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A Midsummer Night's Dream is perhaps the best loved of Shakespeare's plays. It brings together aristocrats, workers, and fairies in a wood outside Athens, and from there the enchantment begins.

Simple and engaging on the surface, it is none the less a highly original and sophisticated work, remarkable for both its literary and its theatrical mastery. It is one of the very few of Shakespeare's plays which do not draw on narrative sources, which suggests that it reflects his deepest imaginative concerns to an unusual degree.

In his introduction Peter Holland pays particular attention to dreams and dreamers, and to Shakespeare's construction of a world of night and shadows. Both here and in his commentary he explores the play's extensive performance history to illustrate the wide range of interpretations of which it is capable.