



# A Midsummer Night's Dream

Shakespeare, William, 1564-1616

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This "Small Print!" by Charles B. Kramer,

Attorney Internet  
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1596

# A MIDSUMMER NIGHT'S DREAM

by William Shakespeare

## DRAMATIS PERSONAE

THESEUS, Duke of Athens    EGEUS, father  
to Hermia    LYSANDER, in love with Hermia

DEMETRIUS, in love with Hermia  
PHILOSTRATE, Master of the Revels to  
Theseus    QUINCE, a carpenter    SNUG, a  
joiner    BOTTOM, a weaver    FLUTE, a  
bellows-mender    SNOUT, a tinker  
STARVELING, a tailor

HIPPOLYTA, Queen of the Amazons,  
bethrothed to Theseus    HERMIA, daughter  
to Egeus, in love with Lysander    HELENA,  
in love with Demetrius

OBERON, King of the Fairies    TITANIA,  
Queen of the Fairies    PUCK, or ROBIN  
GOODFELLOW    PEASEBLOSSOM, fairy  
COBWEB, fairy    MOTH, fairy  
MUSTARDSEED, fairy

PROLOGUE, PYRAMUS, THISBY, WALL,  
MOONSHINE, LION are presented by:  
QUINCE, BOTTOM, FLUTE, SNOUT,  
STARVELING, AND SNUG

Other Fairies attending their King and  
Queen      Attendants on Theseus and  
Hippolyta

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SCENE: Athens and a wood near it

ACT I. SCENE I. Athens. The palace of  
THESEUS

Enter           THESEUS,           HIPPOLYTA,  
PHILOSTRATE, and ATTENDANTS

THESEUS. Now, fair Hippolyta, our nuptial  
hour     Draws on apace; four happy days  
bring in           Another moon; but, O,  
methinks, how slow       This old moon  
waned! She lingers my desires,     Like to a  
step-dame or a dowager,     Long withering  
out a young man's revenue.   HIPPOLYTA.  
Four days will quickly steep themselves in  
night;     Four nights will quickly dream  
away the time;     And then the moon, like  
to a silver bow       New-bent in heaven,  
shall behold the night       Of our  
solemnities.   THESEUS. Go, Philostrate,

Stir up the Athenian youth to merriments;  
Awake the pert and nimble spirit of mirth;  
Turn melancholy forth to funerals; The  
pale companion is not for our pomp. Exit  
PHILOSTRATE      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.

Enter EGEUS, and his daughter  
HERMIA, LYSANDER,      and  
DEMETRIUS

EGEUS. Happy be Theseus, our  
renowned Duke! THESEUS. Thanks, good  
Egeus; what's the news with thee? EGEUS.  
Full of vexation come I, with complaint  
Against my child, my daughter Hermia.  
Stand forth, Demetrius. My noble lord,  
This man hath my consent to marry her.  
Stand forth, Lysander. And, my gracious

Duke,            This man hath bewitch'd the  
bosom of my child.            Thou, thou,  
Lysander, thou hast given her rhymes,  
And interchang'd love-tokens with my  
child;            Thou hast by moonlight at her  
window sung,            With feigning voice,  
verses of feigning love,            And stol'n the  
impression of her fantasy            With bracelets  
of thy hair, rings, gawds, conceits,  
Knacks, trifles, 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. THESEUS. What say you, Hermia?  
Be advis'd, fair maid. 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 form in wax, By him  
imprinted, and within his power To  
leave the figure, or disfigure it.

Demetrius is a worthy gentleman.

HERMIA. So is Lysander. THESEUS. In  
himself he is; But, in this kind, wanting  
your father's voice, The other must be  
held the worthier. HERMIA. I would my  
father look'd but with my eyes. THESEUS.

Rather your eyes must with his judgment  
look. HERMIA. I do entreat your Grace to  
pardon me. I know not by what power I  
am made bold, Nor how it may concern  
my modesty In such a presence here to  
plead my thoughts; But I beseech your  
Grace that I may know The worst that  
may befall me in this case, If I refuse to  
wed Demetrius. THESEUS. Either to die



the death, or to abjure      For ever the  
society of men.      Therefore, fair Hermia,  
question your desires,      Know of your  
youth, examine well your blood,  
Whether, if you yield not to your father's  
choice,      You can endure the livery of a  
nun,      For aye to be 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.      HERMIA. So  
will I grow, so live, so die, my lord,      Ere I  
will yield my virgin patent up      Unto his  
lordship, whose unwished yoke      My soul  
consents not to give sovereignty.

THESEUS. Take time to pause; and by the  
next new moon-      The sealing-day betwixt  
my love and me      For everlasting bond of

fellowship- Upon that day either prepare  
to die For disobedience to your father's  
will, Or else to wed Demetrius, as he  
would, Or on Diana's altar to protest  
For aye austerity and single life.

DEMETRIUS. Relent, sweet Hermia; and,  
Lysander, yield Thy crazed title to my  
certain right. LYSANDER. You have her  
father's love, Demetrius; Let me have  
Hermia's; do you marry him. EGEUS.  
Scornful Lysander, true, he hath my love;  
And what is mine my love shall render  
him; And she is mine; and all my right of  
her I do estate unto Demetrius.

LYSANDER. I am, my lord, as well deriv'd  
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 belov'd of  
beauteous Hermia. Why should not I  
then prosecute my right? Demetrius, I'll

avouch it to his head,            Made love to  
Nedar's daughter, Helena,      And won her  
soul; and she, sweet lady, dotes,  
Devoutly dotes, dotes in idolatry,      Upon  
this spotted and inconstant man.

THESEUS. I must confess that I have heard  
so much,      And with Demetrius thought to  
have spoke thereof;      But, being over-full  
of self-affairs,      My mind did lose it. But,  
Demetrius, come;      And come, Egeus; you  
shall go with me;      I have some private  
schooling for you both.      For you, fair  
Hermia, look you arm yourself      To fit  
your fancies to your father's will,      Or else  
the law of Athens yields you up-      Which  
by no means we may extenuate-      To  
death, or to a vow of single life.      Come,  
my Hippolyta; what cheer, my love?  
Demetrius, and Egeus, go along;      I must  
employ you in some business      Against  
our nuptial, and confer with you      Of  
something      nearly      that      concerns

yourselves. EGEUS. With duty and desire  
we follow you. Exeunt 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.

Ay me! for aught that I could ever read,  
Could ever hear by tale or history, The  
course of true love never did run smooth;

But either it was different in blood-  
HERMIA. O cross! too high to be enthrall'd  
to low. LYSANDER. Or else misgraffed in

respect of years- HERMIA. O spite! too  
old to be engag'd to young. LYSANDER.  
Or else it stood upon the choice of friends-

HERMIA. O hell! to choose love by  
another's eyes. LYSANDER. Or, if there  
were a sympathy in choice, War, death,  
or sickness, did lay siege to it, Making it  
momentary as a sound, Swift as a

shadow, short as any dream,      Brief as the  
lightning in the collid night      That, in a  
spleen, unfolds both heaven and earth,  
And ere a man hath power to say 'Behold!'

The jaws of darkness do devour it up;  
So quick bright things come to confusion.  
HERMIA. If then true lovers have 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.

LYSANDER. A good persuasion; therefore,  
hear me, Hermia.    I have a widow aunt, a  
dowager      Of great revenue, and she hath  
no child-      From Athens is her house  
remote seven leagues-      And she respects  
me as her only son.      There, gentle  
Hermia, may I marry thee;      And to that  
place the sharp Athenian law      Cannot  
pursue us. If thou 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. HERMIA.  
My good Lysander! I swear to thee by  
Cupid's strongest bow, By his best  
arrow, with the golden head, By the  
simplicity of Venus' doves, By that which  
knitteth souls and prospers loves, And  
by that fire which 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. LYSANDER. Keep  
promise, love. Look, here comes Helena.

Enter HELENA

HERMIA. God speed fair Helena! Whither  
away? HELENA. Call you me fair? That

fair again unsay. Demetrius loves your  
fair. O happy fair! Your eyes are  
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! HERMIA. I frown upon  
him, yet he loves me still. HELENA. O that  
your frowns would teach my smiles such  
skill! HERMIA. I give him curses, yet he  
gives me love. HELENA. O that my  
prayers could such affection move!  
HERMIA. The more I hate, the more he  
follows me. HELENA. The more I love, the

more he hateth me. HERMIA. His folly,  
Helena, is no fault of mine. HELENA.  
None, but your beauty; would that fault  
were mine! HERMIA. Take comfort: he no  
more shall see my face; Lysander and  
myself will fly this place. Before the time  
I did Lysander see, Seem'd Athens as a  
paradise to me. O, then, what graces in  
my love do dwell, That he hath turn'd a  
heaven unto a hell! LYSANDER. Helen, to  
you our minds we will unfold:  
To-morrow night, when Phoebe doth  
behold Her silver visage in the wat'ry  
glass, Decking with liquid pearl the  
bladed grass, A time that lovers' flights  
doth still conceal, Through Athens' gates  
have we devis'd to steal. HERMIA. And in  
the wood where often you and I Upon  
faint primrose beds were wont to lie,  
Emptying our bosoms of their counsel  
sweet, There my Lysander and myself  
shall meet; And thence from Athens turn



away our eyes,      To seek new friends and  
stranger companies.      Farewell, sweet  
playfellow; pray thou for us,      And good  
luck grant thee thy Demetrius!      Keep  
word, Lysander; we must starve our sight

From lovers' food till morrow deep  
midnight.      LYSANDER. I will, my Hermia.  
[Exit HERMIA] Helena, adieu;      As you on  
him, Demetrius dote on you.      Exit

HELENA. How happy some o'er other  
some can be!      Through Athens I am  
thought as fair as she.      But what of that?  
Demetrius thinks not so;      He will not  
know what all but he do know.      And as he  
errs, doting on Hermia's eyes,      So I,  
admiring of his qualities.      Things base  
and vile, holding 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  
judgment taste;      Wings and no eyes

figure unheedy haste;      And therefore is  
Love said to be a child,      Because in  
choice he is so oft beguil'd.      As waggish  
boys in game themselves forswear,      So  
the boy Love is perjur'd everywhere;      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 dissolv'd, and show'rs  
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.      Exit

SCENE II. Athens. QUINCE'S house

Enter QUINCE, SNUG, BOTTOM FLUTE, SNOOT, and STARVELING

QUINCE. Is all our company here?

BOTTOM. You were best to call them generally, man by man, according to the scrip. QUINCE. Here is the scroll of every man's name which is thought fit, through all Athens, to play in our interlude before the Duke and 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 Thisby.' BOTTOM. A very good piece of work, I assure you, and a merry. Now, good Peter Quince, call forth your actors by the scroll. Masters,



This was lofty. Now name the rest of the players. This is       Ercles' vein, a tyrant's vein: a lover is more condoling. QUINCE. Francis Flute, the bellows-mender. FLUTE. Here, Peter Quince.       QUINCE. Flute, you must take Thisby on you. FLUTE. What is Thisby? A wand'ring knight?       QUINCE. It is the lady that Pyramus must love. FLUTE. Nay, faith, let not me play a woman; I have a beard coming. QUINCE. That's all one; you shall play it in a mask, and you may       speak as small as you will. BOTTOM. An I may hide my face, let me play Thisby too.       I'll speak in a monstrous little voice: 'Thisne, Thisne!'       [Then speaking small] 'Ah Pyramus, my lover dear! Thy       Thisby dear, and lady dear!'       QUINCE. No, no, you must play Pyramus; and, Flute, you Thisby.       BOTTOM. Well, proceed. QUINCE. Robin Starveling, the tailor.

STARVELING. Here, Peter Quince.

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

SNOUT. Here, Peter Quince. QUINCE.

You, Pyramus' father; myself, Thisby's father; Snug, the joiner, you, the lion's part. And, I hope, here is a play fitted.

SNUG. Have you the lion's part written?

Pray you, if it be, give it me, for I am slow of study. 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. 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. ALL.

That would hang us, every mother's son.

BOTTOM. I grant you, friends, if you should fright the ladies out of their wits,

they would have no more discretion but to hang us; but I will aggravate my voice so, that I will roar you as gently as any sucking dove; I will roar you an 'twere any nightingale. QUINCE. You can play no part but Pyramus; for Pyramus is a sweet-fac'd 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-colour beard, your orange-tawny beard, your purple-in-grain beard, or your French-crown-colour beard, your perfect yellow. QUINCE. Some of your French crowns have no hair at all, and then you will play bare-fac'd. 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 dogg'd with company,  
and our devices known. In the meantime  
I will draw a bill of properties, such as our  
play wants. I pray you, fail me not.

BOTTOM. We will meet; and there we may  
rehearse most obscenely and  
courageously. Take pains; be perfect;  
adieu. QUINCE. At the Duke's oak we  
meet. BOTTOM. Enough; hold, or cut  
bow-strings. Exeunt



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## ACT II. SCENE I. A wood near Athens

Enter a FAIRY at One door, and PUCK at another

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
every where,	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 her elves come here anon. PUCK. 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. FAIRY. 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? PUCK.  
Thou speakest aright: I am that merry  
wanderer of the night. I jest to Oberon,  
and make him smile When I a fat and  
bean-fed horse beguile, Neighing in  
likeness of a filly foal; And sometime  
lurk I in a gossip's bowl In very likeness  
of a roasted crab, And, when she drinks,  
against her lips I bob, And on her  
withered dewlap pour the ale. The  
wisest aunt, telling the saddest tale,  
Sometime for three-foot stool mistaketh  
me; Then slip I from her bum, down  
topples she, And 'tailor' cries, and falls  
into a cough; And then the whole quire



But that, forsooth, the bouncing Amazon,  
Your buskin'd mistress and your warrior  
love, To Theseus must be wedded, and  
you come To give their bed joy and  
prosperity? OBERON. How canst thou  
thus, for shame, Titania, Glance at my  
credit with Hippolyta, Knowing I know  
thy love to Theseus? Didst not thou lead  
him through the glimmering night From  
Perigouna, whom he ravished? And  
make him with fair Aegles break his faith,  
With Ariadne and Antiopa? TITANIA.  
These are the forgeries of jealousy; And  
never, since the middle summer's spring,  
Met we on hill, in dale, forest, or mead,  
By paved fountain, or by rushy brook,  
Or in the beached margent of the sea, To  
dance our ringlets to the whistling wind,  
But with thy brawls thou hast disturb'd our  
sport. Therefore the winds, piping to us  
in vain, As in revenge, have suck'd up  
from the sea Contagious fogs; which,

falling in the land,      Hath every pelting  
river made so proud      That they have  
overborne their continents.      The ox hath  
therefore stretch'd his yoke in vain,      The  
ploughman lost his sweat, and the green  
corn      Hath rotted ere his youth attain'd a  
beard;      The fold stands empty in the  
drowned field,      And crows are fatted with  
the murrion flock;      The nine men's morris  
is fill'd up with mud,      And the quaint  
mazes in the wanton green,      For lack of  
tread, are undistinguishable.      The human  
mortals want their winter here;      No night  
is now with hymn or carol blest;  
Therefore the moon, the governess of  
floods,      Pale in her anger, washes all the  
air,      That rheumatic diseases do abound.

And thorough this distemperature we see  
The seasons alter: hoary-headed frosts  
Fall in the fresh lap of the crimson rose;  
And on old Hiems' thin and icy crown      An  
odorous chaplet of sweet summer buds

Is, as in mockery, set. The spring, the  
summer,        The childing autumn, angry  
winter, change        Their wonted liveries;  
and the mazed world,        By their increase,  
now knows not which is which.        And this  
same progeny of evils comes        From our  
debate, from our dissension;        We are  
their parents and original.        OBERON. Do  
you amend it, then; it lies in you.        Why  
should Titania cross her Oberon?        I do  
but beg a little changeling boy        To be my  
henchman.        TITANIA. Set your heart at  
rest;        The fairy land buys not the child of  
me.        His mother was a vot'ress of my  
order;        And, in the spiced Indian air, by  
night,        Full often hath she gossip'd by my  
side;        And sat with me on Neptune's  
yellow sands,        Marking th' embarked  
traders on the flood;        When we have  
laugh'd to see the sails conceive,        And  
grow big-bellied with the wanton wind;  
Which she, with pretty and with swimming



gait      Following- her womb then rich with  
my young squire-      Would imitate, and  
sail upon the land,      To fetch me trifles,  
and return again,      As from a voyage, rich  
with merchandise.      But she, being mortal,  
of that boy did die;      And for her sake do I  
rear up her boy;      And for her sake I will  
not part with him.      OBERON. How long  
within this wood intend you stay?

TITANIA. Perchance till after 'Theseus'  
wedding-day.      If you will patiently dance  
in our round,      And see our moonlight  
revels, go with us;      If not, shun me, and I  
will spare your haunts.      OBERON. Give me  
that boy and I will go with thee.      TITANIA.  
Not for thy fairy kingdom. Fairies, away.  
We shall chide downright if I longer stay.

Exit TITANIA with her  
train      OBERON. Well, go thy way; thou  
shalt not from this grove      Till I torment  
thee for this injury.      My gentle Puck,  
come hither. Thou rememb'rest      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, all arm'd; a  
certain aim he took        At a fair vestal,  
throned by the west,        And loos'd his  
love-shaft smartly from his bow,        As it  
should pierce a hundred thousand hearts;

But I might see young Cupid's fiery shaft  
Quench'd in the chaste beams of the  
wat'ry moon;        And the imperial vot'ress  
passed on,        In maiden meditation,  
fancy-free.        Yet mark'd I where the bolt of  
Cupid fell.        It fell upon a little western  
flower,        Before milk-white, now purple  
with love's wound,        And maidens call it

Love-in-idleness.      Fetch me that flow'r,  
the herb I showed thee once.      The juice  
of it on sleeping eyelids laid      Will make  
or man or woman madly dote      Upon the  
next live creature that it sees.      Fetch me  
this herb, and be thou here again      Ere  
the leviathan can swim a league.      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  
ere I take this charm from off her sight,  
As I can take it with another herb,      I'll  
make her render up her page to me.      But  
who comes here? I am invisible;      And I  
will overhear their conference.

Enter DEMETRIUS, HELENA  
following him

DEMETRIUS. I love thee not, therefore  
pursue me not.      Where is Lysander and  
fair Hermia?      The one I'll slay, the other  
slayeth me.      Thou told'st me they were  
stol'n unto this wood,      And here am I, and  
wood within this wood,      Because I cannot  
meet my Hermia.      Hence, get thee gone,  
and follow me no more.      HELENA. You  
draw me, you hard-hearted adamant;      But  
yet you draw not iron, for my heart      Is  
true as steel. Leave you your power to  
draw,      And I shall have no power to  
follow you.      DEMETRIUS. Do I entice you?  
Do I speak you fair?      Or, rather, do I not  
in plainest truth      Tell you I do not nor I  
cannot love you?      HELENA. And even for  
that do I love you the more.      I am your  
spaniel; and, Demetrius,      The more you  
beat me, I will fawn on you.      Use me but

as your spaniel, spurn me, strike me,  
Neglect me, lose me; only give me leave,  
Unworthy as I am, to follow you. What  
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. Tempt not too much the  
hatred of my spirit; For I am sick when I  
do look on thee. HELENA. And I am sick  
when I look not on you. DEMETRIUS. You  
do impeach your modesty too much To  
leave the city and commit yourself Into  
the hands of one that loves you not; To  
trust the opportunity of night, And the ill  
counsel of a desert place, With the rich  
worth of your virginity. HELENA. Your  
virtue is my privilege for that: It is not  
night when I do see your face, Therefore  
I think I am not in the night; Nor doth this  
wood lack worlds of company, For you,  
in my respect, are all the world. Then  
how can it be said I am alone When all

the world is here to look on me?

DEMETRIUS. I'll run from thee and hide me  
in the brakes,           And leave thee to the  
mercy of wild beasts.       HELENA. The  
wildest hath not such a heart as you.   Run  
when you will; the story shall be chang'd:

Apollo flies, and Daphne holds the chase;  
The dove pursues the griffin; the mild  
hind       Makes speed to catch the tiger-  
bootless speed,           When cowardice  
pursues and valour flies.   DEMETRIUS. I  
will not stay thy questions; let me go;   Or,  
if thou follow me, do not believe   But I  
shall do thee mischief in the wood.

HELENA. Ay, in the temple, in the town,  
the field,       You do me mischief. Fie,  
Demetrius!   Your wrongs do set a scandal  
on my sex.   We cannot fight for love as  
men may do;   We should be woo'd, and  
were not made to woo.

Exit DEMETRIUS   I'll follow thee,  
and make a heaven of hell,   To die upon

the hand I love so well. Exit HELENA

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

### Re-enter PUCK

Hast thou the flower there? Welcome,  
wanderer. PUCK. Ay, there it is.

OBERON. I pray thee give it me. I know  
a bank where the wild thyme blows,  
Where oxlips and the nodding violet  
grows, Quite over-canopied with  
luscious woodbine, With sweet  
musk-roses, and with eglantine; There  
sleeps Titania sometime of the night,  
Lull'd in these flowers with dances and  
delight; And there the snake throws her  
enamell'd skin, Weed wide enough to  
wrap a fairy in; And with the juice of this  
I'll streak her eyes, And make her full of  
hateful fantasies. Take thou some of it,

and seek through this grove:      A sweet  
Athenian lady is in love      With a disdainful  
youth; anoint his eyes;      But do it when the  
next thing he espies      May be the lady.  
Thou shalt know the man      By the Athenian  
garments he hath on.      Effect it with some  
care, that he may prove      More fond on  
her than she upon her love.      And look  
thou meet me ere the first cock crow.  
PUCK. Fear not, my lord; your servant shall  
do      so.      Exeunt



## SCENE II. Another part of the wood

Enter TITANIA, with her train

TITANIA. Come now, a roundel and a fairy song; Then, for the third part of a minute, hence: Some to kill cankers in the musk-rose buds; Some war with rere-mice for their leathern wings, To make my small elves coats; and some keep back The clamorous owl that nightly hoots and wonders At our quaint spirits. Sing me now asleep; Then to your offices, and let me rest.

### The FAIRIES Sing

FIRST FAIRY. You spotted snakes with double tongue, Thorny hedgehogs, be not seen; Newts and blind-worms, do no wrong, Come not near our fairy Queen. CHORUS.



hair, In thy eye that shall appear When  
thou wak'st, it is thy dear. Wake when  
some vile thing is near. Exit

Enter LYSANDER and HERMIA

LYSANDER. Fair love, you faint with  
wand'ring in the wood; And, to speak  
troth, I have forgot our way; We'll rest  
us, Hermia, if you think it good, And  
tarry for the comfort of the day. HERMIA.  
Be it so, Lysander: find you out a bed,  
For I upon this bank will rest my head.

LYSANDER. One turf shall serve as pillow  
for us both; One heart, one bed, two  
bosoms, and one troth. HERMIA. Nay,  
good Lysander; for my sake, my dear,  
Lie further off yet; do not lie so near.

LYSANDER. O, take the sense, sweet, of  
my innocence! 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 press'd!  
[They sleep]

Enter PUCK

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? Weeds 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 durst  
not lie Near this lack-love, this  
kill-courtesy. Churl, upon thy eyes I  
throw All the power this charm doth  
owe: When thou wak'st let love  
forbid Sleep his seat on thy eyelid.  
So awake when I am gone;  
For I must now to Oberon. Exit

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 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 oft'ner wash'd than hers. No, no, I am as ugly as a bear,

For beasts that meet me run away for fear; Therefore no marvel though Demetrius Do, as a monster, fly my presence thus. What wicked and

dissembling glass of mine Made me compare with Hermia's sphery eyne? But who is here? Lysander! on the ground!

Dead, or asleep? I see no blood, no wound. Lysander, if you live, good sir,

awake.      LYSANDER. [Waking] And run  
through fire I will for thy sweet sake.  
Transparent Helena! Nature shows art,  
That through thy bosom makes me see thy  
heart.      Where is Demetrius? O, how fit a  
word      Is that vile name to perish on my  
sword! HELENA. Do not say so, Lysander;  
say not so.      What though he love your  
Hermia? Lord, what though?      Yet Hermia  
still loves you; then be content.  
LYSANDER. Content with Hermia! No: I do  
repent      The tedious minutes I with her  
have spent.      Not Hermia but Helena I  
love:      Who will not change a raven for a  
dove?      The will of man is by his reason  
sway'd,      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't  
not enough, is't not enough, young man,  
That I did never, no, nor never can,  
Deserve a sweet look from Demetrius' eye,  
But you must flout my insufficiency?

Good troth, you do me wrong, good sooth,  
you do, In such disdainful manner me to  
woo. But fare you well; perforce I must  
confess I thought you lord of more true  
gentleness. O, that a lady of one man  
refus'd Should of another therefore be  
abus'd! Exit LYSANDER. She

sees not Hermia. Hermia, sleep thou there;  
And never mayst thou come Lysander  
near! For, as a surfeit of the sweetest  
things The deepest loathing to the  
stomach brings, Or as the heresies that  
men do leave Are hated most of those  
they did deceive, So thou, my surfeit and



my heresy, Of all be hated, but the most  
of me! And, all my powers, address your  
love and might To honour Helen, and to  
be her knight! Exit HERMIA.

[Starting] 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 prey. Lysander! What,  
remov'd? Lysander! lord! What, out of  
hearing gone? No sound, no word?  
Alack, where are you? Speak, an if you  
hear; Speak, of all loves! I swoon almost  
with fear. No? Then I well perceive you  
are not nigh. Either death or you I'll find  
immediately. Exit

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ACT III. SCENE I. The wood. TITANIA lying asleep

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

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

BOTTOM. Peter Quince! QUINCE. What sayest thou, bully Bottom?

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

SNOUT. By'r lakin, a parlous fear.

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

BOTTOM. Not a whit; I

have a device to make all well. Write me a prologue; and let the prologue seem to say we will do no harm with our swords, and that Pyramus is not kill'd 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 yourself to bring in- God shield us!- a lion among ladies is a most dreadful thing; for there is not a more fearful wild-fowl than your lion living; and we ought to look to't. 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 thus, or to the same defect: 'Ladies,' or 'Fair ladies, I would wish you' or 'I would request you' or 'I would entreat you not to fear, not to tremble. My life for yours! If you think I come hither as a lion, it were pity of my life. No, I am no such thing; I am a 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 Thisby meet by moonlight. SNOUT. Doth the moon shine that night we play our play? BOTTOM. A calendar, a calendar! Look in the almanack; 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 a wall in the great chamber; for Pyramus and Thisby, says the story, did talk through the chink of a wall. SNOUT. You can never bring in a wall. What say you, Bottom? BOTTOM. Some man or other must present Wall; and let him have some plaster, or some loam, or some rough-cast about him, to signify wall; and let him hold his fingers thus, and through that cranny shall Pyramus and Thisby whisper. QUINCE. If that may be, then all is well. Come, sit down, every mother's son, and rehearse your parts. Pyramus, you begin; when you have spoken your speech, enter into that brake; and so every one according to his cue.

Enter PUCK behind

PUCK. What hempen homespuns have we  
swagg'ring 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.  
Thisby, stand forth.      BOTTOM. Thisby, the  
flowers of odious savours sweet-  
QUINCE. 'Odious'- odorous!      BOTTOM.  
-odours savours sweet;      So hath thy  
breath, my dearest Thisby dear.      But  
hark, a voice! Stay thou but here awhile,  
And by and by I will to thee appear.

Exit PUCK. A stranger Pyramus than  
e'er played here!      Exit FLUTE. Must I  
speak now?      QUINCE. Ay, marry, must  
you; for you must understand he goes but  
to      see a noise that he heard, and is to  
come again.      FLUTE. Most radiant  
Pyramus, most lily-white of hue,      Of

colour like the red rose on triumphant  
brier, Most brisky juvenal, and eke most  
lovely Jew, As true as truest horse, that  
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.

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

BOTTOM. If I were fair, Thisby, I were  
only thine. QUINCE. O monstrous! O  
strange! We are haunted. Pray, masters!  
fly, masters! Help!  
Exeunt all but BOTTOM and PUCK 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   BOTTOM. Why do they  
run away? This is a knavery of them to  
make me     afeard.

Re-enter SNOUT

SNOUT. O Bottom, thou art chang'd! What  
do I see on thee?   BOTTOM. What do you  
see? You see an ass-head of your own, do  
you?     Exit

SNOUT

Re-enter QUINCE

QUINCE. Bless thee, Bottom, bless thee!  
Thou art translated. Exit   BOTTOM. I see  
their knavery: this is to make an ass of me;

to fright me, if they could. But I will not stir from this place, do what they can; I will walk up and down here, and will sing, that they shall hear I am not afraid.

[Sings]

The ousel cock, so black of hue,  
With orange-tawny bill,                      The throstle  
with his note so true,                      The wren with  
little quill.

TITANIA. What angel wakes me from my flow'ry bed? BOTTOM. [Sings]                      The  
finch, the sparrow, and the lark,                      The  
plain-song cuckoo grey,                      Whose note  
full many a man doth mark,                      And  
dares not answer nay-                      for, indeed, who  
would set his wit to so foolish a bird?  
Who would give a bird the he, though he  
cry 'cuckoo' never so? TITANIA. I pray  
thee, gentle mortal, sing again.                      Mine ear  
is much enamoured of thy note;                      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-a-days. The more the pity that some  
honest neighbours will not make them  
friends. Nay, I can gleek 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 do not desire to  
go; Thou shalt remain here whether thou  
wilt or no. I am a spirit of no common  
rate; The summer still doth tend upon  
my state; And I do love thee; therefore,  
go with me. 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 PEASEBLOSSOM, COBWEB,  
MOTH, and MUSTARDSEED

PEASEBLOSSOM. Ready. COBWEB. And  
I. MOTH. And I. MUSTARDSEED. 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;      The honey bags steal from  
the humble-bees,      And for night-tapers  
crop their waxen thighs,      And light them  
at the fiery glow-worm's eyes,      To have  
my love to bed and to arise;      And pluck  
the wings from painted butterflies,      To

fan the moonbeams from his sleeping eyes. Nod to him, elves, and do him courtesies. PEASEBLOSSOM. Hail, mortal!

COBWEB. Hail! MOTH. Hail!

MUSTARDSEED. Hail! BOTTOM. I cry your worships mercy, heartily; I beseech your worship's name. COBWEB. Cobweb.

BOTTOM. I shall desire you of more acquaintance, good Master Cobweb. If I cut my finger, I shall make bold with you.

Your name, honest gentleman?

PEASEBLOSSOM. Peaseblossom.

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

BOTTOM. Good Master Mustardseed, I know your patience well. That same cowardly giant-like ox-beef hath devour'd many a gentleman of your house. I

promise you your kindred hath made my  
eyes water ere now. I desire you of more  
acquaintance, good Master  
Mustardseed. TITANIA. Come, wait upon  
him; lead him to my bower. The moon,  
methinks, looks with a wat'ry eye; And  
when she weeps, weeps every little flower;  
Lamenting some enforced chastity. Tie  
up my love's tongue, bring him silently.

Exeunt

## SCENE II. Another part of the wood

Enter OBERON

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

Enter PUCK

Here comes my messenger. How now,  
mad spirit!        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 thickskin of that barren

sort,       Who Pyramus presented, in their  
sport       Forsook his scene and ent'red in a  
brake;       When I did him at this advantage  
take,       An ass's nolle I fixed on his head.

Anon his Thisby must be answered,       And  
forth my mimic comes. When they him  
spy,       As wild geese that the creeping  
fowler eye,       Or russet-pated choughs,  
many in sort,       Rising and cawing at the  
gun's report,       Sever themselves and  
madly sweep the sky,       So at his sight  
away his fellows fly;       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 in this distracted fear,       And  
left sweet Pyramus translated there;  
When in that moment, so it came to pass,



Titania wak'd, and straightway lov'd an ass.

OBERON. This falls out better than I could devise. But hast thou yet latch'd the Athenian's eyes With the love-juice, as I did bid thee do? PUCK. I took him sleeping- that is finish'd too- And the Athenian woman by his side; That, when he wak'd, of force she must be ey'd.

Enter DEMETRIUS and HERMIA

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. The sun was not so true unto the

day      As he to me. Would he have stolen  
away      From sleeping Hermia? I'll believe  
as soon      This whole earth may be bor'd,  
and that the moon      May through the  
centre creep and so displease      Her  
brother's noontide with th' Antipodes.      It  
cannot be but thou hast murd'red him;      So  
should a murderer look- so dead, so grim.

DEMETRIUS. So should the murdered  
look; and so should I,      Pierc'd through the  
heart with your stern cruelty;      Yet you,  
the murderer, look as bright, as clear,  
As yonder Venus in her glimmering  
sphere.

HERMIA. What's this to my  
Lysander? Where is he?      Ah, good  
Demetrius, wilt thou give him me?

DEMETRIUS. I had rather give his carcass  
to my hounds.      HERMIA. Out, dog! out,  
cur! Thou driv'st me past the bounds      Of  
maiden's patience. Hast thou slain him,  
then?      Henceforth be never numb'red  
among men!      O, once tell true; tell true,

even for my sake!     Durst thou have look'd  
upon him being awake,     And hast thou  
kill'd him sleeping? O brave touch!

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 mispris'd 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

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;

Which now in some slight measure it will

pay,      If for his tender here I make some  
stay.      [Lies down] OBERON. What hast  
thou done? Thou hast mistaken quite,  
And laid the love-juice on some true-love's  
sight.      Of thy misprision must perforce  
ensue      Some true love turn'd, and not a  
false turn'd true.      PUCK. Then fate  
o'er-rules, that, one man holding troth,      A  
million fail, confounding oath on oath.  
OBERON. About the wood go swifter than  
the wind,      And Helena of Athens look  
thou find;      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 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 wak'st, if she be by,  
Beg of her for remedy.

Re-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 prepost'rously.

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 with oath, and you will nothing weigh:

Your vows to her and me, put in two  
scales, Will even weigh; and both as  
light as tales. LYSANDER. I had no  
judgment when to her I swore. HELENA.

Nor none, in my mind, now you give her  
o'er. LYSANDER. Demetrius loves her,  
and he loves not you. DEMETRIUS.

[Awaking] O Helen, goddess, nymph,  
perfect, divine! To what, my love, shall I  
compare thine eyne? Crystal is muddy.  
O, how ripe in show Thy lips, those

kissing cherries, tempting grow!      That  
pure congealed white, high Taurus' snow,

Fann'd with the eastern wind, turns to a  
crow      When thou hold'st up thy hand. O,  
let me kiss      This princess of pure white,  
this seal of bliss!      HELENA. O spite! O hell!  
I see you all are bent      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 lov'd her, all that love is gone. My heart to her but as guest-wise sojourn'd, And now to Helen is it home return'd, There to remain.

LYSANDER. Helen, it is not so.

DEMETRIUS. Disparage not the faith thou dost not know, Lest, to thy peril, thou aby 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 yon fiery oes  
and eyes of light.        Why seek'st thou me?

Could not this make thee know        The hate  
I bare thee made me leave thee so?

HERMIA. You speak not as you think; it  
cannot be.        HELENA. Lo, she is one of this

confederacy!        Now I perceive they have  
conjoin'd all three        To fashion this false

sport in spite of me.        Injurious Hermia!

most ungrateful maid!                    Have you  
conspir'd, have you with these contriv'd,  
To bait me with this foul derision?    Is all  
the counsel that we two have shar'd,    The  
sisters' vows, the hours that we have spent,  
When we have chid the hasty-footed  
time    For parting us- O, is all forgot?    All  
school-days'            friendship,            childhood  
innocence?            We, Hermia, like two  
artificial gods,            Have with our needles  
created both one flower,            Both on one  
sampler, sitting on one cushion,            Both  
warbling of one song, both in one key;  
As if our hands, our sides, voices, and  
minds,            Had been incorporate. So we  
grew together,            Like to a double cherry,  
seeming parted,            But yet an union in  
partition,            Two lovely berries moulded  
on one stern;            So, with two seeming  
bodies, but one heart;            Two of the first,  
like coats in heraldry,            Due but to one,  
and crowned with one crest.            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. I am amazed at your  
passionate words; I scorn you not; it  
seems that you scorn me. HELENA. Have  
you not set Lysander, as in scorn, To  
follow me and praise my eyes and face?  
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? What  
though I be not so in grace as you, So  
hung upon with love, so fortunate, But  
miserable most, to love unlov'd? This

you should pity rather than despise.

HERMIA. I understand not what you mean by this.

HELENA. Ay, do- persever,  
counterfeit sad looks,            Make mouths  
upon me when I turn my back,            Wink  
each at other; hold the sweet jest up;

This sport, well carried, shall be  
chronicled.    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 Ethiopie!

DEMETRIUS. No, no, he will 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 med'cine! O hated potion, hence!

HERMIA. Do you not jest?

HELENA. Yes, sooth; and so do you.

LYSANDER. Demetrius, I will keep my word with thee.

DEMETRIUS. I would I had your bond; for I perceive A weak bond holds you; I'll not trust your word.

LYSANDER. What, should I hurt her, strike her, kill her dead? Although I hate her, I'll not harm her so. HERMIA. What! Can you do me greater harm than hate? Hate me! wherefore? O me! what news, my love? Am not I Hermia? Are not you Lysander? I am as fair now as I was erewhile. Since night you lov'd 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 cankerblossom! You thief of love! What! Have you come by night, And stol'n my love's heart from him? HELENA. Fine, i' faith! Have you no modesty, no maiden shame, No touch of bashfulness? What! Will you tear Impatient answers from my

gentle tongue? Fie, fie! you counterfeit,  
you puppet you! HERMIA. 'Puppet!' why  
so? Ay, that way goes the game. Now I  
perceive that she hath made compare  
Between our statures; she hath urg'd her  
height; And with her personage, her tall  
personage, Her height, forsooth, she  
hath prevail'd with him. And are you  
grown so high in his esteem Because I  
am so dwarfish and so low? 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 wrong'd 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 threat'ned 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't that hinders you?  
HELENA. A foolish heart that I leave here  
behind. HERMIA. What! with Lysander?  
HELENA. With Demetrius. LYSANDER. Be  
not afraid; she shall not harm thee, Helena.  
DEMETRIUS. No, sir, she shall not, though  
you take her part. HELENA. O, when she  
is angry, she is keen and shrewd; She  
was a vixen when she went to school;  
And, though she be but little, she is fierce.



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

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

DEMETRIUS. You are too officious In her behalf that scorns your services. Let her alone; speak not of Helena; Take not her part; for if thou dost intend Never so little show of love to her, Thou shalt aby it. LYSANDER. Now she holds me not.

Now follow, if thou dar'st, to try whose right, Of thine or mine, is most in Helena. DEMETRIUS. Follow! Nay, I'll go with thee, cheek by jowl.

Exeunt LYSANDER and DEMETRIUS

HERMIA. You, mistress, all this coil is long of you. Nay, go not back. HELENA. I will not trust you, I; Nor longer stay in your curst company. Your hands than mine are quicker for a fray; My legs are

longer though, to run away. Exit

HERMIA. I am amaz'd, and know not what to say. Exit OBERON. This is thy

negligence. Still thou mistak'st, 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 garments he had on?

And so far blameless proves my enterprise That I have 'nointed an Athenian's eyes;

And so far am I glad it so did sort, As this their jangling I esteem a sport.

OBERON. Thou seest these lovers seek a place to fight. Hie therefore, Robin,

overcast the night; The starry welkin cover thou anon With drooping fog as

black as Acheron, And lead these testy rivals so astray As one come not within

another's way. Like to Lysander sometime frame thy tongue, Then stir

Demetrius up with bitter wrong; And sometime rail thou like Demetrius; And

from each other look thou lead them thus,  
Till o'er their brows death-counterfeiting  
sleep With leaden legs and batty wings  
doth creep. Then crush this herb into  
Lysander's eye; Whose liquor hath this  
virtuous property, To take from thence  
all error with his might And make his  
eyeballs roll with wonted sight. When  
they next wake, all this derision Shall  
seem a dream and fruitless vision; And  
back to Athens shall the lovers wend  
With league whose date till death shall  
never end. Whiles I in this affair do thee  
employ, I'll to my queen, and beg her  
Indian boy; And then I will her charmed  
eye release From monster's view, and all  
things shall be peace. PUCK. My fairy  
lord, this must be done with haste, For  
night's swift dragons cut the clouds full  
fast; And yonder shines Aurora's  
harbinger, At whose approach ghosts,  
wand'ring here and there, Troop home

to churchyards. Damned spirits all      That  
in cross-ways and floods have burial,  
Already to their wormy beds are gone,  
For fear lest day should look their shames  
upon;      They wilfully themselves exil'd  
from light,      And must for aye consort with  
black-brow'd night.      OBERON. But we are  
spirits of another sort:      I with the  
Morning's love have oft made sport;  
And, like a forester, the groves may tread  
Even till the eastern gate, all fiery red,  
Opening on Neptune with fair blessed  
beams,      Turns into yellow gold his salt  
green streams.      But, notwithstanding,  
haste, make no delay;      We may effect this  
business yet ere day.      Exit OBERON  
PUCK.      Up and down, up and down,  
I will lead them up and down.      I am  
fear'd in field and town.      Goblin,  
lead them up and down.      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 defil'd That draws a sword on thee.

DEMETRIUS. Yea, art thou there? PUCK.

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

Re-enter LYSANDER

LYSANDER. He goes before me, and still  
dares me on;      When I come where he  
calls, then he is gone.      The villain is much  
lighter heel'd than I.      I followed fast, but  
faster he did fly,      That fallen am I in dark  
uneven way,      And here will rest me. [Lies  
down] Come, thou gentle day.      For if but  
once thou show me thy grey light,      I'll  
find Demetrius, and revenge this spite.  
[Sleeps]

Re-enter PUCK and DEMETRIUS

PUCK. Ho, ho, ho! Coward, why com'st  
thou not?      DEMETRIUS. Abide me, if thou  
dar'st; for well I wot      Thou run'st before  
me, shifting every place,      And dar'st 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.

[Lies down and sleeps]

Enter HELENA

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

[Sleeps] PUCK. Yet but three? Come one more; Two of both kinds makes 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!

[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]  
When thou wak'st,                      Thou  
tak'st                      True delight                      In the  
sight                      Of thy former lady's eye;  
And the country proverb known,                      That



every man should take his own,                      In  
your waking shall be shown:                      Jack  
shall have Jill;                      Nought shall go ill;  
The man shall have his mare again, and  
all        shall        be        well.                      Exit

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ACT IV. SCENE I. The wood. LYSANDER,  
DEMETRIUS, HELENA, and HERMIA, lying  
asleep

Enter TITANIA and Bottom;  
PEASEBLOSSOM, COBWEB, MOTH,  
MUSTARDSEED, and other FAIRIES  
attending; OBERON behind,  
unseen

TITANIA. Come, sit thee down upon this  
flow'ry bed, While I thy amiable cheeks  
do coy, And stick musk-roses in thy  
sleek smooth head, And kiss thy fair  
large ears, my gentle joy. BOTTOM.  
Where's Peaseblossom? PEASEBLOSSOM.  
Ready. BOTTOM. Scratch my head,  
Peaseblossom. Where's Mounsieur  
Cobweb? COBWEB. Ready. BOTTOM.  
Mounsieur Cobweb; good mounsieur, get  
you your weapons in your hand and kill  
me a red-hipp'd 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? MUSTARDSEED. Ready. BOTTOM. Give me your neaf, Mounsieur Mustardseed. Pray you, leave your curtsy, good mounsieur. MUSTARDSEED. What's your will? BOTTOM. Nothing, good mounsieur, but to help Cavalery Cobweb to scratch. I must to the barber's, mounsieur; for methinks 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, be gone, and be all ways away. Exeunt FAIRIES So doth the woodbine the sweet honeysuckle Gently entwist; the female ivy so Enrings the barky fingers of the elm. O, how I love thee! how I dote on thee! [They sleep]

Enter PUCK

OBERON. [Advancing] Welcome, good

Robin. Seest thou this sweet sight?  
Her dotage now I do begin to pity; For,  
meeting her of late behind the wood,  
Seeking sweet favours for this hateful fool,  
I did upbraid her and fall out with her.  
For she his hairy temples then had  
rounded With coronet of fresh and  
fragrant flowers; And that same dew  
which sometime on the buds Was wont  
to swell like round and orient pearls  
Stood now within the pretty flowerets'  
eyes, Like tears that did their own  
disgrace bewail. When I had at my  
pleasure taunted her, And she in mild  
terms begg'd my patience, I then did ask  
of her her changeling child; Which  
straight she gave me, and her fairy sent  
To bear him to my bower in fairy land.  
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.

[Touching her eyes]

Be as thou wast wont to be;      See as  
thou was wont to see.      Dian's bud o'er  
Cupid's flower      Hath such force and  
blessed power.      Now, my Titania; wake  
you, my sweet queen.      TITANIA. My  
Oberon! What visions have I seen!

Methought I was enamour'd of an ass.

OBERON. There lies your love.      TITANIA.

How came these things to pass?      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!      PUCK.  
Now when thou wak'st with thine own fool's

eyes peep. OBERON. Sound, music.  
Come, my Queen, take hands with me,

[Music] 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,  
an in jollity. PUCK. Fairy King, attend  
and mark; I do hear the morning  
lark. OBERON. Then, my Queen, in  
silence sad, Trip we after night's  
shade. We the globe can compass  
soon, Swifter than the wand'ring  
moon. TITANIA. Come, my lord; and in  
our flight, Tell me how it came this  
night That I sleeping here was  
found With these mortals on the  
ground. Exeunt



To the winding of horns, enter  
THESEUS, HIPPOLYTA, EGEUS,  
and train

THESEUS. Go, one of you, find out the  
forester; For now our observation is  
perform'd, And since we have the  
vaward of the day, My love shall hear  
the music of my hounds. Uncouple in the  
western valley; let them go. Dispatch, I  
say, and find the forester. Exit an  
ATTENDANT 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 bay'd the bear With  
hounds of Sparta; never did I hear Such  
gallant chiding, for, besides the groves,  
The skies, the fountains, every region near  
Seem'd all one mutual cry. I never heard  
So musical a discord, such sweet

thunder. THESEUS. My hounds are bred  
out of the Spartan kind,      So flew'd, so  
sanded; and their heads are hung      With  
ears that sweep away the morning dew;  
Crook-knee'd      and      dew-lapp'd      like  
Thessalian bulls;      Slow in pursuit, but  
match'd in mouth like bells,      Each under  
each. A cry more tuneable      Was never  
holla'd to, nor cheer'd with horn,      In  
Crete, in Sparta, nor in Thessaly.      Judge  
when you hear. But, soft, what nymphs are  
these? EGEUS. My lord, this is my  
daughter here asleep,      And this  
Lysander, this Demetrius is,      This Helena,  
old Nedar's Helena.      I wonder of their  
being here together. THESEUS. No doubt  
they rose up early to observe      The rite of  
May; and, hearing our intent,      Came here  
in grace of our solemnity.      But speak,  
Egeus; is not this the day      That Hermia  
should give answer of her choice?  
EGEUS. It is, my lord. THESEUS. Go, bid

the huntsmen wake them with their horns.

[Horns and shout within. The

sleepers awake and

kneel to 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 I do

bethink me, so it is- I came with Hermia

hither. Our intent Was to be gone from

Athens, where we might, Without the

peril of the Athenian law- EGEUS.

Enough, enough, my Lord; you have

enough; I beg the law, the law upon his

head. They would have stol'n away, they  
would, Demetrius, Thereby to have  
defeated you and me: You of your wife,  
and me of my consent, Of my consent  
that she should be your wife. DEMETRIUS.  
My lord, fair Helen told me of their stealth,  
Of this their purpose hither to this wood;  
And I in fury hither followed them, Fair  
Helena in fancy following me. But, my  
good lord, I wot not by what power- But  
by some power it is- my love to Hermia,  
Melted as the snow, seems to me now As  
the remembrance of an idle gaud Which  
in my childhood I did dote upon; And all  
the faith, the virtue of my heart, The  
object and the pleasure of mine eye, Is  
only Helena. To her, my lord, Was I  
betroth'd ere I saw Hermia. But, like a  
sickness, did I loathe this food; But, as in  
health, come to my natural taste, Now I  
do wish it, love it, long for it, And will for  
evermore be true to it. THESEUS. Fair

lovers, you are fortunately met;      Of this  
discourse we more will hear anon.

Egeus, I will overbear your will;      For in  
the temple, by and by, with us      These  
couples shall eternally be knit.      And, for  
the morning now is something worn,      Our  
purpos'd hunting shall be set aside.

Away with us to Athens, three and three;  
We'll hold a feast in great solemnity.

Come, Hippolyta.      Exeunt

THESEUS, HIPPOLYTA, EGEUS, and train  
DEMETRIUS. These things seem small and  
undistinguishable,      Like far-off mountains  
turned into clouds.      HERMIA. Methinks I  
see these things with parted eye,      When  
every thing seems double.      HELENA. So  
methinks;      And I have found Demetrius  
like a jewel,      Mine own, and not mine  
own.      DEMETRIUS. 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. Exeunt 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, stol'n hence,  
and left me asleep! I have had a most rare  
vision. I have had a dream, past the wit  
of man to say what dream it was. Man is  
but an ass if he go about to expound this  
dream. Methought I was- there is no man  
can tell what. Methought I was, and  
methought I had, but man is but a patch'd  
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 call'd '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

SCENE II. Athens. QUINCE'S house

Enter QUINCE, FLUTE, SNOOT, 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 marr'd; 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 SNOOT



SNUG. Masters, the Duke is coming from the temple; and there is two or three lords and ladies more married. If our sport had gone

forward, we had all been made men.

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

Enter BOTTOM

BOTTOM. Where are these lads? Where are these hearts? QUINCE. Bottom! O most courageous day! O most happy hour!

BOTTOM. Masters, I am to discourse wonders; but ask me not what; for if I tell

you, I am not true Athenian. I will tell you everything, right as it fell out. QUINCE. Let us hear, sweet Bottom. BOTTOM. Not a word of me. All that I will tell you is, that the Duke hath dined. Get your apparel together; good strings to your beards, new ribbons to your pumps; meet presently at the palace; every man look o'er his part; for the short and the long is, our play is preferr'd. In any case, let Thisby have clean linen; and let not him that plays the lion pare his nails, for they shall hang out for the lion's claws. And, most dear actors, eat no onions nor garlic, for we are to utter sweet breath; and I do not doubt but to hear them say it is a sweet comedy. No more words. Away, go, away!  
Exeunt

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ACT V. SCENE I. Athens. The palace of  
THESEUS

Enter               THESEUS,               HIPPOLYTA,  
PHILOSTRATE, 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.       Lovers and madmen have  
such seething brains,       Such shaping  
fantasies, that apprehend    More than cool  
reason ever comprehends.       The lunatic,  
the lover, and the poet,       Are of  
imagination all compact.    One sees more  
devils than vast hell can hold;   That is the  
madman. The lover, all as frantic,   Sees  
Helen's beauty in a brow of Egypt.   The  
poet's eye, in a fine frenzy rolling,   Doth  
glance from heaven to earth, from earth to  
heaven;   And as imagination bodies forth

The forms of things unknown, the poet's  
pen Turns them to shapes, and gives to  
airy nothing A local habitation and a  
name. Such tricks hath strong  
imagination That, if it would but  
apprehend some joy, It comprehends  
some bringer of that joy; Or in the night,  
imagining some fear, How easy is a bush  
suppos'd a bear? HIPPOLYTA. But all the  
story of the night told over, And all their  
minds transfigur'd so together, More  
witnesseth than fancy's images, And  
grows to something of great constancy,  
But howsoever strange and admirable.

Enter LYSANDER, DEMETRIUS,  
HERMIA, and HELENA

THESEUS. Here come the lovers, full of  
joy and mirth. Joy, gentle friends, joy  
and fresh days of love Accompany your  
hearts! LYSANDER. More than to us

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

[Giving a paper]

THESEUS. 'The battle with the Centaurs, to be sung By an Athenian eunuch to the harp.' We'll none of that: that have I told my love, In glory of my kinsman Hercules. 'The riot of the tipsy

Bacchanals,      Tearing the Thracian singer  
in their rage.'      That is an old device, and  
it was play'd      When I from Thebes came  
last a conqueror.      'The thrice three Muses  
mourning for the death      Of Learning, late  
deceas'd in beggary.'      That is some  
satire, keen and critical,      Not sorting with  
a nuptial ceremony.      'A tedious brief  
scene of young Pyramus      And his love  
Thisby; very tragical mirth.'      Merry and  
tragical! tedious and brief!      That is hot ice  
and wondrous strange snow.      How shall  
we find the concord of this discord?

PHILOSTRATE. A play there is, my lord,  
some ten words long,      Which is as brief  
as I have known a play;      But by ten  
words, my lord, it is too long,      Which  
makes it tedious; for in all the play      There  
is not one word apt, one player fitted.  
And tragical, my noble lord, it is;      For  
Pyramus therein doth kill himself.      Which  
when I saw rehears'd, I must confess,

Made mine eyes water; but more merry  
tears    The passion of loud laughter never  
shed.    THESEUS. What are they that do  
play it?    PHILOSTRATE. Hard-handed men  
that work in Athens here,    Which never  
labour'd in their minds till now;    And now  
have toil'd 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 stretch'd and conn'd 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.

Exit PHILOSTRATE    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.

THESEUS. The kinder we, to give them thanks for nothing. Our sport shall be to take what they mistake; And what poor duty cannot do, noble respect Takes it in might, not merit. Where I have come, great clerks have purposed To greet me with premeditated welcomes; Where I have seen them shiver and look pale, Make periods in the midst of sentences, Throttle their practis'd accent in their fears, And, in conclusion, dumbly have broke off, Not paying me a welcome. Trust me, sweet, Out of this silence yet I pick'd a welcome; And in the modesty of fearful duty I read as much as from the rattling tongue Of saucy and audacious eloquence. Love, therefore, and tongue-tied simplicity In least speak most to my capacity.

## Re-enter PHILOSTRATE

PHILOSTRATE. SO please your Grace, the Prologue is address'd. THESEUS. Let him approach. [Flourish of trumpets]

## Enter QUINCE as the PROLOGUE

PROLOGUE. If we offend, it is with our good will. That you should think, we come not to offend, But with good will. To show our simple skill, That is the true beginning of our end. Consider then, we come but in despite. We do not come, as minding to content you, Our true intent is. All for your delight We are not here. That you should here repent you, The actors are at band; 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 play'd on this prologue like a child on a recorder- a sound, but not in government. THESEUS. His speech was like a tangled chain; nothing im paired, but all disordered. Who is next?

Enter, with a trumpet before them, as in dumb show, PYRAMUS and THISBY, WALL, MOONSHINE, and LION

PROLOGUE. Gentles, perchance you wonder at this show; But wonder on, till truth make all things plain. This man is Pyramus, if you would know; This beauteous lady Thisby is certain. This man, with lime and rough-cast, doth present Wall, that vile Wall which did these lovers sunder; And through Walls

chink, poor souls, they are content To  
whisper. At the which let no man wonder.

This man, with lanthorn, dog, and bush of  
thorn, Presenteth Moonshine; for, if you  
will know, By moonshine did these  
lovers think no scorn To meet at Ninus'  
tomb, there, there to woo. This grisly  
beast, which Lion hight by name, The  
trusty Thisby, coming first by night, Did  
scare away, or rather did affright; And as  
she fled, her mantle she did fall; Which  
Lion vile with bloody mouth did stain.

Anon comes Pyramus, sweet youth and  
tall, And finds his trusty Thisby's mantle  
slain; Whereat with blade, with bloody  
blameful blade, He bravely broach'd his  
boiling bloody breast; And Thisby,  
tarrying in mulberry shade, His dagger  
drew, and died. For all the rest, Let Lion,  
Moonshine, Wall, and lovers twain, At  
large discourse while here they do remain.

Exeunt PROLOGUE,

PYRAMUS, THISBY,

LION, and MOONSHINE      THESEUS. I wonder if the lion be to speak.

DEMETRIUS. No wonder, my lord: one lion may, when many asses do.      WALL. 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 Thisby, 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.      THESEUS. Would you

desire lime and hair to speak better?

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

Enter PYRAMUS

THESEUS. Pyramus draws near the wall;  
silence. PYRAMUS. O grim-look'd night!  
O night with hue so black! O night,  
which ever art when day is not! O night,  
O night, alack, alack, alack, I fear my  
Thisby's promise is forgot! And thou, O  
wall, O sweet, O lovely wall, That  
stand'st between her father's ground and  
mine; Thou wall, O wall, O sweet and  
lovely wall, Show me thy chink, to blink  
through with mine eyne.

[WALL holds up his fingers] Thanks,  
courteous wall. Jove shield thee well for  
this! But what see what see I? No Thisby  
do I see. O wicked wall, through whom I  
see no bliss, Curs'd he thy stones for  
thus deceiving me! THESEUS. The wall,  
methinks, being sensible, should curse  
again. PYRAMUS. No, in truth, sir, he  
should not. Deceiving me is Thisby'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 THISBY

THISBY. O wall, full often hast thou beard  
my moans,      For parting my fair Pyramus  
and me!      My cherry lips have often kiss'd  
thy stones,      Thy stones with lime and hair  
knit up in thee.      PYRAMUS. I see a voice;  
now will I to the chink,      To spy an I can  
hear my Thisby's face.      Thisby!      THISBY.  
My love! thou art my love, I think.  
PYRAMUS. Think what thou wilt, I am thy  
lover's grace;      And like Limander am I  
trusty still.      THISBY. And I like Helen, till  
the Fates me kill.      PYRAMUS. Not Shafalus  
to Procrus was so true.      THISBY. As  
Shafalus to Procrus, I to you.      PYRAMUS.  
O, kiss me through the hole of this vile  
wall.      THISBY. I kiss the wall's hole, not  
your lips at all.      PYRAMUS. Wilt thou at  
Ninny's tomb meet me straightway?

THISBY. Tide life, tide death, I come without delay. Exeunt

PYRAMUS and THISBY WALL. Thus have I, Wall, my part discharged so; And, being done, thus Wall away doth go. Exit

WALL THESEUS. Now is the moon used 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. You, ladies, you, whose gentle hearts do fear      The smallest monstrous mouse that creeps on floor,      May now, perchance, both quake and tremble here,

When lion rough in wildest rage doth roar.      Then know that I as Snug the joiner am      A lion fell, nor else no lion's dam; For, if I should as lion come in strife      Into this place, 'twere pity on my life.

THESEUS. A very gentle beast, and of a good conscience.      DEMETRIUS. The very best at a beast, my lord, that e'er I saw.

LYSANDER. This lion is a very fox for his valour.      THESEUS. True; and a goose for his discretion.      DEMETRIUS. Not so, my lord; for his valour cannot carry his discretion, and the fox carries the goose.

THESEUS. His discretion, I am sure, cannot carry his valour; for      the goose carries not the fox. It is well. Leave it to his discretion, and let us listen to the Moon.

MOONSHINE. This lanthorn doth the

horned moon present- DEMETRIUS. He should have worn the horns on his head. THESEUS. He is no crescent, and his horns are invisible within the circumference. MOONSHINE. This lanthorn doth the horned moon present; Myself the Man i' th' Moon do seem to be. THESEUS. This is the greatest error of all the rest; the man should be put into the lantern. How is it else the man i' th' moon? DEMETRIUS. He dares not come there for the candle; for, you see, it is already in snuff. HIPPOLYTA. I am awearry of this moon. Would he would change! THESEUS. It appears, by his small light of discretion, that he is in the wane; but yet, in courtesy, in all reason, we must stay the time. LYSANDER. Proceed, Moon. MOON. All that I have to say is to tell you that the lanthorn is the moon; I, the Man i' th' Moon; this thorn-bush, my thorn-bush; and this dog, my dog. DEMETRIUS. Why,

all these should be in the lantern; for all these are in the moon. But silence; here comes Thisby.

Re-enter THISBY

THISBY. This is old Ninny's tomb. Where is my love? LION. [Roaring] O-

[THISBY runs off] DEMETRIUS. Well roar'd, Lion. THESEUS. Well run, Thisby.

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

[The LION tears THISBY'S Mantle, and exit]

THESEUS. Well mous'd, Lion.

Re-enter PYRAMUS

DEMETRIUS. And then came Pyramus.

LYSANDER. And so the lion vanish'd.

PYRAMUS. 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 Thisby sight.

But stay, O spite!      But mark, poor  
knight,      What dreadful dole is here!

Eyes, do you see?      How can it  
he?      O dainty duck! O dear!

Thy mantle good,      What! stain'd with  
blood?      Approach, ye Furies fell.

O Fates! come, come;      Cut thread  
and thrum;      Quail, crush, conclude,  
and quell. THESEUS. This passion, and the  
death of a dear friend, would go      near to  
make a man look sad. HIPPOLYTA.

Beshrew my heart, but I pity the man.  
PYRAMUS. O wherefore, Nature, didst thou  
lions frame?      Since lion vile hath here  
deflower'd my dear;      Which is- no, no-  
which was the fairest dame      That liv'd,  
that lov'd, that lik'd, that look'd with cheer.

Come, tears, confound;      Out,  
sword, and wound      The pap of  
Pyramus;      Ay, that left pap,

Where heart doth hop. [Stabs  
himself] Thus die I, thus, thus, thus.

Now am I dead, Now am I fled;  
My soul is in the sky. Tongue,  
lose thy light; Moon, take thy flight.

[Exit MOONSHINE] Now die,  
die, die, die, die. [Dies]

DEMETRIUS. No die, but an ace, for him;  
for he is but one. LYSANDER. Less than an  
ace, man; for he is dead; he is nothing.

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

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

Re-enter THISBY

THESEUS. She will find him by starlight.  
Here she comes; and her passion ends  
the play. HIPPOLYTA. Methinks she  
should not use a long one for such a

Pyramus; I hope she will be brief.  
DEMETRIUS. A mote will turn the balance,  
which Pyramus, which Thisby, is the  
better- he for a man, God warrant us: She  
for a woman, God bless us! LYSANDER.  
She hath spied him already with those  
sweet eyes. DEMETRIUS. And thus she  
moans, videlicet:- THISBY. Asleep, my  
love? What, dead, my dove?  
O Pyramus, arise, Speak, speak.  
Quite dumb? Dead, dead? A tomb  
Must cover thy sweet eyes.  
These lily lips, This cherry nose,  
These yellow cowslip cheeks,  
Are gone, are gone; Lovers, make  
moan; His eyes were green as  
leeks. O Sisters Three,  
Come, come to me, With hands as  
pale as milk; Lay them in gore,  
Since you have shore With  
shears his thread of silk. Tongue,  
not a word. Come, trusty sword;

Come, blade, my breast imbrue.

[Stabs herself] And farewell,  
friends; Thus Thisby ends;

Adieu, adieu, adieu. [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 Bergomask 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 need

none to be blamed. Marry, if he that writ  
it had played Pyramus, and hang'd

himself in Thisby's garter, it would have  
been a fine tragedy. And so it is, truly;

and very notably discharg'd. But come,  
your Bergomask; let your epilogue alone.

[A dance] The iron tongue of midnight  
hath told twelve. Lovers, to bed; 'tis

almost fairy time. I fear we shall  
out-sleep the coming morn, As much as  
we this night have overwatch'd. This  
palpable-gross play hath well beguil'd  
The heavy gait of night. Sweet friends, to  
bed. A fortnight hold we this solemnity,  
In nightly revels and new jollity.  
Exeunt

Enter PUCK with a broom

PUCK. Now the hungry lion roars,  
And the wolf howls the moon;  
Whilst the heavy ploughman snores,  
All with weary task fordone. Now  
the wasted brands do glow, Whilst  
the screech-owl, screeching loud,  
Puts the wretch that lies in woe In  
remembrance of a shroud. Now it is  
the time of night That the graves, all  
gaping wide, Every one lets forth  
his sprite, In the church-way paths



to glide.                      And we fairies, that do run  
By the triple Hecate's team  
From the presence of the sun,  
Following darkness like a dream,  
Now are frolic. Not a mouse                      Shall  
disturb this hallowed house.                      I am  
sent with broom before,                      To sweep  
the dust behind the door.

Enter OBERON and TITANIA, with all  
their train

OBERON.                      Through the house give  
glimmering 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 leading, the FAIRIES sing  
and dance]

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



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