



## ACTIVITIES TO DEVELOP THEMES AND ISSUES

- A father's right to marry his daughter to whomever he chooses is a main issue in the play. Read Egeus's speech in **Act 1 Scene 1** and then read what the lovers say in their defence. Can you find any valid reasons for Egeus insisting that Hermia marries Demetrius? Write an entry in Egeus's diary for that night explaining why he thinks he is in the right to choose his daughter's husband.
- Shakespeare has explored the theme of arranged marriages in other plays. The prospect of an arranged marriage in *Romeo and Juliet* brings about the death of the two lovers, as it could in a *Midsummer Night's Dream* if Hermia disobeys her father. Does she owe her first allegiance to her father or should she follow her heart? Read **Hermia's Character Page**, listen to Louise Collins talking about her character on the **audio clip**. What would you do in her place? Write a response to her problem that would help her.
- The law is the law! Read Theseus's response to Hermia's plea to marry Lysander in **Act 1 Scene 1**. Do you think he should have granted her request? Does he have any choice in his judgement when he is there to uphold the law? Write Theseus's notes on the meeting to explain why he told Hermia she must obey her father or suffer the consequences.
- Love is one of the main themes of the play. Lysander says 'The course of true love never did run smooth' and that is certainly the case in this play. At the beginning of the play both Lysander and Demetrius love Hermia and then by Act 3 they are both in love with Helena. In the beginning Demetrius loathes Helena and asks for advice on how to get rid of her on his **Character Page**. Read the responses he gets. Which one do you think offers the best advice?
- By **Act 3 Scene 2** Demetrius is crazy about Helena. Read what he says about her in **Act 2 Scene 1** and then compare his descriptions of her there with what he says in Act 3. How would he update his **Facebook** page after falling in love with her?
- In this play characters want what they can't have. For the lovers it is having the partner of your choice, but for Oberon and Titania it is more complicated. Custody of children when a relationship breaks up is always a sad situation. Read Oberon's explanation for wanting the changeling boy in his problem page and listen to Chook Sibtrain talking about the character on the **audio clip**. Check out what he says there against what the character says in **Act 2 Scene 1**. Do you think Oberon is being reasonable in his demands or does he have a deeper motive for wanting the boy? Now read Titania's side of the story through her **Facebook page**, listen to the **audio clip** of Emma talking about her character and her motivations and read **Act 2 Scene 1**. What are her reasons for wanting to keep the boy? Do you think Titania should give Oberon the boy for the good of the natural world? Work in pairs to improvise the scene when Oberon first asked Titania for the boy, using quotations from **Act 2 Scene 1** in your improvisation.