



企鵝英語簡易读物精选

仲夏夜之梦



A Midsummer Night's Dream

WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE

世界图书出版公司



① 企鹅英语简易读物精选 (高二学生)

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大量阅读简易读物 打好英语基础（代序）

北京外国语大学英语系历来都十分重视简易读物的阅读。我们要求学生在一、二年级至少要阅读几十本经过改写的、适合自己水平的英语读物。教学实践证明，凡是大量阅读了简易读物的学生，基础一般都打得比较扎实，英语实践能力都比较强，过渡到阅读英文原著困难也都比较小。这是我们几十年来屡试不爽的一条经验。

为什么强调在阅读英文原著之前必须阅读大量的简易读物呢？原因之一是简易读物词汇量有控制，内容比较浅易，而原著一般来说词汇量大，内容比较艰深。在打基础阶段，学生的词汇量比较小，阅读原著会遇到许多困难。在这种情况下，要保证足够的阅读量只能要求学生阅读简易读物。其次，简易读物使用的是常用词汇、短语和语法结构，大量阅读这类读物可以反复接触这些基本词语和语法，有助于他们打好基础，培养他们的英语语感。第三，简易读物大部分是文学名著改写而成，尽管情节和人物都大为简化，但依旧保留了文学名著的部分精华，仍不失为优秀读物。大量阅读这些读物对于拓宽学生视野、提高他们的人文素养大有帮助。

在这里我们还可以援引美国教学法家克拉申（Stephen Krashen）的一个著名观点。他认为，学生吸收外语有一个前提，即语言材料只能稍稍高于他们的语言理解水平，如果提供的语言材料难度大大超过学生的水平，就会劳而无功。这是克拉申关于外语学习的一个总的看法，但我们不妨把这个道理运用到阅读上。若要阅读有成效，必须严格控制阅读材料的难易度。目前学生阅读的英语材料往往过于艰深，词汇量过大，学生花了很多时间，而阅读量却仍然很小，进展缓慢，其结果是扼杀了学生的阅读兴趣，影响了他们的自信心。解决这个问题关键是向学生提供适合他们水平的、词汇量有控制的、能够引起他们兴趣的英语读物。“企鹅英语简易读物精选”是专门为初、中级学习者编写的简易读物。这是一套充分考虑到学生的水平和需要，为他们设计的有梯度的读物，学生可以循序渐进，逐步提高阅读难度和扩大阅读量，从而提高自己的英语水平。

应该如何做才能取得最佳效果呢？首先，要选择难易度适当的读物。如果一页书上生词过多，读起来很吃力，进展十分缓慢，很可能选的材料太难了。不妨换一本容易些的。总的原则是宁易毋难。一般来说，学生选择的材料往往偏难，而不是过于浅易。其次，要尽可能读得快一些，不要一句一句地分析，更不要逐句翻译。读故事要尽快读进去，进入故事的情节，就像阅读中文小说一样。不必担心是否记住了新词语。阅读量大，阅读速度适当，就会自然而然地记住一些词语。这是自然吸收语言的过程。再次，阅读时可以做一些笔记，但不必做太多的笔记；可以做一些配合阅读的练习，但不要在练习上花过多时间。主要任务还是阅读。好的读物不妨再读一遍，甚至再读两遍。你会发现在读第二遍时有一种如鱼得水的感觉。

青年朋友们，赶快开始你们的阅读之旅吧！它会把你们带进一个奇妙的世界，在那里你们可以获得一种全新的感受，观察世界也会有一种新的眼光。与此同时，你们的英语水平也会随之迅速提高。

Introduction

'Lovers, crazy people and the writers of poems believe in these silly fairy stories, but I don't.'

These are the words of Theseus, the Duke of Athens, on his wedding night. He is talking about the story that two pairs of lovers – Lysander and Hermia, Demetrius and Helena – have told him about their night in the wood outside Athens. At the beginning of the story, Lysander and Hermia are in love – but they have a problem. The Duke of Athens tells Hermia that she cannot marry Lysander. She must marry Demetrius – or die! What can Hermia and Lysander do to save their love? They run away into a fairyland wood outside Athens. There Oberon and Titania, the King and Queen of the Fairies, have their own difficult problems to solve . . .

When people see this play, some agree with Theseus. They think that the story of lovers and fairies is silly. But for most people, the story is not the most important thing about the play. The play is about ideas and feelings, love and dreams. People dream when they are asleep. When they fall in love, they also *imagine* things. These things are not real, but they are important. Nobody can see the fairies in the wood. But does that mean that fairies don't exist? The fairies play games with people. They change the lovers' lives. Dreams shape the way that we see the real world. So does it really matter if they are real or not?

William Shakespeare (1564–1616) is the most famous writer of plays in the English language. He was born in Stratford-upon-Avon, in England. He went to a good school, but did not go to university. In 1582, he married Anne Hathaway and had three children. By 1592, he was famous in London as an actor and a writer. Over the next twenty years he wrote thirty-seven plays

and many famous poems. He sometimes wrote three plays a year! His plays were very popular, and many of them were acted in front of King James I. When Shakespeare died in 1616, he was a rich man.

A Midsummer Night's Dream (1595) is one of Shakespeare's earlier plays. Most people agree that he wrote it for somebody's wedding. When it was first acted, the same actors usually played Theseus and Oberon, and Hippolyta and Titania.

The title of the play seems strange to the modern reader. We now think of June as the middle of an English summer, but this story happens just before 1 May – May Day. This is because there were only three seasons in Shakespeare's time: autumn, winter and summer. Spring was not a special season – it was a part of the summer. May Day, the middle of summer, was the time of year when animals were put out into the fields. People believed that this was a special time for love and dreams. It was also a time for fairies that brought life and colour to the earth after the hard months of winter.

A Midsummer Night's Dream is as popular today as it was four hundred years ago. It has some of Shakespeare's most beautiful language. It has given us two of his funniest and most famous people: Puck, the likeable but childish fairy, and Bottom, the silly actor with the donkey's head. There have been many films of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. The most famous one was a Hollywood film in 1936, with James Cagney as Bottom. In 1999, Hollywood made another film of the play, with Kevin Kline as Bottom and Michelle Pfeiffer as Titania.

The play is also important for one more reason: it gave the world the idea of fairies! It was the first work of literature that showed fairies as small flying creatures, like little people. Children's writers and Disney films still use the same idea today.

Reading and acting the play

You can read *A Midsummer Night's Dream* silently, like every other story in a book. You will have to imagine the places, the people's clothes and their voices from the words on the page.

But Shakespeare did not write *A Midsummer Night's Dream* as literature for reading. He wrote it for actors on a theatre stage. You can read the play in a group with other people. This is very different from silent reading. You can speak the words and bring the people in the play to life. They can sound happy or sad, worried or angry. You can add silences and important noises, like the sound of music. You can also stop and discuss the play. What does this person mean? Why do they say that?

But you can have more fun if you act the play. *A Midsummer Night's Dream* has a lot of movement and colour. There are many funny scenes and conversations. There are poems, music and dancing, too. The people in the play have to show a lot of different feelings. In the funniest parts, their feelings change very quickly. If you act the play, you can show these feelings by your words *and* actions.

The scenes should look different – a palace in Athens, a market square, a dark forest at night. You should think about special clothes for the fairies, the young lovers, the poor workers from the market, and the Duke and his courtiers. You should also think about stage equipment – swords, lanterns, and a donkey's head for Bottom! *A Midsummer Night's Dream* has a lot of people in it. You should think about how to make the fairies different from the 'real' people. Remember – the people in the play cannot see the fairies, but the audience can! Some people in the play don't speak, but their actions on stage are important. How many fairies do you need? How many guests will there be at Theseus's wedding party?

A Midsummer Night's Dream is a wonderful play. You can read it or act it. But have fun and enjoy it!

The People in the Play

THESEUS, Duke of Athens

HIPPOLYTA, Queen of the Amazons, Theseus's future wife

PHILOSTRATE, Theseus's chief assistant

EGEUS, Hermia's father

HERMIA, Egeus's daughter, in love with Lysander

LYSANDER, in love with Hermia

DEMETRIUS, in love with Hermia

HELENA, in love with Demetrius

OTHER LORDS, friends and courtiers of Theseus

QUINCE, a furniture-maker

SNUG, a bread-maker

BOTTOM, a cloth-maker

FLUTE, a shoe-mender

SNOUT, a tool-mender

STARVELING, a shirt-maker

OBERON, King of the Fairies

TITANIA, Queen of the Fairies

PUCK, a fairy, Oberon's messenger

PEASEBLOSSOM, a fairy, Titania's courtier

COBWEB, a fairy, Titania's courtier

MUSTARDSEED, a fairy, Titania's courtier

OTHER FAIRIES, courtiers to Oberon and Titania

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Act 1 Lovers and Actors

Scene 1 A room in Theseus's palace

[*Theseus, Hippolyta and Philostrate arrive.*]

THESEUS: In four days' time, there will be a new moon and we will be married. But oh, how slow this old moon is!

HIPPOLYTA [*smiling*]: If you keep busy, the time will soon pass.

THESEUS: You are right. Philostrate, go and prepare the young people of the city for four days of fun and parties. There will be no sadness in Athens on our wedding night. [*Philostrate leaves.*]
Hippolyta, it was not easy to win your love. I had to fight other men away with my sword. You were unhappy then, I know. But I promise you that now I will bring you only happiness.

[*Egeus arrives with Hermia, Lysander and Demetrius.*]

EGEUS: I hope you will be very happy, my Lord.

THESEUS: Thank you, Egeus. What is your news?

EGEUS: I have a problem with my daughter, Hermia. [*pointing to Demetrius*] This man has my permission to marry her. But [*pointing to Lysander*] *this* is the man that she loves! [*turning to Lysander*] Yes, you, Lysander! You have given my daughter gifts, sung at her window by moonlight, and now you have stolen her heart! You have turned her against me, her own father. [*turning to Theseus*] She is mine. I have the power to choose a husband for her. And I have chosen Demetrius. But if she refuses to listen to me, I can also send her to her death. That is an old Athenian law. My Lord, do I have your permission to use the law?

THESEUS: Hermia, your father gave you life and happiness. And now he has the power to take them away. If you are wise, you will marry Demetrius. He is a good man.

HERMIA: Lysander is a good man, too!

THESEUS: Yes, I am sure that he is. But in your father's opinion, Demetrius will be a better husband.

HERMIA: Why can't my father see things through my eyes?

THESEUS: Why can't *you* see things through *his*?

HERMIA: My Lord, please forgive me, but the power of love is so strong. I cannot understand it, but I cannot escape from it either. What will happen to me if I refuse to marry Demetrius?

THESEUS: You must promise to live away from the world of men, in a place of religion, for the rest of your life. If you cannot promise that, you will have to die. Think about it, Hermia. Is it right for a beautiful girl like you to spend all her life alone in cold, empty rooms?

HERMIA: I would prefer to do that than to marry Demetrius.

THESEUS: I will give you four days to think about it, Hermia. Then, if you still refuse to marry Demetrius, you must prepare yourself for a life of loneliness – or death!

DEMETRIUS: Think again, sweet Hermia. And you, Lysander, stop this crazy game. Hermia is mine.

LYSANDER: You have her father's love, Demetrius. Why can't I have Hermia's?

EGEUS: Yes, he has my love, and I have decided to give him my daughter as his wife.

LYSANDER: But my Lord, I am as good as Demetrius, if not better. I love her more than he does. She loves me, not him! Can't you see that love is just a game to Demetrius? A short time ago he won the heart of Nedar's daughter, Helena, and she still loves him. How can you believe that your daughter will be safe with a dishonest man like him?

THESEUS: It is true – I have heard about Demetrius and Helena. I wanted to talk to Demetrius about it earlier, but I forgot. Come with me, Demetrius – and you, too, Egeus. You can

help me prepare for my wedding. While we are doing that, we can discuss a few things. And you, fair Hermia, listen to your father, or the law of Athens will punish you!

[Egeus, Hippolyta, Demetrius and Theseus leave.]

LYSANDER: What's the matter, my love? Why is your face so pale?

HERMIA: I'm not free to marry you. How can I be happy?

LYSANDER: We must be brave. True love has never been an easy journey.

HERMIA: You mean that our problems are not unusual?

LYSANDER: I mean exactly that. And if we're brave and patient, we'll find happiness together.

HERMIA: How?

LYSANDER: A long way from Athens, I have an aunt who has no husband or children. She thinks of me as her only son. We can marry there, because the law of Athens can't reach us. If you love me, run away from your father's house tomorrow night. Meet me in the palace wood where I saw you and Helena picking flowers one day last May.

HERMIA: I promise you with all my heart that I'll be there.

LYSANDER: I'll see you tomorrow, then . . . But look! Here comes Helena.

[Helena arrives, looking pale and unhappy.]

HERMIA: Fair Helena, how good it is to see you.

HELENA: Don't call me 'fair', because it isn't true. *You're* the fair one. Demetrius loves *you*. Your eyes are like stars and your voice is as sweet as a bird's song. Teach me how to be like you. Tell me your secret. How did you succeed in stealing Demetrius's heart?

HERMIA: I look coldly at him, but he still loves me.

HELENA: Oh, why can't my smiles be as beautiful as your cold eyes?

HERMIA: I'm rude to him, but he still gives me love.

HELENA: Why can't he love my kindness?

HERMIA: I show him hate, but he still follows me.

HELENA: I show him love, but he still hates me.

HERMIA: But I've never wanted him to love me.

HELENA: You only have to look at him with your beautiful face.

HERMIA: I promise you, Helena, that Demetrius will not see my face again. Lysander and I have a secret plan. Before I met him, Athens was a wonderful place. But now it's become a bad dream for us. We can't stay here.

HELENA: What are you planning to do?

LYSANDER: Tomorrow night, when the moon paints the dark, sleeping city silver with its light, Hermia and I are going to leave through the gates of Athens.

HERMIA: We're going to meet in the wood where you and I often picked flowers. Then Lysander and I will turn our backs on Athens for ever and start a new life together in another land. So goodbye, my sweet friend, and think of us. I hope with all my heart that Demetrius will soon return your love for him. Now we must go. Goodbye again.

LYSANDER: And good luck with Demetrius.

[Hermia and Lysander leave.]

HELENA: How lucky some people are! Everyone in Athens thinks that I'm as beautiful as Hermia – everyone except Demetrius! He loved me until he met Hermia. Then his love for me was forgotten and he only had eyes for her. But I have an idea. If I tell Demetrius about her escape plan, he'll follow her to the wood tomorrow night. When he sees her with Lysander, his eyes will open. Then he'll understand that he'll only ever find true love with me! *[She leaves.]*



'Lysander and I will turn our backs on Athens for ever ...'

Scene 2 *A market square in Athens*

[*Quince arrives with Snug, Bottom, Flute, Snout and Starveling.*]

QUINCE: Is everybody here?

BOTTOM: Why don't you check the list? Then you'll know.

QUINCE: I've got the list here.

BOTTOM: Good. First, tell us all about the play that we're going to do for the Duke and Duchess on their wedding night.

QUINCE: It's about the sad, cruel death of Pyramus and Thisby.

BOTTOM: That sounds like a very good play. Now, good Peter Quince, read the actors' names from your list.

QUINCE: Answer as I call you. Nick Bottom, the cloth-maker.

BOTTOM: I'm ready. Who am I going to be?

QUINCE: You're going to be Pyramus.

BOTTOM: What is Pyramus? A lover or a murderer?

QUINCE: A lover who kills himself for love.

BOTTOM: Ah, *that* will make the audience cry! When they see me, they'll cry an ocean of tears! Now, who are the other actors?

QUINCE: Francis Flute the shoe-mender, you'll be Thisby.

FLUTE: Who is Thisby? A brave, handsome soldier?

QUINCE: No, she's the lady that Pyramus loves.

FLUTE: Me, a woman? I can't do that! I'm growing a beard!

QUINCE: That's no problem. You can cover your face and speak in a high voice.

BOTTOM: No, *I'll* play Thisby. I can speak in a *very* high voice. Listen . . .

QUINCE: No, no, you must play Pyramus, and Flute, you'll be Thisby. Robin Starveling, the shirt-maker?

STARVELING: Here, Peter Quince.

QUINCE: You must play Thisby's mother. Tom Snout, the tool-mender? You'll be Pyramus's father. I'll be Thisby's father. Snug, the bread-maker, you're going to be the lion.

SNUG: I hope there aren't too many words. I'm a very slow learner.

QUINCE: Don't worry – you just have to roar.

BOTTOM: I'll be the lion, too. I'll roar very loudly and the Duke will say, 'I want to hear that roar again!'

QUINCE: No, you'll frighten the ladies with *your* roar, and then the Duke will kill us all!

BOTTOM: Then I'll roar as sweetly as a bird.

QUINCE: I've already told you, Nick Bottom, you must play Pyramus!

BOTTOM: All right. But what kind of beard shall I have?

QUINCE: You can choose: black, grey, orange, blue or even no beard at all. Now, gentlemen, here are your lines. Learn them well and meet me tomorrow night in the palace wood, outside the city. We can practise our play in secret there by moonlight, and no one will see us. Does everyone understand?

BOTTOM: Don't worry, Peter Quince. We'll be there, and we'll know all our lines perfectly. Until tomorrow night in the palace wood, goodbye.

[They all leave.]

Act 2 The Juice of the Purple Flower

Scene 1 The palace wood, the next night

[A fairy, one of Titania's courtiers, arrives from one side. Puck arrives from the other side.]

PUCK: Hello, little fairy, what are you doing here?

PEASEBLOSSOM: I'm looking for raindrops for my Fairy Queen.

When I find them, I'm going to hang them around the necks of her favourite flowers like little lanterns. But I must hurry, because the Queen and all her fairies will be here soon.

PUCK [*looking worried*]: But the King's having a party here tonight. The Queen mustn't see him. Oberon's angry with her because of a little boy that was stolen from an Indian king. The Queen keeps the child like a pet and puts flowers in his hair, but the King wants the boy to be one of his courtiers. Now the King and Queen never meet. If they meet here tonight, there'll be a terrible fight!

PEASEBLOSSOM: I know who you are. You're Robin Goodfellow, aren't you? The bad little fairy that people call Puck. You're always playing jokes on people and frightening the village girls. But they say that you bring them luck.

PUCK [*smiling proudly*]: Yes, that's me. I am the happy little traveller of the night. Oberon smiles at my funny stories. I tell him about all the jokes that I play ... [*suddenly worried*] But you must go now, quickly! I can hear the King coming.

PEASEBLOSSOM [*nervously*]: Oh, no! My Queen's coming, too! Why does the King have to be here now?

[*Oberon arrives from one side with his fairy courtiers. Titania arrives from the other side with Mustardseed, Cobweb and other fairy courtiers.*]

OBERON: What bad luck to meet you here by moonlight!

TITANIA: Is that you, proud Oberon? Come, fairies, we must leave immediately. I don't want to talk to him.

OBERON: Wait, you impatient woman. Am I not your Lord?

TITANIA: Yes, but I know all about you and your love for Hippolyta, the Queen of the Amazons. Is that why you've come back from India? Because Hippolyta's going to marry Theseus?

OBERON: How can you say that when you love Theseus?

TITANIA [*angrily*]: That's a lie. Your words are like smoke. They hide what's really happening. You've been angry with me for a long time. Since we started fighting, the world has gone crazy. The wind punishes us because we've stopped listening to its music. It pushes dark clouds across the sea and brings us too