



A Midsummer Night's Dream

By William Shakespeare

Cutting by
Charles M Pepiton
for
Square Top Repertory Theatre
Pagosa Springs, CO
(6/26/08)



Dramatis Personae & 7 Actor Doubling

- Men
 - Nick Hoenshell - Theseus, Oberon, Snug
 - Andrew Evans - Lysander, Nick Bottom
 - Chris Wilson - Demetrius, Francis Flute, Mustardseed

- Women
 - Erica Curnutte - Puck
 - Summer Gibson - Hippolyta, Titania, Peter Quince
 - Jessi Hampton - Hermia, Tom Snout, Cobweb
 - Rachel Morgan - Helena, Egeus, Robin Starveling, Peaseblossom

It really is a dream.

Six actors sleep throughout.

The audience watches with lucid delirium.

Puck remains awake.

"Perhaps the imagination is on the verge of recovering its rights...For, at least from man's birth to his death, thought presents no solution of continuity; the sum of dreaming moments - even taking into consideration pure dream alone, that of sleep - is from the point of view of time no less than the sum of moments of reality, which we shall confine to waking moments."

-- André Breton in *Le Manifeste du Surréalisme*, 1924

ACT I

SCENE I. Athens. The palace of THESEUS.

[Enter PUCK leading in the other actors who sleep to various degrees.]

PUCK

Now the hungry lion roars,
And the wolf howls the moon;
Whilst the heavy ploughman snores,
All with weary task fordone.

[THESEUS & HIPPOLYTA awake with a start]

THESEUS

Now, fair Hippolyta, our nuptial hour 5
Draws on apace; four happy days bring in
Another moon: but, O, methinks, how slow
This old moon wanes!

HIPPOLYTA

Four days will quickly steep themselves in night;
Four nights will quickly dream away the time; 10
And then the moon, like to a silver bow
New-bent in heaven, shall behold the night
Of our solemnities.

[EGEUS, HERMIA, LYSANDER, and DEMETRIUS awoken]

EGEUS

Happy be Theseus, our renowned duke!

THESEUS

Thanks, good Egeus: what's the news with thee? 15

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, 20
This man hath bewitch'd the bosom of my child;
Be it so she will not here before your grace
Consent to marry with Demetrius.

THESEUS

What say you, Hermia? be advised fair maid:
To you your father should be as a god; 25
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. 30

HERMIA

I would my father look'd but with my eyes.

THESEUS

Rather your eyes must with his judgment look.

HERMIA

But I beseech your grace that I may know
The worst that may befall me in this case,
If I refuse to wed Demetrius. 35

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, 40

You can endure the livery of a nun,

For aye to be in shady cloister mew'd,

To live a barren sister all your life.

DEMETRIUS

Relent, sweet Hermia; and Lysander, yield

Thy crazed title to my certain right. 45

LYSANDER

You have her father's love, Demetrius:

Let me have Hermia's; do you marry him.

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, 50

If not with vantage, as Demetrius';

And, which is more than all these boasts can be,

I am beloved of beauteous Hermia:

Why should not I then prosecute my right?

Demetrius, I'll avouch it to his head, 55

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.

THESEUS

I must confess that I have heard so much, 60
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. 65
Come, my Hippolyta: what cheer, my love?

[Exeunt all]

SCENE II. Athens.

[Enter PUCK]

PUCK

Now the wasted brands do glow,
Whilst the screech-owl, screeching loud,
Puts the wretch that lies in woe
In remembrance of a shroud.

[Enter QUINCE, SNUG, BOTTOM, FLUTE, SNOUT, and
STARVELING]

QUINCE

Is all our company here?

5

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.

10

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."

15

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.

20

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: I could play Ercles rarely, or a part to tear a cat in, to make all split.

25

30

The raging rocks

And shivering shocks

Shall break the locks

Of prison gates;

And Phibbus' car

35

Shall shine from far

And make and mar

The foolish Fates.

This was lofty! Now name the rest of the players.

This is Eracles' vein, a tyrant's vein; a lover is
more condoling.

40

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?

45

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 may speak as small as you will.

BOTTOM

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!'

50

QUINCE

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

BOTTOM

Well, proceed.

55

QUINCE

Robin Starveling, the tailor.

STARVELING

Here, Peter Quince.

QUINCE

Robin Starveling, you must play Thisby's mother.

Tom Snout, the tinker.

SNOUT

Here, Peter Quince.

60

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.

65

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.'

70

QUINCE

An 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.

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.

75

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.

80

BOTTOM

Well, I will undertake it.

QUINCE

Masters, here are your parts: and I am to entreat you, 85
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. In the meantime I 90
will draw a bill of properties, such as our play
wants. 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. 95

BOTTOM

Enough; hold or cut bow-strings.

[Exeunt]

SCENE III. Athens. The palace of THESEUS.

[Enter PUCK]

PUCK

Not a mouse
Shall disturb this hallow'd house:
I am sent with broom before,
To sweep the dust behind the door.

LYSANDER

How now, my love! why is your cheek so pale? 5
How chance the roses there do fade so fast?

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, 10
The course of true love never did run smooth;
But, either it was different in blood,--

HERMIA

O cross! too high to be enthrall'd to low.

LYSANDER

Or else misgraffed in respect of years,--

HERMIA

O spite! too old to be engaged to young. 15

LYSANDER

Or else it stood upon the choice of friends,--

HERMIA

O hell! to choose love by another's eyes.

LYSANDER

Or, if there were a sympathy in choice,

War, death, or sickness did lay siege to it,

Making it momentary as a sound, 20

Swift as a shadow, short as any dream—

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, 25

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: 30

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 eye

Cannot pursue us. If thou lovest me then, 35

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,

To do observance to a morn of May,

There will I stay for thee. 40

HERMIA

My good Lysander!

I swear to thee, by Cupid's strongest bow,

By the simplicity of Venus' doves,

By that which knitteth souls and prospers loves,

By all the vows that ever men have broke, 45

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? 50

HELENA

Call you me fair? that fair again unsay.

Demetrius loves your fair: O happy fair!

Sickness is catching: O, were favour so,

Yours would I catch, fair Hermia, ere I go;

My ear should catch your voice, my eye your eye, 55

My tongue should catch your tongue's sweet melody.

Were the world mine, Demetrius being bated,

The rest I'd give to be to you translated.

O, teach me how you look, and with what art

You sway the motion of Demetrius' heart. 60

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.

65

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.

70

Before the time I did Lysander see,

Seem'd Athens as a paradise to me:

O, then, what graces in my love do dwell,

That he hath turn'd a heaven unto a hell!

LYSANDER

Helen, to you our minds we will unfold: 75
To-morrow night, when Phoebe doth behold
Her silver visage in the watery glass,
Decking with liquid pearl the bladed grass,
A time that lovers' flights doth still conceal,
Through Athens' gates have we devised to steal. 80

HERMIA

And in the wood, where often you and I
Upon faint primrose-beds were wont to lie,
Emptying our bosoms of their counsel sweet,
There my Lysander and myself shall meet;
And thence from Athens turn away our eyes, 85
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. 90

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. 95
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, folding no quantity, 100
Love can transpose to form and dignity:
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; 105
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 110
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]

ACT II

SCENE I. A wood near Athens.

[Enter PUCK]

PUCK

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
By the triple Hecate's team,
From the presence of the sun,
Following darkness like a dream,
Now are frolic.

5

[Enter PEASEBLOSSOM]

PUCK

How now, spirit! whither wander you?

10

PEASEBLOSSOM

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;

15

[Enter COBWEB and MUSTARDSEED]

PEASEBLOSSOM, COBWEB, & MUSTARDSEED

And I serve the fairy queen,
To dew her orbs upon the green.

COBWEB

The cowslips tall her pensioners be:
In their gold coats spots you see; 20
Those be rubies, fairy favours,
In those freckles live their savours:

MUSTARDSEED

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: 25

PEASEBLOSSOM, COBWEB, & MUSTARDSEED

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 30
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, 35
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. 40

MUSTARDSEED

Either I mistake your shape and making quite,
Or else you are that shrewd and knavish sprite
Call'd *Robin Goodfellow*. Are not you he
That frights the maidens of the villagery;
Skim milk, and sometimes labour in the quern 45
And bootless make the breathless housewife churn;
And sometime make the drink to bear no barm;
Mislead night-wanderers, laughing at their harm?

PEASEBLOSSOM

Those that *Hobgoblin* call you

COBWEB

and sweet *Puck*. 50

PEASEBLOSSOM & COBWEB

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.
I jest to Oberon and make him smile 55
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 60
And on her wither'd 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; 65

And then the whole quire hold their hips and laugh,
And waxen in their mirth and neeze and swear
A merrier hour was never wasted there.
But, room, fairy! here comes Oberon.

PEASEBLOSSOM, COBWEB, & MUSARDSEED

And here my mistress.

70

COBWEB

Would that he were gone!

[Enter, from one side, OBERON and TITANIA from the other]

OBERON

I'll 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?

75

TITANIA

Then I must be thy lady. Why art thou here,

Come from the farthest Steppe of India?

But that, forsooth, the bouncing Amazon,

Your buskin'd mistress and your warrior love,

To Theseus must be wedded, and you come

80

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: 85
And never, since the middle summer's spring,
Met we on hill, in dale, forest or mead,
By paved fountain or by rushy brook,
Or in the beached margent of the sea,
To dance our ringlets to the whistling wind, 90
But with thy brawls thou hast disturb'd our sport.
Therefore the winds, piping to us in vain,
As in revenge, have suck'd up from the sea
Contagious fogs; which falling in the land
Have every pelting river made so proud 95
That they have overborne their continents:
The human mortals want their winter here;
No night is now with hymn or carol blest:
Therefore the moon, the governess of floods,
Pale in her anger, washes all the air, 100
That rheumatic diseases do abound:
And thorough this distemperature we see
The seasons alter: hoary-headed frosts
Far in the fresh lap of the crimson rose,
And this same progeny of evils comes 105
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, 110

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:

And, in the spiced Indian air, by night, 115

Full often hath she gossip'd by my side,

And sat with me on Neptune's yellow sands,

Marking the embarked traders on the flood,

When we have laugh'd to see the sails conceive

And grow big-bellied with the wanton wind; 120

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. 125

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. 130

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, PEASEBLOSSOM, COBWEB, & MUSTARDSEED]

OBERON

Well, go thy way: thou shalt not from this grove
Till I torment thee for this injury. 135
My gentle *Puck*, come hither. Thou rememberest
Since once I sat upon a promontory,
And heard a mermaid on a dolphin's back
Uttering such dulcet and harmonious breath
That the rude sea grew civil at her song 140
And certain stars shot madly from their spheres,
To hear the sea-maid's music?

PUCK

I remember.

OBERON

That very time I saw, but thou couldst not,
Flying between the cold moon and the earth, 145
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,
As it should pierce a hundred thousand hearts;
But I might see young Cupid's fiery shaft 150
Quench'd in the chaste beams of the watery moon,
And the imperial votaress passed on,
In maiden meditation, fancy-free.
Yet mark'd I where the bolt of Cupid fell:
It fell upon a little western flower, 155
Before milk-white, now purple with love's wound,

And maidens call it love-in-idleness.
Fetch me that flower; the herb I show'd thee once:
The juice of it on sleeping eye-lids laid
Will make or man or woman madly dote 160
Upon the next live creature that it sees.
Fetch me this herb; and be thou here again
Ere the leviathan can swim a league.

PUCK

I'll put a girdle round about the earth
In forty minutes. 165

[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, 170
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. 175
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.

Where is Lysander and fair Hermia?

The one I'll slay, the other slayeth me. 180

Thou told'st me they were stolen unto this wood;

And here am I, and woo'd 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. 185

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, 190

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 worser place can I beg in your love— 195

And yet a place of high respect with me—

Than to be used as you use your dog?

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. 200

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.

DEMETRIUS

I will not stay thy questions; let me go:
Or, if thou follow me, do not believe 205
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!
Your wrongs do set a scandal on my sex:
We cannot fight for love, as men may do; 210
We should be woo'd 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]

OBERON

Fare thee well, nymph: ere he do leave this grove,
Thou shalt fly him and he shall seek thy love. 215

[Re-enter PUCK]

Hast thou the flower there? Welcome, wanderer.

PUCK

Ay, there 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, 220

Quite over-canopied with luscious woodbine,

With sweet musk-roses and with eglantine:

There sleeps Titania sometime of the night,

Lull'd in these flowers with dances and delight;

And there the snake throws her enamell'd skin, 225

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 230

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 235

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]

SCENE II. Another part of the wood.

[Enter TITANIA, PEASEBLOSSOM, COBWEB, & MUSTARDSEED]

TITANIA

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

PEASEBLOSSOM

You spotted snakes with double tongue,
Thorny hedgehogs, be not seen; 5

MUSTARDSEED

Newts and blind-worms, do no wrong,
Come not near our fairy queen.

COBWEB

Never harm,

PEASEBLOSSOM

Nor spell nor charm, 10
Come our lovely lady nigh;

MUSTARDSEED

So, good night, with lullaby.

PEASEBLOSSOM

Weaving spiders, come not here;
Hence, you long-legg'd spinners, hence!

PEASEBLOSSOM, COBWEB, & MUSTARDSEED

Hence, away! now all is well: 15
One aloof stand sentinel.

[Exeunt Fairies. TITANIA sleeps]

[Enter PUCK, OBERON and squeezes the flower on TITANIA's eyelids]

OBERON

What thou seest when thou dost wake,

Do it for thy true-love take,

Love and languish for his sake:

Be it ounce, or cat, or bear, 20

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]

[Enter LYSANDER and HERMIA]

LYSANDER

Fair love, you faint with wandering in the wood; 25

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. 30

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.

LYSANDER

O, take the sense, sweet, of my innocence! 35

Love takes the meaning in love's conference.

I mean, that my heart unto yours is knit

So that but one heart we can make of it;

Then by your side no bed-room me deny;

For lying so, Hermia, I do not lie. 40

HERMIA

Lysander riddles very prettily:

But, gentle friend, for love and courtesy

Lie further off; in human modesty,

So far be distant; and, good night, sweet friend:

Thy love ne'er alter till thy sweet life end! 45

LYSANDER

Amen, amen, to that fair prayer, say I;

And then end life when I end loyalty!

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. 50

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: 55
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 60
Near this lack-love, this kill-courtesy.
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: 65
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. 70

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.
Happy is Hermia, wheresoe'er she lies;
For she hath blessed and attractive eyes. 75
How came her eyes so bright? Not with salt tears:
If so, my eyes are oftener wash'd than hers.
But who is here? Lysander! on the ground!
Dead? or asleep? I see no blood, no wound.
Lysander if you live, good sir, awake. 80

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! 85

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. 90
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't not enough, is't not enough, young man, 95
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! 100

[Exit]

LYSANDER

She sees not Hermia. Hermia, sleep thou there:
And never mayst thou come Lysander near!
For as a surfeit of the sweetest things
The deepest loathing to the stomach brings,
Or as tie heresies that men do leave 105
Are hated most of those they did deceive,
So thou, my surfeit and my heresy,
Of all be hated, but the most of me!
And, all my powers, address your love and might
To honour Helen and to be her knight! 110

[Exit]

HERMIA

[Awaking] Help me, Lysander, help me! do thy best
To pluck this crawling serpent from my breast!

Ay me, for pity! what a dream was here!
Lysander, look how I do quake with fear:
Methought a serpent eat my heart away, 115
And you sat smiling at his cruel pray.
Lysander! what, removed? Lysander! lord!
What, out of hearing? gone? no sound, no word?
Alack, where are you? speak, an if you hear;
Speak, of all loves! I swoon almost with fear. 120
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. 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.

5

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?

10

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. 15

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. 20

QUINCE

Well...

SNOUT

Will not the ladies be afeard of the lion?

STARVELING

I fear it, I promise you.

BOTTOM

Masters, to bring in (God shield us!) a lion among ladies, is a most dreadful thing. 25

SNOUT

Therefore another prologue must tell he is not a lion.

BOTTOM

Nay, you must name his name, 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. 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. 30

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.

35

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.

40

QUINCE

Yes, it doth shine that night.

BOTTOM

Why, then 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.

45

SNOUT

What say you, Bottom?

BOTTOM

Some man or other must present Wall: and let him 50
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, 55
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, 60
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,-- 65

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.

70

[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,

Of colour 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.

75

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.'

80

FLUTE

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

85

[Re-enter PUCK, and BOTTOM with an ass's head on]

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, SNOOT, and STARVELING]

PUCK

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

Through bog, through bush, through brake, through brier: 90

Sometime a horse I'll be, sometime a hound,

A hog, a headless bear, sometime a fire;

And neigh, and bark, and grunt, and roar, and burn,

Like horse, hound, hog, bear, fire, at every turn.

[Exit]

BOTTOM

Why do they run away? this is a knavery of them to 95
make me afeard.

[Re-enter QUINCE]

QUINCE

Bless thee, Bottom! bless thee! thou art
translated. [Exit]

BOTTOM

I see their knavery: this is to make an ass of me;
to fright me, if they could. But I will not stir 100
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, 105
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, 110
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 enamour'd of thy note;
So is mine eye enthralled to thy shape; 115
And thy fair virtue's force perforce doth move me
On the first view to say, to swear, I love thee. [kisses him]

BOTTOM

Methinks, mistress, you should have little reason
for that: and yet, to say the truth, reason and 120
love keep little company together now-a-days; the
more the pity that some honest neighbours 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 have enough to serve mine own turn. 125

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; 130
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. 135
Peaseblossom! Cobweb! and my Mustardseed!

[Enter PEASEBLOSSOM, COBWEB, and MUSTARDSEED]

PEASEBLOSSOM

Ready.

COBWEB

And I.

MUSTARDSEED

And I.

PEASEBLOSSOM, COBWEB, & MUSTARDSEED

Where shall we go? 140

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;
And pluck the wings from Painted butterflies 145
To fan the moonbeams from his sleeping eyes:
Nod to him, elves, and do him courtesies.

PEASEBLOSSOM, COBWEB, & MUSTARDSEED

Hail, mortal!

BOTTOM

I cry your worship's mercy, heartily: I beseech your
worship's name. 150

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. 155

BOTTOM

I pray you, commend me to Mistress Squash, your
mother, and to Master Peascod, your father. Good
Master Peaseblossom, I shall desire you of more
acquaintance too. Your name, I beseech you, sir?

MUSTARDSEED

Mustardseed.

160

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 your more acquaintance, good Master

Mustardseed.

165

TITANIA

Come, wait upon him; lead him to my bower.

The moon methinks looks with a watery eye;

And when she weeps, weeps every little flower,

Lamenting some enforced chastity.

Tie up my love's tongue; bring him silently.

170

[Exeunt]

SCENE II. Another part of the wood.

[Enter OBERON]

OBERON

I wonder if Titania be awak'd;
Then, what it was that next came in her eye,
Which she must dote on in extremity.

[Enter PUCK]

Here comes my messenger.
How now, mad spirit! 5
What night-rule now 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, 10
That work for bread upon Athenian stalls,
Were met together to rehearse a play
Intended for great Theseus' nuptial-day.
The shallowest thick-skin of that barren sort,
Who Pyramus presented, in their sport 15
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:
Anon his Thisbe must be answered,
And forth my mimic comes. When they him spy, 20
As wild geese that the creeping fowler eye,
Or russet-pated choughs, many in sort,
Rising and cawing at the gun's report,
Sever themselves and madly sweep the sky,

So, at his sight, away his fellows fly; 25
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. 30
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. 35

[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.

HERMIA

Now I but chide; but I should use thee worse, 40
For thou, I fear, hast given me cause to curse,
If thou hast slain Lysander in his sleep,
Being o'er shoes in blood, plunge in the deep,
And kill me too.

The sun was not so true unto the day 45
As he to me: would he have stolen away
From sleeping Hermia? I'll believe as soon
This whole earth may be bored and that the moon
May through the centre creep and so displease
Her brother's noontide with Antipodes. 50
It cannot be but thou hast murder'd him;
So should a murderer look, so dead, so grim.

DEMETRIUS

So should the murder'd look, and so should I,
Pierced through the heart with your stern cruelty:
Yet you, the murderer, look as bright, as clear, 55
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 60
Of maiden's patience. Hast thou slain him, then?
Henceforth be never number'd among men!
O, once tell true, tell true, even for my sake!
Durst thou have look'd upon him being awake,
And hast thou kill'd him sleeping? O brave touch! 65
Could not a worm, an adder, do so much?
An adder did it; for with doubler tongue
Than thine, thou serpent, never adder stung.

DEMETRIUS

You spend your passion on a misprised mood:

I am not guilty of Lysander's blood;

70

Nor is he dead, for aught that I can tell.

HERMIA

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

DEMETRIUS

An if I could, what should I get therefore?

HERMIA

A privilege never to see me more.

And from thy hated presence part I so:

75

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.

So sorrow's heaviness doth heavier grow

For debt that bankrupt sleep doth sorrow owe:

80

Which now in some slight measure it will pay,

If for his tender here I make some stay.

[Lies down and sleeps]

OBERON

What hast thou done? thou hast mistaken quite

And laid the love-juice on some true-love's sight:

Of thy misprision must perforce ensue

85

Some true love turn'd and not a false turn'd true.

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: 90
All fancy-sick she is and pale of cheer,
With sighs of love, that costs the fresh blood dear:
By some illusion see thou bring her here:
I'll charm his eyes against she do appear.

PUCK

I go, I go; look how I go, 95
Swifter than arrow from the Tartar's bow.

[Exit]

OBERON

Flower of this purple dye,
Hit with Cupid's archery,
Sink in apple of his eye.
When his love he doth espy, 100
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, 105

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! 110

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 115

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:

Look, when I vow, I weep; and vows so born,

In their nativity all truth appears. 120

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? 125

Weigh oath with oath, and you will nothing weigh:

Your vows to her and me, put in two scales,

Will even weigh, and both as light as tales.

LYSANDER

I had no judgment when to her I swore.

HELENA

Nor none, in my mind, now you give her o'er. 130

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! 135

That pure congealed white, high Taurus snow,

Fann'd with the eastern wind, turns to a crow

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 140

To set against me for your merriment:

If you were civil and knew courtesy,

You would not do me thus much injury.

Can you not hate me, as I know you do,

But you must join in souls to mock me too? 145

If you were men, as men you are in show,
You would not use a gentle lady so;
To vow, and swear, and superpraise my parts,
When I am sure you hate me with your hearts.
You both are rivals, and love Hermia; 150
And now both rivals, to mock Helena:
A trim exploit, a manly enterprise,
To conjure tears up in a poor maid's eyes
With your derision! none of noble sort
Would so offend a virgin, and extort 155
A poor soul's patience, all to make you sport.

LYSANDER

You are unkind, Demetrius; be not so;
For you love Hermia; this you know I know:
And here, with all good will, with all my heart,
In Hermia's love I yield you up my part; 160
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. 165
My heart to her but as guest-wise sojourn'd,
And now to Helen is it home return'd,
There to remain.

LYSANDER

Helen, it is not so.

DEMETRIUS

Disparage not the faith thou dost not know, 170
Lest, to thy peril, thou aby it dear.
Look, where thy love comes; yonder is thy dear.

[Re-enter HERMIA]

HERMIA

Dark night, that from the eye his function takes,
The ear more quick of apprehension makes;
Wherein it doth impair the seeing sense, 175
It pays the hearing double recompense.
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? 180

HERMIA

What love could press Lysander from my side?

LYSANDER

Lysander's love, that would not let him bide,
Fair Helena, who more engilds the night
Than all you fiery oes and eyes of light.
Why seek'st thou me? could not this make thee know, 185
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. 190

Injurious Hermia! most ungrateful maid!

Have you conspired, have you with these contrived

To bait me with this foul derision?

It is not friendly, 'tis not maidenly:

Our sex, as well as I, may chide you for it, 195

Though I alone do feel the injury.

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? 200

And made your other love, Demetrius,

Who even but now did spurn me with his foot,

To call me goddess, nymph, divine and rare,

Precious, celestial? Wherefore speaks he this

To her he hates? and wherefore doth Lysander 205

Deny your love, so rich within his soul,

And tender me, forsooth, affection,

But by your setting on, by your consent?

HERMIA

I understand not what you mean by this.

HELENA

Ay, do, persevere, counterfeit sad looks, 210
Make mouths upon me when I turn my back;
Wink each at other; hold the sweet jest up:
This sport, well carried, shall be chronicled.
But fare ye well: 'tis partly my own fault;
Which death or absence soon shall remedy. 215

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. 220

LYSANDER

Thou canst compel no more than she entreat:
Thy threats have no more strength than her weak prayers.
Helen, I love thee; by my life, I do:

DEMETRIUS

I say I love thee more than he can do.

LYSANDER

If thou say so, withdraw, and prove it too. 225

DEMETRIUS

Quick, come!

HERMIA

Lysander, whereto tends all this?

LYSANDER

Away, you Ethiopel!

DEMETRIUS

No, no; he'll seem to break loose;

[To LYSANDER]

Take on as you would follow,

230

But yet come not: you are a tame man, go!

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,--

235

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.

240

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? 245
Hate me! wherefore? O me! what news, my love!
Am not I Hermia? are not you Lysander?
I am as fair now as I was erewhile.

LYSANDER

Be certain, nothing truer; 'tis no jest
That I do hate thee and love Helena. 250

HERMIA

O me! you juggler! you canker-blossom!
You thief of love! what, have you come by night
And stolen my love's heart from him?

HELENA

Fine, ifaith!
Have you no modesty, no maiden shame, 255
No touch of bashfulness? What, will you tear
Impatient answers from my gentle tongue?
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 260
Between our statures; she hath urged her height;

And with her personage, her tall personage,
Her height, forsooth, she hath prevail'd with him.
And are you grown so high in his esteem;
Because I am so dwarfish and so low? 265
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 strike me. You perhaps may think, 270
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. 275

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? 280
Let me come to her.

LYSANDER

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

DEMETRIUS

You are too officious 285
In her behalf that scorns your services.
Let her alone: speak not of Helena;

LYSANDER

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. 290

[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, 295
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. 300
Did not you tell me I should know the man
By the Athenian garment he had on?
And so far blameless proves my enterprise,
That I have 'nointed an Athenian's eyes;
And so far am I glad it so did sort 305
As this their jangling I esteem a sport.

OBERON

Thou see'st these lovers seek a place to fight:
Hie therefore, *Robin*, overcast the night;
Like to Lysander sometime frame thy tongue,
Then stir Demetrius up with bitter wrong; 310
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; 315
Whose liquor hath this virtuous property,
To take from thence all error with his might,
And make his eyeballs roll with wonted sight.
When they next wake, all this derision
Shall seem a dream and fruitless vision, 320
And back to Athens shall the lovers wend,

With league whose date till death shall never end.
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 325
From monster's view, and all things shall be peace.

[Exit OBERON]

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. 330
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, 335
To plainer ground.

[Exit LYSANDER, as following the voice]

[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 to the stars, 340

Telling the bushes that thou look'st for wars,

And wilt not come? Come, recreant; come, thou child;

I'll whip thee with a rod: he is defiled

That draws a sword on thee.

DEMETRIUS

Yea, art thou there? 345

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; 350

That fallen am I in dark uneven way,

And here will rest me.

[Lies down]

Come, thou gentle day!

For if but once thou show me thy grey light,

I'll find Demetrius and revenge this spite. 355

[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,
And darest not stand, nor look me in the face.
Where art thou now?

360

PUCK

Come hither: I am here.

DEMETRIUS

Nay, then, thou mock'st me. Thou shalt buy this dear,
If ever I thy face by daylight see:
Now, go thy way. Faintness constraineth me
To measure out my length on this cold bed.
By day's approach look to be visited.

365

[Lies down and sleeps]

[Re-enter HELENA]

HELENA

O weary night, O long and tedious night,
Abate thy hour! Shine comforts from the east,
That I may back to Athens by daylight,
From these that my poor company detest:
And sleep, that sometimes shuts up sorrow's eye,
Steal me awhile from mine own company.

370

[Lies down and sleeps]

PUCK

Yet but three? Come one more;

Two of both kinds make up four.

Here she comes, curst and sad:

375

Cupid is a knavish lad,

Thus to make poor females mad.

[Re-enter HERMIA]

HERMIA

Never so weary, never so in woe,

Bedabbled with the dew and torn with briers,

I can no further crawl, no further go;

380

My legs can keep no pace with my desires.

Here will I rest me till the break of day.

Heavens shield Lysander, if they mean a fray!

[Lies down and sleeps]

PUCK

On the ground

Sleep sound: 385

I'll apply

To your eye,

Gentle lover, remedy.

[Squeezing the juice on LYSANDER's eyes]

When thou wakest,

Thou takest 390

True delight

In the sight

Of thy former lady's eye:

Jack shall have Jill;

Nought shall go ill; 395

[Exit]

ACT IV

SCENE I. The same. LYSANDER, DEMETRIUS, HELENA, and
HERMIA lying asleep.

[Enter THESEUS, HIPPOLYTA]

THESEUS

This is Egeus' daughter here asleep;
And this, Lysander; this Demetrius is;
This Helena, old Nedar's Helena:

HYPPOLYTA

I wonder of their being here together.

THESEUS

No doubt they rose up early to observe 5
The rite of May, and hearing our intent,
Came here in grace our solemnity.
But speak, Hyppolyta; is not this the day
That Hermia should give answer of her choice?

HYPPOLYTA

It is, my lord. 10

[LYSANDER, DEMETRIUS, HELENA, and HERMIA wake and start
up]

THESEUS

Good morrow, friends. Saint Valentine is past:
Begin these wood-birds but to couple now?

LYSANDER

Pardon, my lord.

THESEUS

I pray you all, stand up.

I know you two are rival enemies: 15

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, 20

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, 25

Without the peril of the Athenian law—

DEMETRIUS

[Interrupting]

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. 30

But, my good lord, I wot not by what power,--

But by some power it is,--my love to Hermia,

Melted as the snow, seems to me now

As the remembrance of an idle gaud

Which in my childhood I did dote upon; 35

And 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 betroth'd ere I saw Hermia:

But, like in sickness, did I loathe this food; 40

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:
Of this discourse we more will hear anon. 45
For in the temple by and by with us
These couples shall eternally be knit:
Away with us to Athens; three and three,
We'll hold a feast in great solemnity.
Come, Hippolyta. 50

[Exeunt THESEUS & HIPPOLYTA]

LYSANDER

These things seem small and undistinguishable,

HERMIA

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

HELENA

So methinks:
And I have found Demetrius like a jewel, 55
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

And he did bid us follow to the temple. 60

[Exeunt]

[Enter TITANIA and BOTTOM; PEASEBLOSSOM, COBWEB,
MUSTARDSEED, and OBERON behind unseen]

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, 65
And kiss thy fair large ears, my gentle joy.

BOTTOM

Where's Cobweb?

COBWEB

Ready.

BOTTOM

Scratch my head Cobweb. Where's Mounsieur Peaseblossom?

PEASEBLOSSOM

Ready. 70

BOTTOM

Mounsieur Peaseblossom, good mounsieur, get you your
weapons in your hand, and kill me a red-hipped
humble-bee on the top of a thistle; and, good
mounsieur, bring me the honey-bag. Do not fret
yourself too much in the action, mounsieur; and, 75
good mounsieur, have a care the honey-bag break not;
I would be loath to have you overflown with a
honey-bag, signior. Where's Mounsieur Mustardseed?

MUSTARDSEED

Ready.

BOTTOM

Give me your neaf, Mounsieur Mustardseed. Pray you, 80
leave your courtesy, good mounsieur.

MUSTARDSEED

What's your Will?

BOTTOM

Nothing, good mounsieur, but to help Cavalery Cobweb
to scratch. I must to the barber's, monsieur; for
methinks I am marvellous hairy about the face; and I 85
am such a tender ass, if my hair do but tickle me,
I must scratch.

TITANIA

What, wilt thou hear some music,
my sweet love?

BOTTOM

I have a reasonable good ear in music. Let's have 90
the tongs and the bones.

TITANIA

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. 95

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.

100

TITANIA

Sleep thou, and I will wind thee in my arms.
Fairies, begone, and be all ways away.

[Exeunt fairies]

So doth the woodbine the sweet honeysuckle
Gently entwist; the female ivy so
Enrings the barky fingers of the elm.
O, how I love thee! how I dote on thee!

105

[They 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 favours from 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 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.

110

115

And now I have the boy, I will undo
This hateful imperfection of her eyes:
And, gentle *Puck*, take this transformed scalp 120
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. 125
But first I will release the fairy queen.
Be as thou wast wont to be;
See as thou wast wont to see:
Dian's bud o'er Cupid's flower
Hath such force and blessed power. 130
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? 135
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

Now thou and I are new in amity, 140

And will to-morrow midnight solemnly

Dance in Duke Theseus' house triumphantly,

And bless it to all fair prosperity:

There shall the pairs of faithful lovers be

Wedded, with Theseus, all in jollity. 145

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 150

With this mortal on the ground.

[Exeunt]

[Bottom awakens with a start.]

BOTTOM

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 155
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 160
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 165
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 a play, before the duke:
peradventure, to make it the more gracious, I shall 170
sing it at her death.

[Exit]

ACT V

SCENE I. Athens. The palace of THESEUS.

[Enter THESEUS & HIPPOLYTA]

THESEUS

Lovers and madmen have such seething brains,

Such shaping fantasies, that apprehend

More than cool reason ever comprehends.

The lunatic, the lover and the poet

Are of imagination all compact.

5

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!

10

THESEUS

Say, what abridgement have we for this evening?

What masque? what music? How shall we beguile

The lazy time, if not with some delight?

[Reads] *'A tedious brief scene of young Pyramus*

And his love Thisbe; very tragical mirth.'

15

Merry and tragical! tedious and brief!

That is, hot ice and wondrous strange snow.

How shall we find the concord of this discord?

Go, bring them in: and take your places, ladies.

[Enter QUINCE for the Prologue and PUCK unseen, also Pyramus and Thisbe, Wall, Moonshine, and Lion]

QUINCE [as 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; 35

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. 40

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, 45

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, 50

And finds his trusty Thisby's mantle slain:

Whereat, with blade, with bloody blameful blade,

He bravely broach'd his boiling bloody breast;

And Thisby, tarrying in mulberry shade,

His dagger drew, and died. For all the rest, 55

Let Lion, Moonshine, Wall, and lovers twain

At large discourse, while here they do remain.

[Exeunt Prologue, Thisbe, Lion, and Moonshine]

PUCK

I wonder if the lion be to speak.
One lion may, when many asses do.

WALL

In this same interlude it doth befall 60
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. 65
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.

PUCK

Would you desire lime and hair to speak better? 70
It is the wittiest partition that ever I heard
discourse. [Enter PYRAMUS]
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! 75
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 stand'st between her father's ground and mine!
Thou wall, O wall, O sweet and lovely wall, 80
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!*

85

[A Pause]

[To the audience]

'Deceiving me' is Thisby's cue: she is to enter now,
and I am to spy her through the wall. Yonder she comes.

[Enter THISBE]

THISBE

*O wall, full often hast thou heard my moans,
For parting my fair Pyramus and me!
My cherry lips have often kiss'd thy stones,
Thy stones with lime and hair knit up in thee.*

90

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

*Think what thou wilt, I am thy lover's grace;
O kiss me through the hole of this vile wall!*

95

THISBE

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

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; 100

And, being done, thus Wall away doth go.

[Exit]

PUCK

Now is the mural down between the two neighbours.

No remedy when walls are so wilful to hear

without warning. The best in this kind are but shadows;

and the worst are no worse, if imagination amend them. 105

Here come two noble beasts in, a man and a lion.

[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. 110

Then know that I, one 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.

PUCK

A very gentle beast, of a good conscience. 115

This lion is a very fox for his valour,
and a goose for his discretion.

Let us listen to the moon.

MOONSHINE

This lanthorn doth the horned moon present:--

[Restarting]

This lanthorn doth the horned moon present; 120

Myself the man i' the moon do seem to be.

PUCK

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? It appears, by his small light of
discretion, that he is in the wane; but yet, in courtesy, 125
in all reason, we must stay the time.

MOONSHINE

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

[Enter THISBE]

THISBE

This is old Ninny's tomb. Where is my love? 130

LION

[Roaring]

[Thisbe runs off]

PUCK

Well roared, Lion.

Well run, Thisbe.

[LION shakes Thisbe's mantle and exits]

[Enter Pyramus]

PYRAMUS

Sweet Moon, I thank thee for thy sunny beams;

I thank thee, Moon, for shining now so bright; 135

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! 140

Eyes, do you see?

How can it be?

O dainty duck! O dear!

Thy mantle good,

What, stain'd with blood! 145

Approach, ye Furies fell!

O Fates, come, come,

Cut thread and thrum;

Quail, crush, conclude, and quell!

PUCK

Beshrew my heart, but I pity the man. 150

PYRAMUS

O wherefore, Nature, didst thou lions frame?

Since lion vile hath here deflower'd my dear:

Which is--no, no--which was the fairest dame

That lived, that loved, that liked, that look'd

with cheer. 155

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

160

[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:*

165

[Exit Moonshine]

Now die, die, die, die, die.

[Dies]

PUCK

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

[Re-enter THISBE]

Here she comes; and her passion ends the play.
I hope she will be brief.

170

THISBE

*Asleep, my love?
What, dead, my dove?
O Pyramus, arise!*

Speak, speak. Quite dumb? 175
Dead, dead? A tomb
Must cover thy sweet eyes.
These My lips,
This cherry nose,
These yellow cowslip cheeks, 180
Are gone, are gone:
Lovers, make moan:
His eyes were green as leeks.
O Sisters Three,
Come, come to me, 185
With hands as pale as milk;
Lay them in gore,
Since you have shore
With shears his thread of silk.
Tongue, not a word: 190
Come, trusty sword;
Come, blade, my breast imbrue:

[Stabs herself]

And, farewell, friends;
Thus Thisby ends:
Adieu, adieu, adieu. 195

[Dies]

PUCK

Moonshine and Lion are left to bury the dead.

BOTTOM

[Starting up. Looks to the audience.]

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

[THESEUS Re-enters]

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.
And so it is, truly; and very notably
discharged. Let your epilogue alone. 200

[PYRAMUS & THISBE take a bow and exit]

[Four lovers Re-enter]

The iron tongue of midnight hath told twelve: 205
Lovers, to bed; 'tis almost fairy time.
I fear we shall out-sleep the coming morn
As much as we this night have overwatch'd.
This palpable-gross play hath well beguiled
The heavy gait of night. Sweet friends, to bed. 210

[Exeunt]

PUCK

My fairy lord, this must be done with haste,
For night's swift dragons cut the clouds full fast,
And yonder shines Aurora's harbinger;
At whose approach, ghosts, wandering here and there,
Troop home to churchyards. Damnéd spirits all, 215
That in crossways and floods have burial,

Already to their wormy beds are gone,
For fear lest day should look their shames upon:
They willfully themselves exil'd from light
And must for aye consort with black-brow'd night. 220

[OBERON & TITANIA enter]

OBERON

Now, until the break of day,
Through this house each fairy stray.
With this field-dew consecrate,
Every fairy take his gait;
And each several chamber bless, 225
Through this palace, with sweet peace;
And the owner of it blest
Ever shall in safety rest.
Trip away; make no stay;
Meet me all by break of day. 230

[Exeunt OBERON & TITANIA]

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, 235
No more yielding but a dream,
Gentles, do not reprehend:

if you pardon, we will mend:

And, as I am an honest *Puck*,

If we have unearned luck 240

Now to 'scape the serpent's tongue,

We will make amends ere long;

Else the *Puck* a liar call;

So, good night unto you all.

Give me your hands, if we be friends, 245

And *Robin* shall restore amends.

