

**A
Midfommer
nights
dreame.**

**As it hath beene fundry times
pub-
*likely acted, by the Right
Honoura-
ble, the Lord Chamberlain his
feruants.***

Written by William Shakepeare.

Directed
by
Cait Bodenbender

The Prenzle Players

Actor One	IS	Theseus, Duke of Athens & Cobweb, a fairy
Actress Two	IS	Hippolyta, Queen of the Amazons & Peaseblossom, a fairy
Actor Three	IS	Philostrate, Master of the Revels & Robin Goodfellow, a puck
Actor Four	IS	Egeus, a lord of Athens & Francis Flute, a bellows mender
Actress Five	IS	Hermia, daughter to Egeus
Actor Six	IS	Demetrius, a gentleman of Athens
Actor Seven	IS	Lysander, a gentleman of Athens
Actress Eight	IS	Helena, a gentlewoman of Athens
Actress Nine	IS	Penny Quince, a carpenter & Mustardseed, a fairy
Actor Ten	IS	Nick Bottom, a weaver
Actress Eleven	IS	Robin Starveling, a tailor & Mote, a fairy
Actor Twelve	IS	Tom Snout, a tinker & Oberon, the Fairy King
Actress Thirteen	IS	Snug, a joiner & Titania, the Fairy Queen

ACT 1

Scene 1.

[Enter THESEUS, HIPPOLYTA and PHILOSTRATE.]

THESEUS: Now, fair Hippolyta, our nuptial hour
 Draws on apace. Four happy days bring in
 Another moon—but O methinks how slow
 This old moon wanes! She lingers my desires
 Like to a stepdame or a dowager
 Long withering out a young man's revenue.

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

THESEUS: Go, Philostrate,
 Stir up the Athenian youth to merriments.
 Awake the pert and nimble spirit of mirth.
 Turn melancholy forth to funerals—
 The pale companion is not for our pomp.

[Exit PHILOSTRATE. PHILOSTRATE becomes ROBIN.]

Hippolyta, I wooed thee with my sword,
 And won thy love doing thee injuries.
 But I will wed thee in another key—
 With pomp, with triumph, and with revelling.

[Enter EGEUS, HERMIA, LYSANDER, and DEMETRIUS.]

EGEUS: Happy be Theseus, our renowned duke!

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

EGEUS: Full of vexation come I, with complaint
 Against my child, my daughter Hermia.—
 Stand forth, Demetrius.—My noble lord,
 This man hath my consent to marry her.—
 Stand forth, Lysander.—And, my gracious Duke,
 This hath bewitched the bosom of my child.
 Thou, thou, Lysander, thou hast given her rhymes,
 And interchanged love-tokens with my child.
 Thou hast by moonlight at her window sung
 With feigning voice verses of feigning love,
 And stol'n the impression of her fantasy
 With bracelets of thy hair, rings, gawds, conceits,
 Knacks, trifles, nose-gays, sweetmeats—messengers
 Of strong prevailment in unhardened youth.
 With cunning hast thou filched my daughter's heart,
 Turned her obedience, which is due to me,
 To stubborn harshness. And, my gracious Duke,

Be it so she will not here, before your grace,
 Consent to marry with Demetrius,
 I beg the ancient privilege of Athens:
 As she is mine I may dispose of her—
 Which shall be either to this gentleman
 Or to her death, according to our law.

THESEUS: What say you, Hermia? Be advised, fair maid.
 To you your father should be as a god,
 One that composed your beauties, yea, and one
 To whom you are but as a form in wax,
 By him imprinted, and within his power
 To leave the figure or disfigure it.
 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 would my father looked but with my eyes.

THESEUS: Rather your eyes must with his judgment look.

HERMIA: I do entreat your grace to pardon me.
 I know not by what power I am made bold,
 Nor how it may concern my modesty
 In such a presence here to plead my thoughts,
 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,
 For aye to be in shady cloister mewed,
 To live a barren sister all your life,
 Chanting faint hymns to the cold, fruitless moon.
 Thrice-blessèd they that master so their blood
 To undergo such maiden pilgrimage;
 But earthlier happy is the rose distilled
 Than that which, withering on the virgin thorn,
 Grows, lives, and dies in single blessedness.

HERMIA: So will I grow, so live, so die, my lord,
 Ere I will yield my virgin patent up
 Unto his lordship, whose unwishèd yoke
 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

For everlasting bond of fellowship—
 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 crazèd title to my certain right.

LYSANDER: You have her father's love, Demetrius;
 Let me have Hermia's. Do you marry him.

EGEUS: Scornful Lysander, true, he hath my love;
 And what is mine my love shall render him,
 And she is mine, and all my right of her
 I do estate unto Demetrius.

LYSANDER: I am, my lord, as well derived as he,
 As well possessed. My love is more than his,
 My fortunes every way as fairly ranked,
 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—
 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,
 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—
 Which by no means we may extenuate—
 To death or to a vow of single life.
 Come, my Hippolyta; what cheer, my love?
 Demetrius and Egeus, go along.
 I must employ you in some business
 Against our nuptial, and confer with you
 Of something nearly that concerns yourselves.

EGEUS: With duty and desire we follow you.
*[Exeunt THESEUS, HIPPOLYTA, EGEUS and DEMETRIUS. THESEUS becomes
 COBWEB. HIPPOLYTA becomes PEASEBLOSSOM. EGEUS becomes FLUTE.]*

LYSANDER: How now, my love? Why is your cheek so pale?

How chance the roses there do fade so fast?
 HERMIA: Belike for want of rain, which I could well
 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,
 But either it was different in blood—
 HERMIA: O cross!—too high to be enthralled to low!
 LYSANDER: Or else misgrafted in respect of years—
 HERMIA: O spite!—too old to be engaged to young!
 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 momentany as a sound,
 Swift as a shadow, short as any dream,
 Brief as the lightning in the collied night
 That, in a spleen, unfolds both heaven and earth,
 And, ere a man hath power to say, "Behold!",
 The jaws of darkness do devour it up.
 So quick bright things come to confusion.
 HERMIA: If then true lovers have been ever crossed,
 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.
 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 lov'st me then,
 Steal forth thy father's house tomorrow night,
 And in the wood, a league without the town,
 Where I did meet thee once with Helena
 To do observance to a morn of May,
 There will I stay for thee.
 HERMIA: My good Lysander,
 I swear to thee by Cupid's strongest bow,
 By his best arrow with the golden head,
 By the simplicity of Venus' doves,
 By that which knitteth souls and prospers loves,
 And by that fire which burned the Carthage queen
 When the false Trojan under sail was seen;

By all the vows that ever men have broke—
 In number more than ever women spoke—
 In that same place thou hast appointed me
 Tomorrow truly will I meet with thee.

LYSANDER: Keep promise, love. Look, here comes Helena.

[Enter HELENA.]

HERMIA: God speed fair Helena. Whither away?

HELENA: Call you me fair? That “fair” again unsay.

Demetrius loves your fair—O happy fair!
 Your eyes are lodestars, and your tongue's sweet air
 More tuneable than lark to shepherd's ear,
 When wheat is green, when hawthorn buds appear.
 Sickness is catching. O were favor so!
 Your words I catch, fair Hermia; ere I go,
 My ear should catch your voice, my eye your eye,
 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!

HERMIA: I frown upon him, yet he loves me still.

HELENA: O that your frowns would teach my smiles such skill!

HERMIA: I give him curses, yet he gives me love.

HELENA: O that my prayers could such affection move!

HERMIA: The more I hate, the more he follows me.

HELENA: The more I love, the more he hateth me.

HERMIA: His folly, Helena, is no fault of mine.

HELENA: None but your beauty; would that fault were mine!

HERMIA: Take comfort. He no more shall see my face.

Lysander and myself will fly this place.

LYSANDER: Helen, to you our minds we will unfold.

Tomorrow night, when Phoebe doth behold
 Her silver visage in the wat'ry glass,
 Decking with liquid pearl the bladed grass—
 A time that lovers' flights doth still conceal—
 Through Athens' gates have we devised to steal.

HERMIA: And in the wood where often you and I
 Upon faint primrose beds were wont to lie,
 Emptying our bosoms of their counsel sweet,
 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.—

[Enter EGEUS and DEMETRIUS.]

[aside to LYSANDER] Keep word, Lysander. We must starve our sight

From lovers' food till morrow deep midnight.
 LYSANDER [*aside to HERMIA*]: I will, my Hermia.
 [*Exit HERMIA, EGEUS and DEMETRIUS.*]

Helena, adieu.

As you on him, Demetrius dote on you!
 [*Exit LYSANDER.*]

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.
 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.
 For sometime ere he looked on Hermia's eyne
 He hailed down oaths that he was only mine,
 And when this hail some heat from Hermia felt,
 So he dissolved, and showers of oaths did melt.
 I will go tell him of fair Hermia's flight.
 Then to the wood will he tomorrow night
 Pursue her, and for this intelligence
 If I have thanks it is a dear expense.
 But herein mean I to enrich my pain,
 To have his sight thither and back again.
 [*Exit HELENA.*]

Scene 2.

[*Enter SNUG, BOTTOM:, FLUTE, SNOUT, QUINCE:, 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 Duchess on his wedding day at night.

BOTTOM: First, good Penny 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 Penny 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 humor is for a tyrant. I could play Ercles rarely, or a part to tear a cat

in, to make all split.

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

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

QUINCE: Francis Flute, the bellows mender.

FLUTE: Here, Penny Quince.

QUINCE: Flute, you must take Thisby on you.

FLUTE: What is Thisby? A wand'ring knight?

QUINCE: It is the lady that Pyramus must love.

FLUTE: Nay, faith, let not me 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: An I may hide my face, let me play Thisby too, I'll speak in a monstrous little voice, "Thisne, Thisne!" "Ah, Pyramus, my 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, Penny Quince.

QUINCE: Robin Starveling, you must play Thisby's Moteer. Tom Snout, the tinker.

SNOUT: Here, Penny Quince.

QUINCE: You, Pyramus' father: myself, Pyramus' Moteer: 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. [*BOTTOM roars.*] I will roar that I will make the Duke say, "Let him roar again, let him roar again." [*BOTTOM roars and roars.*]

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.

SNOUT: That would hang us!

STARVELING: That would hang us!	SNUG: That would hang us!	FLUTE: That would hang us, every Moteer's son!
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BOTTOM: I grant you, friends, if you should fright the ladies out of their wits, they would have no more discretion but to hang us: but I will aggravate my voice so that I will roar you as gently as any sucking dove; [*BOTTOM roars.*] I will roar you an 'twere any nightingale. [*BOTTOM roars.*]

QUINCE: You can play no part but Pyramus!

[BOTTOM begins to exit.]

—for Pyramus is a sweet-faced man; a proper man as one shall see in a summer's day; a most lovely, gentlemanlike man: therefore you must needs play Pyramus.

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

QUINCE: Why, what you will.

BOTTOM: I will discharge it in either your straw-color beard, your orange-tawny beard, your purple-in-grain beard, or your French-crown-color beard, your perfit yellow.

QUINCE: Some of your French crowns have no hair at all, and then you will play barefaced. But, masters, here are your parts; and I am to entreat you, request you, and desire you, to con them by tomorrow 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 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 perfit; adieu.

[BOTTOM, FLUTE, STARVELING, SNOUT, and SNUG begin to exit.]

QUINCE: At the Duke's oak we meet!

*[Exeunt FLUTE, STARVELING, SNOUT, SNUG, BOTTOM and QUINCE.
STARVELING becomes MOTE. SNOUT becomes OBERON. SNUG becomes
HIPPOLYTA. QUINCE becomes MUSTARDSEED.]*

ACT 2

Scene 1.

[Enter ROBIN. ROBIN sits and whiles the time. Enter MOTE.]

ROBIN: How now, spirit! whither wander you?

MOTE: 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.
The cowslips tall her pensioners be;
In their gold coats spots you see:
Those be rubies, fairy favors;
In those freckles live their savors.
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:

[MOTE begins to exit.]

Our Queen and all her elves come here anon.

ROBIN: The King doth keep his revels here tonight.
Take heed the Queen come not within his sight,
For Oberon is passing fell and wrath
Because that she, as her attendant, hath
A lovely boy stol'n 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 lovèd 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.

MOTE: Either I mistake your shape and making quite
Or else you are that shrewd and knavish sprite
Called Robin Goodfellow. Are not you he
That frights the maidens of the villag'ry,
Skim milk, and sometimes labor in the quern,
And bootless make the breathless housewife churn,
And sometime make the drink to bear no barm,
Mislead night-wanderers, laughing at their harm?
Those that "hobgoblin" call you, and "sweet puck",

You do their work, and they shall have good luck:
Are not you he?

ROBIN: Thou speak'st aright;
I am that merry wanderer of the night.
I jest to Oberon, and make him smile
When I a fat and bean-fed horse beguile,
Neighing in likeness of a filly foal;
And sometime lurk I in a gossip's bowl
In very likeness of a roasted crab,
And when she drinks, against her lips I bob,
And on her withered dewlap pour the ale.
The wisest aunt telling the saddest tale
Sometime for three-foot stool mistaketh me.
Then slip I from her bum—down topples she,
And “tailor” cries, and falls into a cough,
And then the whole choir hold their hips, and laugh,
And waxen in their mirth, and neeze, and swear
A merrier hour was never wasted there.—

*[Enter OBERON one way, and TITANIA, COBWEB, PEASEBLOSSOM and
MUSTARDSEED another.]*

But room, fairy: here comes Oberon.

MOTE: And here my mistress. Would that he were gone.

OBERON: Ill met by moonlight, proud Titania.

TITANIA: What, jealous Oberon?—Fairies, skip hence.

[TITANIA, COBWEB, PEASEBLOSSOM, MUSTARDSEED and MOTE begin to exit.]

I have forsworn his bed and company.

OBERON: Tarry, rash wanton. Am not I thy lord?

TITANIA: Then I must be thy lady; but I know
When thou hast stol'n away from fairyland
And in the shape of Corin sat all day,
Playing on pipes of corn, and versing love
To amorous Phillida. Why art thou here
Come from the farthest step of India,
But that, forsooth, the bouncing Amazon,
Your buskined mistress and your warrior love,
To Theseus must be wedded, and you come
To give their bed joy and prosperity?

OBERON: How canst thou thus, for shame, Titania,
Glance at my credit with Hippolyta,
Knowing I know thy love to Theseus?
Didst not thou lead him through the glimmering night
From Perigouna whom he ravishèd?
And make him with fair Aegles break his faith,
With Ariadne and Antiopa?

TITANIA: These are the forgeries of jealousy,
And never since the middle summer's spring

Met we on hill, in dale, forest, or mead,
 By pavèd fountain or by rushy brook,
 Or on the beachèd margin of the sea
 To dance our ringlets to the whistling wind,
 But with thy brawls thou hast disturbed our sport.
 Therefore the winds, piping to us in vain,
 As in revenge have sucked up from the sea
 Contagious fogs which, falling in the land,
 Hath every pelting river made so proud
 That they have overborne their continents.
 The ox hath therefore stretched his yoke in vain,
 The ploughman lost his sweat, and the green corn
 Hath rotted ere his youth attained a beard.
 The fold stands empty in the drownèd field,
 And crows are fatted with the murrain flock.
 The nine men's morris is filled up with mud;
 And the quaint mazes in the wanton green
 For lack of tread are undistinguishable.
 The human mortals want their winter cheer.
 No night is now with hymn or carol blessed.
 Therefore the moon, the governess of floods,
 Pale in her anger, washes all the air,
 That rheumatic diseases do abound;
 And thorough this distemperature we see
 The seasons alter: hoary-headed frosts
 Fall in the fresh lap of the crimson rose,
 And on old Hiem's thin and icy crown
 An odorous chaplet of sweet summer buds
 Is, as in mock'ry, set. The spring, the summer,
 The childing autumn, angry winter change
 Their wonted liveries; and the mazèd world
 By their increase now knows not which is which;
 And this same progeny of evils comes
 From our debate, from our dissension—
 We are their parents and original.

OBERON: Do you amend it, then. It lies in you.
 Why should Titania cross her Oberon?
 I do but beg a little changeling boy
 To be my henchman.

TITANIA: Set your heart at rest.
 The fairyland buys not the child of me.
 His mother was a vot'ress of my order,
 And in the spicèd Indian air by night
 Full often hath she gossiped by my side,
 And sat with me on Neptune's yellow sands,
 Marking th' embarkèd traders on the flood,

When we have laughed to see the sails conceive
 And grow big-bellied with the wanton wind,
 Which she with pretty and with swimming gait
 Following, her womb then rich with my young squire,
 Would imitate, and sail upon the land
 To fetch me trifles, and return again
 As from a voyage, rich with merchandise.
 But she, being mortal, of that boy did die;
 And for her sake do I rear up her boy;
 And for her sake I will not part with him.

OBERON: How long within this wood intend you stay?
 TITANIA: 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.
[Exeunt COBWEB, PEASEBLOSSOM, MOTE and MUSTARDSEED.]
 We shall chide downright if I longer stay.
[Exit TITANIA.]

OBERON: Well, go thy way. Thou shalt not from this grove
 Till I torment thee for this injury.—
 My gentle Puck, come hither. Thou rememb'rst
 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
 And certain stars shot madly from their spheres
 To hear the sea-maid's music?

ROBIN: I remember.

OBERON: That very time I saw, but thou couldst not,
 Flying between the cold moon and the earth,
 Cupid, all armed. A certain aim he took
 At a fair vestal, thronèd by the west,
 And loosed his love-shaft smartly from his bow
 As it should pierce a hundred thousand hearts.
 But I might see young Cupid's fiery shaft
 Quenched in the chaste beams of the wat'ry moon,
 And the imperial vot'ress passed on,
 In maiden meditation, fancy-free.
 Yet marked I where the bolt of Cupid fell.
 It fell upon a little western flower—
 Before, milk-white, now purple with love's wound:
 And maidens call it "love-in-idleness".
 Fetch me that flower; the herb I showed thee once.
 The juice of it on sleeping eyelids laid

Will make or man or woman madly dote
 Upon the next live creature that it sees.
 Fetch me this herb, and be thou here again
 Ere the leviathan can swim a league.
 ROBIN: I'll put a girdle round about the earth
 In forty minutes.

[Exit ROBIN.]

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

[Enter DEMETRIUS, with HELENA following him.]

DEMETRIUS: I love thee not, therefore pursue me not.
 Where is Lysander and fair Hermia?
 The one I'll slay, the other slayeth me.
 Thou told'st me they were stol'n unto this wood,
 And here am I, and wood within this wood
 Because I cannot meet with Hermia.
 Hence, get thee gone, and follow me no more.

HELENA: You draw me, you hard-hearted adamant,
 But yet you draw not iron, for my heart
 Is true as steel. Leave you your power to draw,
 And I shall have no power to follow you.

DEMETRIUS: Do I entice you? Do I speak you fair?
 Or rather do I not in plainest truth
 Tell you I do not, nor I cannot love you?

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

DEMETRIUS: Tempt not too much the hatred of my spirit;
 For I am sick when I do look on thee.

HELENA: And I am sick when I look not on you.

DEMETRIUS: You do impeach your modesty too much,
 To leave the city and commit yourself
 Into the hands of one that loves you not;
 To trust the opportunity of night,
 And the ill counsel of a desert place,
 With the rich worth of your virginity.

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

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

[HELENA intercepts and embraces DEMETRIUS.]

HELENA: The wildest hath not such a heart as you.
 Run when you will, the story shall be changed:
 Apollo flies, and Daphne holds the chase.
 The dove pursues the griffin; the mild hind
 Makes speed to catch the tiger: bootless speed,
 When cowardice pursues, and valor flies.

DEMETRIUS: I will not stay thy questions. Let me go;
 Or if thou follow me, do not believe
 But I shall do thee mischief in the wood.

HELENA: Ay, in the temple, in the town, the field,
 You do me mischief. Fie, Demetrius,
 Your wrongs do set a scandal on my sex.

[Exit DEMETRIUS.]

We cannot fight for love as men may do;
 We should be wooed, and were not made to woo.
 I'll follow thee, and make a heaven of hell,
 To die upon the hand I love so well.

[Exit HELENA.]

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

[Enter ROBIN.]

Hast thou the flower there? Welcome, wanderer.

ROBIN: 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,
 Quite overcanopied with luscious woodbine,
 With sweet musk-roses, and with eglantine.
 There sleeps Titania sometime of the night,
 Lulled in these flowers with dances and delight;

And there the snake throws her enamelled skin,
 Weed wide enough to wrap a fairy in.
 And with the juice of this I'll streak her eyes,
 And make her full of hateful fantasies.
 Take thou some of it, and seek through this grove.
 A sweet Athenian lady is in love
 With a disdainful youth. Anoint his eyes;
 But do it when the next thing he espies
 May be the lady. Thou shalt know the man
 By the Athenian garments he hath on.
 Effect it with some care, that he may prove
 More fond on her than she upon her love;
 And look thou meet me ere the first cock crow.
 ROBIN: Fear not, my lord. Your servant shall do so.
[Exeunt OBERON and ROBIN severally.]

Scene 2.

[Enter TITANIA, COBWEB, MUSTARDSEED, PEASEBLOSSOM and MOTE.]

TITANIA: Come, now a roundel and a fairy song,
 Then for the third part of a minute hence:
 Some to kill cankers in the musk-rose buds,
 Some war with rermice for their leathern wings
 To make my small elves coats, and some keep back
 The clamorous owl, that nightly hoots and wonders
 At our quaint spirits. Sing me now asleep;
 Then to your offices, and let me rest.
 MOTE *[sings]*: You spotted snakes with double tongue,
 Thorny hedgehogs, be not seen;
 Newts and blindworms do no wrong;
 Come not near our Fairy Queen.
 PEASEBLOSSOM/COBWEB/MUSTARDSEED *[sing]*:
 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.
 MOTE *[sings]*: Weaving spiders, come not here;
 Hence, you long-legged spinners, hence;
 Beetles black, approach not near;
 Worm nor snail do no offence.
 PEASEBLOSSOM/COBWEB/MUSTARDSEED *[sing]*:
 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.

[TITANIA sleeps.]

PEASEBLOSSOM: Hence away. Now all is well.

One, aloof, stand sentinel.

[COBWEB stands as a sentry. Exeunt MOTE, PEASEBLOSSOM and MUSTARDSEED.

MOTE becomes STARVELING. MUSTARDSEED becomes QUINCE. Enter OBERON.

OBERON's magic overcomes COBWEB. OBERON drops the juice 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,

Pard, or boar with bristled hair,

In thy eye that shall appear

When thou wak'st, it is thy dear.

Wake when some vile thing is near.

[Exit OBERON. Enter LYSANDER and HERMIA.]

LYSANDER: Fair love, you faint with wand'ring 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.

[HERMIA lies down.]

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 farther off yet; do not lie so near.

LYSANDER: O take the sense, sweet, of my innocence!

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.

Two bosoms interchainèd with an oath;

So, then, two bosoms and a single troth.

Then by your side no bed-room me deny;

For lying so, Hermia, I do not lie.

HERMIA: Lysander riddles very prettily.

Now much beshrew my manners and my pride

If Hermia meant to say Lysander lied.

But, gentle friend, for love and courtesy,

Lie further off, in human modesty.

Such separation as may well be said

Becomes a virtuous bachelor and a maid,

So far be distant; and good night, sweet friend.
Thy love ne'er alter till thy sweet life end.

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.

[LYSANDER lies down apart.]

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

[HERMIA and LYSANDER sleep. Enter ROBIN.]

ROBIN: Through the forest have I gone,
But Athenian found I none
On whose eyes I might approve
This flower's force in stirring love.
Night and silence. Who is here?
Weeds of Athens he doth wear.
This is he my master said
Despisèd the Athenian maid—
And here the maiden, sleeping sound
On the dank and dirty ground.
Pretty soul, she durst not lie
Near this lack-love, this kill-courtesy.
Churl, upon thy eyes I throw
All the power this charm doth owe.

[ROBIN drops the juice on LYSANDER's eyelids.]

When thou wak'st, let love forbid
Sleep his seat on thy eyelid.
So, awake when I am gone.
For I must now to Oberon.

[Exit ROBIN. Enter DEMETRIUS running, with HELENA running after.]

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 DEMETRIUS.]

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 blessèd and attractive eyes.
How came her eyes so bright? Not with salt tears—
If so, my eyes are oft'ner washed than hers.
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.
What wicked and dissembling glass of mine
Made me compare with Hermia's sphery eyne?
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 [*waking*]: 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 swayed;
 And reason says you are the worthier maid.
 Things growing are not ripe until their season,
 So I, being young, till now ripe not to reason.
 And touching now the point of human skill,
 Reason becomes the marshal to my will,
 And leads me to your eyes, where I o'erlook
 Love's stories written in love's richest book.

HELENA: Wherefore was I to this keen mock'ry 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?
 Good troth, you do me wrong—good sooth, you do—
 In such disdainful manner me to woo.
 But fare you well. Perforce I must confess
 I thought you lord of more true gentleness.
 O that a lady of one man refused
 Should of another therefore be abused!

[Exit HELENA.]

LYSANDER: She sees not Hermia. 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 the heresies that men do leave
 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 honor Helen, and to be her knight.

[Exit LYSANDER.]

HERMIA [*waking*]: 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 ate my heart away,
And you sat smiling at his cruel prey.
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.
No? Then I well perceive you are not nigh.
Either death or you I'll find immediately.
[Exit HERMIA.]

ACT 3

Scene 1.

[Enter QUINCE, SNUG, BOTTOM, FLUTE, SNOOT, and STARVELING.]

BOTTOM: Are we all met?

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

BOTTOM: Penny Quince?

QUINCE: What sayest thou, bully Bottom?

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

SNOOT: By'r la'kin, 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 prologuee.

SNOOT: Will not the ladies be afeard of the lion?

STARVELING: I fear it, I promise you.

BOTTOM: Masters, you ought to consider with yourself, 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.

SNOOT: Therefore another prologue must tell she is not a lion.

BOTTOM: Nay, you must name her name, and half her face must be seen through the lion's neck; and she herself must speak through, saying thus, or to the same defect: "Ladies", or "fair ladies, I would wish you" or "I would request you" or "I would entreat you not to fear, not to tremble. My life for yours. If you think I come hither as a lion, it were pity of my life. No, I am no such thing. I am a woman, as other women are"—and there, indeed, let her name her name, and tell them plainly she 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 Thisbe meet by moonlight.

SNOOT: Doth the moon shine that night we play our play?

BOTTOM: A calendar, a calendar—

[Enter ROBIN with an almanac, which he leaves to be discovered by BOTTOM.]

look in the almanac, find out moonshine, find out moonshine.

QUINCE *[consulting the almanac]*: Yes, it doth shine that night.

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

QUINCE: Ay; or else one must come in with a bush of thorns and a lantern, 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 Thisbe, 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 Thisbe 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. Speak, Pyramus. Thisbe, stand forth.

BOTTOM *[as PYRAMUS]*: Thisbe, the flowers of odious savors sweet.

QUINCE: "Odious"?—odorous!

BOTTOM *[as PYRAMUS]*: Odours savors sweet.

So hath thy breath, my dearest Thisbe dear.

But hark, a voice. Stay thou but here awhile,

And by and by I will to thee appear.

[Exit BOTTOM, followed by ROBIN.]

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 *[as THISBE]*: Most radiant Pyramus, most lily white of hue,

Of color like the red rose on triumphant brier,

Most bristly juvenile, and eke most lovely Jew,

As true as truest horse that would never tire.

Enter Pyramus. Pyramus passionately embraces Thisbe.

Pyramus. If I were fair, fair Thisbe, I were only thine.

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: Oh!

[as THISBE] As true as truest horse that yet would never tire.

[Re-enter ROBIN, leading BOTTOM onstage wearing an asshead. BOTTOM attempts to passionately embrace FLUTE.]

BOTTOM *[as PYRAMUS]*: If I were fair, fair Thisbe, I were only thine.

[FLUTE screams.]

QUINCE: O monstrous! O strange! We are haunted. Pray, masters; fly, masters. Help!

[Exeunt screaming QUINCE, FLUTE, SNOUT, SNUG, STARVELING and BOTTOM.]

ROBIN: I'll follow you, I'll lead you about a round,

Through bog, through bush, through brake, through brier.

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 ROBIN. Enter BOTTOM.]

BOTTOM: Why do they run away?

[Enter SNOUT running.]

SNOUT: O Bottom, thou art changed.

[Exit SNOUT screaming. SNOUT becomes OBERON.]

MUSTARDSEED: And I.
 PEASEBLOSSOM/COBWEB/MOTE/MUSTARDSEED: Where shall we go?
 TITANIA: Be kind and courteous to this gentleman.
 Hop in his walks, and gambol in his eyes.
 Feed him with apricots and dewberries,
 With purple grapes, green figs, and mulberries;
 The honeybags steal from the humble-bees,
 And for night tapers crop their waxen thighs
 And light them at the fiery glow-worm's eyes
 To have my love to bed, and to arise;
 And pluck the wings from painted butterflies,
 To fan the moonbeams from his sleeping eyes.
 Nod to him, elves, and do him courtesies.

PEASEBLOSSOM: Hail, mortal!

COBWEB: Hail!

MOTE: Hail!

MUSTARDSEED: Hail!

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

COBWEB: Cobweb.

BOTTOM: I shall desire you of more acquaintance, good Master Cobweb. If I cut my finger, I shall make bold with you.—Your name, honest lady?

PEASEBLOSSOM: Peaseblossom.

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

MUSTARDSEED: Mustardseed.

<p>BOTTOM: Good Mistress Mustardseed, I know your patience well. That same cowardly giantlike ox-beef hath devoured many a gentleman of your house. I promise you your kindred hath made my eyes water ere now.</p>	<p>TITANIA <i>[to COBWEB, PEASEBLOSSOM and MOTE]</i>: Come, wait upon him, lead him to my bower. The moon, methinks, looks with a wat'ry eye, And when she weeps, weeps every little flower, Lamenting some enforced chastity.</p>
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BOTTOM: I desire you of more acquaintance, good Mistress Mustardseed.

[BOTTOM laughs and laughs, brays and brays.]

TITANIA *[to COBWEB, PEASEBLOSSOM and MOTE]*:

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

[Exeunt TITANIA, PEASEBLOSSOM, MUSTARDSEED, COBWEB and BOTTOM.]

MOTH magically produces the INTERMISSION sign and exits after them.]

Scene 2.

[Enter OBERON and ROBIN..]

OBERON: This falls out better than I could devise.

[OBERON and ROBIN come upon the INTERMISSION sign. At a nod from OBERON, ROBIN exits with it.]

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

ROBIN: I took him sleeping—that is finished, too—
 And the Athenian woman by his side,
 That when he waked of force she must be eyed.

[Enter DEMETRIUS and HERMIA.]

OBERON: Stand close. This is the same Athenian.

ROBIN: This is the woman, but not this the man.

[OBERON and ROBIN stand apart.]

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;

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

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 th' Antipodes.

It cannot be but thou hast murdered him.

So should a murderer look: so dead, so grim.

DEMETRIUS: So should the murdered look, and so should I,

Pierced through the heart with your stern cruelty.

Yet you, the murderer, look as bright, as clear,

As yonder Venus in her glimmering sphere.

HERMIA: What's this to my Lysander? Where is he?

Ah, good Demetrius, wilt thou give him me?

DEMETRIUS: I had rather give his carcass to my hounds.

HERMIA: Out, dog; out, cur. Thou driv'st me past the bounds

Of maiden's patience. Hast thou slain him then?

Henceforth be never numbered among men.

O once tell true; tell true, even for my sake.

Durst thou have looked upon him, being awake,

And hast thou killed him sleeping? O brave touch!

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,

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

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

DEMETRIUS: And if I could, what should I get therefor?

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 HERMIA.]

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

[DEMETRIUS lies down and sleeps.]

OBERON: What hast thou done? Thou hast mistaken quite,
And laid the love-juice on some true love's sight.
About the wood go swifter than the wind,
And Helena of Athens look thou find.
All fancy-sick she is, and pale of cheer
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.

ROBIN: I go, I go. Look how I go,
Swifter than arrow from the Tartar's bow.

[Exit ROBIN.]

OBERON: Flower of this purple dye,
Hit with Cupid's archery,
Sink in apple of his eye.
[OBERON drops the juice on DEMETRIUS' eyelids.]
When his love he doth espy,
Let her shine as gloriously
As the Venus of the sky.
When thou wak'st, if she be by,
Beg of her for remedy.

[Enter ROBIN.]

ROBIN: 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.

ROBIN: Then will two at once woo one.
That must needs be sport alone;
And those things do best please me
That befall prepost'rously.

[OBERON and ROBIN stand apart. Enter HELENA, with LYSANDER following her.]

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.

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?
 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.

LYSANDER: Demetrius loves her, and he loves not you.

DEMETRIUS [*waking*]: O Helen, 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!
 That pure congealèd white—high Taurus' snow,
 Fanned 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
 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?

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;
 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.
 My heart to her but as guestwise sojourned
 And now to Helen is it home returned,
 There to remain.

LYSANDER: Helen, it is not so.

DEMETRIUS: Disparage not the faith thou dost not know,
 Lest to thy peril thou aby it dear.

[*Enter HERMIA.*]

Look where thy love comes; yonder is thy dear.

HERMIA: Dark night, that from the eye his function takes,

The ear more quick of apprehension makes.

Wherein it doth impair the seeing sense,

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?

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 yon fiery O's and eyes of light.
 Why seek'st thou me? Could not this make thee know
 The hate I bare 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 conjoined 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?
 Is all the counsel that we two have shared—
 The sisters' vows, the hours that we have spent
 When we have chid the hasty-footed time
 For parting us—O is all forgot?
 All schooldays' friendship, childhood innocence?
 We, Hermia, like two artificial gods
 Have with our needles created both one flower,
 Both on one sampler, sitting on one cushion,
 Both warbling of one song, both in one key,
 As if our hands, our sides, voices, and minds
 Had been incorporate. So we grew together,
 Like to a double cherry: seeming parted;
 But yet an union in partition,
 Two lovely berries moulded on one stem.
 So, with two seeming bodies but one heart;
 Two of the first—like coats in heraldry,
 Due but to one and crownèd with one crest.
 And will you rend our ancient love asunder,
 To join with men in scorning your poor friend?
 It is not friendly, 'tis not maidenly.
 Our sex as well as I may chide you for it,
 Though I alone do feel the injury.

HERMIA: I am amazèd 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,
 Precious, celestial? Wherefore speaks he this
 But by your setting on, by your consent?
 What though I be not so in grace as you,
 So hung upon with love, so fortunate,
 But miserable most, to love unloved—
 This you should pity rather than despise.

HERMIA: I understand not what you mean by this.

HELENA [*to LYSANDER and DEMETRIUS*]: Ay, do, persever, counterfeit sad looks,
 Make mouths upon me when I turn my back;
 Wink each at other; hold the sweet jest up.
 So 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 [*to LYSANDER*]: Sweet, do not scorn her so.

DEMETRIUS [*to LYSANDER*]: If she cannot entreat, I can compel.

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.

I swear by that which I will lose for thee

To prove him false that says I love thee not.

DEMETRIUS [*to HELENA*]: 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?

[HERMIA clings to LYSANDER to keep him from leaving.]

LYSANDER: Away, you Ethiopel!

DEMETRIUS: No, no, sir, yield.

Seem to break loose; take on as you would follow,

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?

LYSANDER: Thy love? Out, tawny Tartar, out;

Out, loathèd med'cine; O 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?

I am as fair now as I was erewhile.

Since night you loved me, yet since night you left me.

Why then, you left me—O the gods forbid—

In earnest, shall I say?

LYSANDER: Ay, by my life,

And never did desire to see thee more.
 Therefore be out of hope, of question, doubt.
 Be certain, nothing truer; 'tis no jest
 That I do hate thee and love Helena.

HERMIA [*to HELENA*]: O me, you juggler, you cankerblossom,
 You thief of love—what, have you come by night
 And stol'n my love's heart from him?

HELENA: Fine, i' faith.
 Have you no modesty, no maiden shame,
 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
 Between our statures; she hath urged her height,
 And with her personage, her tall personage,
 Her height, forsooth, she hath prevailed with him—
 And are you grown so high in his esteem
 Because I am so dwarfish and so low?
 How low am I, thou painted maypole? Speak,
 How low am I? I am not yet so low
 But that my nails can reach unto thine eyes.

[HERMIA launches herself at HELENA.]

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

HERMIA: Lower! Hark again.

HELENA: Good Hermia, do not be so bitter with me.
 I evermore did love you, Hermia,
 Did ever keep your counsels, never wronged you—
 Save that, in love unto Demetrius
 I told him of your stealth unto this wood.
 He followed you; for love I followed him.
 But he hath chid me hence, and threatened me
 To strike me, spurn me, nay, to kill me too.
 And now, so you will let me quiet go,
 To Athens will I bear my folly back,
 And follow you no farther. Let me go.
 You see how simple and how fond I am.

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.
 She was a vixen when she went to school,
 And though she be but little, she is fierce.

HERMIA: "Little" again? Nothing but "low" and "little"?—
 Why will you suffer her to flout me thus?
 Let me come to her.

LYSANDER: Get you gone, you dwarf,
 You *minimus* of hind'ring knot-grass made,
 You bead, you acorn.

DEMETRIUS: You are too officious
 In her behalf that scorns your services.
 Let her alone. Speak not of Helena.
 Take not her part. For if thou dost intend
 Never so little show of love to her,
 Thou shalt aby it.

LYSANDER: Now she holds me not.
 Now follow, if thou dar'st, 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.
[HELENA exits.]

HERMIA: I am amazed, and know not what to say.
[HERMIA exits.]

OBERON: This is thy negligence. Still thou mistak'st,
 Or else commit'st thy knaveries willfully.

ROBIN: Believe me, king of shadows, I mistook.
 Did not you tell me I should know the man
 By the Athenian garments 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
 As this their jangling I esteem a sport.

OBERON: Thou seest these lovers seek a place to fight.
 Hie therefore, Robin, overcast the night;
 The starry welkin cover thou anon
 With drooping fog as black as Acheron,
 And lead these testy rivals so astray

As one come not within another's way.
 Like to Lysander sometime frame thy tongue,
 Then stir Demetrius up with bitter wrong;
 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,
 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,
 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 charmèd eye release
 From monster's view, and all things shall be peace.

ROBIN: 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, wand'ring here and there,
 Troop home to churchyards; damnèd spirits all
 That in cross-ways and floods have burial
 Already to their wormy beds are gone,
 For fear lest day should look their shames upon.
 They willfully themselves exiled from light,
 And must for aye consort with black-browed night.

OBERON: But we are spirits of another sort.
 I with the morning's love have oft made sport,
 And like a forester the groves may tread
 Even till the eastern gate, all fiery red,
 Opening on Neptune with fair blessèd beams
 Turns into yellow gold his salt green streams.
 But notwithstanding, haste, make no delay;
 We may effect this business yet ere day.

[OBERON sits in the audience.]

ROBIN: Up and down, up and down,
 I will lead them up and down.
 I am feared in field and town.
 Goblin, lead them up and down.

[ROBIN plunges the stage into darkness.]

Here comes one.

[Enter LYSANDER:.]

LYSANDER: Where art thou, proud Demetrius? Speak thou now.

ROBIN [*in the voice of DEMETRIUS*]: Here, villain; drawn and ready. Where art thou?

LYSANDER: I will be with thee straight.

ROBIN [*in the voice of DEMETRIUS*]: Follow me then
To plainer ground.

[Exit LYSANDER.. Enter DEMETRIUS.]

DEMETRIUS: Lysander, speak again.

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

ROBIN [*in the voice of LYSANDER*]: Thou coward, art thou bragging to the stars,
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?

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

[Exeunt ROBIN and DEMETRIUS. Enter LYSANDER:.]

LYSANDER: He goes before me, and still dares me on;
When I come where he calls, then he is gone.
The villain is much lighter heeled than I;
I followed fast, but faster he did fly,
That fallen am I in dark uneven way,
And here will rest me.

[LYSANDER lies down.]

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

[LYSANDER sleeps. Enter ROBIN and DEMETRIUS.]

ROBIN: Ho, ho, ho, coward, why com'st thou not?

DEMETRIUS: Abide me if thou dar'st, for well I wot
Thou runn'st before me, shifting every place,
And dar'st not stand nor look me in the face.
Where art thou now?

ROBIN: 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.

[DEMETRIUS lies down.]

By day's approach look to be visited.

[DEMETRIUS sleeps. Enter HELENA:.]

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

[HELENA lies down and sleeps.]

ROBIN: Yet but three? Come one more,
Two of both kinds makes up four.

[Enter HERMIA.]

Here she comes, curst and sad.
Cupid is a knavish lad
Thus to make poor females mad.

HERMIA: Never so weary, never so in woe,
Bedabbled with the dew, and torn with briers,
I can no further crawl, no further go.
My legs can keep no pace with my desires.
Here will I rest me till the break of day.

[HERMIA lies down.]

Heavens shield Lysander, if they mean a fray.

[HERMIA sleeps. ROBIN restores the lights.]

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

[ROBIN squeezes the juice on LYSANDER'S eyelids.]

When thou wak'st,
Thou tak'st
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,
Naught shall go ill,
The man shall have his mare again,
And all shall be well.

[Exit ROBIN.]

ACT 4

Scene 1.

[Enter TITANIA, BOTTOM, PEASEBLOSSOM, COBWEB, MOTE and MUSTARDSEED.]

TITANIA: Come, sit thee down upon this flow'ry bed,
While I thy amiable cheeks do coy,
And stick musk-roses in thy sleek smooth head,
And kiss thy fair large ears, my gentle joy.

BOTTOM: Where's Peaseblossom?

PEASEBLOSSOM: Ready.

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

COBWEB: Ready.

BOTTOM: Monsieur Cobweb, good monsieur, get you your weapons in your hand and kill me a red-hipped humble-bee on the top of a thistle; and, good monsieur, bring me the honeybag. Do not fret yourself too much in the action, monsieur; and, good monsieur, have a care the honeybag break not. I would be loath to have you overflowen with a honeybag, signior.

[Exit COBWEB. COBWEB becomes THESEUS.]

Where's Madam Mustardseed?

MUSTARDSEED: Ready.

[MUSTARDSEED curtsies.]

BOTTOM: Give me your neaf, Madam Mustardseed. Pray you, leave your courtesy, good madam.

MUSTARDSEED: What's your will?

BOTTOM: Nothing, good madam, but to help Cavalieri Cobweb—

BOTTOM^[cont'd]: to scratch.

PEASEBLOSSOM: Peaseblossom.

BOTTOM: I must to the barber's, madam; for methinks I am marvellous hairy about the face; and 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 us have the tongs and the bones.

[Rough rural music of tongs and bones.]

TITANIA: Or say, sweet love, what thou desir'st 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.

TITANIA: I have a venturous fairy that shall seek

The squirrel's hoard, and fetch thee off new nuts.

BOTTOM: I had rather have a handful or two of dried peas. But, I pray you, let none of your people stir me. I have an exposition of sleep come upon me.

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

Fairies, be gone, and be always away.

[Exeunt MOTE, PEASEBLOSSOM and MUSTARDSEED. MOTE becomes STARVELING. PEASEBLOSSOM becomes HIPPOLYTA. MUSTARDSEED becomes QUINCE.]

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!

[BOTTOM and TITANIA snuggle and sleep. Music ends. Enter ROBIN. OBERON rises.]

OBERON: Welcome, good Robin. Seest thou this sweet sight?

Her dotage now I do begin to pity,
 For meeting her of late behind the wood,
 Seeking sweet favors for this hateful fool,
 I did upbraid her and fall out with her,
 For she his hairy temples then had rounded
 With coronet of fresh and fragrant flowers,
 And that same dew which sometime on the buds
 Was wont to swell like round and orient pearls
 Stood now within the pretty flow'rets' eyes,
 Like tears that did their own disgrace bewail.
 When I had at my pleasure taunted her,
 And she in mild terms begged my patience,
 I then did ask of her her changeling child,
 Which straight she gave me, and her fairy sent
 To bear him to my bower in fairyland.
 And now I have the boy, I will undo
 This hateful imperfection of her eyes.
 And, gentle puck, take this transformèd scalp
 From off the head of this Athenian swain,
 That he, awaking when the other do,
 May all to Athens back again repair,
 And think no more of this night's accidents
 But as the fierce vexation of a dream.
 But first I will release the Fairy Queen.

[OBERON drops the juice on TITANIA's eyelids.]

Be as thou wast wont to be,
 See as thou was wont to see.
 Dian's bud o'er Cupid's flower
 Hath such force and blessèd power.

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

TITANIA *[waking]*: My Oberon, what visions have I seen!

Methought I was enamoured 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 a while.—Robin, take off this head.—

Titania, music call, and strike more dead
 Than common sleep of all these five the sense.

TITANIA: Music, ho—music such as charmeth sleep.

[Soft music as from a recorder. ROBIN removes the asshead off BOTTOM.]

ROBIN: Now when thou wak'st, with thine own fool's eyes peep.

OBERON: Sound, music.

[Music changes to a stately dance.]

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

[OBERON and TITANIA dance.]

Now thou and I are new in amity,
And will tomorrow 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.

[Offstage, the lark calls.]

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

OBERON: Then, my queen, in silence sad
Trip we after night's shade.
We the globe can compass soon,
Swifter than the wand'ring moon.

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 TITANIA, OBERON and ROBIN. TITANIA becomes SNUG. OBERON becomes SNOUT. ROBIN becomes PHILOSTRATE. Distant hunting horns sound and crescendo with the light of dawn as the stately night music dies away. Enter THESEUS, HIPPOLYTA, EGEUS and PHILOSTRATE.]

THESEUS: Now, since we have the vanguard of the day,
My love shall hear the music of my hounds.
We will, fair queen, up to the mountain's top,
And mark the musical confusion
Of hounds and echo in conjunction.

HIPPOLYTA: I was with Hercules and Cadmus once
When in a wood of Crete they bayed the bear
With hounds of Sparta. Never did I hear
Such gallant chiding; for besides the groves,
The skies, the fountains, every region near
Seemed all one mutual cry. I never heard
So musical a discord, such sweet thunder.

THESEUS: My hounds are bred out of the Spartan kind,
So flewed, so sanded; and their heads are hung
With ears that sweep away the morning dew,
Crook-kneed, and dewlapped like Thessalian bulls,
Slow in pursuit, but matched in mouth like bells,
Each under each. A cry more tuneable
Was never holla'd to nor cheered with horn

In Crete, in Sparta, nor in Thessaly.
 Judge when you hear. But, soft: what nymphs are these?
 EGEUS: My lord, this is my daughter here asleep,
 And this Lysander; this Demetrius is;
 This Helena, old Nedar's Helena.
 I wonder of their being here together.
 THESEUS: No doubt they rose up early to observe
 The rite of May; and, hearing our intent,
 Came here in grace of our solemnity.
 But speak, Egeus: is not this the day
 That Hermia should give answer of her choice?
 EGEUS: It is, my lord.
 THESEUS: Go bid the huntsmen wake them with their horns.
[Exit PHILOSTRATE.]
 PHILOSTRATE *[offstage]*: Wind horns!
[Sound of hunting horns. DEMETRIUS, LYSANDER, HERMIA, and HELENA awake and start up. Enter PHILOSTRATE.]
 THESEUS: Good morrow, friends. Saint Valentine is past.
 Begin these wood-birds but to couple now?
 LYSANDER: Pardon, my lord.
[LYSANDER, HERMIA, DEMETRIUS and HELENA kneel to THESEUS.]
 THESEUS: I pray you all, stand up.
[LYSANDER, HERMIA, DEMETRIUS and HELENA stand.]
[to LYSANDER and DEMETRIUS] I know you two are rival enemies.
 How comes this gentle concord in the world,
 That hatred is so far from jealousy
 To sleep by hate, and fear no enmity?
 LYSANDER: My lord, I shall reply amazedly,
 Half 'sleep, half waking. But as yet, I swear,
 I cannot truly say how I came here,
 But as I think—for truly would I speak,
 And, now I do bethink me, so it is—
 I came with Hermia hither. Our intent
 Was to be gone from Athens where we might,
 Without the peril of the Athenian law—
 EGEUS *[to THESEUS]*: Enough, enough, my lord, you have enough.
 I beg the law, the law upon his head.—
 They would have stol'n away, they would, Demetrius,
 Thereby to have defeated you and me—
 You of your wife, and me of my consent,
 Of my consent that she should be your wife.
 DEMETRIUS *[to THESEUS]*: My lord, fair Helen told me of their stealth,
 Of this their purpose hither to this wood,
 And I in fury hither followed them,
 Fair Helena in fancy following me.
 But, my good lord, I 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,
 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 betrothed ere I see Hermia.
 But like in sickness did I loathe this food;
 But, as in health come to my natural taste,
 Now I do wish it, love it, long for it,
 And will for evermore be true to it.

THESEUS: Fair lovers, you are fortunately met.
 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.—
 And, for the morning now is something worn,
 Our purposed hunting shall be set aside.
 Away with us to Athens. Three and three,
 We'll hold a feast in great solemnity.
 Come, Hippolyta.

[Exeunt THESEUS, HIPPOLYTA, EGEUS, and PHILOSTRATE.]

DEMETRIUS: These things seem small and undistinguishable,
 Like far-off mountains turned into clouds.

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,
 Mine own and not mine own.

DEMETRIUS: It seems to me
 That yet we sleep, we dream. Do not you think
 The Duke was here and bid us follow him?

HERMIA: Yea, and my father.

HELENA: And Hippolyta.

LYSANDER: And he did bid us follow to the temple.

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

[Exeunt HERMIA, HELENA, LYSANDER and DEMETRIUS. BOTTOM awakes.]

BOTTOM: When my cue comes, call me, and I will answer. My next is “most fair Pyramus.” Heigh-ho. Penny Quince? Flute the bellows-mender? Snout the tinker? Starveling? God's my life! Stol'n hence, and left me asleep?—I have had a most rare vision. I have had a dream past the wit of man to say what dream it was. Man is but an ass if he go about to expound this dream. Methought I was—there is no man can tell what. Methought I was, and methought I had—but man is but a patched fool if he will offer to say what methought I had. The eye of man hath not heard, the ear of man hath

not seen, man's hand is not able to taste, his tongue to conceive, nor his heart to report what my dream was. I will get Penny 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.

[Exit BOTTOM.]

Scene 2.

[Enter QUINCE, FLUTE, SNOUT, and STARVELING.]

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

STARVELING: He cannot be heard of. Out of doubt he is transported.

FLUTE: If he come not, then the play is marred. It goes not forward. Doth it?

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

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

QUINCE: Yea, and the best person, too; and he is a very paramour for a sweet voice.

FLUTE: You must say "paragon". A paramour is, God bless us, a thing of naught.

[Enter SNUG.]

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

FLUTE: O sweet bully Bottom! Thus hath he lost sixpence a day during his life. He could not have scaped sixpence a day. An the Duke had not given him sixpence a day for playing Pyramus, I'll be hanged. He would have deserved it. Sixpence a day in Pyramus, or nothing.

[Enter BOTTOM.]

BOTTOM: Where are these lads? Where are these hearts?

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

BOTTOM: Masters, I am to discourse wonders; but ask me not what. For if I tell you, I am not true Athenian. I will tell you everything right as it fell out.

QUINCE: Let us hear, sweet Bottom.

BOTTOM: Not a word of me. All that I will tell you is that the Duke hath dined. Get your apparel together, good strings to your beards, new ribbons to your pumps. Meet presently at the palace; every man look over his part. For the short and the long is, our play is preferred. In any case let Thisbe have clean linen, and let not her that plays the lion pare her nails, for they shall hang out for the lion's claws. And, most dear actors, eat no onions nor garlic, for we are to utter sweet breath, and I do not doubt but to hear them say it is a sweet comedy. No more words. Away, go, away!

[Exeunt BOTTOM, QUINCE, FLUTE, SNUG, STARVELING and SNOUT.]

ACT 5

Scene 1.

[Enter THESEUS, HIPPOLYTA and PHILOSTRATE.]

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.
 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.
 One sees more devils than vast hell can hold:
 That is the madman. The lover, all as frantic,
 Sees Helen's beauty in a brow of Egypt.
 The poet's eye, in a fine frenzy rolling,
 Doth glance from heaven to earth, from earth to heaven,
 And as imagination bodies forth
 The forms of things unknown, the poet's pen
 Turns them to shapes, and gives to airy nothing
 A local habitation and a name.
 Such tricks hath strong imagination
 That if it would but apprehend some joy
 It comprehends some bringer of that joy;
 Or in the night, imagining some fear,
 How easy is a bush supposed a bear!

HIPPOLYTA: But all the story of the night told over,
 And all their minds transfigured so together,
 More witnesseth than fancy's images,
 And grows to something of great constancy;
 But, howsoever, strange and admirable.

[Enter LYSANDER:, DEMETRIUS:, HERMIA, and HELENA.]

THESEUS: Here come the lovers, full of joy and mirth.
 Joy, gentle friends, joy and fresh days of love
 Accompany your hearts.

LYSANDER: More than to us
 Wait in your royal walks, your board, your bed.

THESEUS: Come now; what masques, what dances shall we have,
 To wear away this long age of three hours
 Between our after-supper and bed-time?
 Where is our usual manager of mirth?
 What revels are in hand? Is there no play
 To ease the anguish of a torturing hour?
 Call Philostrate.

PHILOSTRATE: Here, mighty Theseus.

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

PHILOSTRATE: Here is a brief how many sports are ripe.
 Make choice of which your highness will see first.
[reads] “The battle with the Centaurs, to be sung
 By an Athenian eunuch to the harp.”

THESEUS: We'll none of that. That have I told my love
 In glory of my kinsman Hercules.

PHILOSTRATE *[reads]*: “The riot of the tipsy bacchanals
 Tearing the Thracian singer in their rage.”

THESEUS: That is an old device, and it was played
 When I from Thebes came last a conqueror.

PHILOSTRATE *[reads]*: “The thrice-three muses mourning for the death
 Of learning, late deceased in beggary.”

THESEUS: That is some satire, keen and critical,
 Not sorting with a nuptial ceremony.

PHILOSTRATE *[reads]*: “A tedious brief scene of young Pyramus
 And his love Thisbe: very tragical mirth.”

THESEUS: “Merry” and “tragical”! “Tedious” and “brief”?—
 That is hot ice and wondrous strange black snow.
 How shall we find the concord of this discord?

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

THESEUS: What are they that do play it?

PHILOSTRATE: Hard-handed men that work in Athens here,
 Which never laboured in their minds till now,
 And now have toiled their unbreathed memories
 With this same play against your nuptial.

THESEUS: And we will hear it.

PHILOSTRATE: No, my noble lord,
 It is not for you. I have heard it over,
 And it is nothing, nothing in the world,
 Unless you can find sport in their intents
 To do you service.

THESEUS: I will hear that play;
 For never anything can be amiss
 When simpleness and duty tender it.

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

[Exit PHILOSTRATE.]

HIPPOLYTA: I love not to see wretchedness o'ercharged,
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.

Our sport shall be to take what they mistake,
And what poor duty cannot do,
Noble respect takes it in might, not merit.
Where I have come, great clerks have purposèd
To greet me with premeditated welcomes,
Where I have seen them shiver and look pale,
Make periods in the midst of sentences,
Throttle their practised accent in their fears,
And in conclusion dumbly have broke off,
Not paying me a welcome. Trust me, sweet,
Out of this silence yet I picked a welcome,
And in the modesty of fearful duty
I read as much as from the rattling tongue
Of saucy and audacious eloquence.
Love, therefore, and tongue-tied simplicity
In least speak most, to my capacity.

[Enter PHILOSTRATE.]

PHILOSTRATE: So please your grace, the prologue is addressed.

THESEUS: Let him approach.

[Flourish of trumpets. Enter QUINCE, as Prologue, with a promptbook; she bows to THESEUS and HIPPOLYTA.]

QUINCE: If we offend, it is with our good will.

That you should think, we come not to offend
But with good will. To show our simple skill,
That is the true beginning of our end.
Consider then we come but in despite.

We do not come as minding to content you,
Our true intent is. All for your delight
We are not here. That you should here repent you
The actors are at hand; and by their show
You shall know all that you are like to know.

[QUINCE steps aside and opens the promptbook.]

THESEUS: This woman doth not stand upon points.

LYSANDER: She hath rid her prologue like a rough colt; she knows not the stop.

HIPPOLYTA: Indeed, she hath played on this prologue like a child on a recorder: a sound, but not in government.

THESEUS: Her speech was like a tangled chain: nothing impaired, but all disordered.
Who is next?

[Enter SNOUT as Wall. He steps forward and bows.]

SNOUT: 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 Thisbe
 Did whisper often, very secretly.
 This loam, this roughcast, and this stone doth show
 That I am that same wall; the truth is so.
 And this the cranny is, right and sinister,
 Through which the fearful lovers are to whisper.

THESEUS: Would you desire lime and hair to speak better?

[SNOUT steps forward and bows.]

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

[Enter BOTTOM as Pyramus.]

THESEUS: Pyramus draws near the wall. Silence.

[SNOUT steps forward and bows.]

PYRAMUS: O grim-looking night, O night with hue so black,

O night which ever art when day is not;
 O night, O night, alack, alack, alack,
 I fear my Thisbe'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,
 Show me thy chink, to blink through with mine eyne.

[SNOUT shows his chink.]

Thanks, courteous wall. Jove shield thee well for this.

But what see I? No Thisbe 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.

[SNOUT steps forward and bows.]

BOTTOM: No, in truth, sir, he should not. "Deceiving me" is Thisbe'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.

[Enter FLUTE as THISBE.]

Yonder she comes.

FLUTE: O wall, full often hast thou heard my moans

For parting my fair Pyramus and me.

My cherry lips have often kissed thy stones,
 Thy stones with lime and hair knit up in thee.

BOTTOM: I see a voice. Now will I to the chink

To spy an I can hear my Thisbe's face.

Thisbe?

FLUTE: My love—thou art my love, I think.

BOTTOM: Think what thou wilt, I am thy lover's grace,
 And like Lemander am I trusty still.

FLUTE: And I like Helen, till the fates me kill.

BOTTOM: Not Shafalus to Procrus was so true.

FLUTE: As Shafalus to Procrus, I to you.

BOTTOM: O kiss me through the hole of this vile wall.

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

BOTTOM: Wilt thou at Ninny's tomb meet me straightway?

FLUTE: Tide life, tide death, I come without delay.

[Exeunt BOTTOM and FLUTE severally.]

SNOUT: Thus have I, Wall, my part dischargèd so;

And, being done, thus Wall away doth go.

[Exeunt SNOUT.]

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.

THESEUS: If we imagine no worse of them than they of themselves, they may pass for excellent men.

[Enter SNUG as Lion and STARVELING as Moonshine, with a lantern, thorn bush and a dog.]

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

[SNUG and STARVELING curtsy to THESEUS and HIPPOLYTA.]

HIPPOLYTA: I wonder if the lion be to speak.

SNUG: You, ladies, you, whose gentle hearts do fear

The smallest monstrous mouse that creeps on floor,

May now, perchance, both quake and tremble here

When lion rough in wildest rage doth roar.

Then know that I as Snug the joiner am

A lion fell, nor else no lion's dam:

For if I should as lion come in strife

Into this place, 'twere pity on my life.

THESEUS: A very gentle beast, and of a good conscience.

[SNUG curtsies to THESEUS and HIPPOLYTA.]

Let us listen to the moon.

[STARVELING curtsies to THESEUS and HIPPOLYTA.]

STARVELING: This lantern doth the hornèd moon present,

Myself the man i' th' moon do seem to be—

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

[STARVELING curtsies to THESEUS and HIPPOLYTA.]

DEMETRIUS: She dares not come there for the candle; for you see it is already in snuff.

STARVELING: This lantern doth the hornèd moon present—

HIPPOLYTA: I am awearry of this moon. Would she would change!

[STARVELING curtsies to THESEUS and HIPPOLYTA.]

THESEUS: It appears by her small light of discretion that she is in the wane: but yet in courtesy, in all reason, we must stay the time.

LYSANDER: Proceed, Moon.

STARVELING: All that I have to say is to tell you that the lantern is the moon, I, the man i' th' moon, this thorn bush, my thorn bush, and this dog my dog.

DEMETRIUS: Why, all these should be in the lantern, for all these are in the moon. But silence; here comes Thisbe.

[Enter FLUTE as Thisbe.]

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

[FLUTE waits. SNUG looks expectantly offstage. FLUTE stares accusingly at SNUG.]

SNUG: Oh!

[SNUG roars. FLUTE drops Thisbe's mantle and runs off.]

DEMETRIUS: Well roared, lion.

THESEUS: Well run, Thisbe.

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

[SNUG worries FLUTE's mantle.]

THESEUS: Well moused, lion.

[Enter BOTTOM as Pyramus.]

DEMETRIUS: And then came Pyramus.

[Exit SNUG.]

LYSANDER: And so the lion vanished.

BOTTOM: Sweet moon, I thank thee for thy sunny beams.

I thank thee, moon, for shining now so bright;

For by thy gracious, golden glittering gleams,

I trust to take of truest Thisbe sight.

But stay, O spite!

But mark, poor knight,

What dreadful dole is here?

Eyes, do you see?

How can it be?

O dainty duck, O dear!

Thy mantle good,

What, stained with blood?

Approach, ye furies fell.

O fates, come, come,

Cut thread and thrum,

Quail, crush, conclude, and quell!

THESEUS: This passion, and the death of a dear friend, would go near to make a man look sad.

HIPPOLYTA: Beshrew my heart, but I pity the man.

BOTTOM: O wherefore, nature, didst thou lions frame,

Since lion vile hath here deflowered my dear?—

Which is—no, no, which *was*—the fairest dame

That lived, that loved, that liked, that looked with cheer.

Come, tears, confound;

Out, sword, and wound

The pap of Pyramus.

Ay, that left pap,

Where heart doth hop.

Thus die I, thus, thus, thus.

[BOTTOM as Pyramus stabs himself thrice.]

Now am I dead,

Now am I fled,

My soul is in the sky.

Tongue, lose thy light;

Moon, take thy flight.

[Exit STARVELING.]

Now die, die, die, die, die.

[BOTTOM as Pyramus dies.]

DEMETRIUS: No die but an ace for him; for he is but one.

LYSANDER: Less than an ace, man; for he is dead; he is nothing.

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

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

THESEUS: She will find him by starlight.

[Enter FLUTE as Thisbe.]

Here she comes, and her passion ends the play.

HIPPOLYTA: Methinks she should not use a long one for such a Pyramus. I hope she will be brief.

DEMETRIUS: A mote will turn the balance, which Pyramus, which Thisbe, is the better—he for a man, God warrant us; she for a woman, God bless us.

LYSANDER: She hath spied him already with those sweet eyes.

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

O Pyramus, arise.

Speak, speak. Quite dumb?

Dead, dead? A tomb

Must cover thy sweet eyes.

These lily lips,

This cherry nose,

These yellow cowslip cheeks,

Are gone, are gone.

Lovers, make moan.

His eyes were green as leeks.

O sisters Three,

Come, come to me

With hands as pale as milk.

Lay them in gore,

Since you have shore

With shears his thread of silk.

Tongue, not a word.

Come, trusty sword,

Come, blade, my breast imbrue.

[FLUTE as Thisbe stabs himself.]

And farewell friends,

Thus Thisbe ends.
Adieu, adieu, adieu.

[FLUTE as Thisbe dies.]

THESEUS: Moonshine and Lion are left to bury the dead.

DEMETRIUS: Ay, and Wall too.

BOTTOM: No, I assure you, the wall is down that parted their fathers.

[BOTTOM and FLUTE stand up.]

Will it please you to see the epilogue or to hear a bergamask dance between our company?

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

[The dance of BOTTOM and FLUTE is joined by SNUG, SNOUT, QUINCE and STARVELING; they exit.]

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

*[Exeunt THESEUS, HIPPOLYTA, LYSANDER, HERMIA, DEMETRIUS and HELENA.
PHILOSTRATE becomes ROBIN.]*

ROBIN: If we shadows have offended,
Think but this, and all is mended:
That you have but slumbered here,
While these visions did appear;
And this weak and idle theme,
No more yielding but a dream,
Gentles, do not reprehend.
If you pardon, we will mend.
And as I am an honest puck,
If we have unearnèd luck
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,
And Robin shall restore amends.

[Exit ROBIN.]