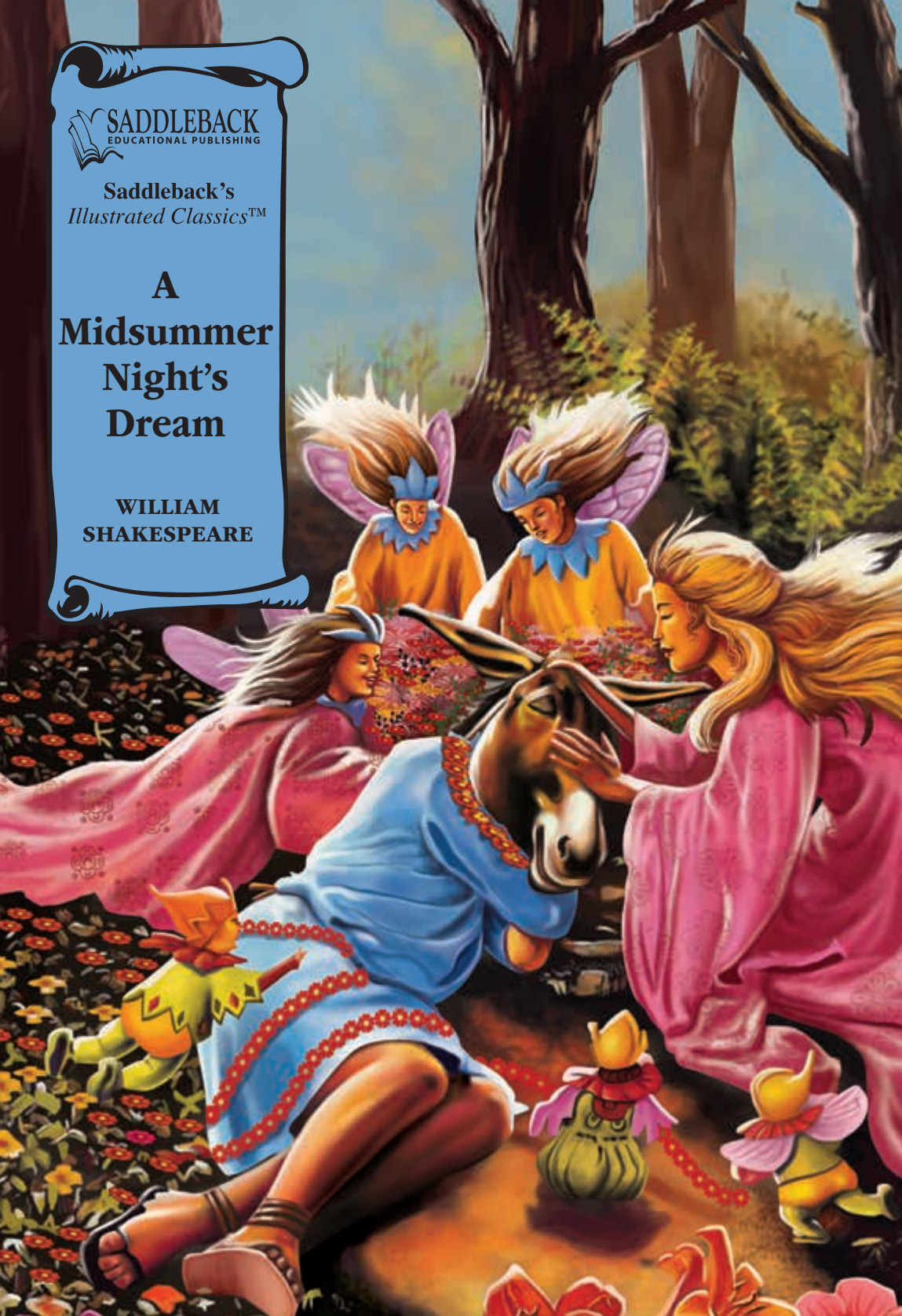




Saddleback's
Illustrated Classics™

A
**Midsummer
Night's
Dream**

WILLIAM
SHAKESPEARE





William Shakespeare

William Shakespeare was baptized on April 26, 1564, in Stratford-on-Avon, England, the third child of John Shakespeare, a well-to-do merchant, and Mary Arden, his wife. Young William probably attended the Stratford grammar school, where he learned English, Greek, and Latin. Historians aren't sure of the exact date of Shakespeare's birth.

In 1582, Shakespeare married Anne Hathaway. By 1583, the couple had a daughter, Susanna, and two years later the twins, Hamnet and Judith. Somewhere between 1585 and 1592, Shakespeare went to London, where he became first an actor and then a playwright. His acting company, *The King's Men*, appeared most often in the *Globe* theatre, a part of which Shakespeare himself owned.

In all, Shakespeare is believed to have written thirty-seven plays, several nondramatic poems, and a number of sonnets. Quoted often, Shakespeare's lines and characters are immortal. In *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, Puck says, "Lord, what fools these mortals be!" Those words have been echoed by actors for centuries.

In 1611, when he left the active life of the theatre, he returned to Stratford and became a country gentleman, living a quiet life. Then, on April 23, 1616, William Shakespeare died and was buried in Trinity Church in Stratford. Shakespeare is considered one of the greatest writers of the English-speaking world.



William Shakespeare

A Midsummer Night's Dream

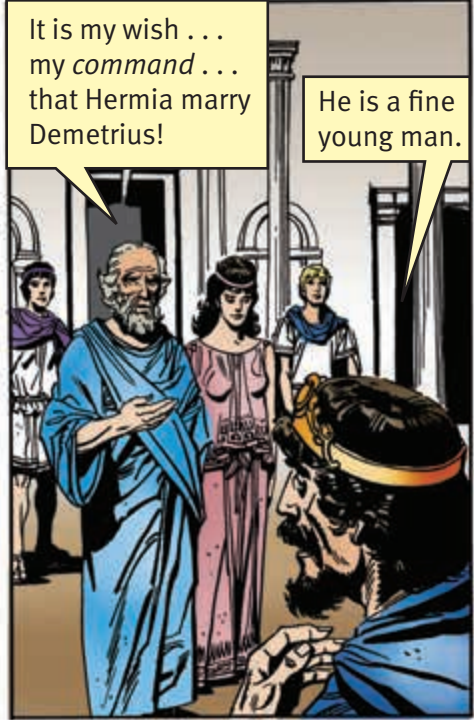


A midsummer night . . . a magic forest . . . anything could happen!
Men could be changed to donkeys and ladies could fall in love
with them.



Was it magic? A joke? Or was
it all a dream?







I have an aunt who lives where the laws of Athens cannot touch us. We'll go there and be married!



Leave your father's house tomorrow night. I'll wait for you in the forest, at the place where I once met you with Helena!



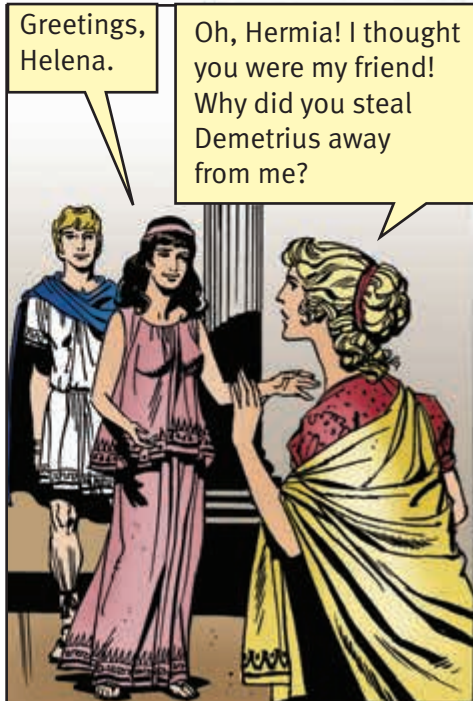
I'll be there!

Look, here comes Helena. When you are gone, perhaps Demetrius will love her again!



Greetings, Helena.

Oh, Hermia! I thought you were my friend! Why did you steal Demetrius away from me?





I didn't, Helena! He loves me, but I don't love him.

And the more I love him, the more he hates me.

Don't worry, dear friend. Lysander and I are going to run away.

We're meeting in the forest tomorrow night.



The lovers walked away, but Helena could think only of Demetrius.

I will tell Demetrius about this, and he will follow them. I will stay close to him!



Meanwhile, the people of Athens were planning ways to celebrate Theseus' wedding. One group of workmen decided to put on a play. They met at the house of Peter Quince, a carpenter.

What play shall we do?

A very serious play . . . *Pyramus and Thisby*.

