The Resolution: A Midsummer Night’s Dream Essay, Research Paper

The Resolution

In Shakespeare s A Midsummer Night s Dream, the conflict is based upon pure confusion. The main characters are involved in a mix-up of epic proportions. The story begins with Demetrius pledged to marry Hermia, daughter of Egeus. Conflict arises immediately when Lysander is shown to have won Hermia s affection and also her undying love. This situation is clouded even further when Helena, a friend of Hermia is found to be in love with Demetrius. The crowning mix-up that throws the events of the play into action is the strange relationship between Oberon and Titania, the ruling fairies. Because of his untamed jealousy over Titania s new servant, Oberon orders Puck to sprinkle love juice in Titania s eye and, taking pity on Helena, the eyes of Demetrius as well. A solution is very close at hand until Puck mistakes Lysander for Demetrius and causes Lysander to fall desperately in love with Helena. This is the main conflict. Characters that are desperately in love are torn apart by forces they cannot control. Helena is in great anguish because she cannot have Demetrius and now it seems that Lysander is mocking her over this very fact. Hermia is also in terrible pain due to the sudden change of heart seen in her lover. Demetrius is still seeking Hermia with no hope of success and Lysander is trapped in the daze of love for a woman that is not his true love. It is with this feeling of utter helplessness that Shakespeare ends act II.

Although this is one of Shakespeare s comedies, an interesting way to resolve the story would be to take the traditional tragic approach: everyone dies. Hermia, caught between her father s wish that she marry Demetrius and her strong love for Lysander, surely will be driven to madness by the loss of Lysander s love. A loss so great will have no other effect than to drive Hermia to suicide when she confronts Lysander and is mysteriously and continuously turned away. With Lysander s own sword, she cuts herself down and bleeds to death at her lover s feet. Confused by the act and possibly shaken back to reality by it, Lysander awakens from his daze and sees his love dead, his own sword plunged through her body. Disoriented by the love juice and not remembering what happened, he concludes that he is indeed the killer and so takes his own life. Demetrius, out of sadness and the fear that he will be blamed for his rival s death, flees in terror from the city never to be seen again. The final fate goes to Helena who, overcoming the death of her friend and coming to terms with the knowledge that she will never see Demetrius again, joins a convent and lives out the rest of her life in seclusion.