

Acting it Out: Subtext in Act III Scene 1

Remind yourself of the main action in Act III scene 1 and then in your groups discuss and answer the following questions, all the while considering subtext and how you would direct this section.

**You must think about: What is happening in this scene?
 What do you want to show the audience about the characters?**

Tasks

1. Summarise the main action of this scene in one paragraph, identifying any quotes that you feel are particularly key to the play as a whole.
2. Write down a couple of adjectives to describe the main characters in this scene.
 - a. Bottom
 - b. Quince
 - c. Snout
 - d. Starveling
 - e. Flute
 - f. Puck
 - g. Titania
 - h. The Fairies
3. What props would you use (if any) to perform this scene and why? How would you use them?
4. What sort of clothes would the characters wear? Write or quickly sketch your ideas, and say why you chose them.
5. What sort of accent would each character have and why? What would accent say about their character?
6. Consider how the characters react with each other, remembering to find proof from the scene itself:
 - a. How does Quince react to Bottom's ideas? Do you feel Bottom is trying to take over the rehearsal or just be helpful? Why?
 - b. How do the other characters react to Bottom's suggestions and ideas? Why?
 - c. Is Quince in control of his "team"? Based on your answer to this question, how would he deliver his lines? In what tone of voice? What would his subtext be?

- d. What is Puck thinking when he enters this scene? How would this be expressed?
- e. How would Bottom and Flute act out their parts of Pyramus and Thisbe? Would they be ridiculous and laughable, or deliberately overacting? How would we know this?
- f. How does Quince feel as he is acting as director and prompt? Frustrated? Despairing? Humorous? How would you convey this to the audience?
- g. How would you stage the rehearsal? Where would each of the characters be? What would Puck be doing as he is watching the rehearsal? Remember he is invisible to mortal eye...
- h. What would all the characters do when Bottom enters transformed?
- i. What movements would Puck make as he delivers his lines: "I'll follow you... (p. 49, line 26 onwards)? How would he deliver these lines?
- j. How does Bottom react to what his friends tell him about his transformation?
- k. How would you describe the relationship between Titania and Bottom? How would you make this relationship clear to the audience?
- l. How do you think the fairies react to Bottom turning up and their mistress asking them to wait on him?