

# A Midsummer Night's Dream

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## A MIDSUMMER NIGHT'S DREAM SYNOPSIS

Duke Theseus of Athens has conquered the Amazons and brought back their Queen, Hippolyta, whom he will marry in four days. Egeus comes before Theseus and complains that his daughter Hermia will not marry Demetrius, the man he has chosen for her. She wants to marry Lysander, the man she loves. Theseus upholds the law of Athens and tells Hermia that in four days she must marry Demetrius, become a nun or die. Left alone, Lysander and Hermia plot to run away and live with Lysander's aunt. Helena, Hermia's best friend and deeply in love with Demetrius who has recently dumped her, enters and wishes that she was more like Hermia. Hermia and Lysander tell Helena of their plans to elope and in the hope of regaining Demetrius' affection, Helena decides to tell Demetrius of their escape plans.

In the woods Oberon, the King of the fairies, and Titania, the Queen of the fairies, are fighting over a human changeling boy in Titania's group of followers. Oberon wants the boy, but Titania is unwilling to part with him because of her loyalty to the child's dead mother. Their discord is causing climatic chaos and much suffering for men, animals and nature. Oberon decides to wreak vengeance on Titania by putting a love potion on her eyes while she is asleep that causes her to fall in love with the first live creature she sees when she awakes.

Demetrius then enters looking for Hermia and Lysander, followed by the lovesick Helena. Demetrius treats Helena very poorly and runs off hoping to lose her in the woods. The heartbroken but still determined Helena follows him. Oberon takes pity on Helena and tells Puck to put some love juice on Demetrius' eyes, so that he may fall in love with Helena.

Lysander and Hermia have become lost in the woods and lie down to sleep. Puck thinks Lysander is Demetrius and puts the love juice on his eyes. Helena stumbles upon Lysander who awakes and falls instantly in love with her. Thinking she is being mocked, she runs off. Lysander runs after her and when Hermia awakes to find she is alone, she leaves in search of Lysander.

Bottom and his amateur acting friends have met in the woods to rehearse the play they hope will be chosen for Theseus' wedding festivities. Puck magically puts an ass's head on Bottom, which frightens his fellow actors away and causes Titania to awake. With the love juice on her eyes she falls instantly in love with this improbable mate, and leads him to her bower.

After Puck has delighted Oberon with what has happened to Titania, Hermia and Demetrius enter. Hermia accuses Demetrius of having killed Lysander. Hermia leaves, and a dispirited Demetrius decides to sleep. Oberon chastises Puck for his mistake and orders him to put the love juice on Demetrius' eyes. When Helena appears and Demetrius awakes, both boys are now in love with Helena. Hermia then enters and confusion reigns as accusations fly. The boys then seek a place to fight for Helena. Puck manages to get them all to sleep without any harm being done, and uses the juice of another flower to free Lysander of the love juice's power.

Under the influence of the love potion, Titania gives Oberon the changeling child, and he eventually releases her from its power. She is horrified by the ass-headed Bottom, but receives no clear answer from Oberon as to what exactly has happened. Puck removes the ass's head from Bottom, who wakes from what he imagines has been an extraordinary dream. He heads back to Athens with aspirations of turning his dream into a ballad.

While out early-morning hunting, Theseus and Hippolyta discover the four young lovers asleep. When Demetrius explains that he is again in love with Helena, Theseus overrules Egeus' wishes and declares there shall be a triple wedding that night. Confused but happy, the couples return to Athens.

That evening Bottom and his fellows perform 'Pyramus and Thisby' for the six newlyweds. Once the six lovers have all gone to bed, Oberon and Titania appear and bless their beds and their future offspring. Puck then says good night to the audience.

## A MIDSUMMER NIGHT'S DREAM NAMES OF THE CHARACTERS

THESEUS	Duke of Athens
HIPPOLYTA	Queen of the Amazons, betrothed to Theseus
EGEUS	Father of Hermia
PHILOSTRATE	Master of the Revels to Theseu
HERMIA	Daughter of Egeus, in love with Lysander
HELENA	In love with Demetrius
LYSANDER	In love with Hermia
DEMETRIUS	Suitor to Hermia, loved by Helena
PETER QUINCE	A carpenter - Prologue in the interlude
NICK BOTTOM	A weaver - Pyramus in the interlude
FRANCIS FLUTE	A bellows mender - Thisby in the interlude
SNUG	A joiner - Lion in the interlude
TOM SNOUT	A tinker - Wall in interlude
ROBIN STARVELLING	A tailor - Moonshine in the interlude
TITANIA	Queen of the fairies
OBERON	King of the fairies
PUCK	Robin Goodfellow; Oberon's right-hand fairy
FAIRY	Titania's 1st in command
MOTH	Fairy in Titania's band
PEASEBLOSSOM	Fairy in Titania's band
COBWEB	Fairy in Titania's band
MUSTARDSEED	Fairy in Titania's band
Other fairies and attendants	
SCENE	In and around Athens

## Act 1, Scene 1 Athens - the palace of Theseus

(THESEUS, HIPPOLYTA, PHILOSTRATE and attendants.)

THESEUS

Now, fair Hippolyta, our nuptial\* hour draws on apace. Four happy days bring in another moon.  
But O, methinks, how slow this old moon wanes!\*  
She lingers my desires like a dowager,\* long withering out a young man's revenue.

HIPPOLYTA

Four days will quickly steep themselves in night, four nights will quickly dream away the time;  
and then the moon, like to a silver bow new bent in heaven, shall behold the night of our solemnities.

THESEUS

Go, Philostrate, stir up the Athenian youth to merriments.

(Exit PHILOSTRATE.)

Hippolyta, I wooed thee with my sword,\* and won thy love, doing thee injuries;  
but I will wed thee in another key, with pomp, with triumph and with revelling.

(Enter EGEUS, HERMIA, LYSANDER and DEMETRIUS.)

EGEUS

Happy be Theseus, our renowned Duke.

THESEUS

Thanks, good Egeus. What's the news with thee?

EGEUS

Full of vexation come I, with complaint against my child, my daughter Hermia.  
Stand forth, Demetrius. My noble lord, this man hath my consent to marry her.  
Stand forth, Lysander. And, my gracious Duke, this man hath bewitched the bosom of my child.  
Thou, thou, Lysander, thou hast given her rhymes and interchanged love-tokens with my child.  
Thou hast by moonlight at her window sung with feigning voice verses of feigning love.  
With cunning hast thou filched my daughter's heart,  
turned her obedience (which is due to me) to stubborn harshness.  
And, my gracious Duke, be it so she will not here before your grace consent to marry with Demetrius,  
I beg the ancient privilege of Athens:  
as she is mine, I may dispose of her, which shall be either to this gentleman or to her death.

THESEUS

What say you, Hermia?  
Be advised fair maid. To you your father should be as a god, one to whom you are but as a form in wax.  
Demetrius is a worthy gentleman.

*nuptial* - wedding, *wanes* - declines, *dowager* - elderly woman of wealth,  
*Hippolyta...sword* - Theseus defeated the Amazons and took Hippolyta captive

HERMIA

So is Lysander.

THESEUS

In himself he is; but wanting your father's voice, the other must be held the worthier.

HERMIA

I would my father looked but with my eyes.

THESEUS

Rather your eyes must with his judgment look.

HERMIA

I beseech your grace that I may know the worst that may befall me if I refuse to wed Demetrius.

THESEUS

Either to die the death, or to abjure\* for ever the society of men.

Therefore, fair Hermia, question your desires, know of your youth, examine well your blood,\* whether, if you yield not to your father's choice, you can endure the livery\* of a nun.

Thrice-blessed they that master so their blood; but earthlier happy is the rose distilled,\* than that which withering on the virgin thorn grows, lives and dies in single blessedness.

HERMIA

So will I grow, so live, so die my lord, ere I will yield my virginity up unto his lordship.

THESEUS

Take time to pause.

And by the next new moon, the sealing-day betwixt my love and me, either prepare to die for disobedience to your father's will, or else to wed Demetrius, as he would, or on Diana's altar to swear to single life.

DEMETRIUS

Relent sweet Hermia, and Lysander, yield thy crazed title to my certain right.

LYSANDER

You have her father's love Demetrius; let me have Hermia's. Do you marry him?

EGEUS

Scornful Lysander, true, he hath my love, and what is mine my love shall render\* him.

And she is mine, and all my right of her I do estate unto Demetrius.

LYSANDER

I am my lord, as well derived\* as he, as well possessed;\* my love is more than his; and which is more, I am beloved of beautiful Hermia.

Demetrius, I'll avouch it to his head, made love to Nedar's daughter Helena, and won her soul; and she (sweet lady) dotes, devoutly dotes, dotes in idolatry upon this spotted and inconstant man.

*abjure* - give up, *blood* - passions, *livery* - habit; way of life, *distilled* - reproduced and purified by giving birth, *render* - give, *well derived* - well born, *well possessed* - rich

THESEUS

I must confess that I have heard so much, but being over-full of self-affairs, my mind did lose it. But Demetrius, come, and come Egeus. I have some private schooling for you both. For you fair Hermia, look you arm yourself to fit your fancies to your father's will; or else the law of Athens yields you up to death, or to a vow of single life. Come, my Hippolyta.

*(Exeunt all but LYSANDER and HERMIA.)*

LYSANDER

How now my love, why is your cheek so pale? How chance the roses there do fade so fast?

HERMIA

Belike for want of rain, which I could well afford from the tempest of my eyes.

LYSANDER

Ay me! For all that I could ever read, could ever hear by tale or history, the course of true love never did run smooth.

HERMIA

If then true lovers have been ever crossed, then let us teach our trial patience.

LYSANDER

A good persuasion.\* Therefore hear me, Hermia. I have a widow aunt, a dowager of great revenue, and she hath no child. From Athens is her house remote seven leagues,\* and she respects me as her only son. There gentle Hermia, may I marry thee, and to that place the sharp Athenian law cannot pursue us. If thou lovest me then, steal forth thy father's house tomorrow night; and in the wood, a league without the town where I did meet thee once with Helena, there will I stay for thee.

HERMIA

My good Lysander, I swear to thee by Cupid's strongest bow, by his best arrow with the golden head, tomorrow truly will I meet with thee.

LYSANDER

Keep promise love. Look, here comes Helena.

*(Enter HELENA.)*

HERMIA

God speed fair\* Helena. Whither away?

HELENA

Call you me fair? That fair again unsay. Demetrius loves your fair.\* O happy fair! Sickness is catching. O, were favor\* so, yours would I catch fair Hermia, ere I go;

*persuasion* - conviction, *league* - about 3 miles, *fair* - beautiful (blonde), *your fair* - Hermia's dark complexion, *favor* - looks

my ear should catch your voice, my eye your eye, my tongue should catch your tongue's sweet melody.  
O teach me how you look, and with what art you sway the motion of Demetrius' heart.

HERMIA

I frown upon him, yet he loves me still.

HELENA

O that your frowns would teach my smiles such skill.

HERMIA

I give him curses, yet he gives me love.

HELENA

O that my prayers could such affection move.

HERMIA

The more I hate, the more he follows me.

HELENA

The more I love, the more he hateth me.

HERMIA

His folly, Helena, is no fault of mine.

HELENA

None but your beauty. Would that fault were mine.

HERMIA

Take comfort. He no more shall see my face; Lysander and myself will fly this place.

LYSANDER

Helen, to you our minds we will unfold.  
Tomorrow night, through Athens' gates have we devised to steal.

HERMIA

And in the wood, where often you and I upon faint primrose-beds were wont\* to lie,  
there my Lysander and myself shall meet,  
and thence from Athens turn away our eyes to seek new friends and stranger companies.  
Farewell, sweet playfellow. Pray thou for us; and good luck grant thee thy Demetrius.  
Keep word, Lysander. We must starve our sight from lovers' food till morrow deep midnight.

LYSANDER

I will my Hermia.

*(Exit HERMIA.)*

Helena, adieu. As you on him, Demetrius dote on you

*wont* - accustomed

*(Exit LYSANDER.)*

HELENA

How happy some or other some can be. Through Athens I am thought as fair as she.  
But what of that? Demetrius thinks not so. He will not know what all but he do know.  
And as he errs, doting on Hermia's eyes, so I, admiring of his qualities.  
Things base and vile, holding no quantity, love can transpose to form and dignity.  
For ere\* Demetrius looked on Hermia's eyne,\* he hailed down oaths that he was only mine;  
and when this hail some heat from Hermia felt, so he dissolved, and showers of oaths did melt.  
I will go tell him of fair Hermia's flight. Then to the wood will he tomorrow night pursue her.  
And for this intelligence\* if I have thanks, it is a dear expense.\*  
But herein mean I to enrich my pain, to have his sight thither and back again.

*(Exit HELENA.)*

*ere* - before, *eyne* - eyes, *intelligence* - piece of news, *a dear expense* - a trouble worth taking

**Act 1, Scene 2    Somewhere in Athens***(QUINCE, SNUG, BOTTOM, FLUTE, SNOOT and STARVELING.)*

QUINCE

Is all our company here?

BOTTOM

You were best to call them generally,\* man by man, according to the scrip.

QUINCE

Here is the scroll of every man's name, which is thought fit through all Athens, to play in our interlude before the Duke and the Duchess, on his wedding-day at night.

BOTTOM

First, good Peter Quince, say what the play treats on, then read the names of the actors, and so grow to a point.

QUINCE

Marry, our play is, 'The most lamentable comedy, and most cruel death of Pyramus and Thisby.'

BOTTOM

A very good piece of work, I assure you, and a merry.  
Now, good Peter Quince, call forth your actors by the scroll. Masters, spread yourselves.

QUINCE

Answer as I call you. Nick Bottom, the weaver.

BOTTOM

Ready. Name what part I am for and proceed.

QUINCE

You, Nick Bottom, are set down for Pyramus.

BOTTOM

What is Pyramus? A lover or a tyrant?

QUINCE

A lover, that kills himself most gallant for love.

BOTTOM

That will ask some tears in the true performing of it.  
If I do it, let the audience look to their eyes. I will move storms!  
To the rest.\*  
Yet my chief humor\* is for a tyrant. I could play Ercles\* rarely.*generally* - Bottom means the opposite (individually),*To the rest* - he means name the rest of the players but he interrupts before Quince has a chance,*humor* - temperamental bent, *Ercles* - Hercules

The raging rocks  
 And shivering shocks  
 Shall break the locks  
 Of prison gates,  
 And Phibbus' car\*  
 Shall shine from far  
 And make and mar  
 The foolish Fates.

This was lofty. Now name the rest of the players.  
 This is Hercules' vein, a tyrant's vein. A lover is more condoling.\*

QUINCE

Francis Flute, the bellows-mender.

FLUTE

Here, Peter Quince.

QUINCE

Flute, you must take Thisby on you.

FLUTE

What is Thisby? A wandering knight?

QUINCE

It is the lady that Pyramus must love.

FLUTE

Nay, faith, let me not play a woman. I have a beard coming.

QUINCE

That's all one. You shall play it in a mask, and you may speak as small as you will.

BOTTOM

And I may hide my face, let me play Thisby too. I'll speak in a monstrous little voice.  
 'Thisne, Thisne!' 'Ah, Pyramus, lover dear, thy Thisby dear, and lady dear.'

QUINCE

No, no. You must play Pyramus; and, Flute, you Thisby.

BOTTOM

Well, proceed.

QUINCE

Robin Starveling, the tailor.

STARVELING

Here, Peter Quince

*Phibbus' car* - chariot of Apollo the sun god, *condoling* - sorrowing

QUINCE

Robin Starveling, you must play Thisby's mother.  
Tom Snout, the tinker.

SNOUT

Here, Peter Quince.

QUINCE

You, Pyramus' father; myself, Thisby's father; Snug the joiner, you the lion's part.  
And I hope here is a play fitted.

SNUG

Have you the lion's part written? Pray you, if it be, give it me, for I am slow of study.

QUINCE

You may do it extempore,\* for it is nothing but roaring.

BOTTOM

Let me play the lion too. I will roar that I will do any man's heart good to hear me.  
I will roar that I will make the Duke say, 'Let him roar again, let him roar again!'

QUINCE

And you should do it too terribly, you would fright the Duchess and the ladies, that they would shriek;  
and that were enough to hang us all.

ALL

That would hang us, every mother's son.

BOTTOM

I grant you, friends, if you should fright the ladies out of their wits,  
they would have no more discretion but to hang us.  
But I will aggravate my voice so that I will roar you as gently as any sucking dove;  
I will roar you and 'twere any nightingale.

QUINCE

You can play no part but Pyramus!  
For Pyramus is a sweet-faced man, a proper man as one shall see in a summer's day,  
a most lovely gentleman-like man. Therefore you must needs play Pyramus.

BOTTOM

Well, I will undertake it.  
What beard were I best to play it in?

QUINCE

Why, what you will.  
Masters, here are your parts;\* and I am to entreat you to learn them by tomorrow night;  
and meet me in the palace wood, a mile without the town, by moonlight.

*extempore* - improvise (make it up), *parts* - each actor is given only his character's lines and the cue lines

There will we rehearse; for if we meet in the city we will be dogged with company.  
In the meantime I will draw a list of props, such as our play needs.  
I pray you fail me not.

BOTTOM

We will meet, and there we may rehearse most obscenely\* and courageously.  
Take pains, be perfect. Adieu.

QUINCE

At the Duke's oak we meet.

*(Exeunt.)*

**Act 2, Scene 1 A wood near Athens***(PUCK and FAIRY.)*

PUCK

How now, spirit, whither wander you?

FAIRY

Over hill, over dale, thorough bush, thorough brier,  
 over park, over pale,\* thorough flood,\* thorough fire;  
 I do wander everywhere, swifter than the moon's sphere;  
 and I serve the Fairy Queen, to dew her orbs\* upon the green.  
 I must go seek some dewdrops here, and hang a pearl in every cowslip's ear.  
 Farewell, thou lob\* of spirits; I'll be gone. Our Queen and all our elves come here anon.\*

PUCK

The King doth keep his revels here tonight. Take heed the Queen come not within his sight.  
 For Oberon is passing fell and wrath,\* because that she as her attendant hath a lovely boy,  
 stolen from an Indian king. She never had so sweet a changeling.\*  
 And jealous Oberon would have the child knight of his train, to trace the forests wild.  
 But she perforce withholds the loved boy, crowns him with flowers and makes him all her joy.  
 And now they never meet in grove or green, by fountain clear, or spangled starlight sheen,  
 but they do square,\* that all their elves for fear, creep into acorn-cups and hide them there.

FAIRY

Either I mistake your shape and making quite, or else you are that shrewd and knavish sprite  
 called Robin Goodfellow.  
 Are not you he that frights the maidens of the villagery?  
 Those that Hobgoblin call you, and sweet Puck, you do their work, and they shall have good luck?  
 Are not you he?

PUCK

Thou speakest aright; I am that merry wanderer of the night.  
 I jest to Oberon and make him smile when I a fat and bean-fed horse beguile,  
 neighing in likeness of a filly foal.\*  
 And sometime lurk I in a gossip's bowl in very likeness of a roasted crab,  
 and when she drinks, against her lips I bob and on her withered dewlap pour the ale.  
 The wisest aunt, telling the saddest tale, sometime for three-foot stool mistaketh me;  
 then slip I from her bum, down topples she, and tailor cries, and falls into a cough;  
 and then the whole quire\* hold their hips and laugh, and neeze\* and swear  
 a merrier hour was never wasted there.  
 But room, fairy! Here comes Oberon.

FAIRY

And here my mistress. Would that he were gone.

*pale* - enclosed park, *flood* - water, *dew her orbs* - put dew on her flowers, *lob* - lout, *anon* - soon,  
*passing fell and wrath* - surpassingly fierce and wrathful, *changeling* - a child secretly left in place of another,  
*square* - quarrel, *beguile...foal* - Puck neighs like a female horse to entice a male horse, *quire* - company, *neeze* - sneeze

(Enter, from one side, OBERON, with his train; from the other, TITANIA, with her train.)

OBERON

Ill met by moonlight, proud Titania.

TITANIA

What, jealous Oberon? Fairies, skip hence. I have forsworn his bed and company.

OBERON

Tarry, rash wanton.\* Am not I thy lord?

TITANIA

Then I must be thy lady.

Why art thou here?

But that the bouncing Amazon, your warrior love, to Theseus must be wedded,  
and you come to give their bed joy and prosperity.

OBERON

How canst thou thus for shame, Titania, glance at my credit with Hippolyta,  
knowing I know thy love to Theseus?

TITANIA

These are the forgeries of jealousy;\*

and never, since the middle summer's spring, met we on hill, in dale, forest or mead,  
or in the beached margent of the sea, to dance our ringlets\* to the whistling wind,  
but with thy brawls thou hast disturbed our sport.

Therefore the winds, piping to us in vain, as in revenge, have sucked up from the sea contagious fogs;  
which falling in the land have every pelting river made so proud that they have overborne their continents.

The ox hath therefore stretched his yoke in vain, the ploughman lost his sweat,  
and the green corn hath rotted ere\* his youth attained a beard.

The moon, the governess of floods, pale in her anger,  
washes all the air, that rheumatic diseases do abound.

And thorough this distemperature\* we see the seasons alter:  
hoary-headed frosts fall in the fresh lap of the crimson rose.

The spring, the summer, the childing\* autumn, angry winter, change their wonted liveries,\*  
and the mazed\* world, knows not which is which.

And this same progeny\* of evils comes from our debate, from our dissension;  
we are their parents and original.

OBERON

Do you amend it then; it lies in you.

Why should Titania cross her Oberon?

I do but beg a little changeling boy to be my henchman.

*tarry, rash wanton* - wait, unrestrained woman, *forgeries of jealousy* - lies caused by jealousy,  
*ringlets* - dances in a ring, *ere* - before, *distemperature* - disorder in nature, *childing* - pregnant; fruitful,  
*wonted liveries* - accustomed garments, *mazed* - amazed, *progeny* - children

TITANIA

Set your heart at rest. The fairyland buys not the child of me.  
 His mother was a votaress\* of my order,  
 and in the spiced Indian air, by night, full often hath she gossiped by my side,  
 and sat with me on Neptune's yellow sands, marking the embarked traders on the flood.\*  
 When we have laughed to see the sails conceive and grow big-bellied with the wanton\* wind;  
 which she, with pretty and with swimming gait\* following (her womb then rich with my young squire)  
 would imitate, and sail upon the land to fetch me trifles, and return again,  
 as from a voyage, rich with merchandise.  
 But she, being mortal, of that boy did die,  
 and for her sake do I rear up her boy,  
 and for her sake I will not part with him.

OBERON

How long within this wood intend you stay?

TITANIA

Perhaps till after Theseus' wedding-day.  
 If you will patiently dance in our round and see our moonlight revels, go with us.  
 If not, shun me, and I will spare your haunts.

OBERON

Give me that boy, and I will go with thee.

TITANIA

Not for thy fairy kingdom. Fairies, away!  
 We shall chide downright\* if I longer stay.

*(Exeunt TITANIA with her train.)*

OBERON

Well, go thy way. Thou shalt not from this grove till I torment thee for this injury.  
 My gentle Puck, come hither.  
 Thou remember once I sat upon a promontory, and heard a mermaid singing on a dolphin's back?

PUCK

I remember.

OBERON

That very time I saw, but thou couldst not, flying between the cold moon and the earth Cupid, all armed.  
 A certain aim he took at a fair vestal,\* throned by the west,  
 and loosed his love-shaft smartly from his bow, as it should pierce a hundred thousand hearts.  
 But I might see young Cupid's fiery shaft quenched in the chaste beams of the watery moon,  
 and the imperial votaress passed on, in maiden meditation, fancy-free.  
 Yet marked I where the bolt of Cupid fell.

*votaress* - woman who had taken a vow to serve Titania, *traders on the flood* - trading ships sailing with the tide,  
*wanton* - undisciplined; unchaste, *gait* - walk, *chide downright* - have a really good fight,  
*fair vestal* - virgin priestess (an allusion to Queen Elizabeth I)

It fell upon a little western flower, before milk-white, now purple with love's wound,  
and maidens call it love-in-idleness.

Fetch me that flower; the herb I showed thee once.

The juice of it on sleeping eye-lids laid,  
will make man or woman madly dote upon the next live creature that it sees.  
Fetch me this herb.

PUCK

I'll put a girdle round about the earth in forty minutes.

*(Exit PUCK.)*

OBERON

Having once this juice, I'll watch Titania when she is asleep, and drop the liquor of it in her eyes.  
The next thing then she waking looks upon, be it on lion, bear, or wolf, or bull,  
on meddling monkey, or on busy ape, she shall pursue it with the soul of love.  
And ere\* I take this charm from off her sight, as I can take it with another herb,  
I'll make her render up her page to me.  
But who comes here? I am invisible and I will overhear their conference.

*(Enter DEMETRIUS with HELENA following him.)*

DEMETRIUS

I love thee not, therefore pursue me not.  
Where is Lysander and fair Hermia? The one I'll slay, the other slayeth me.  
You told me they were stolen unto this wood;  
and here am I, and wode\* within this wood because I cannot meet my Hermia.  
Hence, get thee gone, and follow me no more!

HELENA

You draw me, you hard-hearted adamant.\*  
But yet you draw not iron, for my heart is true as steel.  
Leave you your power to draw, and I shall have no power to follow you.

DEMETRIUS

Do I entice you? Do I speak you fair?  
Or rather do I not in plainest truth tell you I do not nor I cannot love you?

HELENA

And even for that do I love you the more.  
I am your spaniel;  
and Demetrius, the more you beat me, I will fawn on you.  
Use me but as your spaniel spurn me, strike me, neglect me, lose me;  
only give me leave, unworthy as I am, to follow you.  
What worse place can I beg in your love, and yet a place of high respect with me,  
than to be used as you use your dog?

*ere* - before, *wode* - mad, *adamant* - magnet

DEMETRIUS

Tempt not too much the hatred of my spirit, for I am sick when I do look on thee.

HELENA

And I am sick when I look not on you.

DEMETRIUS

You do impeach\* your modesty too much  
to leave the city and commit yourself into the hands of one that loves you not.  
To trust the opportunity of night with the rich worth of your virginity.

HELENA

Your virtue is my privilege.  
For that it is not night when I do see your face, therefore I think I am not in the night.  
Nor doth this wood lack worlds of company, for you, in my respect, are all the world.  
Then how can it be said I am alone when all the world is here to look on me?

DEMETRIUS

Let me go.  
Or if thou follow me, do not believe but I shall do thee mischief in the wood.

HELENA

Ay, in the temple, in the town, the field, you do me mischief.  
Fie, Demetrius! We cannot fight for love, as men may do; we should be wooed, and were not made to woo.

*(Exit DEMETRIUS.)*

I'll follow thee and make a heaven of hell, to die upon the hand I love so well.

*(Exit HELENA.)*

OBERON

Fare thee well, nymph.  
Ere he do leave this grove, thou shalt fly him, and he shall seek thy love.

*(Re-enter PUCK.)*

Welcome wanderer. Hast thou the flower there?

PUCK

Ay, here it is.

OBERON

I pray thee give it me.  
I know a bank where the wild thyme blows, where oxlips and the nodding violet grows,  
quite over-canopied with luscious woodbine, with sweet musk-roses, and with eglantine.

*impeach* - discredit

There sleeps Titania sometime of the night, lulled in these flowers with dances and delight;  
and there the snake throws her enamelled skin, weed\* wide enough to wrap a fairy in.  
And with the juice of this I'll streak her eyes and make her full of hateful fantasies.  
Take thou some of it and seek through this grove.  
A sweet Athenian lady is in love with a disdainful youth.  
Anoint his eyes; but do it when the next thing he espies may be the lady.  
Thou shalt know the man by the Athenian garments he hath on.  
Effect it with some care, that he may prove more fond on her than she upon her love.  
And look thou meet me ere the first cock crow.\*

PUCK

Fear not, my lord; your servant shall do so.

*(Exeunt.)*

*weed* - clothes,

*cock crow* - the fairies follow the night around the globe and must leave the forest before dawn,  
when the cock crows

**Act 2, Scene 2    Another part of the wood**

*(TITANIA and THE FAIRIES.)*

TITANIA

Come now, a fairy song. Sing me asleep, then to your offices and let me rest.

THE FAIRIES

*(Sing.)* You spotted snakes with double tongue,  
Thorny hedgehogs, be not seen;  
Newts and blind-worms, do no wrong,  
Come not near our Fairy Queen.  
Philomel,\* with melody  
Sing in our sweet lullaby;  
Lulla, lulla, lullaby, lulla, lulla, lullaby.

FAIRY

Hence, away!

Now all is well. One aloof stand sentinel.\*

*(Exeunt FAIRIES and TITANIA sleeps.)*

*(Enter OBERON and squeezes the juice of the flower on TITANIA'S eyelids.)*

OBERON

What thou seest when thou dost wake, do it for thy true-love take.  
Be it lynx or cat or bear, pard,\* or boar with bristled hair,  
in thy eye that shall appear when thou wakest, it is thy dear.  
Wake when some vile thing is near.

*(Exit OBERON.)*

*(Enter LYSANDER and HERMIA.)*

LYSANDER

Fair love, you faint with wandering in the wood; and to speak truth, I have forgot our way.  
We'll rest us, Hermia, if you think it good, and tarry\* for the comfort of the day.

HERMIA

Be it so, Lysander.

Find you out a bed, for I upon this bank will rest my head.

LYSANDER

One turf shall serve as pillow for us both, one heart, one bed, two bosoms and one troth.\*

HERMIA

Nay, good Lysander. For my sake, my dear, lie further off; yet do not lie so near.

*Philomel* - Plilomela, the nightingale, *sentinel* - guard, *pard* - leopard, *tarry* - wait, *troth* - true love

LYSANDER

O, take the sense, sweet, of my innocence.

I mean that my heart unto yours is knit, so that but one heart we can make of it;  
two bosoms interchained with an oath—so then two bosoms and a single troth.

Then by your side no bed-room me deny, for lying so, Hermia, I do not lie.

HERMIA

Lysander riddles very prettily.

Now much beshrew\* my manners and my pride if Hermia meant to say Lysander lied.

But, gentle friend, for love and courtesy lie further off, in human modesty.

Such separation as may well be said becomes a virtuous bachelor and a maid.

So far be distant.

And good night, sweet friend. Thy love never alter till thy sweet life end.

LYSANDER

Amen, amen, to that fair prayer say I.

Here is my bed. Sleep give thee all his rest.

HERMIA

With half that wish the wisher's eyes be pressed.

*(They sleep.)*

*(Enter PUCK.)*

PUCK

Through the forest have I gone, but Athenian found I none  
on whose eyes I might approve\* this flower's force in stirring love.

Night and silence.

Who is here?

Weeds of Athens he doth wear.

This is he (my master said) despised the Athenian maid;  
and here the maiden, sleeping sound on the dank and dirty ground.

Pretty soul. She durst not lie near this lack-love, this kill-courtesy.

Churl,\* upon thy eyes I throw all the power this charm doth owe. *(Squeezes flower on LYSANDER'S eyes.)*

So awake when I am gone, for I must now to Oberon.

*(Exit PUCK)*

*(Enter DEMETRIUS and HELENA.)*

HELENA

Stay, though thou kill me, sweet Demetrius.

DEMETRIUS

I charge thee, hence, and do not haunt me thus.

*beshrew* - curse, *approve* - test, *churl* - someone with no manners

HELENA

O, wilt thou darkling\* leave me? Do not so.

DEMETRIUS

Stay, on thy peril! I alone will go.

*(Exit DEMETRIUS.)*

HELENA

O, I am out of breath in this fond\* chase.

The more my prayer, the lesser is my grace.

Happy is Hermia, wheresoever she lies, for she hath blessed and attractive eyes.

How came her eyes so bright? Not with salt tears. If so, my eyes are oftener washed than hers.

No, no! I am as ugly as a bear! For beasts that meet me run away for fear.

But who is here?

Lysander, on the ground?

Dead? Or asleep?

I see no blood, no wound.

Lysander, if you live, good sir, awake.

LYSANDER

*(Awaking.)* And run through fire I will for thy sweet sake.

Transparent Helena!

Nature shows art, that through thy bosom makes me see thy heart.

Where is Demetrius?

O, how fit a word is that vile name to perish on my sword!

HELENA

Do not say so, Lysander, say not so.

Though he love your Hermia? Lord, what though?

Yet Hermia still loves you. Then be content.

LYSANDER

Content with Hermia? No! I do repent the tedious minutes I with her have spent.

Not Hermia, but Helena I love. Who will not change a raven for a dove?

HELENA

Wherefore was I to this keen mockery born? When at your hands did I deserve this scorn?

Is it not enough, is it not enough, young man, that I did never, no, nor never can

deserve a sweet look from Demetrius' eye, but you must flout my insufficiency?\*

I must confess I thought you lord of more true gentleness.

O, that a lady, of one man refused, should of another therefore be abused!

*(Exit HELENA.)*

LYSANDER

She sees not Hermia.

*darkling* - in the dark, *fond* - foolishly tender, *flout my insufficiency* - scorn my shortcomings

Hermia, sleep thou there, and never mayest thou come Lysander near.  
And, all my powers, address your love and might to honor Helen and to be her knight.

*(Exit LYSANDER.)*

HERMIA

*(Awaking.)* Help me, Lysander, help me!  
Do thy best to pluck this crawling serpent\* from my breast.  
What a dream was here! Lysander, look how I do quake with fear.  
Lysander? What, removed? Lysander? Lord?  
What out of hearing? Gone? No sound, no word?  
I swoon\* almost with fear.  
Either death or you I'll find immediately.

*(Exit HERMIA.)*

*serpent* - snake, *swoon* - faint

**Act 3, Scene 1 The woods - Titania lying asleep**

(Enter QUINCE, SNUG, BOTTOM, FLUTE, SNOUT and STARVELING.)

BOTTOM

Are we all met?

QUINCE

Pat, pat; and here's a marvellous convenient place for our rehearsal.  
This green plot shall be our stage, this hawthorn-brake\* our tiring-house,  
and we will do it in action as we will do it before the Duke.

BOTTOM

Peter Quince?

QUINCE

What sayest thou, bully Bottom?

BOTTOM

There are things in this comedy of Pyramus and Thisby that will never please.  
First, Pyramus must draw a sword to kill himself; which the ladies cannot abide.\*  
How answer you that?

SNOUT

A parlous\* fear.

STARVELING

I believe we must leave the killing out, when all is done.

BOTTOM

Not a whit. I have a device to make all well.  
Write me a prologue, and let the prologue seem to say, we will do no harm with our swords,  
and that Pyramus is not killed indeed.  
And, for their better assurance, tell them that I Pyramus am not Pyramus, but Bottom the weaver.  
This will put them out of fear.

QUINCE

Well, we will have such a prologue, and it shall be written in eight and six.

BOTTOM

No, make it two more; let it be written in eight and eight.\*

SNOUT

Will not the ladies be afeard of the lion?

*brake* - hedge or thicket, *abide* - endure, *parlous* - perilous, *eight and eight* - Quince wants to write Bottom a sonnet (eight and six lines) but Bottom thinks he is being cheated out of two lines

STARVELING

I fear it, I promise you.

BOTTOM

Masters, you ought to consider with yourselves,  
to bring in (God shield us) a lion among ladies is a most dreadful thing.  
For there is not a more fearful wild-fowl than your lion living; and we ought to look to it.

SNOUT

Therefore another prologue must tell he is not a lion.

BOTTOM

Nay, you must name his name, and half his face must be seen through the lion's neck,  
and he himself must speak through, saying thus, or to the same defect:\*  
'Ladies,' or 'Fair-ladies, I would wish you' or 'I would request you' or 'I would entreat you,  
not to fear, not to tremble. My life for yours!  
If you think I come hither as a lion, it were pity of my life.\*  
No! I am no such thing. I am a man as other men are.'  
And there, indeed, let him name his name and tell them plainly he is Snug the joiner.

QUINCE

Well it shall be so. But there is two hard things:  
that is, to bring the moonlight into a chamber; for you know, Pyramus and Thisby meet by moonlight.

SNOUT

Doth the moon shine that night we play our play?

BOTTOM

A calendar, a calendar! Look in the almanac. Find out moonshine, find out moonshine.

QUINCE

Yes, it doth shine that night.

BOTTOM

Why then, may you leave a casement of the great chamber window, where we play, open,  
and the moon may shine in at the casement.

QUINCE

Ay. Or else one must come in with a bush of thorns and a lanthorn,\* and say he comes to disfigure,  
or to present, the person of Moonshine.  
Then, there is another thing. We must have a wall in the great chamber;  
for Pyramus and Thisby, says the story, did talk through the chink of a wall.

SNOUT

You can never bring in a wall. What say you, Bottom?

*defect* - Bottom means effect, *it were pity of my life* - my life would be in danger,  
*bush...lanthorn* - the man in the moon traditionally had a bundle of firewood and a dog

BOTTOM

Some man or other must present Wall;  
and let him have some plaster, or some loam, or some rough-cast about him, to signify wall;  
and let him hold his fingers thus; and through that cranny shall Pyramus and Thisby whisper.

QUINCE

Then all is well.  
Come, sit down every mother's son, and rehearse your parts.  
Pyramus, you begin.  
When you have spoken your speech, go behind that bush; and so every one according to his cue.

*(Enter PUCK.)*

PUCK

What hempen home-spuns have we swaggering here, so near the cradle of the Fairy Queen?  
What, a play? I'll be an actor, if I see cause.

QUINCE

Speak, Pyramus. Thisby, stand forth.

BOTTOM

Thisby, the flowers of odious savors sweet,

QUINCE

Odourous, odourous.

BOTTOM

odours savors sweet. So hath thy breath, my dearest Thisby dear.  
But hark, a voice! Stay thou but here awhile, and by and by I will to thee appear.

PUCK

A stranger Pyramus than ever played here.

*(Exeunt BOTTOM followed by PUCK.)*

FLUTE

Must I speak now?

QUINCE

Ay, must you. For you must understand he goes but to see a noise that he heard, and is to come again.

FLUTE

Most radiant Pyramus, most lily-white of hue,  
of color like the red rose on triumphant brier,  
most brisky juvenal, and eke most lovely Jew,  
as true as truest horse, that yet would never tire,  
I'll meet thee, Pyramus, at Ninny's tomb.

QUINCE

'Ninus' tomb,' man. Why, you must not speak that yet; that you answer to Pyramus.  
You speak all your part at once, cues and all.  
Pyramus enter. Your cue is past; it is 'never tire.'

FLUTE

O. As true as truest horse, that yet would never tire.

*(Re-enter PUCK, and BOTTOM with an ass's head.)*

BOTTOM

If I were fair, Thisby, I were only thine.

QUINCE

O monstrous! O strange! We are haunted! Pray, masters! Fly, masters! Help!

*(Exeunt QUINCE, SNUG, FLUTE, SNOUT and STARVELING.)*

PUCK

I'll follow you, I'll lead you a round!

*(Exit PUCK.)*

BOTTOM

Why do they run away?  
This is a knavery of them to make me afeard.

*(Re-enter SNOUT.)*

SNOUT

O Bottom, thou art changed! What do I see on thee?

BOTTOM

What do you see? You see an asshead of your own, do you?

*(Exit SNOUT.)*

*(Re-enter QUINCE.)*

QUINCE

Bless thee, Bottom! Bless thee! Thou art translated.\* *(Exit QUINCE.)*

BOTTOM

I see their knavery. This is to make an ass of me, to fright me, if they could.  
But I will not stir from this place, do what they can.  
I will walk up and down here, and I will sing, that they shall hear I am not afraid.

*translated* - transformed

(Sings.) The ousel\* cock so black of hue,  
 With orange-tawny bill,  
 The throstle\* with his note so true,  
 The wren with little quill\*

TITANIA

(Awaking.) What angel wakes me from my flowery bed?

BOTTOM

(Sings.) The finch, the sparrow and the lark,  
 The plain-song cuckoo gray,  
 Whose note full many a man doth mark,\*  
 And dares not answer nay.

TITANIA

I pray thee, gentle mortal, sing again.  
 Mine ear is much enamored of thy note; so is mine eye enthralled to thy shape;  
 and thy fair virtue's force\* doth move me, on the first view, to say, to swear, I love thee.

BOTTOM

Methinks, mistress, you should have little reason for that.  
 And yet, to say the truth, reason and love keep little company together now-a-days.  
 The more the pity that some honest neighbors will not make them friends.

TITANIA

Thou art as wise as thou art beautiful.

BOTTOM

Not so, neither.  
 But if I had wit enough to get out of this wood, I'd have enough to serve my own turn.

TITANIA

Out of this wood do not desire to go. Thou shalt remain here, whether thou wilt or no.  
 I am a spirit of no common rate, the summer still\* doth tend upon my state; and I do love thee.  
 Therefore, go with me.  
 I'll give thee fairies to attend on thee,  
 and they shall fetch thee jewels from the deep, and sing while thou on pressed flowers dost sleep;  
 and I will purge thy mortal grossness so, that thou shalt like an airy spirit go.  
 Peaseblossom, Cobweb, Moth, and Mustardseed!

(Enter PEASEBLOSSOM, COBWEB, MOTH and MUSTARDSEED.)

PEASEBLOSSOM

Ready.

*ousel* - English blackbird, *throstle* - song-thrush, *quill* - pipe made of a reed or stalk,  
*whose...mark* - in singing cuckoo, the bird appears to be calling the man a cuckold,  
*virtue's force* - manly charms, *still* - always

COBWEB

And I.

MOTH

And I.

MUSTARDSEED

And I.

ALL

Where shall we go?

TITANIA

Be kind and courteous to this gentleman.

Hop in his walks and gambol\* in his eyes;

feed him with apricocks and dewberries, with purple grapes, green figs, and mulberries.

The honey-bags steal from the humble-bees,

and pluck the wings from painted butterflies to fan the moonbeams from his sleeping eyes.

Nod to him, elves, and do him courtesies.

PEASEBLOSSOM

Hail, mortal!

COBWEB

Hail!

MOTH

Hail!

MUSTARDSEED

Hail!

BOTTOM

I cry your worships mercy, heartily. I beseech your worship's name.

COBWEB

Cobweb.

BOTTOM

I shall desire you of more acquaintance, good Master Cobweb.

If I cut my finger, I shall make bold with you.

Your name, honest gentleman?

PEASEBLOSSOM

Peaseblossom.

***gambol*** - to jump and skip; to frolic

BOTTOM

I pray you, commend me to Mistress Squash, your mother, and to Master Peascod,\* your father.  
Your name, I beseech you, sir?

MUSTARDSEED

Mustardseed.

BOTTOM

Good Master Mustardseed, I know your patience well.  
That same cowardly, giant-like ox-beef hath devoured many a gentleman of your house.  
I promise you your kindred had made my eyes water ere now.  
I desire you of more acquaintance, good Master Mustardseed.

TITANIA

Tie up my love's tongue.  
Bring him silently.  
Lead him to my bower.

*(EXEUNT.)*

*Peascod* - a ripe pea pod

## Act 3, Scene 2 Another part of the wood

(*OBERON.*)

OBERON

I wonder if Titania be awaked.

Then, what it was that next came in her eye, she must dote on in extremity.

(*Enter PUCK.*)

How now, mad spirit?

What night-rule about this haunted grove?

PUCK

My mistress with a monster is in love.

Near to her close\* and consecrated bower, while she was in her dull\* and sleeping hour,  
a crew of patches,\* rude mechanicals, that work for bread upon Athenian stalls,

were met together to rehearse a play, intended for great Theseus' wedding-day.

The shallowest thick-skin of that barren sort, who Pyramus presented in their sport,  
left the scene and went behind a bush.

An ass's noll I then fixed on his head.

Anon his Thisbe must be answered, and forth my mimic comes.

When they him spy, away his fellows did fly!

Here, over and over one falls.

Another 'murder!' cries and 'help!' from Athens calls.

I led them on in this distracted fear, and left sweet Pyramus translated\* there.

When in that moment, so it came to pass, Titania waked, and straightway loved an ass.

OBERON

This falls out better than I could devise.

But hast thou yet latched\* the Athenian's eyes with the love-juice, as I did bid thee do?

PUCK

I took him sleeping.

(*Enter HERMIA and DEMETRIUS.*)

OBERON

Stand close. This is the same Athenian.

PUCK

This is the woman, but not this the man.

DEMETRIUS

O, why rebuke you him that loves you so?

Lay breath so bitter on your bitter foe.

*close* - secret, *dull* - drowsy, *patches* - clowns, *translated* - transformed, *latched* - moistened

HERMIA

If thou hast slain Lysander in his sleep, kill me too.  
Would he have stolen away from sleeping Hermia?  
It cannot be but thou hast murdered him. So should a murderer look, so dead, so grim.

DEMETRIUS

So should the murdered look, and so should I, pierced through the heart with your stern cruelty.  
Yet you, the murderer, look as bright, as clear, as yonder Venus in her glimmering sphere.

HERMIA

What's this to my Lysander? Where is he?  
Ah, good Demetrius, wilt thou give him me?

DEMETRIUS

I had rather give his carcass to my hounds.

HERMIA

Out, dog! Out, cur! Thou drivest me past the bounds of maiden's patience.  
Hast thou slain him, then? Henceforth be never numbered among men!

DEMETRIUS

I am not guilty of Lysander's blood, nor is he dead, for aught that I can tell.

HERMIA

I pray thee, tell me then that he is well.

DEMETRIUS

And if I could, what should I get therefore?

HERMIA

A privilege never to see me more.

*(Exit HERMIA.)*

DEMETRIUS

There is no following her in this fierce vein.  
Here therefore for a while I will remain.

*(DEMETRIUS lies down and sleeps.)*

OBERON

What hast thou done?  
Thou hast mistaken quite and laid the love-juice on some true-love's sight.  
About the wood, go swifter than the wind, and Helena of Athens look thou find.  
All fancy-sick she is, and pale of cheer.  
By some illusion see thou bring her here. I'll charm his eyes before she does appear.

PUCK

I go, I go; look how I go, swifter than arrow from the Tartar's bow.

*(Exit PUCK.)*

OBERON

Flower of this purple dye, hit with Cupid's archery, sink in apple of his eye.  
When his love he doth espy, let her shine as gloriously as the Venus of the sky.  
When thou wakest, if she be by, beg of her for remedy.

*(Re-enter PUCK.)*

PUCK

Captain of our fairy band, Helena is here at hand,  
and the youth, mistook by me, pleading for a lover's fee.\*  
Shall we their fond pageant\* see?  
Lord, what fools these mortals be!

OBERON

Stand aside. The noise they make will cause Demetrius to awake.

PUCK

Then will two at once woo one.

*(Enter LYSANDER and HELENA.)*

LYSANDER

Why should you think that I should woo in scorn? Scorn and derision never come in tears.  
Look, when I vow, I weep.

HELENA

You do advance your cunning more and more.  
These vows are Hermia's.

LYSANDER

I had no judgment when to her I swore.

HELENA

Nor none, in my mind, now you give her o'er.\*

LYSANDER

Demetrius loves her; and he loves not you.

DEMETRIUS

*(Awaking.)* O Helena, goddess, nymph, perfect, divine!  
To what, my love, shall I compare thine eyne?  
Crystal is muddy!  
O, how ripe in show thy lips, those kissing cherries, tempting grow.  
O, let me kiss this princess of pure white, this seal of bliss.

*lover's fee* - kisses, *fond pageant* - foolishness, *o'er* - over

HELENA

O spite! O hell! I see you all are bent to set against me for your merriment.  
Can you not hate me, as I know you do, but you must join in souls to mock me too?  
You both are rivals, and love Hermia; and now both rivals, to mock Helena.

LYSANDER

You are unkind, Demetrius. Be not so! For you love Hermia. This you know I know.

DEMETRIUS

Lysander, keep thy Hermia; I will none. If ever I loved her, all that love is gone.

LYSANDER

Helen, it is not so.

DEMETRIUS

Look where thy love comes. Yonder is thy dear.

*(Re-enter HERMIA.)*

HERMIA

Thou art not by mine eye, Lysander, found; mine ear, I thank it, brought me to thy sound.  
But why unkindly didst thou leave me so?

LYSANDER

Why should he stay, whom love doth press to go?

HERMIA

What love could press Lysander from my side?

LYSANDER

Fair Helena, who more engilds\* the night than all the fiery eyes of light.\*  
Why seekest thou me?  
Could not this make thee know, the hate I bear thee made me leave thee so?

HERMIA

You speak not as you think. It cannot be.

HELENA

Lo, she is one of this confederacy!\*

Hermia, will you tear our ancient love asunder,\* to join with men in scorning your poor friend?  
It is not friendly, 'tis not maidenly.  
Our sex, as well as I, may chide you for it, though I alone do feel the injury.

HERMIA

I am amazed at your words. I scorn you not. It seems that you scorn me.

*engilds* - brighten with golden light, *eyes of light* - stars, *confederacy* - conspiracy, *asunder* - apart

HELENA

Have you not set Lysander, as in scorn, to follow me and praise my eyes and face?  
And made your other love, Demetrius (who even but now did spurn me with his foot),  
to call me goddess, nymph, divine, rare, precious, celestial?  
Wherefore speaks he this to her he hates, but by your setting on, by your consent?

HERMIA

I understand not what you mean.

HELENA

Ay do, make mouths upon me when I turn my back;\* wink at each other; hold the sweet jest up.

DEMETRIUS

I say I love thee more than he can do.

LYSANDER

If thou say so, withdraw, and prove it.

DEMETRIUS

Quick, come.

HERMIA

(*Grabbing LYSANDER.*) Lysander, whereto tends all this?

LYSANDER

Hang off, thou cat, thou burr! Vile thing, let loose, or I will shake thee from me like a serpent.

HERMIA

Why are you grown so rude? What change is this, sweet love?

LYSANDER

Thy love? Out, tawny Tartar,\* out! Out, loathed medicine!\* Hated potion,\* hence!

HERMIA

Do you not jest?

LYSANDER

Demetrius, I will keep my word with thee.

DEMETRIUS

I would I had your bond, for I perceive a weak bond holds you. I'll not trust your word.

LYSANDER

What, should I hurt her, strike her, kill her dead?  
Although I hate her, I'll not harm her so.

**mouths...back** - talk behind my back, **tawny Tartar** - Hermia's dark complexion, **medicine, potion** - poison

HERMIA

What, can you do me greater harm than hate?  
Hate me? Wherefore?

LYSANDER

Ay, by my life! 'Tis no jest that I do hate thee and love Helena.

HERMIA

O me! You thief of love! Have you come by night and stolen my love's heart from him?

HELENA

Have you no modesty, no maiden shame, no touch of bashfulness?  
Fie, fie. You counterfeit,\* you puppet,\* you!

HERMIA

Puppet? Why, so! That way goes the game.  
And are you grown so high in his esteem because I am so dwarfish and so low?  
How low am I, thou painted maypole? Speak! How low am I?  
I am not yet so low but that my nails can reach unto thine eyes.

HELENA

I pray you, though you mock me, gentlemen, let her not hurt me.  
I was never curst; I have no gift at all in shrewishness. I am a right maid for my cowardice.  
Let her not strike me.  
You perhaps may think, because she is something lower than myself, that I can match her.

HERMIA

Lower? Hark, again!

LYSANDER

Be not afraid; she shall not harm thee, Helena.

DEMETRIUS

No, sir, she shall not, though you take her part.

HELENA

O, when she's angry, she is keen and shrewd.\*  
She was a vixen when she went to school; and though she be but little, she is fierce.

HERMIA

'Little' again? Nothing but 'low' and 'little.'  
Why will you suffer her to flout\* me thus? Let me come to her.

LYSANDER

Get you gone, you dwarf! You minimus,\* you bead, you acorn!  
Now she holds me not.  
Now follow, if thou darest, to try whose right, of thine or mine, is most in Helena.

*counterfeit* - sham (not a real maiden), *puppet* - something small, *shrewd* - shrewish, *flout* - mock, *minimus* - smallest thing

DEMETRIUS

Follow? Nay, I'll go with thee, cheek by jowl.

*(Exeunt LYSANDER and DEMETRIUS.)*

HERMIA

You, mistress. Nay, go not back.

HELENA

I will not trust you, I, nor longer stay in your curst company.

Your hands than mine are quicker for a fray; my legs are longer though, to run away.

*(Exit HELENA.)*

HERMIA

I am amazed, and know not what to say.

*(Exit HERMIA.)*

OBERON

This is thy negligence.

PUCK

Believe me, king of shadows, I mistook.

Did not you tell me I should know the man by the Athenian garment he had on?

OBERON

Thou see'st these lovers seek a place to fight.

Hie therefore, Robin, overcast the night;

and lead these testy rivals so astray as one come not within another's way.

Then, when he is asleep crush this herb into Lysander's eye,

whose liquor hath this virtuous property, to take all error from his sight.

When they next wake, all this derision shall seem a dream and fruitless vision.

Whiles I in this affair do thee employ, I'll to my Queen and beg her Indian boy;

and then I will her charmed eye release from monster's view, and all things shall be peace.

Make haste; have no delay. We may effect this business before day.

*(Exit OBERON.)*

PUCK

Up and down, up and down, I will lead them up and down.

I am feared in field and town. Goblin, lead them up and down.

Here comes one.

*(Re-enter LYSANDER.)*

LYSANDER

Where art thou, proud Demetrius? Speak thou now.

PUCK

Here, villain, drawn and ready. Where art thou?

LYSANDER

I will be with thee straight.

PUCK

Follow me then to plainer ground.

*(Exit LYSANDER.)*

*(Re-enter DEMETRIUS.)*

DEMETRIUS

Lysander, speak again! Thou runaway, thou coward, art thou fled?  
Speak! In some bush? Where dost thou hide thy head?

PUCK

Thou coward, art thou bragging?  
Come, thou child.

DEMETRIUS

Yea, art thou there?

PUCK

Follow my voice. We'll try no manhood here.

*(Exit PUCK AND DEMETRIUS.)*

*(Re-enter LYSANDER.)*

LYSANDER

He goes before me and still dares me on; when I come where he calls, then he is gone.  
The villain is much lighter-heeled than I. I followed fast, but faster he did fly.  
Here will rest me.

*(LYSANDER lies down.)*

Come, thou gentle day.  
For if but once thou show me thy grey light,  
I'll find Demetrius and revenge this spite.

*(LYSANDER sleeps.)*

*(Re-enter PUCK and DEMETRIUS.)*

PUCK

Ho, ho, ho! Coward, why comest thou not?

DEMETRIUS

Thou runnest before me, shifting every place, and darest not stand, nor look me in the face.  
Where art thou now?

PUCK

Come hither. I am here.

DEMETRIUS

Nay then, thou mockest me. Go thy way.  
Faintness constraineth\* me to measure out my length on this cold bed.  
By day's approach look to be visited.

*(DEMETRIUS lies down and sleeps.)*

*(Re-enter HELENA.)*

HELENA

O weary night, O long and tedious night, abate\* thy hours.  
Shine comforts from the east, that I may back to Athens by daylight.  
And sleep, that sometimes shuts up sorrow's eye, steal me awhile from mine own company.

*(HELENA lies down and sleeps.)*

PUCK

Yet but three? Come one more. Two of both kinds make up four.  
Here she comes, curst\* and sad. Cupid is a knavish lad thus to make poor females mad.

*(Re-enter HERMIA.)*

HERMIA

Never so weary, never so in woe. I can no further crawl, no further go.  
Here will I rest me till the break of day.  
Heavens shield Lysander, if they mean a fray!\*

*(HERMIA lies down and sleeps.)*

PUCK

On the ground, sleep sound.  
I'll apply to your eye, gentle lover, remedy.

*(Squeezing the antidote on LYSANDER'S eyes.)*

When thou wakest, thou takest true delight in the sight of thy former lady's eye.  
Jack shall have Jill, nought shall go ill,  
the man shall have his mare again, and all shall be well.\* *(Exit PUCK.)*

*constraineth* - forces, *abate* - lessen, *curst* - cross, *fray* - fight,  
*the man shall have his mare again, and all shall be well* - an Elizabethan proverb

## Act 4, Scene 1    The same - Lysander, Demetrius, Helena and Hermia lying asleep

(Enter TITANIA, BOTTOM, PEASEBLOSSOM, COBWEB, MOTH, MUSTARDSEED,  
with OBERON behind them.)

TITANIA

Come, sit thee down upon this flowery bed, while I thy amiable\* cheeks do coy,\*  
and stick musk-roses in thy sleek smooth head, and kiss thy fair large ears, my gentle joy.

BOTTOM

Where's Peaseblossom?

PEASEBLOSSOM

Ready.

BOTTOM

Scratch my head, Peaseblossom. Where's Monsieur Cobweb?

COBWEB

Ready.

BOTTOM

Monsieur Cobweb, good monsieur, get you your weapons in your hand,  
and kill me a red-hipped humble-bee on the top of a thistle; and, good monsieur, bring me the honey-bag.  
And have a care the honey-bag break not. I would be loath to have you overflown with a honey-bag.  
Where's Monsieur Mustardseed?

MUSTARDSEED

Ready.

BOTTOM

Give me your neaf,\* Monsieur Mustardseed. Pray you leave your courtesy,\* good monsieur.

MUSTARDSEED

What's your will?

BOTTOM

Nothing, good monsieur, but to help Cavalery Cobweb\* to scratch.  
I must to the barber's, monsieur; for methinks I am marvelous hairy about the face,  
and I am such a tender ass, if my hair do but tickle me, I must scratch.

TITANIA

Wilt thou hear some music, my sweet love?

*amiable* - lovable, *coy* - caress, *neaf* - fist, *courtesy* - bow (perhaps fearful of his task),  
*Cavalery Cobweb* - Cobweb obviously hasn't left to get Bottom a honey-bag. Perhaps Cobweb is not immortal and  
the honey-bag is a very dangerous mission.

BOTTOM

I have a reasonable good ear in music. Let's have the tongs and the bones.

TITANIA

Or say, sweet love, what thou desirest to eat.

BOTTOM

I could munch your good dry oats.

Methinks I have a great desire to a bottle\* of hay. Good hay, sweet hay, hath no fellow.

TITANIA

I have a venturous fairy that shall seek the squirrel's hoard, and fetch thee new nuts.

BOTTOM

I had rather have a handful or two of dried peas.

But, I pray you, let none of your people stir me. I have an exposition\* of sleep come upon me.

TITANIA

Sleep thou, and I will wind thee in my arms.

Fairies, begone, and be all ways away.

*(Exeunt FAIRIES.)*

O, how I love thee! How I dote on thee!

*(TITANIA and BOTTOM sleep.)*

*(Enter PUCK.)*

OBERON

Welcome, good Robin. See'st thou this sweet sight?

Her dotage now I do begin to pity;

for, meeting her of late behind the wood, seeking sweet favors\* for this hateful fool,

I did upbraid her and fall out with her.

When I had at my pleasure taunted her, and she in mild terms begged my patience,

I then did ask of her her changeling child; which straight she gave me.

And now I have the boy, I will undo this hateful imperfection of her eyes.

And, gentle Puck, take this transformed scalp\* from off the head of this Athenian swain;

that, he awaking when the other do, may all to Athens back again repair

and think no more of this night's accidents but as the fierce vexation of a dream.

But first I will release the Fairy Queen.

Be as thou wast wont to be; see as thou wast wont to see.

Now, my Titania, wake you, my sweet Queen.

TITANIA

My Oberon! What visions have I seen!

Methought I was enamored of an ass.

*bottle* - bundle, *exposition* - Bottom means disposition, *favors* - probably flowers, *transformed scalp* - the ass head

OBERON

There lies your love.

TITANIA

How came these things to pass?

O, how mine eyes do loathe his visage\* now!

OBERON

Silence awhile. Robin, take off this head.

PUCK

Now, when thou wakest, with thine own fool's eyes peep.

OBERON

Sound, music.

Come, my Queen, take hands with me. And rock the ground whereon these sleepers be.

PUCK

Fairy King, attend, and mark:

I do hear the morning lark.

OBERON

Then, my Queen, in silence sad trip we after night's shade.

TITANIA

Come, my lord, and in our flight tell me how it came this night  
that I sleeping here was found with these mortals on the ground.

*(Exeunt PUCK, TITANIA, OBERON and fairies.)*

*(Horns sounded.)*

*(Enter THESEUS, HIPPOLYTA, EGEUS and attendants.)*

THESEUS

Go, one of you, find out the forester.

Uncouple\* in the western valley; let them go.

*(Exit an attendant.)*

My love shall hear the music of my hounds.

HIPPOLYTA

I was with Hercules and Cadmus once,  
when in a wood of Crete they bayed\* the bear with hounds of Sparta.  
Never did I hear so musical a discord, such sweet thunder.

*visage* - looks, *uncouple* - free the dogs so they can hunt, *bayed* - hunted

THESEUS

My hounds are bred out of the Spartan kind,  
and their heads are hung with ears that sweep away the morning dew.  
But, soft! What nymphs are these?

EGEUS

My lord, this is my daughter here asleep; and this, Lysander; this Demetrius is; this Helena, old Nedar's Helena.  
I wonder of their being here together.

THESEUS

No doubt they rose up early to observe the rite of May; and hearing our intent, came here to grace our solemnity.\*  
But speak, Egeus. Is not this the day that Hermia should give answer of her choice?

EGEUS

It is, my lord.

THESEUS

Bid the huntsmen wake them with their horns.

*(Horns. LYSANDER, DEMETRIUS, HELENA and HERMIA wake.)*

Good morrow, friends. Saint Valentine is past.\*

LYSANDER

Pardon, my lord.

THESEUS

I pray you all, stand up.  
I know you two are rival enemies.  
How comes this gentle concord in the world  
that hatred is so far from jealousy to sleep by hate and fear no enmity?\*

LYSANDER

My lord, I shall reply amazedly, half sleep, half waking;  
but as yet, I swear, I cannot truly say how I came here.  
But, as I think, (for truly would I speak), and now do I bethink me, so it is, I came with Hermia hither.  
Our intent was to be gone from Athens, where we might, without the peril of the Athenian law—

EGEUS

Enough, enough, my lord. You have enough. I beg the law, the law, upon his head.  
They would have stolen away; they would, Demetrius, thereby to have defeated you and me.

DEMETRIUS

My lord, fair Helen told me of this their purpose hither to this wood,  
and I in fury hither followed them, fair Helena in fancy following me.  
But, my good lord, I know not by what power (but by some power it is) my love to Hermia, melted as the snow.

*solemnity* - observance of May Day, *St. Valentine's day is past* - an old saying says, "Birds begin to mate on St Valentine's day.", *enmity* - hostility

Now all the faith, the virtue of my heart, the object and the pleasure of mine eye, is only Helena.  
 To her, my lord, was I betrothed ere I saw Hermia,  
 but, like in sickness, did I loathe this food;  
 but, as in health, come to my natural taste,  
 now I do wish it, love it, long for it, and will for evermore be true to it.

THESEUS

Fair lovers, you are fortunately met.  
 Egeus, I will overbear your will; for in the temple by and by with us, these couples shall eternally be knit.  
 And, for the morning now is something worn, our purposed hunting shall be set aside.  
 Away with us to Athens! Three and three, we'll hold a feast in great solemnity.  
 Come, Hippolyta.

*(Exeunt THESEUS, HIPPOLYTA, EGEUS and train.)*

DEMETRIUS

These things seem small and undistinguishable.

HERMIA

Methinks I see these things with parted eye, when every thing seems double.

HELENA

And I have found Demetrius like a jewel, mine own, and not mine own.

DEMETRIUS

Are you sure that we are awake? It seems to me that yet we sleep, we dream.  
 Do not you think the Duke was here, and bid us follow him?

HERMIA

Yea, and my father.

HELENA

And Hippolyta.

LYSANDER

And he did bid us follow to the temple.

DEMETRIUS

Why then, we are awake. Let's follow him, and by the way let us recount our dreams.

*(Exeunt.)*

BOTTOM

*(Awaking.)* When my cue\* comes, call me, and I will answer. My next is, 'Most fair Pyramus.'  
 Heigh-ho!\*

*cue* - the line before Bottom's next line in the play, **Heigh-ho** - perhaps a yawn

Peter Quince? Flute, the bellows-mender? Snout, the tinker? Starveling?  
God's my life! Stolen hence, and left me asleep.  
I have had a most rare vision. I have had a dream, past the wit of man to say what dream it was.  
Man is but an ass, if he go about to expound this dream.  
Methought I was—there is no man can tell what.  
Methought I was—and methought I had—  
but man is but a patched fool,\* if he will offer to say what methought I had.  
The eye of man hath not heard, the ear of man hath not seen, man's hand is not able to taste,  
his tongue to conceive, nor his heart to report, what my dream was.\*  
I will get Peter Quince to write a ballad of this dream.  
It shall be called Bottom's Dream, because it hath no bottom.  
And I will sing it in the latter end of our play, before the Duke.  
Peradventure, to make it the more gracious, I shall sing it at her death.\*

*(Exit BOTTOM.)*

*patched fool* - a fool in a motley or many-colored suit,  
*the eye...what my dream was* - Bottom's senses appear to be all mixed up, *her death* - probably Thisby's

## Act 4, Scene 2 Athens - Quince's house

(*QUINCE, FLUTE, SNOUT and STARVELING.*)

QUINCE

Have you sent to Bottom's house? Is he come home yet?

STARVELING

He cannot be heard of. Out of doubt he is transported.\*

FLUTE

If he come not, then the play is marred;\* it goes not forward, doth it?

QUINCE

It is not possible. You have not a man in all Athens able to discharge Pyramus but he.

FLUTE

No, he hath simply the best wit of any handicraft man in Athens.

(*Enter SNUG.*)

SNUG

Masters, the Duke is coming from the temple, and there is two or three lords and ladies more married. If our sport had gone forward, we had all been made men.

FLUTE

O sweet bully Bottom!

If the Duke had not given him sixpence a day for playing Pyramus, I'll be hanged. He would have deserved it. Sixpence a day for Pyramus, or nothing.

(*Enter BOTTOM.*)

BOTTOM

Where are these lads? Where are these hearts?

QUINCE

Bottom! O most courageous day! O most happy hour!

BOTTOM

Masters, I am to discourse\* wonders!  
But ask me not what; for if I tell you, I am no true Athenian.  
I will tell you everything, right as it fell out.

QUINCE

Let us hear, sweet Bottom.

*transported* - carried away by spirits, *marred* - ruined, *discourse* - tell you of

## BOTTOM

Not a word of me.\*

All that I will tell you is, that the Duke hath dined.

Get your apparel together, good strings to your beards, new ribbons to your pumps,\*  
and meet presently at the palace.

Let Thisby have clean linen; and let not him that plays the lion pare his nails,  
for they shall hang out for the lion's claws.

And, most dear actors, eat no onions nor garlic, for we are to utter sweet breath;  
and I do not doubt but to hear them say it is a sweet comedy.

No more words. Away! Go, away!

*(Exeunt.)*

## Act 5, Scene 1 Athens - the palace of Theseus

(THESEUS, HIPPOLYTA, PHILOSTRATE, lords and attendants.)

HIPPOLYTA

'Tis strange my Theseus, what these lovers speak of.

THESEUS

More strange than true.

Lovers and madmen have such seething brains, such shaping fantasies,  
that apprehend more than cool reason ever comprehends.

HIPPOLYTA

But all the story of the night told over, and all their minds transfigured so together,  
grows to something of great constancy;\* howsoever strange.

THESEUS

Here come the lovers, full of joy and mirth.

(Enter LYSANDER, DEMETRIUS, HERMIA and HELENA.)

Joy, gentle friends! Joy and fresh days of love accompany your hearts.

LYSANDER

More than to us wait in your royal walks, your board,\* your bed.

THESEUS

Where is our usual manager of mirth? What revels are in hand?  
Is there no play, to ease the anguish of a torturing hour before bedtime?  
Call Philostrate.

PHILOSTRATE

Here, mighty Theseus.

THESEUS

Say, what abridgement\* have you for this evening? What masque?\* What music?  
How shall we beguile the lazy time, if not with some delight?

PHILOSTRATE

(Giving a paper.) There is a list how many sports are ripe.  
Make choice of which your highness will see first.

THESEUS

(Reads.) 'The battle with the Centaurs,\* to be sung by an Athenian eunuch to the harp.'  
We'll none of that.

*constancy* - unity, *board* - table for meals, *abridgement* - activity to shorten the time before bed,  
*masque* - short, lavish entertainment,  
*Centaur* - mythological monster with body and legs of a horse and the head and arms of a man

'The riot of the tipsy Bacchanals\* tearing the Thracian singer in their rage.'  
 That is an old device.  
 'A tedious brief scene of young Pyramus and his love Thisby; very tragical mirth.'  
 Merry and tragical? Tedious and brief? That is hot ice and wondrous strange snow.  
 How shall we find the concord of this discord?

PHILOSTRATE

A play there is, my lord, some ten words long, which is as brief as I have known a play;  
 but by ten words, my lord, it is too long, which makes it tedious.  
 For in all the play there is not one word apt, one player fitted.  
 And tragical, my noble lord, it is, for Pyramus therein doth kill himself.  
 Which when I saw rehearsed, I must confess, made mine eyes water;  
 but more merry tears the passion of loud laughter never shed.

THESEUS

What are they that do play it?

PHILOSTRATE

Hard-handed men that work in Athens here, which never labored in their minds till now.

THESEUS

We will hear it.

PHILOSTRATE

No, my noble lord, it is not for you. I have heard it over, and it is nothing, nothing in the world;  
 unless you can find sport in their intents, extremely stretched and learned with cruel pain to do you service.

THESEUS

I will hear that play. For never anything can be amiss, when simpleness and duty tender\* it.  
 Go, bring them in; and take your places, ladies.

*(Exit PHILOSTRATE.)*

HIPPOLYTA

I love not to see wretchedness overcharged and duty in his service perishing.

THESEUS

Why, gentle sweet, you shall see no such thing.

*(Re-enter PHILOSTRATE.)*

PHILOSTRATE

So please your grace, the Prologue is addressed

THESEUS

Let him approach.

*Bacchanals* - drunken carousers, *tender* - has responsibility for

*(Enter QUINCE for the Prologue.)*

Prologue

If we offend, it is with our good will.  
 That you should think, we come not to offend, but with good will.  
 To show our simple skill, that is the true beginning of our end.  
 Consider then we come but in despite.  
 We do not come as minding to content you, our true intent is.  
 All for your delight we are not here.  
 That you should here repent you,  
 the actors are at hand and by their show you shall know all that you are like to know.

THESEUS

This fellow doth not stand upon points.

HIPPOLYTA

Indeed he hath played on his prologue like a child on a recorder a sound, but not in government.\*

THESEUS

Who is next?

*(Enter Pyramus, Thisby, Wall, Moonshine, and Lion.)*

Prologue

Gentles, perchance you wonder at this show; but wonder on, till truth make all things plain.  
 This man is Pyramus, if you would know; this beauteous lady Thisby is certain.  
 This man, with lime and rough-cast, doth present Wall, that vile wall which did these lovers sunder;\*  
 and through Wall's chink, poor souls, they are content to whisper. At the which let no man wonder.  
 This man, with lanthorn, dog, and bush of thorn, presenteth Moonshine. For, if you will know,  
 by moonshine did these lovers think no scorn to meet at Ninus' tomb, there, there to woo.  
 This grisly beast (which Lion hight\* by name)  
 the trusty Thisby, coming first by night, did scare away, or rather did affright;  
 and as she fled, her mantle\* she did fall, which Lion vile with bloody mouth did stain.  
 Anon comes Pyramus, sweet youth and tall, and finds his trusty Thisby's mantle slain;  
 whereat, with blade, with bloody blameful blade, he bravely broached his boiling bloody breast!  
 And Thisby, tarrying in mulberry shade, his dagger drew, and died.  
 For all the rest, let Lion, Moonshine, Wall, and lovers twain at large discourse, while here they do remain.

*(Exeunt Prologue, Pyramus, Thisby, Lion and Moonshine.)*

THESEUS

I wonder if the lion be to speak?

DEMETRIUS

No wonder, my lord. One lion may, when many asses do.

*in government* - controlled with skill, *sunder* - keep apart, *hight* - is called, *mantle* - shawl

Wall

In this same interlude it doth befall that I, one Snout by name, present a wall;  
and such a wall, as I would have you think, that had in it a crannied hole or chink,  
through which the lovers, Pyramus and Thisby, did whisper often, very secretly.  
This loam, this rough-cast and this stone doth show that I am that same wall; the truth is so.  
And this the cranny is, right and sinister, through which the fearful lovers are to whisper.

THESEUS

Would you desire lime and hair to speak better?

DEMETRIUS

It is the wittiest partition that ever I heard discourse, my lord.

*(Enter Pyramus.)*

THESEUS

Pyramus draws near the wall. Silence!

Pyramus

O grim-look'd night! O night with hue so black! O night, which ever art when day is not.  
O night, O night, alack, alack, alack.  
I fear my Thisby's promise is forgot!  
And thou, O wall, O sweet, O lovely wall, that standest between her father's ground and mine,  
thou wall, O wall, O sweet and lovely wall, show me thy chink, to blink through with mine eyne.

*(Wall holds up his fingers.)*

Thanks, courteous wall. Jove shield thee well for this.  
But what see I? No Thisby do I see.  
O wicked wall, through whom I see no bliss, cursed be thy stones for thus deceiving me!

THESEUS

The wall, methinks, being sensible, should curse again.

BOTTOM

No, in truth, sir, he should not. 'Deceiving me' is Thisby's cue.  
She is to enter now, and I am to spy her through the wall.  
You shall see, it will fall pat as I told you. Yonder she comes.

*(Enter Thisby.)*

Thisby

O wall, full often hast thou heard my moans, for parting my fair Pyramus and me.  
My cherry lips have often kissed thy stones, thy stones with lime and hair knit up in thee.

Pyramus

I see a voice!\* Now will I to the chink, to spy if I can hear my Thisby's face. Thisby!

*see a voice* - Bottom is either over-acting or his senses are still mixed up

Thisby  
My love? Thou art my love, I think.

Pyramus  
Think what thou wilt, I am thy lover's grace; and like Limander, am I trusty still.

Thisby  
And I, like Helen, till the Fates me kill.

Pyramus  
Not Shafalus to Procrus\* was so true.

Thisby  
As Shafalus to Procrus, I to you.

Pyramus  
O kiss me through the hole of this vile wall!

Thisby  
I kiss the wall's hole, not your lips at all.

Pyramus  
Wilt thou at Ninny's tomb meet me straightway?

Thisby  
'Tide life, 'tide death, I come without delay.

*(Exeunt Pyramus and Thisby.)*

Wall  
Thus have I, Wall, my part discharged so; and, being done, thus Wall away doth go.

*(Exit Wall.)*

HIPPOLYTA  
This is the silliest stuff that ever I heard.

THESEUS  
The best in this kind are but shadows; and the worse are no worse if imagination amend them.

HIPPOLYTA  
It must be your imagination then and not theirs.

THESEUS  
If we imagine no worse of them than they of themselves, they may pass for excellent men.  
Here come two noble beasts in, a man and a lion.

*Limander, Helen, Shafalus and Procrus* - all tragic lovers

*(Enter Lion and Moonshine.)*

Lion

You, ladies, you, whose gentle hearts do fear the smallest monstrous mouse that creeps on floor,  
may now perchance both quake and tremble here, when lion rough in wildest rage doth roar.  
Then know that I, as Snug the joiner am a lion-fell\* nor else no lion's dam;\*  
for if I should as lion come in strife into this place, 'twere pity on my life.

HIPPOLYTA

A very gentle beast, and of a good conscience.

THESEUS

Let us listen to the moon.

Moonshine

This lanthorn doth the horned moon present.

DEMETRIUS

He should have worn the horns on his head.

Moonshine

This lanthorn doth the horned moon present. Myself the man in the moon do seem to be.

LYSANDER

This is the greatest error of all the rest.  
The man should be put into the lanthorn. How is it else the man in the moon?

HIPPOLYTA

I am awary of this moon. Would he would change.

THESEUS

Proceed, Moon.

Moonshine

All that I have to say is, to tell you that the lanthorn is the moon; I, the man in the moon;  
this thorn-bush, my thorn-bush; and this dog, my dog.

*(Enter Thisby.)*

Thisby

This is old Ninny's tomb. Where is my love?

Lion

Oh. *(Lion roars and Thisby runs off.)*

DEMETRIUS

Well roared, Lion.

*lion fell* - lion's skin or perhaps a fallen (dead) lion, *lion's dam* - lion's mother

THESEUS

Well run, Thisby.

HIPPOLYTA

Well shone, Moon. Truly, the Moon shines with a good grace.

*(The Lion shakes Thisby's mantle, and exits.)*

THESEUS

Well moused,\* Lion.

LYSANDER

And so the lion vanished.

DEMETRIUS

And then came Pyramus.

*(Enter Pyramus.)*

Pyramus

Sweet Moon, I thank thee for thy sunny beams;  
I thank thee, Moon, for shining now so bright;  
for, by thy gracious, golden, glittering gleams, I trust to take of truest Thisby sight.  
But stay. O spite! But mark, poor knight. What dreadful dole\* is here?  
Eyes, do you see? How can it be?  
O dainty duck, O dear. Thy mantle good. What, stained with blood?  
Approach, ye Furies\* fell!\* O Fates, come, come, cut thread and thrum,\*  
quail,\* crush, conclude, and quell!\*

HIPPOLYTA

Beshrew\* my heart, but I pity the man.

Pyramus

O wherefore, Nature, didst thou lions frame?  
Since lion vile hath here deflowered my dear;  
which is—no, no—which was the fairest dame that lived, that loved, that liked, that looked with cheer.  
Come, tears, confound.  
Out, sword, and wound the pap of Pyramus;  
ay, that left pap, where heart doth hop.

*(Stabbing himself.)*

Thus die I, thus, thus, thus.

Now am I dead, now am I fled; my soul is in the sky.  
Tongue, lose thy light, Moon take thy flight.

*to mouse* - to search for something stealthily, *dole* - cause of grief, *Furies* - avenging female spirits, *fell* - fierce, terrible, *thrum* - last thread to be cut off loom - Bottom the weaver's way of saying, 'Do a complete job of it.', *quail* - overpower, *quell* - kill, *Beshrew* - curse lightly

*(Exit Moonshine.)*

Now die, die, die, die, die!

*(Pyramus dies.)*

THESEUS

With the help of a surgeon he might yet recover and prove an ass.

HIPPOLYTA

How chance Moonshine is gone before Thisby comes back and finds her lover?

THESEUS

She will find him by starlight. Here she comes; and her passion ends the play.

*(Re-enter Thisby.)*

Thisby

Asleep, my love? What, dead, my dove?

O Pyramus, arise! Speak, speak! Quite dumb? Dead, dead?

A tomb must cover thy sweet eyes. These lily lips, this cherry nose, these yellow cowslip cheeks, are gone, are gone.

Lovers, make moan.

His eyes were green as leeks.

O Sisters Three,\* come, come to me, with hands as pale as milk;

lay them in gore, since you have shore with shears his thread of silk.

Tongue, not a word.

Come, trusty sword, come, blade, my breast imbrue!\*

*(Thisby stabs herself.)*

And, farewell, friends. Thus Thisby ends.

Adieu, adieu, adieu.

*(Thisby Dies.)*

THESEUS

Moonshine and Lion are left to bury the dead.

DEMETRIUS

Ay, and Wall too.

BOTTOM

*(Starting up.)* No, I assure you; the wall is down that parted their fathers.

Will it please you to see the epilogue,\* or to hear a Bergomask dance\* between two of our company?

*Sisters Three* - the Fates, *imbrue* - stain with blood, *see the epilogue* - Bottom's senses are still confused, *Bergomask dance* - clownish dance named after peasants of Bergamo, Italy

## THESEUS

No epilogue, I pray you; for your play needs no excuse.  
 Never excuse, for when the players are all dead, there needs none to be blamed.  
 Marry, if he that writ it had played Pyramus and hanged himself in Thisby's garter,  
 it would have been a fine tragedy; and so it is truly, and very notably discharged.  
 But come, your Bergomask. Let your epilogue alone.

*(A dance and THESEUS pays them.)*

*(Exeunt BOTTOM, QUINCE, FLUTE, SNOUT, SNUG and STARVELING.)*

The iron tongue of midnight hath told twelve. Lovers, to bed; 'tis almost fairy time.  
 I fear we shall out-sleep the coming morn as much as we this night have overwatched.\*  
 This palpable gross play hath well beguiled the heavy gait\* of night.  
 Sweet friends, to bed.  
 A fortnight\* hold we this solemnity in nightly revels and new jollity.

*(Exeunt.)*

*(Enter PUCK.)*

## PUCK

Now the hungry lion roars, and the wolf behowls the moon.  
 Now it is the time of night that the graves all gaping wide,  
 every one lets forth his sprite, in the church-way paths to glide.  
 And we fairies, that do run from the presence of the sun, following darkness like a dream, now are frolic!  
 Not a mouse shall disturb this hallowed house.  
 I am sent with broom before, to sweep the dust behind the door.

*(Enter OBERON and TITANIA and fairies.)*

## OBERON

Now, until the break of day, through this house each fairy stray.  
 To the best bride-bed will we, which by us shall blessed be;  
 and the issue\* there create ever shall be fortunate.  
 So shall all the couples three ever true in loving be;  
 and the blots of Nature's hand shall not in their issue stand.

## TITANIA

Never mole, harelip, nor scar, nor mark prodigious, such as are despised in nativity,  
 shall upon their children be.

## OBERON

Every fairy take his gait and through this palace each chamber bless.  
 Trip away; make no stay; meet us all by break of day.

*overwatched* - stayed up too late, *gait* - walk, *fortnight* - two weeks, *issue* - children

*(Exeunt OBERON, TITANIA and fairies.)*

PUCK

If we shadows have offended, think but this, and all is mended,  
that you have but slumbered here while these visions did appear.  
And this weak and idle theme, no more yielding but a dream.  
So, good night unto you all.  
Give me your hands, if we be friends, and Robin shall restore amends.

*(The end.)*