**Which character in ‘A Midsummer Night’s Dream’ is the most powerful?**

When Shakespeare wrote ‘A Midsummer Night’s Dream’, society was structured along very rigid lines. People had to ‘know their place’, and the ruling classes had lots of control over the workers. Also, men were more powerful than women, and girls were brought up to obey their fathers (and later, their husbands) in all things. If you look at the list of characters in this play, you would expect it would be easy to tell who had the most power.

Firstly, Duke Theseus rules over the city of Athens. He is powerful because he is the highest-ranking nobleman, and also a successful soldier. He is about to marry Hippolyta, who is also a powerful character and warrior, but she has lost in battle to Theseus and is therefore his subordinate. Yet he has fallen in love with her, so while he remains in charge, it is clear that she can control him in some ways because she knows he loves her.

Furthermore, Oberon is also very powerful, because he is also a ruler, but one that has magical powers. This would seem to make him almost invincible; everyone must obey him, and he can control humans by the means of magic potions and the like. Yet he does not always appear to be in control in this play. His wife Titania has angered him by refusing to let him have the changeling boy, and he is forced to play a trick on her to get what he wants. She certainly will not do as he says otherwise.

When Oberon and Titania fight, the audience gets an impression of just how powerful they are, as their anger causes terrible disasters for the human world. There are floods, strange unseasonable weather and the crops die. This shows that no matter how much people think they can control their own lives, no one has the power to fight the effects of the natural world. If Oberon and Titania are taken to represent nature, the play shows us that even the most powerful people are at the mercy of Nature, or ‘chance’.

*Mention Egeus and Hermia here*