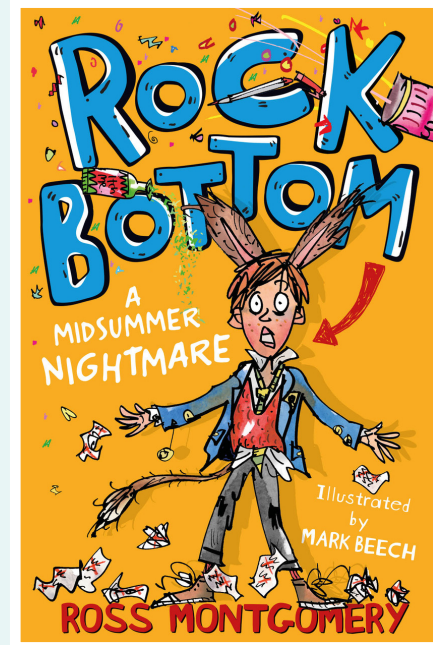




Barrington Stoke

CLASS ACTIVITY PACK



ROCK BOTTOM

Ross Montgomery

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INTRODUCTION

Moving the action of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* from magical Athens to a regular high-school, *Rock Bottom* borrows the key ingredients from Shakespeare's original comedy and reimagines them in a laugh-out-loud, comedy caper of a school play gone wrong!

What would you do if the girl you loved thought you were just a joke?

Nick has a great idea to win over Jessie's heart – he'll get the leading role alongside her in the school play, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. But when he is cast as the foolish joker Bottom instead of the romantic hero, his whole scheme falls apart.

Enter Robyn, school prankster, who has a sneaky idea to put Nick back in the spotlight and finally get him noticed. But when opening night rolls around, one by one their grand plans go up in smoke!

This activity pack is designed to provide some inspiration for working with *Rock Bottom* in the classroom and offers fun, interactive activities to enjoy with the whole classroom.

We hope you enjoy exploring this hilarious book and Shakespeare's wonderfully witty original with your pupils!



WHAT WAS 'A MIDSUMMER NIGHT'S DREAM'?

Written in the mid-1590s *A Midsummer Night's Dream* is one of Shakespeare's most popular plays and is widely performed across the world to this day. *A Midsummer Night's Dream* is also perhaps Shakespeare's most imaginative work drawing on lots of different sources, from Greek mythology to English folklore, for its strange, dream-like plot of love, fairies and mischief.

The plot for *A Midsummer Night's Dream* goes something like this:

Helena loves **Demetrius**, **Demetrius** loves **Hermia**, and **Hermia** and **Lysander** love each other. **Hermia's** father orders her to marry **Demetrius** but **Hermia** and **Lysander** run away to the forest to get married in secret.

Meanwhile ... Titania, Queen of the fairies, is in an argument with Oberon, King of the fairies, over the custody of a young boy. Oberon is annoyed that Titania won't give in so plans revenge in the form of a love potion designed to make Titania fall in love with the first creature she sees. Oberon sends Puck to find the magic flower for the potion.

Puck causes chaos ... Thinking **Lysander** is **Demetrius**, Puck puts the potion in his eyes by mistake. When **Lysander** wakes up he sees **Helena** and instantly falls in love with her. Trying to correct his mistake, Puck puts the potion in **Demetrius's** eyes, making him fall in love with **Helena** too. Finally Puck manages to get the potion to Titania and sprinkles it in her eyes while she sleeps.

Meanwhile ... Bottom and his friends are rehearsing their play while Puck watches unseen. Puck thinks they're hilarious and to add to the mischief transforms Bottom's head into a donkey's head. When Titania wakes up Bottom is the first person she sees and she falls instantly in love.

Quick fixes ... Oberon fixes Puck's mistakes and returns everything to normal. **Lysander** loves **Hermia**, and **Demetrius** now loves **Helena**. All four lovers think their night in the forest was part of some strange dream.



Titania is so in love with Bottom that she gives the little boy to Oberon. Because he has won, Oberon releases Titania from the potion and returns Bottom's head to normal.

Finally ... The lovers get married in a joint ceremony with the Duke of Athens and his bride. At the wedding Bottom and his friends perform their play intending it to be a tragedy but the audience find it hilarious. In the end everyone is happy, Oberon and Titania bless the couples and Puck has the final word:

*If we shadows have offended,
Think but this, and all is mended,
That you have but slumber'd here
While these visions did appear.
And this weak and idle theme,
No more yielding but a dream,
Gentles, do not reprehend:
if you pardon, we will mend:
And, as I am an honest Puck,
If we have unearned luck
Now to 'scape the serpent's tongue,
We will make amends ere long;
Else the Puck a liar call;
So, good night unto you all.
Give me your hands, if we be friends,
And Robin shall restore amends.*



DISCUSSING 'ROCK BOTTOM'

1. Using the plot description from *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (on page 4-5) can you find three similarities between Shakespeare's play and *Rock Bottom*?
2. Shakespeare's character of Bottom is full of self-confidence and boastful advice for his friends, but his overconfidence frequently trips him up and results in lots of silly mistakes. Can you find three examples from *Rock Bottom* where Nick acts like the character he's meant to play?
3. In Shakespeare's play Puck is a jester fairy who enjoys playing pranks and causing mischief, which *Rock Bottom* character do you think fits that description best? Can you give evidence from the book to support your answer?
4. In *Rock Bottom* there are no confused lovers arguing with each other. What other confusions happen in *Rock Bottom* that replace the mess between Helena, Hermia, Demetrius and Lysander in the play?
5. There's an important lesson to be learned from the audience's reaction to Bottom's play both in *A Midsummer Night's Dream* and in *Rock Bottom*. What do you think that lesson is? What are Shakespeare and author Ross Montgomery trying to tell their readers?



THE WHO'S WHO CAST LIST

Oh no, the cast list for *A Midsummer Night's Dream* has been muddled up! Can you match the actors from the school play to the correct Shakespeare characters?

Helena

Demetrius

Hermia

Lysander

Bottom

Flute

Quince

Starveling

Snout

Snug

Puck

Blake

Frank

Petra

Tomi

Jessie

Ruby

Robyn

Leo

Dom

Taylor

Nick



DESIGN YOUR OWN PLAY PROGRAMME

When you go to watch a play you are often given a programme that tells you a little about the plot of the play and some extra information on the actors who will be performing.

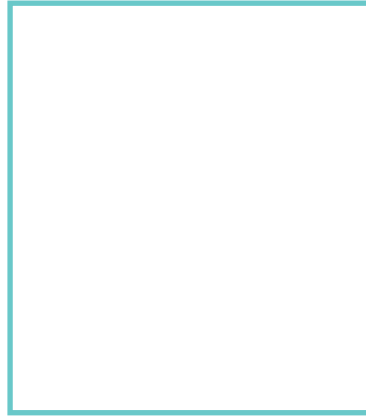
Imagine that you need to create a programme for the school production of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. Using the cast list from page 6, the template below, and your imagination create a play programme to tell the audience all about the actors. Don't forget to include their pictures!



_____ as Bottom



_____ as Helena



_____ as Demetrius



_____ as **Hermia**

_____ as **Lysander**

_____ as **Flute**

_____ as **Quince**

_____ as **Starveling**

_____ as **Snout**

_____ as Snug

_____ as Puck



SHAKE-UP SHAKESPEARE POSTER CHALLENGE

In *Rock Bottom*, author Ross Montgomery took the ingredients of Shakespeare's famous play *A Midsummer Night's Dream* – the plot, the characters, even some of the lines – and turned it into something new. People have been doing this with Shakespeare plays for years: films, books, music and computer games have all taken his ideas and adapted them into something new. Now it's your turn!

Your job is to take a famous Shakespeare play of your choosing, and imagine you were adapting it into a brand new film. You can do your own research about his plays, but here are a few brief descriptions of some of his most famous ones to help you out:

A Midsummer Night's Dream

Two young couples run into a forest filled with fairies, and confusion and chaos ensues!

Macbeth

Macbeth kills his King and steals the throne of Scotland ... but how long until he loses his soul?

Hamlet

A young prince discovers that his father was murdered by his uncle and seeks revenge.

Romeo and Juliet

Two children from warring families fall in love ... will they ever find a way to be together?

The Two Gentlemen of Verona

Valentine and Proteus are best friends ... until Sylvia comes between them.

Could you make *Romeo and Juliet* about a cat and a dog falling in love? Or set *Macbeth* in the future, and fill it with robot kings and queens? The choice is yours!

Once you've decided which play you're adapting, your next job is to turn your idea into a film poster! Don't forget to include all these details:

- **A TITLE**

Try and come up with something new, or a clever pun on the original title.

- **CHARACTERS**

Make sure your main characters are visible in the poster.

- **LOCATION**

Where is your story set? Make sure it's clear!

- **A BLURB**

Most film posters have a single sentence or a few words explaining the plot to grab your attention.

- **REVIEWS**

Make up some review quotes using persuasive language to entice people to watch the film!

- **TONE**

Is your film action-packed? Romantic? Funny? Make sure the tone is obvious in the design of your poster - try studying the posters of films you like to get a good feel for what would work.

- **CREDITS**

Don't forget to put down who made and wrote the film ... that's you! You could even add some clever details: "Based on an original idea by William Shakespeare", for example.



BECOMING BOTTOM

Poor Bottom spends a lot of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* with the head of a Donkey, all thanks to mischievous Puck!

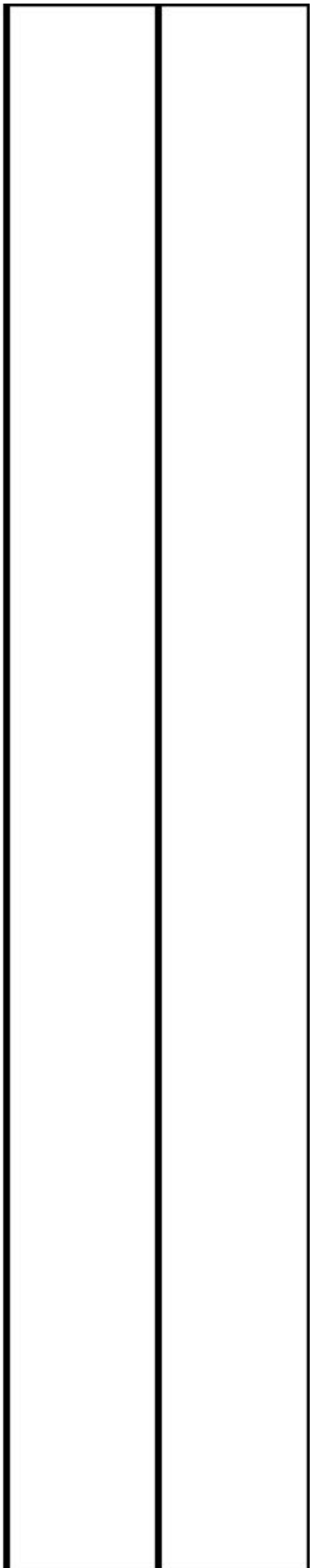
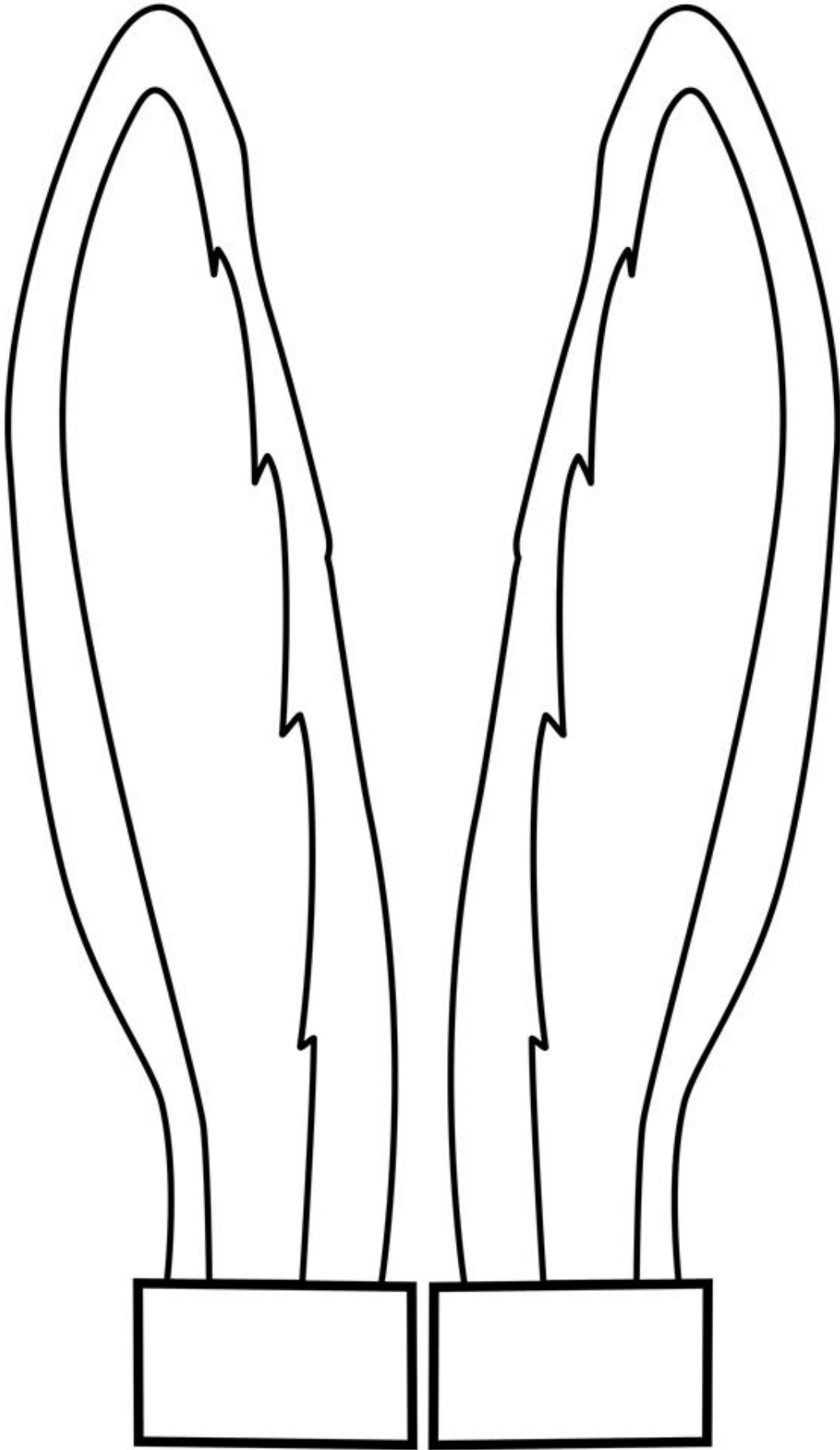
Find out what it's like to be Bottom by making your very own Donkey ears using the instructions below:

You will need:

- the donkey ear template (on the next page)
- a pair of scissors
- glue or sellotape
- some colouring in pens and pencils
- some fluffy cotton wool

1. Very carefully cut out your ears and the headband from the template on the next page.
2. Colour in your ears and your headband.
3. Glue some fluffy cotton wool to your ears and let them dry.
4. Make your headband into a ring that fits round your head and secure it with some glue or sellotape. (You can add some extra paper to make it bigger or pull it tighter to make it smaller)
5. Attach your ears to the inside of your headband with your design facing out the way.
6. Put on your ears and ta-da! Now you're all set to play the part of Bottom!





REVIEWING 'ROCK BOTTOM'

A big part of publishing books and putting on plays is having people review them. Using the templates below tell everyone what you thought of *Rock Bottom* by Ross Montgomery:

TITLE: _____

AUTHOR: _____ **ILLUSTRATOR:** _____

DID YOU LIKE THE BOOK?

GIVE IT A RATING OUT OF FIVE STARS:



HOW WOULD YOU DESCRIBE THE BOOK?

WHAT DID YOU LIKE OR DISLIKE ABOUT THIS BOOK?

WHAT WAS YOUR FAVOURITE PART?

**DRAW YOUR FAVOURITE SCENE
FROM THE BOOK:**



We've left this template completely blank so that you can use it for other books that you've enjoyed! Why not start a collection of your own reviews?