husband, your Majesty.
- Elizabeth** Cool story. I'm hungry. Someone — you, Jacob — bring me my toast. Make sure you burn it like last time. I love doing that thing where you have to scrape off an entire layer before it's edible.
- Jacob** Wait — really, your Majesty?
- Elizabeth** Yeah really. But also: obviously not really. If you burn it, I'll burn you, how's that? On the flame of Dudley's love. Ha! Hahaha! Hahahahaha! I'm cold.
- Burghley** Your Majesty, we really must return to the question of finding you a husband.
- Elizabeth** Shut up! You know, sometimes I feel like my life is just back-to-back meetings with sweaty men. Who want to talk to me about other sweaty men. How do I, like, get the message across? I mean, I keep buying these bigger ruffs to the point I basically look like an armoured dinosaur, but — oh no, what's this — you still treat me like I'm weak! Weak, weak, weak! Oh speaking of weak, where's my head of security?

THE MOST PERILOUS COMEDIE OF ELIZABETH I: SIDE C

Side C: Walsingham, any gender

Walsingham is Elizabeth's chief spymaster, whose job it is to uncover any conspiracies against her, not least those planned by the queen's chief enemy: King Philip of Spain. Walsingham feels Elizabeth has become complacent after defeating the Spanish Armada, and he wants to paint her a vivid picture of how things really are.

No one has ever taken a job more seriously than Walsingham takes his job as spymaster. He is intense, surly and straight down the line.

Walsingham You may have knackered the bull, Majesty, but the beast still breathes. It's breathing now: I can hear it. I hear it in the day, I hear it in the night, I hear it in between those two times. King Philip of Spain won't rest until he's locked you between his horns and thrown you around so much that your ginger wig falls off.

Elizabeth What the f— this isn't a wig.

Walsingham Pardon, Majesty, but it is my job to think as the enemy does. Oh I could play the pretty little optimist and say cheerful things like "You probably won't get assassinated" or "Fortune favours the bald."

Elizabeth This isn't a wig.

Walsingham But you don't want that. Because the next thing you know, you're waking up one morning to discover your severed head is on a spike, and you didn't really wake up at all. Because you're dead. Think on it, Majesty.