

## Nancy's Story

After a year of isolating at home, Nancy had had enough. She felt as if her life was passing by while she was being sidelined. When she learned about the "Read Shakespeare Out Loud" program in *Daybreak*, she only asked herself what she had to lose?

The answer was not so straightforward. She had read Shakespeare in college, but she had not performed theater since high school. As a career journalist and professional writer, she could interpret his plays with a critical eye, but reading Elizabethan English in front of others? Zounds!

Nancy decided to plunge ahead anyway. It was definitely time to change things up and try something new. Still, when the first class met via Zoom, some of her earlier fears were realized. Others in the group seemed more experienced and skilled. How long could her dignity remain intact?

She was soon to discover that Jared Jenisch, the librarian who organized the program, would assuage her concern. Moreover, her castmates were there to enjoy the playwright's language and poetry, not to pass judgment on others.

*A Midsummer Night's Dream* is all about confusion; reading the parts of multiple characters guaranteed even more. Mistakes happened often. Nancy was tasked with playing Puck, Bottom, and Demetrius, which forced her to be a mischievous fairy, a clown, and a wise guy in quick succession. Everyone surrendered to the experience and threw themselves into character without reservation, even at their own expense. What followed was an act of creation that was amazingly uplifting.

Nancy recalls that what surprised her most was how easily she got into it and how much fun it was too. She had been pushed out of her comfort zone, but in return, she got to enjoy the collective humanity of the entire cast.

Forsooth, somewhere the Bard is smiling!