***A Midsummer Night’s Dream***

***Act 5***

* **The Mechanicals’ play has been shortlisted for performance (Act 4, Scene 2).**

**(1-32) “The lunatic, the lover and the poet/Are of imagination all compact”: Theseus believes these types of people all have over active imaginations. He therefore finds the explanations given by the young lovers hard to believe.**

**(33-62) After reviewing potential performances, Theseus is intrigued by *Pyramus and Thisbe:* (“Merry and tragical? Tedious and brief?”).**

* **Philostrate tries to convince the Duke not to see it by claiming it is an absolute mess. Theseus believes that as long as the players are honest and hard-working, they deserve an audience.**

**Peter Quince’s Speech (112-121):**

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| **What he wants to say** | **What he actually ends up saying** |
| ***If we do offend, please know we didn’t come here to do that on purpose. We just wanted to demonstrate our bit of skill. Please remember, we only want to please you and delight you. We did not come to displease anyone.***  | ***If we happen to offend you, it’s because we wanted to. We would like to use our best intentions to offend you. We will surely be killed once we demonstrate our bit of talent. We are not here to please or delight you. The actors are here to make you sorry.*** |

* **By rushing through the prologue and ignoring the punctuation (possibly out of nervousness or carelessness), Quince’s words come out different than intended.**
* **The play is humourous, though not intentionally. Theseus congratulates the players.**
* **(362-430) The fairies come and bless the lovers and their children. Puck’s epilogue is directed toward the audience.**

***Theme***

**Theme is the main idea that runs through a piece. It is the lesson or moral that the reader (or viewer) can take from it. Typically, a theme should be more than one simple word. For example, it isn’t enough to say that the theme of *A Midsummer Night’s Dream* is “love.” Certainly, the play is *about* love, but the message is deeper than that. If you are able to describe the message, you can describe theme.**

**Fortunately, Shakespeare has provided direct statements of theme in his play. *“The course of true love never did run smooth,”* says Lysander in Act I. That statement is, in fact, a theme. Love is quite often difficult, and couples must frequently endure a variety of hardships. Look no further than the experience of Hermia and Lysander.**

***“Love looks not with the eyes, but with the mind,”* says Helena at the end of Act I scene i. This can be another theme that is present in the play. In this case, the eyes would represent fact and truth, while the mind would represent imagination. So often, love is an inexplicable state that can cause us to perceive things that aren’t true (like Titania believing that the transformed Bottom was beautiful). The fairy love potion was actually symbolic. It represented love’s magical and mysterious properties.**

***“Reason and love keep little company together,”* says Bottom to Titania. This is yet another way to state a theme about love and relationships. Love is an emotional response that sometimes defies common sense, or reason. There are many examples in the play of romantic attractions that simply didn’t make sense, and of people acting in strange ways while being in love.**