



A Midsummer Night's Dream Comedy or Tragedy?

According to Aristotle, comedy and tragedy each follow a set of particular dramatic conventions. For the most part, Shakespeare's plays follow these conventions, though he sometimes mixes elements of each type in one play.

Review the chart that lists common elements found in comedies and tragedies. Next, in the blank charts, record the elements of comedy and the elements of tragedy in Shakespeare's *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. Then, write a paragraph assessing whether the play is a comedy or tragedy.

Elements of Comedy	Elements of Tragedy
Usually has a happy ending	Ending is usually tragic
Audience knows the conflict will resolve in a happy ending beforehand	Audience is kept in suspense; doesn't know ending beforehand
Characters have exaggerated flaws that make them seem buffoonish	Characters are usually "more admirable" than the average audience member
Characters' misfortunes and dilemmas aren't taken as seriously since audience already knows ending will be happy	Main character will have a "tragic flaw" (usually involves hubris) that inspires pity or fear in the audience
Has a light-hearted, humorous tone	Characters' suffering can seem fated or ultimately insurmountable
Satirizing, or "making low" of high-minded concepts and themes	Deals with serious themes

What elements of comedy are found in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*?

Element	Explanation
Puck turns Bottom's head into that of an ass.	This is a comedic element because it emphasizes what a buffoon Bottom is.

What elements of tragedy are found in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*?

Element	Explanation
Hermia's father is ok with her dying if she doesn't agree to marry Demetrius.	This is tragic because it is a situation that Hermia can't escape; she has no choice but to die or submit to her father's will.

Your final assessment: Is *A Midsummer Night's Dream* a comedy or tragedy?

RL.11-12.5 Analyze how an author's choices concerning how to structure specific parts of a text (e.g., the choice of where to begin or end a story, the choice to provide a comedic or tragic resolution) contribute to its overall structure and meaning as well as its aesthetic impact.