Shakespeare First Folio circa 1620

Digital facsimile of the Bodleian
First Folio of Shakespeare's plays, Arch. G c.7
http://firstfolio.bodleian.ox.ac.uk/downloads.html#images

The. Either to dye the death, or to abiure

For ever the society of men.

Therefore faire Hermia question your desires,

Know of your youth, examine well your blood,

Whether (if you yeeld not to your fathers choice)

You can endure the liverie of a Nunne,

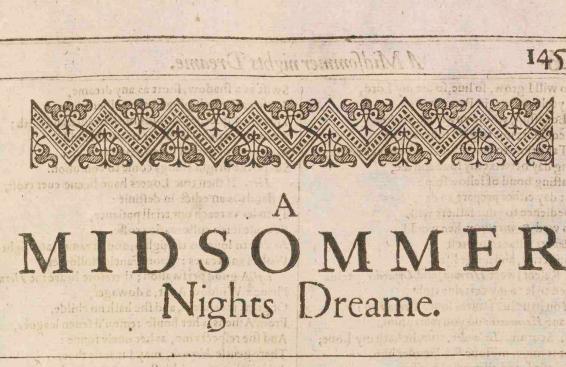
For aye to be in shady Cloister mew'd,

To live a barren sister all your life,

Chanting faint hymnes to the cold fruitlesse Moone,

Thrice blessed they that master so their blood.

Chris Jennings 2022



Actus primus.

Enter Thefeus, Hippolita, with others.

Thefeu.

Ow faire Hippolita, our nuptiall houre
Drawes on apace: foure happy daies bring in
Another Moon: but oh, me thinkes, how flow
This old Moon wanes; She lingers my defires

Like to a Step-dame, or a Dowager, Long withering out a yong mans reuennew.

Hip. Foure daies wil quickly fleep the felues in nights oure nights wil quickly dreame away the time:
and then the Moone, like to a filuer bow,

low bent in heaven, shalbehold the night

The. Go Philostrate, cirre vp the Athenian youth to merriments, wake the pert and nimble spirit of mirth, urne melancholy forth to Funerals: he pale companion is not for our pompe, sippolita, I woo'd thee with my sword, and wonne thy loue, doing thee injuries: ut I will wed thee in another key, Vith pompe, with triumph, and with reuelling.

Enter Egous and his daughter Hermia, Lyfander, and Demetrius.

Ege. Happy be Thefeus, our renowned Duke.
The Thanks good Egens: what's the news with thee!
Ege. Full of vexation, come I, with complaint
gainst my childe, my daughter Hermia.

Stand forth Dometrius.

hisman hath my consent to marrie her.

Stand forth Lysander

this man hath bewitch'd the bosome of my childes how, thou Lysander, thou hast given her rimes, and interchang'd love tokens with my childe: Thou hast by Moone-light at her window sung, with faining voice, verses of faining love, and stolne the impression of her fantase, with bracelets of thy haire, rings, gawdes, conceits, snackes, trifles, Nose-gaics, sweet meats (messengers of strong prevailment in vinhardned youth)

With cunning haft thou filch'd my daughters heart, Turn'd her obedience (which is due to me)
To stubborne hardnesse. And my gracious Duke, Be it so she will not heere before your Grace,
Consent to marrie with Demetrius,
I beg the ancient priviledge 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.

The. What say you Hermia? be aduis'd faire Maide, To you your Father should be as a God; One that compos'd your beauties; yea and one To whom you are but as a forme in waxe By him imprinted: and within his power, To leave the figure, or disfigure it:

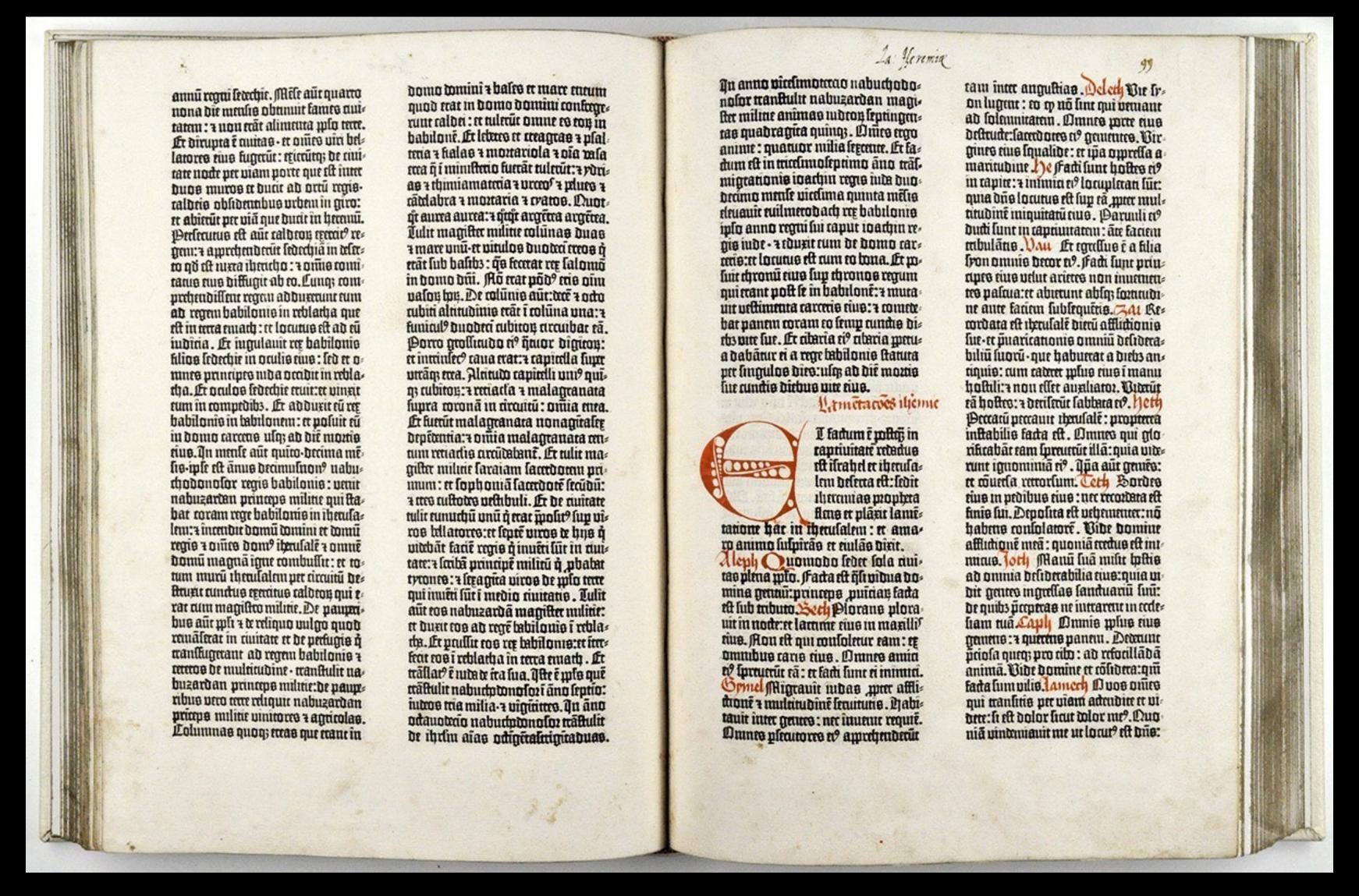
Demetrius is a worthy Gentleman.

Her. So is Lyfander.
The. In himselfe he is.
But in this kinde, wanting your fathers voyce.
The other must be held the worthier.

Her. I would my father look'd but with my eyes.
The. Rather your gies must with his judgment looke.

Her. I do entreat your Grace to pardon me.
I know not by what power I am made bold,
Nor how it may concerne my modestie
In such a presence heere to pleade my thoughts:
But I beseech your Grace, that I may know
The worst that may befall me in this case,
If I result to wed Demetrius.

Therefore faire Hermia question your desires,
Know of your youth, examine well your blood,
Whether (if you yeeld not to your fathers choice)
You can endure the liverie of a Nunne,
For aye to be in shady Cloister mew'd,
To live a barren sister all your life,
Chanting faint hymnes to the cold fruitlesse Moone,
Thrice blessed they that master so their blood,
To vndergo such maiden pilgrimage,
But earthlier happie is the Rose distil'd,
Then that which withering on the virgin thorne,
Growes, lives, and dies, in single blessednesse.



Gutenberg Bible Fragment of 31 leaves.

[Mainz: Johannes Gutenberg, Johannes Fust, and Peter Schoeffer, c. 1454-55].