

Midsummer Nights Dream

By William Shakespeare

Abridged by Natalie Miller



ACT I

SCENE I. Athens. The palace of THESEUS.

Enter THESEUS, HIPPOLYTA, PHILOSTRATE, and Attendants

THESEUS

Now, fair Hippolyta, our nuptial hour
Draws on apace; four happy days bring in
Another moon

HIPPOLYTA

Four days will quickly steep themselves in night;
Four nights will quickly dream away the time;

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 bewitch'd the bosom of my child;
With cunning hast thou filch'd my daughter's heart,
Turn'd 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, according to our law.

THESEUS

What say you, Hermia? be advised fair maid:
Demetrius is a worthy gentleman.

HERMIA

So is Lysander.

THESEUS

In himself he is;
But in this kind, wanting your father's voice,
The other must be held the worthier.

HERMIA

I do entreat your grace to pardon me.
But I beseech your grace that I may know
The worst that may befall me in this case,
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.

HERMIA

So will I grow, so live, so die, my lord,
My soul consents not to give sovereignty.

THESEUS

Take time to pause; and, by the next new moon--
The sealing-day betwixt my love and me,
Upon that day 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 protest
For aye austerity and 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.

LYSANDER

I am, my lord, as well derived as he,
As well possess'd; my love is more than his;
My fortunes every way as fairly rank'd,
And, I am beloved of beauteous Hermia:
Why should not I then prosecute my right?
Demetrius, I'll avouch it to his head,
Made love to Nedar's daughter, Helena,
And won her soul; and she, sweet lady, dotes,
Upon this spotted and inconstant man.

THESEUS

I must confess that I have heard so much,
And with Demetrius thought to have spoke thereof;
But, being over-full of self-affairs,
My mind did lose it. But, Demetrius, come;
And come, Egeus; you shall go with me,
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.

EGEUS

With duty and desire we follow you.

Exeunt all but LYSANDER and HERMIA

LYSANDER

How now, my love! why is your cheek so pale?

HERMIA

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

LYSANDER

Ay me! for aught 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 cross'd,
It stands as an edict in destiny:
Then let us teach our trial patience,
Because it is a customary cross,

As due to love as thoughts and dreams and sighs,
Wishes and tears, poor fancy's followers.

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 to-morrow 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 all the vows that ever men have broke,
In number more than ever women spoke,
In that same place thou hast appointed me,
To-morrow 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!
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:
To-morrow night,
A time that lovers' flights doth still conceal,
Through Athens' gates have we devised to steal.

HERMIA

And in the wood,
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!

Exit

HELENA

How happy some o'er other some can be!
Through Athens I am thought as fair as she.
But what of that? Demetrius thinks not so;
Love looks not with the eyes, but with the mind;
And therefore is wing'd Cupid painted blind:
For ere Demetrius look'd on Hermia's eyne,
He hail'd 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 to-morrow 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

SCENE II. Athens. QUINCE'S house.

Enter QUINCE, SNUG, BOTTOM, FLUTE, SNOUT, 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, I will condole in some measure. To the rest: yet my chief humour is for a tyrant.

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.

QUINCE

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

SNOOT

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 that 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 an 'twere any nightingale.

QUINCE

You can play no part but Pyramus;

BOTTOM

Well, I will undertake it.

QUINCE

But, masters, here are your parts: and I am to entreat you, request you and desire you, to con them by to-morrow night; and meet me in the palace wood, a mile without the town, by moonlight; there will we rehearse, for if we meet in the city, we shall be dogged with company, and our devices known. I pray you, fail me not.

BOTTOM

We will meet; and there we may rehearse most obscenely and courageously. Take pains; be perfect: adieu.

Exeunt

ACT II

SCENE I. A wood near Athens.

Enter, from opposite sides, Princess of the Fairies, and PUCK

PUCK

How now, spirit! whither wander you?

PRINCESS OF THE FAIRIES

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.
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 to-night:
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.

PRINCESS OF THE FAIRIES

Either I mistake your shape and making quite,
Or else you are that shrewd and knavish sprite
Call'd Robin Goodfellow:
Those that Hobgoblin call you and sweet Puck,
You do their work, and they shall have good luck:
Are not you he?

PUCK

Thou speak'st aright;
I am that merry wanderer of the night.
But, room, fairy! here comes Oberon.

PRINCESS OF THE FAIRIES

And here my mistress. Would that he were gone!

Enter, from one side, OBERON, with his train; from the other, TITANIA, with hers

OBERON

Ill met by moonlight, proud Titania.

TITANIA

What, jealous Oberon! Fairies, skip hence:

OBERON

Tarry: am not I thy lord?

TITANIA

Then I must be thy lady:

OBERON

Why should Titania cross her Oberon?

I do but beg a little changeling boy,

To be my henchman.

TITANIA

Set your heart at rest:

The fairy land buys not the child of me.

His mother was a votaress of my order:

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

Perchance 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.

Exit 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 rememberest
Since once I sat upon a promontory,
And heard a mermaid on a dolphin's back?

PUCK

I remember.

OBERON

That very time I saw,
Cupid all arm'd: a certain aim he took
At a fair vestal throned by the west,
And loosed his love-shaft smartly from his bow,
Yet mark'd I where the bolt of Cupid fell:
It fell upon a little western flower,
The juice of it on sleeping eye-lids laid
Will make or man or woman madly dote
Upon the next live creature that it sees.
Fetch me that flower;

PUCK

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

Exit

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,
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, HELENA, following him

DEMETRIUS

I love thee not, therefore pursue me not.

HELENA

You draw me, you hard-hearted adamant;

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.

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

I'll run from thee and hide me in the brakes,
And leave thee to the mercy of wild beasts.

HELENA

The wildest hath not such a heart as you.

Exit DEMETRIUS

Run when you will, the story shall be changed:
Apollo flies, and Daphne holds the chase;

Exit

OBERON

Fare thee well, nymph: ere he do leave this grove,
Thou shalt fly him and he shall seek thy love.

Re-enter PUCK

Hast thou the flower there?

PUCK

Ay, there it is.

OBERON

I pray thee, give it me.
I know a bank where the wild thyme blows,
There sleeps Titania sometime of the night,
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.
And look thou meet me ere the first cock crow.

PUCK

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

Exeunt

SCENE II. Another part of the wood.

Enter TITANIA, with her train

TITANIA

Come, now a roundel and a fairy song;
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:
Never harm,
Nor spell nor charm,
Come our lovely lady nigh;
So, good night, with lullaby.

PRINCESS OF THE FAIRIES

Hence, away! now all is well:
One aloof stand sentinel.

Exeunt Fairies. TITANIA sleeps

Enter OBERON and squeezes the flower on TITANIA's eyelids

OBERON

Wake when some vile thing is near.

Exit

Enter LYSANDER and HERMIA

LYSANDER

Fair love, you faint with wandering in the wood;
And to speak troth, 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

Here is my bed: sleep give thee all his rest!

HERMIA

With half that wish the wisher's eyes be press'd!

They sleep

Enter PUCK

PUCK

Through the forest have I gone.
But Athenian found I none,
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.
Churl, upon thy eyes I throw
All the power this charm doth owe.
When thou wakest, let love forbid
Sleep his seat on thy eyelid:
So awake when I am gone;
For I must now to Oberon.

Exit

Enter DEMETRIUS and HELENA, running

HELENA

Stay, though thou kill me, sweet Demetrius.

DEMETRIUS

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

HELENA

O, wilt thou darkling leave me? do not so.

DEMETRIUS

Stay, on thy peril: I alone will go.

Exit

HELENA

O, I am out of breath in this fond chase!
The more my prayer, the lesser is my grace.
No, no, I am as ugly as a bear;
For beasts that meet me run away for fear:
Therefore no marvel though Demetrius
Do, as a monster fly my presence thus.
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
What 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?
The will of man is by his reason sway'd;
And reason says you are the worthier maid.

HELENA

Wherefore was I to this keen mockery born?
When at your hands did I deserve this scorn?
Is't not enough, is't 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?
O, that a lady, of one man refused.
Should of another therefore be abused!

Exit

LYSANDER

She sees not Hermia. Hermia, sleep thou there:
And never mayst thou come Lysander near!
And, all my powers, address your love and might
To honour Helen and to be her knight!

Exit

HERMIA

[Awaking] Help me, Lysander, help me!
Ay me, for pity! what a dream was here!
Lysander, look how I do quake with fear:
Methought a serpent eat my heart away,
And you sat smiling at his cruel pray.
Lysander! what, removed? Lysander! lord!
No? then I well perceive you all not nigh
Either death or you I'll find immediately.

Exit

ACT III

SCENE I. The wood. 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.

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

By'r lakin, 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 the more 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?

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 't.

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—

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. 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?

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

If that may be, then all is well. Come, sit down, every mother's son, and rehearse your parts. Pyramus, you begin: when you have spoken your speech, enter into that brake: and so every one according to his cue.

Enter PUCK behind

PUCK

What hempen home-spuns have we swaggering here,
So near the cradle of the fairy queen?
What, a play toward! I'll be an auditor;
An actor too, perhaps, if I see cause.

QUINCE

Speak, Pyramus. Thisby, stand forth.

BOTTOM

Thisby, the flowers of odious savours sweet,--

QUINCE

Odours, odours.

BOTTOM

--odours savours 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.

Exit

PUCK

A stranger Pyramus than e'er played here.

Exit

FLUTE

Must I speak now?

QUINCE

Ay, marry, 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,
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 about a round,
Through bog, through bush, through brake, through brier:

Exit

BOTTOM

Why do they run away?
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.

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?
I pray thee, gentle mortal, sing again:
And thy fair virtue's force perforce 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;

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 have enough to serve mine own turn.

TITANIA

Out of this wood do not desire to go:
Thou shalt remain here, whether thou wilt or no.
And I do love thee: therefore, go with me;
I'll give thee fairies to attend on thee,
Peaseblossom! Cobweb! Moth! and Mustardseed!

*Enter PRINCESS OF THE FAIRIES, PEASEBLOSSOM, COBWEB, MOTH, THISTLE and
MUSTARDSEED*

PEASEBLOSSOM

Ready.

COBWEB

And I.

MOTH

And I.

THISTLE

And I.

MUSTARDSEED

And I.

ALL

Where shall we go?

TITANIA

Be kind and courteous to this gentleman;
Feed him with apricots and dewberries,
With purple grapes, green figs, and mulberries;
Nod to him, elves, and do him courtesies.

PEASEBLOSSOM

Hail, mortal!

COBWEB

Hail!

MOTH

Hail!

THISTLE

Hail!

MUSTARDSEED

Hail!

BOTTOM

I cry your worship's mercy, heartily:

TITANIA

Come, wait upon him; lead him to my bower.
Tie up my love's tongue bring him silently.

Exeunt

INTERMISSION

SCENE II. Another part of the wood.

Enter OBERON

OBERON

I wonder if Titania be awaked;
Then, what it was that next came in her eye.

Enter PUCK

Here comes my messenger.
How now, mad spirit!

PUCK

My mistress with a monster is in love.
Near to her close and consecrated bower,
A crew of patches, rude mechanicals,
Were met together to rehearse a play.
The shallowest thick-skin of that barren sort,
Forsook his scene and enter'd in a brake
When I did him at this advantage take,
An ass's nole I fixed on his head:
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 latch'd the Athenian's eyes
With the love-juice, as I did bid thee do?

PUCK

I took him sleeping,--that is finish'd too,--
And the Athenian woman by his side:
That, when he waked, of force she must be eyed.

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?

HERMIA

Now I but chide; but I should use thee worse,
For thou, I fear, hast given me cause to curse,
It cannot be but thou hast murder'd him;
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?

DEMETRIUS

You spend your passion on a misprised mood:
I am not guilty of Lysander's blood;

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.
And from thy hated presence part I so:
See me no more, whether he be dead or no.

Exit

DEMETRIUS

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

Lies down and sleeps

OBERON

What hast thou done? thou hast mistaken quite
And laid the love-juice on some true-love's sight:

PUCK

Then fate o'er-rules, that, one man holding troth,
A million fail, confounding oath on oath.

OBERON

About the wood go swifter than the wind,
And Helena of Athens look thou find:
I'll charm his eyes against she do appear.

PUCK

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

Exit

OBERON

Flower of this purple dye,
When his love he doth espy,
Let her shine as gloriously
As the Venus of the sky.

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;
That must needs be sport alone;
And those things do best please me
That befall preposterously.

Enter LYSANDER and HELENA

LYSANDER

Why should you think that I should woo in scorn?
Scorn and derision never come in tears:
How can these things in me seem scorn to you,
Bearing the badge of faith, to prove them true?

HELENA

You do advance your cunning more and more.
When truth kills truth, O devilish-holy fray!
These vows are Hermia's: will 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?
When thou hold'st up thy hand: O, let me kiss
This princess of pure white, this seal of bliss!

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?
If you were men, as men you are in show,
You would not use a gentle lady so;
You both are rivals, and love Hermia;
And now both rivals, to mock Helena:
None of noble sort would so offend
A poor soul's patience, all to make you sport.

LYSANDER

You are unkind, Demetrius; be not so;
In Hermia's love I yield you up my part;
And yours of Helena to me bequeath,
Whom I do love and will do till my death.

HELENA

Never did mockers waste more idle breath.

DEMETRIUS

Lysander, keep thy Hermia; I will none:
If e'er I loved her, all that love is gone.
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?
Why seek'st 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!
Now I perceive they have conjoin'd all three
To fashion this false sport, in spite of me.
Injurious Hermia! most ungrateful maid!
Have you conspired, have you with these contrived
To bait me with this foul derision?
To join with men in scorning your poor friend?
It is not friendly, 'tis not maidenly:

HERMIA

I am amazed at your passionate words.
I scorn you not: it seems that you scorn me.

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 and rare,

HERNIA

I understand not what you mean by this.

HELENA

Ay, do, preserver, counterfeit sad looks,
Make mouths upon me when I turn my back;
Wink each at other; hold the sweet jest up:
But fare ye well: 'tis partly my own fault;
Which death or absence soon shall remedy.

LYSANDER

Stay, gentle Helena; hear my excuse:
My love, my life my soul, fair Helena!

HELENA

O excellent!

HERMIA

Sweet, do not scorn her so.

DEMETRIUS

If she cannot entreat, I can compel.

LYSANDER

Thou canst compel no more than she entreat:
I swear by that which I will lose for thee,
To prove him false that says I love thee not.

DEMETRIUS

I say I love thee more than he can do.

LYSANDER

If thou say so, withdraw, and prove it too.

DEMETRIUS

Quick, come!

HERMIA

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?

HELENA

Yes, sooth; and so do you.

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.

HERMIA

What, can you do me greater harm than hate?
Hate me! wherefore? O me! what news, my love!
Am not I Hermia? are not you Lysander?

LYSANDER

Be certain, nothing truer; but 'tis no jest
That I do hate thee and love Helena.

HERMIA

O me! you juggler! you canker-blossom!
You thief of love!

HELENA

Have you no modesty, no maiden shame,
No touch of bashfulness?
Fie, fie! you counterfeit, you puppet, you!

HERMIA

Puppet? why so? ay, that way goes the game.
Now I perceive that she hath made compare
Between our statures; How low am I,
Thou painted maypole? 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. You perhaps may think,
Because she is something lower than myself,
That I can match her.

HERMIA

Lower! hark, again.

HELENA

Good Hermia, do not be so bitter with me.
I evermore did love you, Hermia,
Did ever keep your counsels, never wrong'd you;
Save that, in love unto Demetrius,
I told him of your stealth unto this wood.
He follow'd you; for love I follow'd him;
But he hath chid me hence and threaten'd me
And now, so you will let me quiet go,
To Athens will I bear my folly back
And follow you no further: let me go:

HERMIA

Why, get you gone: who is't that hinders you?

HELENA

A foolish heart, that I leave here behind.

HERMIA

What, with Lysander?

HELENA

With Demetrius.

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!
And though she be but little, she is fierce.

HERMIA

'Little' again! nothing but 'low' and 'little'!
Let me come to her.

LYSANDER

Get you gone, you dwarf;
You minimus, of hindering knot-grass made;
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.

DEMETRIUS

Follow! nay, I'll go with thee, cheek by jowl.

Exeunt LYSANDER and DEMETRIUS

HERMIA

You, mistress, all this coil is 'long of you:
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

HERMIA

I am amazed, and know not what to say.

Exit

OBERON

This is thy negligence: still thou mistakest,
Or else committ'st thy knaveries wilfully.

PUCK

Believe me, king of shadows, I mistook.
Did not you tell me I should know the man

By the Athenian garment be had on?

OBERON

Thou see'st these lovers seek a place to fight:
Hie therefore, Robin, overcast the night.
Like to Lysander sometime frame thy tongue,
And sometime rail thou like Demetrius;
And from each other look thou lead them thus,
Till o'er their brows death-counterfeiting sleep
With leaden legs and batty wings doth creep:
Then crush this herb into Lysander's eye;
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.
But, notwithstanding, haste; make no delay:
We may effect this business yet ere day.

Exit

PUCK

Up and down, up and down,
I will lead them up and down:
I am fear'd 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, as following the voice

Re-enter DEMETRIUS

DEMETRIUS

Lysander! speak again:
Thou runaway, thou coward, art thou fled?

PUCK

Thou coward, art thou bragging to the stars,
And wilt not come? Come, recreant; come, thou child;

DEMETRIUS

Yea, art thou there?

PUCK

Follow my voice: we'll try no manhood here.

Exeunt

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-heel'd than I:
I follow'd fast, but faster he did fly;
That fallen am I in dark uneven way,
And here will rest me.

Lies down and sleeps

Re-enter PUCK and DEMETRIUS

PUCK

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

DEMETRIUS

Abide me, if thou darest; for well I wot
Thou runn'st before me, shifting every place,
Where art thou now?

PUCK

Come hither: I am here.

DEMETRIUS

Nay, then, thou mock'st me.
Now, go thy way. Faintness constraineth me

To measure out my length on this cold bed.
By day's approach look to be visited.

Lies down and sleeps

Re-enter HELENA

HELENA

O weary night, O long and tedious night,
Abate thy hour!
And sleep, that sometimes shuts up sorrow's eye,
Steal me awhile from mine own company.

Lies down and sleeps

PUCK

Yet but three? Come one more;
Two of both kinds make up four.
Here she comes, curst and sad:

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.

Lies down and sleeps

PUCK

On the ground
Sleep sound:
I'll apply
To your eye,
Gentle lover, remedy.

Squeezing the juice on LYSANDER's eyes

When thou wakest,
Thou takest
True delight
In the sight
Of thy former lady's eye:
And the country proverb known,
That every man should take his own,
In your waking shall be shown:

Jack shall have Jill;
Nought shall go ill;
And all shall be well.

Exit

ACT IV

SCENE I. The same.

LYSANDER, DEMETRIUS, HELENA, and HERMIA lying asleep.

Enter TITANIA and BOTTOM; PRINCESS OF THE FAIRIES, PEASEBLOSSOM, COBWEB, MOTH, THISTLE, MUSTARDSEED; OBERON behind unseen

TITANIA

Come, sit thee down upon this flowery bed,
What, wilt thou hear some music,
Or say, sweet love, what thou desirest to eat.

BOTTOM

Truly, a peck of provender: 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.
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!

They sleep

Enter PUCK

OBERON

[Advancing] 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,
I did upbraid her and fall out with her;

When I had at my pleasure taunted her
And she in mild terms begg'd my patience,
I then did ask of her her changeling child;
Which straight she gave me, and her fairy sent
To bear him to my bower in fairy land.
And now I have the boy, I will undo
This hateful imperfection of her eyes:
Now, my Titania; wake you, my sweet queen.

TITANIA

My Oberon! what visions have I seen!
Methought I was enamour'd of an ass.

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

Come, my queen, take hands with me,
Now thou and I are new in amity.

PUCK

Fairy king, attend, and mark:
I do hear the morning lark.

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

Horns winded within

Enter THESEUS, HIPPOLYTA, EGEUS, and train

THESEUS

Go, one of you, find out the forester;
For now our observation is perform'd;
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

Go, bid the huntsmen wake them with their horns.

Horns and shout within. LYSANDER, DEMETRIUS, HELENA, and HERMIA wake and start up

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;
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;

DEMETRIUS

My lord, fair Helen told me of their stealth,
Of this their purpose hither to this wood;
And I in fury hither follow'd them,
Fair Helena in fancy following me.

But, my good lord, I wot not by what power,--
But by some power it is,--my love to Hermia,
Melted as the snow, the object and
The pleasure of mine eye, is only Helena.

THESEUS

Fair lovers, you are fortunately met:
Of this discourse we more will hear anon.
Egeus, I will overbear your will;
For in the temple by and by with us
These couples shall eternally be knit:
Our purposed hunting shall be set aside.
Away with us to Athens; three and three,
We'll hold a feast in great solemnity.

Exeunt

BOTTOM

[Awaking] When my cue comes, call me, and I will
answer: my next is, 'Most fair Pyramus.' Heigh-ho!
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. Methought I was,--and
methought I had,--but man is but a patched fool, if
he will offer to say what methought I had.
No more words: away! away!

Exeunt

ACT V

SCENE I. Athens. The palace of THESEUS.

Enter THESEUS, HIPPOLYTA, PHILOSTRATE, Lords and Attendants

HIPPOLYTA

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

THESEUS

More strange than true: I never may believe
These antique fables, nor these fairy toys.
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!

THESEUS

Come now; what masques, what dances shall we have,
Say, what abridgement have you for this evening?

EGEUS

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:

THESEUS

And we will hear it.

EGEUS

No, my noble lord;
It is not for you: I have heard it over,
And it is nothing, nothing in the world;

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 EGEUS

HIPPOLYTA

I love not to see wretchedness o'er charged
And duty in his service perishing.

THESEUS

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

HIPPOLYTA

He says they can do nothing in this kind.

THESEUS

The kinder we, to give them thanks for nothing.

Re-enter EGEUS

EGEUS

So please your grace, the Prologue is address'd.

THESEUS

Let him approach.

Flourish of trumpets

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.

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.

Enter Pyramus and Thisbe, Wall, Moonshine, and Lion

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.

DEMETRIUS

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

Pyramus

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.

Pyramus

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 Thisbe

Thisbe

O wall, full often hast thou heard my moans,
For parting my fair Pyramus and me!

Pyramus

I see a voice: now will I to the chink,
To spy an I can hear my Thisby's face. Thisby!

Thisbe

My love thou art, my love I think.

Pyramus

Wilt thou at Ninny's tomb meet me straightway?

Thisbe

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

Exeunt Pyramus and Thisbe

Wall

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

Exit

THESEUS

Now is the mural down between the two neighbours.

DEMETRIUS

No remedy, my lord, when walls are so wilful to hear
without warning.

HIPPOLYTA

This is the silliest stuff that ever I heard.

THESEUS

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

HIPPOLYTA

It must be your imagination then, and not theirs.
Here come two noble beasts in, a man and a lion.

Enter Lion and Moonshine

Lion

You, ladies, you, whose gentle hearts do fear,
When lion rough in wildest rage doth roar.
Then know that I, one Snug the joiner, am.

THESEUS

A very gentle beast, of a good conscience.

DEMETRIUS

The very best at a beast, my lord, that e'er I saw.
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 i' the moon do seem to be.

THESEUS

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

HIPPOLYTA

I am awearry of this moon: would he would change!

LYSANDER

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.

DEMETRIUS

Why, all these should be in the lanthorn; for all
these are in the moon. But, silence! here comes Thisbe.

Enter Thisbe

Thisbe

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

Lion

[Roaring] Oh--

Thisbe runs off

DEMETRIUS

Well roared, Lion.

THESEUS

Well run, Thisbe.

HIPPOLYTA

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

The Lion shakes Thisbe's mantle, and exit

DEMETRIUS

And then came Pyramus.

Enter Pyramus

Pyramus

Sweet Moon, I thank thee for thy sunny beams;
But stay, O spite!
What dreadful dole is here!
O dainty duck! O dear!
Thy mantle good,
What, stain'd with blood!

Approach, ye Furies fell!
O Fates, come, come,

HIPPOLYTA

Beshrew my heart, but I pity the man.

Pyramus

Come, tears, confound;
Out, sword, and wound
The pap of Pyramus;
Ay, that left pap,
Where heart doth hop:

Stabs 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:

Exit Moonshine

Now die, die, die, die, die.

Dies

HIPPOLYTA

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

THESEUS

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

Re-enter Thisbe

HIPPOLYTA

I hope she will be brief.

Thisbe

Asleep, my love?
What, dead, my dove?
O Pyramus, arise!
Speak, speak. Quite dumb?

Dead, dead? Come, trusty sword;
Come, blade, my breast imbrue:

Stabs herself

And, farewell, friends;
Thus Thisby ends:
Adieu, adieu, adieu.

Dies

THESEUS

Moonshine and Lion are left to bury the dead.

DEMETRIUS

Ay, and Wall too.

BOTTOM

[*Starting up*] No assure you; the wall is down that
parted their fathers. Will it please you to see the
epilogue?

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. Let your
epilogue alone. This palpable-gross play hath
well beguiled the heavy gait of night.
Sweet friends, to bed. 'tis almost fairy time.

Exeunt

Enter PUCK

PUCK

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,
So, give me your hands, if we be friends,
And Robin shall restore amends.