

A Midsummer Night's Dream (Abridged 90 mins)

Rehearsal Script

CHARACTERS

THESEUS
HERMIA
HELENA
FLUTE
SNUG
OBERON
COBWEB
PHILOSTRATE

HIPPOLYTA
DEMETRIUS
QUINCE
STARVELING
PUCK
TITANIA
MOTH

EGEUS
LYSANDER
BOTTOM
SNOUT
FAIRY
PEASE
MUSTARD

ACT 1, SCENE 1. Athens. The Palace of Theseus

(Enter Theseus and Hippolyta)

THESEUS Now fair Hippolyta, our wedding
Draws near; 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;
And then the moon, like to a silver bow
New-bent in heaven shall behold the night
Of our solemnities.

THESEUS 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 consent to marry her.
Stand forth, Lysander: and my gracious duke,
This man hath stole the heart of my child;
Thou, thou, Lysander, thou hast given her poems,
And interchanged love-tokens with my child:
Thou hast by moonlight at her window sung,
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:
She must obey me and marry this gentleman
Or, according to our law, she must die!

THESEUS What say you, Hermia? Be advised fair maid:
To you your father should be as a god;
He has all the power and you have none.
Besides, I know not what your problem here is.
Demetrius is a worthy gentleman.

HERMIA So is Lysander.

THESEUS In himself he is;
But your father demands you marry the other.

HERMIA I would my father looked but with my eyes.

THESEUS Rather your eyes must see things as your father sees them!

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.

THESEUS Either to die or to be forever exiled
Forever from the society of men as a nun,
A lonely servant to altar of the goddess Diana.

HERMIA Then I must either die or become a nun?

THESEUS These are your only choices.

HERMIA Then I will die if these are my choices,
But I will never consent to marry a man I love not.

THESEUS Take time to pause; and, four days from now-
The same day I marry my sweet Hippolyta,
Upon that day either prepare to die
For disobedience to your father's will,
Or else to wed Demetrius, as he would

DEMETRIUS Relent, sweet Hermia: and, Lysander, yield
Thy crazed title to my certain right.

LYSANDER You have her father's love, Demetrius;
Let me have Hermia's: why not marry him?

EGEUS Scornful Lysander! True, he hath my love,
And what is mine by 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 swear it to his head,
Made love to Nedar's daughter, Helena,
He won Helena's heart; and she, sweet lady, loves,
Devoutly loves, and dotes in idolatry,
Upon this spotted and fickle man.

THESEUS I must confess that I have heard so much,
And with Demetrius thought to have spoke thereof;
But, being over-full of my upcoming marriage,
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, come along:
I have marriage plans to arrange
And you must help me with the arrangements!

EGEUS With duty and desire we follow you.

(Exit all but Lysander and Hermia)

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

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

LYSANDER The course of true love never did run smooth!
A good persuasion: therefore, hear me, Hermia.
I have a widow aunt, a dowager
Of great revenue, and she hath no child:

From Athens is her house remote seven leagues;
And she respects me as her only son.
There, gentle Hermia, may I marry thee;
And to that place the sharp Athenian law
Cannot pursue us. If thou lovest me then,
Steal forth thy father's house to-morrow night;
And in the wood, a league without the town,
There will I stay for thee.

HERMIA My good Lysander!
I swear to thee, by Cupid's strongest bow,
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 beauty: O happy beauty!
Your eyes are stars to him; and your voice he adores!
If only I had your face, your voice, your charms,
Then Demetrius would love me and not you!
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 escape this place

LYSANDER Helena, to you our minds we will unfold:
Tomorrow night, when darkness comes
Through Athens' gates have we devised to run away.

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!
Keep word, Lysander: we must starve our sight
From lover's food till morrow deep midnight.

LYSANDER I will, my Hermia.

(Exit Hermia)

LYSANDER Helena, adieu:
As you love him, may Demetrius dote of you!

(Exit Lysander)

HELENA How happy does Hermia seem to 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 err, admiring of his qualities.
Love looks not with the eyes, but with the mind;
And therefore is winged Cupid painted blind:
Nor hath Love's mind of any judgement taste;
Wings and no eyes figure unheedy haste:
And therefore is Love said to be a child,
Because in choice he is oft so beguiled.
Before Demetrius looked on Hermia's eyes,
He hailed down oaths that he was only mine;
But 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 I will also go, pursuing him!

I will betray my friend Hermia, because I have no choice.
My love for Demetrius is so strong it makes me weak!
And in the woods my true love I will seek!

(Exit Helena)

ACT 1, SCENE 2. Athens. Quince's House.

(Enter Quince, Snug, Bottom. Flute, Snout and Starveling)

QUINCE Is all our company here?

BOTTOM You were best to call them generally, man by man, according to the script.

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

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

QUINCE Marry, our play is, The most lamentable comedy, and most cruel death of Pyramus and Thisbe.

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

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

BOTTOM Ready. Name what part I am for, and proceed.

QUINCE You, Nick Bottom, are set down for Pyramus.

BOTTOM What is Pyramus? A lover, or a tyrant?

QUINCE A lover, that kills himself most gallant for love.

BOTTOM That will ask some tears in the true performing of it: if I do it, let the audience look to their eyes; I will move storms, I will condole in some measure.

QUINCE Francis Flute, the bellows-mender.

FLUTE Here, Peter Quince.

QUINCE Flute, you must take Thisbe on you.

FLUTE What is Thisbe? A wandering knight?

QUINCE It is the lady that Pyramus must love.

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

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

BOTTOM And I may hide my face, let me play Thisbe too, I'll speak in a monstrous little voice.
'Thisbe, Thisbe;' Ah, Pyramus, lover dear! Thy Thisbe dear, and lady dear!'

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

BOTTOM Well, proceed.

QUINCE Robin Starveling, the tailor.

STARVELING Here, Peter Quince.

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

SNOUT Here, Peter Quince.

QUINCE You, Pyramus' father: myself, Thisbe's father. Snug, the joiner, you, the lion's part: and, I hope, here is a play fitted.

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

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

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

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

ALL That would hang us, every mother's son.

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

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

- BOTTOM** Well, I will undertake it. What beard were I best to play it in?
- QUINCE** Why, what you will.
- BOTTOM** I will discharge it in either your straw-coloured beard, your orange-tawny beard, or your purple-in-grain beard.
- QUINCE** Masters, here are your parts: and I am to entreat you, request you and desire you, to know them by to-morrow night; and meet me in the palace wood, a mile without the town, by moonlight; there will we rehearse.
- 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.
- BOTTOM** Enough; hold or cut bow-strings.

(Exit all)

ACT 2, SCENE 1. A Wood Near Athens

(Enter, from opposite sides a Fairy and Puck)

PUCK How now, spirit! Whither wander you?

FAIRY Over hill, over dale,
Thorough bush, thorough brier,
Over park, over pale,
Thorough flood, thorough fire,
I do wander everywhere,
Swifter than the moon's sphere;
And I serve the fairy queen,
To dew her orbs upon the green.

PUCK The king does keep his party here tonight:
Take heed the queen come not within his sight;
For Oberon is filled with wrath
Because the queen has stolen the child he loves,
A lovely boy, taken from an Indian King.
And jealous Oberon would have the child
To run with him and trace the forests wild;
But she withholds the loved boy,
Crowns him with flowers and makes him all her joy:
And now the king and queen do quarrel so
We live in fear to see their anger grow!

FAIRY Either I mistake your shape and making quite,
Or else you are that shrewd and knavish sprite
Called Robin Goodfellow: are not you he
That frights the maidens of the villager;
Those that Hobgoblin call you and sweet Puck,
You do their work, and they shall have good luck:
Are not you he?

PUCK Thou speak'st aright;
I am that merry wanderer of the night.
I jest to Oberon and make him smile
But, make room, fairy! Here comes Oberon.

FAIRY And here my mistress. Would that he were gone!

(Enter, from one side, Oberon; from the other, Titania, with Peaseblossom, Cobweb, Mustardseed and Moth)

OBERON Ill met by moonlight, proud Titania.

TITANIA What, jealous Oberon! Fairies, skip hence:
I have forsworn his bed and company.

OBERON Tarry, rash wanton: am not I thy lord?

TITANIA Then I must be thy lady: but I know
When thou hast stolen away from fairy land.
Have you come to see your sweetheart Hippolyta
Wedded to Theseus, 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?
When Theseus marries Hippolyta
It is you who will feel great hurt!

TITANIA Why must we always be fighting?

OBERON The answer to our quarrel lies in you:
Why should Titania cross her Oberon?
I do but beg a little changeling boy,
To be my page.

TITANIA Set your heart at rest:
The fairy land buys not the child of me.
His mother was a votaress of my order:
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's 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. I must away!
We shall fight downright, if I longer stay.

(Exit Titania)

OBERON Well, go thy way: thou shalt not move from this grove
Till I torment thee for this injury.
My gentle Puck, come hither. Thou rememberest
Since once I sat upon a promontory,
And heard a mermaid on a dolphin's back
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.

PUCK I remember.

OBERON That very time I saw, but thou couldst not,
Flying between the cold moon and the earth,
Cupid with his bow shot his shaft.
Yet marked I where the bolt of Cupid fell:
If fell upon a little western flower,
Before milk-white, now purple with love's wound,
And maidens call it love-in-idleness.
Fetch me that flower; the herb I showed thee once:
The juice of it on sleeping eye-lids laid
Will make or man or woman fall madly in love
With the next live creature that it sees.
Fetch me this herb; and be thou quickly again.

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

(Exit Puck)

OBERON Having once this juice,
I'll watch Titania when she is asleep,
And drop the liquor of it in her eyes.
The next thing then she waking looks upon,
Be it on lion, bear, or wolf, or bull,
On meddling monkey, or on busy ape,
She shall pursue it with the soul of love:
And before I release her from this potion's power,
I'll make her render up the boy to me.
But who comes here? I am invisible;
And I will overhear their conference.

(Enter Demetrius and 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 stolen unto this wood;
And here am I unhappy in 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;
You pull me toward you because I love 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; 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 worser 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 You cast too much doubt on your modesty
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
Will bring shame upon your name.

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 marsh,
And leave thee to the mercy of wild beasts.

HELENA The wildest hath not such a heart as you.
Run when you will, yet I will follow you.

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!

(Exit Demetrius)

HELENA I'll follow thee well, nymph: Before Demetrius leaves this grove,
Thou shalt flee from him, and he shall seek thy love.

(Enter Puck)

OBERON Hast thou the flower there, whose juice produces love? Welcome, wander.

PUCK Ay, there it is.

OBERON I pray thee, give it to me.
I know a bank where the wild thyme blows,
There sleeps Titania sometime of the night,
And with the juice of this I'll streak her eyes,
And make her full of hateful fantasies.
Take thou some of it, and seek through this grove:
A sweet Athenian lady is in love
With a disdainful youth: anoint his eyes;
But do it when the next thing that he sees
May be that same 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 before the first cock crow.

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

(Exit Puck and Oberon)

ACT 2, SCENE 2. Another Part of the Wood

(Enter Titania, she stretches, yawns, then lies down to rest. An owl hoots briefly)

TITANIA Oh, clamorous owl that nightly hoots and wonders
At our quaint spirits, keep yourself away that I may rest.

(Titania sleeps)

(Enter 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 lynx, or cat, or bear,
Leopard, or boar and bristled hair,
In thy eye that shall appear
When thou wakest, it is thy dear:
Wake when some vile thing is near.

(Enter Oberon and enter Lysander and Hermia)

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

HERMIA Be it so, Lysander: find you out a bed;
For I upon this bank will rest my head.

LYSANDER One turf shall serve as a 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!
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 interchained with an oath;
So then two bosoms and a single troth.
Then by your side no bed-room me deny;
For lying so, Hermia, I do not lie.

HERMIA Lysander riddles very prettily:
Now much beshrew my manners and my pride,
If Hermia meant to say Lysander lied.
But, gentle friend, for love and courtesy
Lie further off; in human modesty,
Such separation as may well be said
Becomes a virtuous bachelor and a maid,
So far be distant; and, good night, sweet friend:
Thy love 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!

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

(They sleep, as Puck enters)

PUCK Through the forest have I gone.
But Athenian found I none,
On whose eyes I might approve
This flower's force in stirring love.
Night and silence. – Who is here?
Garment of Athens he doth wear:
This is he, my master said,
Despised the Athenian maid;
And here the maiden, sleeping sound,
On the dank and dirty ground.
Pretty soul! She dares not lie
Near the man she loves, this hateful man.
Upon thy eyes I throw
All the power this charm doth owe me.
When thou wakest, let love forbid
Sleep his seat on thy eyelid:
So awake when I am gone;
For I must now to Oberon.

(Enter Puck. Enter Demetrius and Helena, running.)

HELENA Stay, though thou kill me, sweet Demetrius.

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

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

DEMETRIUS Stay, on thy peril: I alone will go.

(Exit 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 blessed and attractive eyes.
How came her eyes so bright? Not with salt tears:
If so, my eyes are oftener washed than hers.
No, no, I am 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 eyes?
But who is here? Lysander! On the ground!
Dead? Or asleep? I see no blood, no wound.
Lysander if you live, good sir, awake.

LYSANDER (Awaking) And run through fire I will for thy sweet sake.
Transparent Helena! Nature shows art,
That through thy bosom makes me see thy heart.
Where is Demetrius? O, how fit a word
Is that vile name to perish on my sword!

HELENA Do not say so, Lysander; say not so
What though he love your Hermia? Lord, what though?
Yet Hermia still loves you: then be content.

LYSANDER Content with Hermia! No; I do repent
The tedious minutes I with her have spent.
Not Hermia but Helena I love:
Who will not change a raven for a dove?
The will of man is by his reason 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 mockery born?
When at your hands did I deserve this scorn?
Is it not enough, is it not enough, young man,

That I did never, no, nor ever 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,
And, all my powers, address your love and might
To honour Helen and to be her knight!

(Exit Lysander)

HERMIA (Awaking) Help me , Lysander, help me! Do thy best
To pluck this crawling serpent from my breast!
Ay me, for pity! What a dream was here!
Lysander, look how I do quake with fear:
Methought a serpent eat my heart away,
And you sat smiling at his cruel pray.
Lysander! What, removed? Lysander! Lord!
What, out of hearing? Gone? No sound, no word?
Alack, where are you speak, and if you hear,
Speak, of all loves! I swoon almost with fear.
No? Then I well perceive you all not nigh
Either death or you I'll find immediately.

(Exit Hermia)

ACT 3, SCENE 1. 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.

BOTTOM Peter 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?

SNOUT That's a perilous fear!

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

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

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

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

SNOUT Will not the ladies be afeard of the lion?

STARVELING I fear it, I promise you.

BOTTOM Masters, you ought to consider with yourselves: to bring in- God shield us!- a lion among ladies, is a most dreadful thing; for there is not a more fearful wild-fowl than your lion living; and we ought to look to't.

SNOUT Therefore another prologue must tell he is not a lion.

BOTTOM Nay, you must name his name, and half his face must be seen through the lion's neck: and he himself must speak through, saying this, 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: ,y life for yours. If you think I come hither as a lion, it were pity of my life: no I am no such thing; I am a man as other men are,’ and there indeed let him name his name, and tell them plainly he is Snug the joiner.

QUINCE Well It shall be so. But there is two hard things; that is, to bring the moonlight into a chamber; for, you know, Pyramus and Thisbe meet my moonlight.

SNOUT Doth the moon shine that night we play our play?

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

QUINCE Yes, it doth shine that night.

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

QUINCE Ay, or else one must come in with a bush of thorns and a lantern, and say he comes to disfigure, or to present, the person of Moonshine. Then, there is another thing: we must have 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 this, 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 you parts. Pyramus, you begin: when you have spoken your speech, enter into that brake: and so every one according to his cue.

(Enter Puck behind)

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

QUINCE Speak, Pyramus. Thisbe, stand forth.

BOTTOM Thisbe, the flowers of odious savours sweet, -

QUINCE Odours, odours.

BOTTOM - odours savours 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)

PUCK A stranger Pyramus than e'er played here.

(Exit Puck)

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.

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

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

(Enter Puck, and Bottom with an ass's head)

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

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

(Exit Quince, Snug, Flute, Snout and Starveling)

PUCK I'll follow you, I'll lead you about a round,
Through bog, through bush, through brake, through brier:
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 Puck)

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

(Enter Snout)

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

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

(Exit Snout and enter Quince)

QUINCE Bless thee, Bottom! Bless thee! Thou art translated.

(Exit Quince)

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

TITANIA (Awaking) What angel awakes me from my flowery bed?
I pray thee, gentle mortal, speak again:
Mine ear is much enamoured of thy voice;
So is mine eye enthralled to thy shape;
And thy fair virtue's force perforce doth move me
On the first view to say, to swear, I love thee.

BOTTOM Methinks, mistress, you should have little reason for that: and yet, to say the truth, reason and love keep little company together now-days; the more the pity that some honest neighbours will not make them friends. Nay, I can jest upon occasion.

TITANIA Thou art as wise as thou art beautiful.

BOTTOM Not so, neither: but if I had wit enough to get out of this wood, I have enough to serve mine own turn.

TITANIA Out of this wood so not desire to go:
Thou shalt remain here, whether thou wilt or no.
I am a spirit of no common rate;
The summer still doth tend upon my state;
And I do love thee: therefore, go with me;
I'll give thee fairies to attend on thee,
And they shall fetch thee jewels from the deep,
And sing while thou on pressed flowers dost sleep;
And I will purge thy mortal grossness so

That thou shalt like an airy spirit go.
Peaseblossom! Cobweb! Moth! And Mustardseed!

(Enter the 4 fairies)

PEASE Ready.

COBWEB And I.

MOTH And I.

MUSTARD And I.

ALL Where shall we go?

TITANIA Be kind and courteous to this gentleman;
Hop in his walks and gambol in his eyes;
Feed him with apricocks and dewberries,
With purple grapes, green figs, and mulberries;
And pluck the wings from Painted butterflies
To fan the moonbeams from his sleeping eyes:
Nod to him, elves, and do him courtesies.

PEASE Hail, mortal!

COBWEB Hail!

MOTH Hail!

MUSTARD Hail!

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

COBWEB Cobweb.

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

PEASE Peaseblossom.

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

MUSTARD Mustardseed.

BOTTOM I desire you more acquaintance, good Master Mustardseed.

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.

(All exit)

ACT 3, SCENE 2. Another Part of the Wood.

(Enter Oberon)

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

(Enter Puck)

OBERON Here comes my messenger.
How now, mad spirit!
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,
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
Forsook his scene and entered in a brake
When I did him at this advantage take,
An ass's noll I fixed on his head:
Anon his Thisbe must be answered,
And forth my mimic comes. When they him spy,
So, at his sight, away his fellows fly;
And, at our stamp, here o'er and o'er one falls;
He murder cries and help from Athens calls.
Their sense thus weak, lost with their fears
Thus strong.
Made senseless things begin to do them wrong;
For briers and thorns at their apparel snatch;
Some sleeves, some hats, from yielders all
Things catch.
I led them on this distracted fear,
And left sweet Pyramus translated there:
When in that moment, so it came to pass,
Titania waked and straightaway loved an ass.

OBERON This falls out better than I could devise.
But hast thou yet latched the Athenian's eyes
With the love-juice, as I did bid thee do?

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

(Enter Hermia and Demetrius)

OBERON Stand close: this is the same Athenian.

PUCK This is the woman, but not this the man.

DEMETRIUS O, why rebuke you him that loves you so?
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.
It cannot be but thou hast murdered him;
So should a murderer look, so dead, so grim.

DEMETRIUS So should the murdered, 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 he?

DEMETRIUS I had rather give his carcass to my hounds.

HERMIA Out, dog! Out, cur! Thou drivest me past the bounds
Of maiden's patience. Hast thou slain him, then?
Henceforth be never numbered among men!
O, once tell true, tell true, even for my sake!
Durest 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 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:
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.
So sorrow's heaviness doth heavier grow
For debt that bankrupt sleep doth sorrow owe.

(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.

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

(Exit Puck)

OBERON Flower of this purple dye,
Hit with Cupid's archery,
Sink in apple of his eye.
When his love he doth espy,
Let her shine as gloriously
As the Venus of the sky.
When thou wakest, if she be by,
Beg of her for remedy.

(Enter Puck)

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

OBERON Stand aside: the noise they make
Will cause Demetrius to awake.

PUCK Then will two at once woo one;
That must needs be sport alone,
And those things do best please me
That befall preposterously.

(Enter Lysander and Helena)

LYSANDER Why should you think that I should woo in scorn?
Scorn and derision never come in tears:
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 and 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 judgement when to her I swore.

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

LYSANDER Demetrius loves her, and he loves not you.

DEMETRIUS (Awaking) O Helena, goddess, nymph, perfect, divine!
To what, my love, shall I compare thine eyne?
Crystal is muddy. O, how ripe in show
Thy lips, those kissing cherries, tempting grow!
That pure congealed 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:
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?
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;
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
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;
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 guest-wise 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 abide it dear.
Look, where thy love comes; yonder is thy dear.

(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,
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 you fiery orbs and eyes of light.
Why seek'st thou me? Could not this make thee know,
The hate I bear thee made me leave thee so.

HERMIA You speak not as you think: it cannot be.

HELENA Lo, she is one of this confederacy!
Now I perceive they have 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 sister's vows, the hours that we have spent,
And will you rent 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 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
To her he hates? And wherefore doth Lysander
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 If you have any pity, grace, or manners,
You would not make me such an argument.

But fare ye well: 'tis partly my own fault;
Which death or absence soon shall remedy.

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

HELENA O excellent!

HERMIA Sweet, do not scorn her so.

DEMETRIUS If she cannot entreat, I can compel.

LYSANDER Thou canst compel no more than she entreat:
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 I say I love thee more than he can do.

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

DEMETRIUS Quick, come!

HERMIA Lysander, whereto tends all this?

LYSANDER Away, you Ethiope!

DEMETRIUS No, no; he'll but
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, loathed medicine! Hated potion, hence!

HERMIA Do you not jest?

HELENA Yes, sooth; and so do you.

- LYSANDER** Demetrius, I will keep my word with thee.
- DEMETRIUS** I would I had your bond, for I perceive
A weak bond holds you: I'll not trust your word.
- LYSANDER** What, should I hurt her, strike her, kill her dead?
Although I hate her, I'll not harm her so.
- HERMIA** What, can you do me greater harm than hate?
Hate me! Wherefore? I 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, of doubt;
Be certain, nothing truer; 'tis no jest
That I do hate thee and love Helena.
- 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, in 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.
- 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 further: let me go:
You see how simple and how fond I am.

HERMIA Why, get you gone: who is it 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 hindering 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 abide it.

LYSANDER Now she holds me not;
Now follow, if thou darest, to try whose right,
Of thine or mine, is most in Helena.

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

(Exit Demetrius and Lysander)

HERMIA You, mistress, all this turmoil is because of you.
Nay, go not back.

HELENA I will not trust you, I,
Nor longer stay in your curst company.
Your hands than mine are quicker for a fray,
My legs are longer though, to run away.

(Exit Helena)

HERMIA I am amazed, and know not what to say.

(Exit Hermia)

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

PUCK Believe me, king of shadows, I mistook.
Did not you tell me I should know the man
By the Athenian garment he had on?
And so far blameless proves my enterprise,
That I have anointed an Athenian's eyes;
And so far am I glad it so did sort
As this their jangling I esteem a sport.

OBERON 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 charmed eye release
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 feared in field and town:
Goblin, lead them up and down.
Here comes one.

(Enter Lysander)

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

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

LYSANDER I will be with thee straight.

PUCK Follow me, then,
To plainer ground.

(Exit Lysander, as following the voice)

(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,
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?

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

(Exit Puck 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)

LYSANDER 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 Puck and Demetrius)

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

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

PUCK Come hither: I am here.

DEMETRIUS Nay, then, thou 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.

(Demetrius lies down and sleeps. 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.

(Helena lies down and sleeps)

PUCK Yet but three? Come one more;
Two of both kinds make up four.

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

(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;
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!

(Hermia lies down and sleeps)

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

(Squeezing the juice on Lysander's eyes)

PUCK When thou wakest,
Thou takest
True delight
In the sight
Of thy former lady's eye:
And the country proverb known,
That every man should take his own,
In your waking shall be shown:
Jack shall have Jill;
Nought shall go ill;
The man shall have his mare again, and all shall be well.

(Exit)

ACT 4, SCENE 1. The Same

(Lysander, Demetrius, Helena and Hermia lying asleep)

(Enter Titania and Bottom; the four fairies 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,
And kiss thy fair large ears, my gentle joy.

BOTTOM Where's Peaseblossom?

PEASE Ready.

BOTTOM Scratch my head Peaseblossom. Where's Mounsieur Cobweb?

COBWEB Ready.

BOTTOM Mounsieur Cobweb, 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, 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?

MUSTARD Ready.

BOTTOM Give me your fist, Mounsieur Mustardseed. Pray you, leave your courtesy, good mounsieur.

MUSTARD What's your will?

BOTTOM Nothing, good mounsieur, but to help Cavalery Cobweb to scratch. I must to the barber's, mounsieur' for me thinks I am marvellous hairy about the face; and I 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 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.

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

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

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

(Exit Fairies)

TITANIA 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!

(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;
For she his hairy temples then had rounded
With a coronet of fresh and fragrant flowers.
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 fairy land.
And now I have the boy, I will undo
This hateful imperfection of her eyes:
And, gentle Puck, take this transformed scalp
From off the head of this Athenian swain;
That, he awaking when the other do,
May all to Athens back again repair
And think no more of this night's accidents
But as the fierce vexation of a dream.
But first I will release the fairy queen.
Be as thou wast wont to be;

See as thou wast wont to see:
Now, my Titania; wake you, my sweet queen.

TITANIA My Oberon! What visions have I seen!
Methought I was 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 awhile. 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!

(SFX, quiet classical piano or flute)

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

OBERON Sound, music! Come, my queen, take hands with me,
And rock the ground whereon these sleepers be.
Now thou and I are new in amity,
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.

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

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

(Titania, Oberon and Puck exit)

(SFX horns, as in a foxhunt)

(Enter Theseus, Hippolyta, and Egeus)

- THESEUS** 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,
With ears that sweep away the morning dew;
Slow in pursuit, but matched in mouth like bells,
Each under each. A cry more tuneable
Was never hollered 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 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.

(Horns and shout within. Lysander, Demetrius, Helena and Hermia wake startled)

- 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:
How comes this gentle concord in the world,
That hatred is so far from jealousy,
To sleep by hate, and fear no enmity?
- LYSANDER** My lord, I shall reply amazedly,
Half sleep, half waking: but as yet, I swear,
I cannot truly say how I came here;
But, as I think,- for truly would I speak,
And now do I bethink me, so it is, -
I came with Hermia hither: our intent
Was to be gone from Athens, where we might,
Without the peril of the Athenian law.
- EGEUS** Enough, enough, my lord; you have enough:
I beg the law, the law, upon his head.
They would have stolen away; they would, Demetrius,
Thereby to have defeated you and me,
You of your wife and me of my consent,
Of my consent that she should be your wife.
- DEMETRIUS** 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 know 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 saw Hermia:
But, like in sickness, did I loathe this food;
But, as in health, come to my natural taste,
Now I do wish it, love it, long for it,
And will 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 joined:
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.

(Exit Theseus, Hippolyta and Egeus)

DEMETRIUS These things seem 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,
Mine own, and not mine own.

DEMETRIUS Are you sure
That we are awake? It seems to me
That yet we sleep, we dream. Do not you think
The duke was here, and bid us follow him?

HERMIA Yea; and my father.

HELENA And Hippolyta.

LYSANDER And he did bid us follow to the temple.

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

(Hermia, Helena, Lysander and Demetrius exit)

BOTTOM (Awaking) When my cue comes, call me, and I will answer: my next is, 'Most fair Pyramus.' Heigh-ho! Peter Quince! Flute, the bellows-mender! Snout, the tinker! Starveling! God's my life, stolen hence, and left me asleep! I have had a most rare vision. I have had a dream, past the wit of man to say what dream it was: man is but an ass, if he go about to expound this dream. Methought I was- there is no man can tell what. Methought I was, - and methought I had, - but man is but a patched fool, if he will offer to say what methought I had. The eye of man hath not heard, the ear of man hath not seen, man's hand is not able to taste, his tongue to conceive, nor his heart to report, what my dream was. I will get Peter Quince to write a ballad of this dream: it shall be called Bottom's Dream, because it hath no bottom; and I will sing it in the latter end of a play, before the duke: peradventure, to make it the more gracious, I shall sing it at her death.

(Exit Bottom)

ACT 4, SCENE 2. Athens. Quince's House.

(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! This hath he lost sixpence a day during his life; he could not have 'scraped sixpence a day: and 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 no true Athenian. I will tell you every thing, 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 o'er his part; for the sort and the long is,

our play is preferred. In any case, let Thisbe have clean linen; and let not him that plays the lion pair his nails, for they shall hang out for the lion's claws. And, most dear actors, eat no onions or 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!

(Exit Bottom, Quince, Snout, Snug, Starveling and Flute)

ACT 5, SCENE 1. Athens. The Palace of Theseus

(Enter Theseus, Hippolyta, Lords and Attendants)

HIPPOLYTA 'tis strange my Theseus, that these lovers speak of.

THESEUS More strange than true: I never may believe
These antique fables, nor these fairy toys.
And as imagination bodies forth
The forms of things unknown, the poet's pen
Turns them to shapes and gives airy nothing
A local habitation and a name.
Such tricks hath strong imagination,
That if it would but apprehend some joy,
If 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.

THESEUS Here come the lovers, full of joy and mirth.

(Enter Lysander, Demetrius, Hermia and Helena)

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

PHILOSTRATE There is a brief how many sports are ripe:
Make choice of which your highness will see first.

(Philostrate hands Theseus a paper)

THESEUS (Reads) 'The battle with the Centaurs, to be sung by an Athenian eunuch to the harp. 'We'll none of that. 'The thrice three Muses mourning for the death of Learning, late deceased in beggary.' That is some satire, keen and critical, not the sort for a nuptial ceremony. 'A tedious brief scene of your Pyramus and his love Thisbe' very tragical mirth' Merry and tragical! Tedious and brief!

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,
Extremely stretched and conned with cruel pain,
To do you service.

THESEUS I will hear that play:
For never anything can be amiss,
When simpleness and duty tender it.
Go, bring them in: and take your places, ladies.

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

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

HIPPOLYTA He says they can do nothing in this kind.

PHILOSTRATE So please your grace, the Prologue is addressed.

THESEUS Let him approach.

(SFX, Flourish of trumpets. Enter Quince for the Prologue)

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

THESEUS This fellow doth not stand upon points.

LYSANDER He hath rid his prologue like a rough colt; he knows not the stop. A good moral, my lord: it is not enough to speak, but to speak true.

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

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

(Enter Pyramus (Bottom), Thisbe (Flute), Wall (Snout), Moonshine (Starveling) and Lion (Snug))

THESEUS I wonder if the lion be to speak.

DEMETRIUS No wonder, my lord: one lion may, when many asses do.

WALL
(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 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.

(Enter Pyramus)

THESEUS Pyramus draws near the wall: silence!

PYRAMUS
(BOTTOM) O grim-looking night! O night with hue so black!
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!

(Wall hold up his fingers)

PYRAMUS
(BOTTOM) 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.

PYRAMUS
(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.
Yonder she comes.

(Enter Thisbe)

THISBE
(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.

PYRAMUS
(BOTTOM) I see a voice: now will I to the chink,
To spy an I can hear my Thisbe's face. Thisbe!

THISBE
(FLUTE) My love thou art, my love I think.

PYRAMUS
(BOTTOM) Think what thou wilt, I am thy lover's grace;
And, like Limander, am I trusty still.

THISBE
(FLUTE) And I like Helen, till the Fates me kill.

PYRAMUS
(BOTTOM) Not Shafalus to Procrus, I to you.

PYRAMUS
(BOTTOM) O kiss me through the hole of this vile wall!

THISBE
(FLUTE) I kiss the wall's hole, not your lips at all.

PYRAMUS
(BOTTOM) Wilt thou at Ninny's tomb meet me straightaway?

THISBE
(FLUTE) 'Tide life, 'tide death, I come without delay.

(Exit Pyramus and Thisbe)

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

(Exit Wall)

THESEUS Now is the mural down between the two neighbours.

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

HIPPOLYTA This is the silliest stuff that ever I heard.

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

HIPPOLYTA It must be your imagination then, and not theirs.

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

(Enter Lion and Moonshine)

LION
(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, 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.

MOONSHINE This lantern doth the horned moon present;-
(STARVELING)

DEMETRIUS He should have worn the horns on his head.

MOONSHINE This lantern doth the horned moon present;
(STARVELING) Myself the man in the 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 in the moon?

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

HIPPOLYTA I am aweary of this moon: would he would change"

LYSANDER Proceed, Moon.

MOONSHINE All that I have to say is to tell you that the lantern is the moon; I, the man in the
(STARVELING) moon; this thorn bush, my thorn bush; and this dog, my dog.

(Enter Thisbe)

THISBE This is old Ninny's tomb. Where is my love?
(FLUTE)

LION (Roaring) Oh-
(SNUG)

(Thisbe runs off)

DEMETRIUS Well roared, Lion.

THESEUS Well run, Thisbe.

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

(The Lion shakes Thisbe's mantle, and exits)

THESEUS Well moused, lion.

LYSANDER And so the lion vanished.

DEMETRIUS And then came Pyramus.

(Enter Pyramus)

PYRAMUS
(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 sorrow is here!
Eyes, do you see?
How can it be?
O dainty duck! I 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 Oh, my heart, but I pity the man

PYRAMUS
(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;

(Stabs himself)

PYRAMUS
(BOTTOM)
Thus die I, thus, thus, thus.
Now am I dead,
Now am I fled;
My soul is in the sky;
Tongue, lose thy light;
Moon take thy flight:

(Exit Moonshine)

PYRAMUS
(BOTTOM)
Now die, die, die, die, die.

(Pyramus dies)

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

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

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

(re-enter Thisbe)

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

LYSANDER She hath spied him already with those sweet eyes.

THISBE
(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, and stain my breast with blood.

(Stabs herself)

THISBE
(FLUTE)
And, farewell, friends;
Thus Thisbe ends:
Adieu, adieu, adieu.

(Thisbe dies)

- THESEUS** Moonshine and Lion are left to bury the dead.
- DEMETRIUS** Ay, and Wall too.
- BOTTOM** (starting up) No, I assure you; the wall is down that parted their fathers. Will it please you to see the epilogue, or to hear a dance between two of our company?
- THESEUS** No epilogue, I pray you; for your play needs no excuse. Never excuse; for when the players are all dead, there needs none to be blamed. Marry, if he that writ it had played Pyramus and hanged himself in Thisbe's garter, it would have been a fine tragedy: and so it is, truly; and very notably discharged. But let your epilogue alone. The iron tongue of midnight hath told twelve.

(the players stand, bow and exit)

- THESEUS** Lovers, to bed; 'tis almost fairy time.
I fear we shall out-sleep the coming morn
As much as we this night have overwatched.
The heavy gait of night. Sweet friends, to bed.
A fortnight hold we this solemnity,
In nightly revels and new jollity.

(Theseus and others exit. Enter Oberon, Titania and Puck)

- OBERON** Through the house give gathering light,
By the dead and drowsy fire;
Every elf and fairy sprite
Hop as light as bird from brier;
And this ditty, after me,
Sing, and dance it trippingly.

- TITANIA** First, rehearse your song by rote
To each word a warbling note:
Hand in hand, with fairy grace,
Will we sing and bless this place.

- OBERON** Now, until the break of day,
Through this house each fairy stray.
To the best bride-bed will we,
Which by us shall blessed be;
And the issue there create
Ever shall be fortunate.
So shall all the couples three
Ever true in loving be;
And the blots of Nature's hand

Shall not in their issue stand;
Never mole, hare lip, nor scar,
Nor mark prodigious, such as are
Despised in nativity,
Shall upon their children be.
With this field-dew consecrate,
Every fairy take his gait;
And each several chamber bless,
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.

(Exit Oberon and Titania)

PUCK

If we shadows have offended,
Think but this, and all is mended,
That you have but slumbered here
While these visions did appear.
And this weak and idle theme,
No more yielding but a dream,
Gentles, do not reprehend;
If you pardon, we will mend:
And, as I am an honest Puck,
If we have unearned luck
Now to escape 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.