Name:

Date:

Pg. ___

How to Read a Shakespearean Play Page

Act 1

Scene Summary

Scene Number

Character Lines

Stage Directions

Setting

Act 1 Scene 1

Theseus, who is soon to be married to Hippolyta, listens to Egeus's account of his disobedient daughter, Hermia. The girl refuses to marry Demetrius, because she is in love with Lysander. Theseus warns Hermia that she will be punished if she does not obey her father, and so Lysander and Hermia plan to run away from Athens. They tell their secret to Helena, Hermia's best friend, who is very unhappy because she is in love with Demetrius and he does not return her love.

- t our nuptial hour; the time of our wedding.
- 2 apace: quickly.
- 2-3 four ... moon: there will be a new moon in four days' time.
- 4 lingers : makes me wait.
- 5-6 A young man could not claim full possession of his dead father's property until his mother (the 'dowager'), or his father's second wife (the 'step-dame') was also dead. Whilst the mother was growing old ('withering'), the young man's income ('revenue') would be wasting away (also 'withering').
 - steep: drown.
- 11 solemnities: marriage ceremonies.
 - youth : young people.
- 13 pert: lively.

12

We do not want unhappy (palefaced) fellows in our festivities. A Scene I Athens: The Palace of Theseus

→ Enter Theseus, Hippolyta, Philostrate, and Attendants

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 my desires,

5 Like to a step-dame or a dowager

Long withering out a young man's revenue.

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

10 New-bent in heaven, shall behold the night Of our solemnities.

Theseus

Go, Philostrate,

Stir up the Athenian youth to merriments; Awake the pert and nimble spirit of mirth; Turn melancholy forth to funerals:

15 The pale companion is not for our pomp.

Line Numbers

Line Annotations

Why is Theseus' line here at the right hand side?

His line finishes the metre of Hippolyta's line

Line Numbers with Annotations