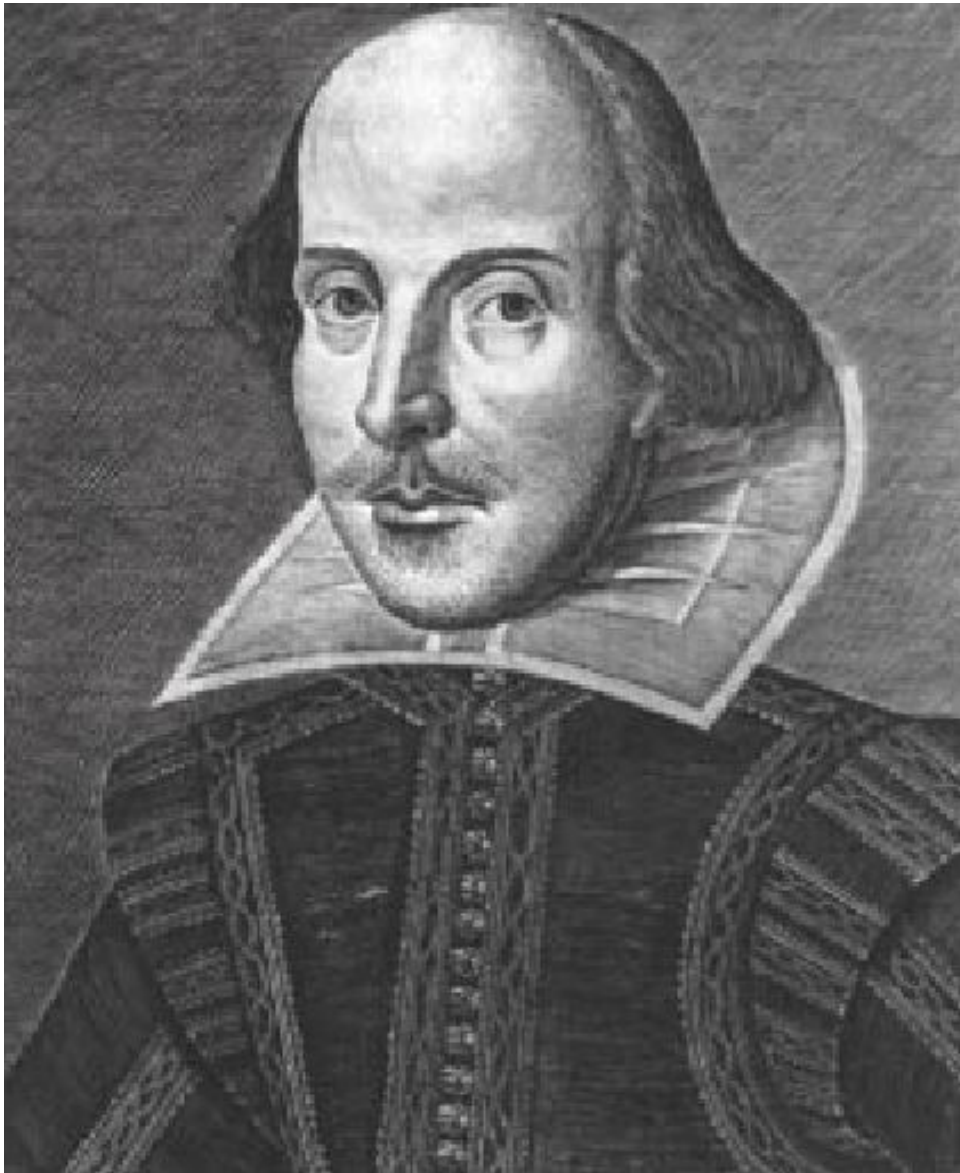


VOLUME I BOOK IX

A Midsummer Night's Dream



By William Shakespeare

Innan

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 step-dame or a dowager
Long withering out a young man revenue.
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.
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.
Hippolyta, I woo'd 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.
Happy be Theseus, our renowned duke!
Thanks, good Egeus:
what's the news with thee?
Full of vexation come I, with complaint
Against my child, my daughter Hermia.
Stand forth, Demetrius. My noble lord,
This man hath my consent to marry her.
Stand forth, Lysander:
and my gracious duke,

This man hath bewitch'd
the bosom of my child;
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 stolen the impression of her fantasy
With bracelets of thy hair,
rings, gawds, conceits,
Knacks, trifles, nosegays,
sweetmeats, messengers
Of strong prevailment
in unhardened youth:
With cunning hast thou
filch'd my daughter's heart,
Turn'd her obedience, which is due to me,
To stubborn harshness:
and, my gracious duke,
Be it so she; will not
here before your grace
Consent to marry with Demetrius,
I beg the ancient privilege of Athens,
As she is mine, I may dispose of her:
Which shall be either to this gentleman
Or to her death, according to our law
Immediately provided in that case.
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

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By him imprinted and within his power
To leave the figure or disfigure it.
Demetrius is a worthy gentleman.
So is Lysander.
In himself he is;
But in this kind, wanting
your father's voice,
The other must be held the worthier.
I would my father look'd but with my eyes.
Rather your eyes must
with his judgment look.
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.
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 mew'd,
To live a barren sister all your life,
Chanting faint hymns to
the cold fruitless moon.
Thrice-blessed they that
master so their blood,
To undergo such maiden pilgrimage;

But earthlier happy is the rose distill'd,
Than that which withering
on the virgin thorn
Grows, lives and dies
in single blessedness.
So will I grow, so live, so die, my lord,
Ere I will my virgin patent up
Unto his lordship, whose unwish'd yoke
My soul consents not to give sovereignty.
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.
Relent, sweet Hermia:
and, Lysander, yield
Thy crazed title to my certain right.
You have her father's love, Demetrius;
Let me have Hermia's: do you marry him.
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.
I am, my lord, as well derived as he,
As well possess'd; my
love is more than his;
My fortunes every way as fairly rank'd,
If not with vantage, as Demetrius';
And, which is more than
all these boasts can be,
I am beloved of beauteous Hermia:

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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.
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.
With duty and desire we follow you.
How now, my love! why
is your cheek so pale?
How chance the roses
there do fade so fast?
Belike for want of rain, which I could well

Beteem them from the
tempest of my eyes.
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,--
O cross! too high to be enthrall'd to low.
Or else misgraffed in respect of years,--
O spite! too old to be engaged to young.
Or else it stood upon
the choice of friends,--
O hell! to choose love by another's eyes.
Or, if there were a sympathy in choice,
War, death, or sickness did lay siege to it,
Making it momentary 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.
If then true lovers have been ever cross'd,
It stands as an edict in destiny:
Then let us teach our trial patience,
Because it is a customary cross,
As due to love as thoughts
and dreams and sighs,
Wishes and tears, poor fancy's followers.
A good persuasion:
therefore, hear me, Hermia.
I have a widow aunt, a dowager
Of great revenue, and she hath no child:

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From Athens is her house
remote seven leagues;
And she respects me as her only son.
There, gentle Hermia, may I marry thee;
And to that place the sharp Athenian law
Cannot pursue us. If thou lovest me then,
Steal forth thy father's
house to-morrow night;
And in the wood, a
league without the town,
Where I did meet thee once with Helena,
To do observance to a morn of May,
There will I stay for thee.
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
burn'd 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,
To-morrow truly will I meet with thee.
Keep promise, love. Look,
here comes Helena.
God speed fair Helena! whither away?
Call you me fair? that fair again unsay.
Demetrius loves your fair: O happy fair!
Your eyes are lode-stars;
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 favour so,
Yours would 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.
I frown upon him, yet he loves me still.
O that your frowns would
teach my smiles such skill!
I give him curses, yet he gives me love.
O that my prayers could
such affection move!
The more I hate, the more he follows me.
The more I love, the more he hateth me.
His folly, Helena, is no fault of mine.
None, but your beauty:
would that fault were mine!
Take comfort: he no
more shall see my face;
Lysander and myself will fly this place.
Before the time I did Lysander see,
Seem'd Athens as a paradise to me:
O, then, what graces in my love do dwell,
That he hath turn'd a heaven unto a hell!
Helen, to you our minds we will unfold:

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To-morrow night, when
Phoebe doth behold
Her silver visage in the watery glass,
Decking with liquid
pearl the bladed grass,
A time that lovers'
flights doth still conceal,
Through Athens' gates
have we devised to steal.
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 lovers' food till
morrow deep midnight.
I will, my Hermia.
Helena, adieu:
As you on him, Demetrius dote on you!
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,

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So I, admiring of his qualities:
Things base and vile, folding no quantity,
Love can transpose to form and dignity:
Love looks not with the
eyes, but with the mind;
And therefore is wing'd
Cupid painted blind:
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 so oft beguiled.
As waggish boys in game
themselves forswear,
So the boy Love is perjured every where:
For ere Demetrius
look'd on Hermia's eyne,
He hail'd down oaths
that he was only mine;
And when this hail some
heat from Hermia felt,
So he dissolved, and
showers of oaths did melt.
I will go tell him of fair Hermia's flight:
Then to the wood will he to-morrow night
Pursue her; and for this intelligence
If I have thanks, it is a dear expense:
But herein mean I to enrich my pain,
To have his sight thither and back again.
Is all our company here?
You were best to call them
generally, man by man,
according to the scrip.
Here is the scroll of every
man's name, which is

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thought fit, through all
Athens, to play in our
interlude before the duke
and the duchess, on his
wedding-day at night.
First, good Peter Quince,
say what the play treats
on, then read the names
of the actors, and so grow
to a point.
Marry, our play is, The most
lamentable comedy, and
most cruel death of Pyramus and Thisby.
A very good piece of
work, I assure you, and a
merry. Now, good Peter
Quince, call forth your
actors by the scroll.
Masters, spread yourselves.
Answer as I call you.
Nick Bottom, the weaver.
Ready. Name what part
I am for, and proceed.
You, Nick Bottom, are
set down for Pyramus.
What is Pyramus? a lover, or a tyrant?
A lover, that kills himself
most gallant for love.
That will ask some tears
in the true performing of
it: if I do it, let the audience look to their
eyes; I will move storms,
I will condole in some
measure. To the rest: yet
my chief humour is for a

tyrant: I could play
Ercles rarely, or a part to
tear a cat in, to make all split.
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.
Francis Flute, the bellows-mender.
Here, Peter Quince.
Flute, you must take Thisby on you.
What is Thisby? a wandering knight?
It is the lady that Pyramus must love.
Nay, faith, let me not play a
woman; I have a beard coming.
That's all one: you shall
play it in a mask, and
you may speak as small as you will.
An I may hide my face,
let me play Thisby too, I'll
speak in a monstrous little voice. 'Thisne,
Thisne;' 'Ah, Pyramus,
lover dear! thy Thisby dear,
and lady dear!'
No, no; you must play Pyramus:
and, Flute, you Thisby.
Well, proceed.
Robin Starveling, the tailor.

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Here, Peter Quince.
Robin Starveling, you
must play Thisby's mother.
Tom Snout, the tinker.
Here, Peter Quince.
You, Pyramus' father:
myself, Thisby's father:
Snug, the joiner; you,
the lion's part: and, I
hope, here is a play fitted.
Have you the lion's part
written? pray you, if it
be, give it me, for I am slow of study.
You may do it extempore,
for it is nothing but roaring.
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.'
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.
That would hang us, every mother's son.
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.

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.

Well, I will undertake it.

What beard were I best
to play it in?

Why, what you will.

I will discharge it in
either your straw-colour
beard, your orange-tawny
beard, your purple-in-grain
beard, or your French-
crown-colour beard, your
perfect yellow.

Some of your French crowns
have no hair at all, and
then you will play bare-
faced. But, masters, here
are your parts: and I am
to entreat you, request
you and desire you, to con
them by to-morrow night;
and meet me in the palace
wood, a mile without the
town, by moonlight; there
will we rehearse, for if
we meet in the city, we
shall be dogged with
company, and our devices
known. In the meantime I

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will draw a bill of properties,
such as our play
wants. I pray you, fail me not.
We will meet; and there
we may rehearse most
obscenely and courageously.
Take pains; be perfect: adieu.
At the duke's oak we meet.
Enough; hold or cut bow-strings.
How now, spirit! whither wander you?
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 favours,
In those freckles live their savours:
I must go seek some dewdrops here
And hang a pearl in every cowslip's ear.
Farewell, thou lob of spirits; I'll be gone:
Our queen and all our
elves come here anon.
The king doth keep his
revels here to-night:
Take heed the queen
come not within his sight;
For Oberon is passing fell and wrath,
Because that she as her attendant hath
A lovely boy, stolen from an Indian king;
She never had so sweet a changeling;
And jealous Oberon would have the child

Knight of his train, to
trace the forests wild;
But she perforce withholds the loved boy,
Crowns him with flowers
and makes him all her joy:
And now they never
meet in grove or green,
By fountain clear, or
spangled starlight sheen,
But, they do square, that
all their elves for fear
Creep into acorn-cups
and hide them there.
Either I mistake your
shape and making quite,
Or else you are that
shrewd and knavish sprite
Call'd Robin Goodfellow: are not you he
That frights the maidens of the villagery;
Skim milk, and sometimes
labour in the quern
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?
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,

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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 wither'd dewlap pour the ale.
The wisest aunt, telling the saddest tale,
Sometime for three-
foot stool mistaketh me;
Then slip I from her
bum, down topples she,
And 'tailor' cries, and falls into a cough;
And then the whole quire
hold their hips and laugh,
And waxen in their mirth
and neeze and swear
A merrier hour was never wasted there.
But, room, fairy! here comes Oberon.
And here my mistress.
Would that he were gone!
Ill met by moonlight, proud Titania.
What, jealous Oberon!
Fairies, skip hence:
I have forsworn his bed and company.

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Tarry, rash wanton: am not I thy lord?
If we shadows have offended,
Think but this, and all is mended,
That you have but slumber'd here
While these visions did appear.
And this weak and idle theme,
No more yielding but a dream,
Gentles, do not reprehend:
if you pardon, we will mend:
And, as I am an honest Puck,
If we have unearned 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.

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