

A MIDSUMMER NIGHT'S DREAM

By William Shakespeare

Edited/Adapted by Tom Smith

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CHARACTERS

Theseus, duke of Athens
Hippolyta, queen of the Amazons
Egeus, father to Hermia

Hermia
Lysander
Helena
Demetrius

Nick Bottom, weaver
Peter Quince, carpenter
Francis Flute, bellows-mender
Tom Snout, tinker
Snug, joiner

Oberon, king of the Fairies
Titania, queen of the Fairies
Puck, in Oberon's service
Peaseblossom, attendant to Titania

Suggested Doubling:

- Theseus/Oberon/Snug
- Hippolyta/Titania/Quince
- Egeus/Helena/Snout
- Hermia/Puck
- Lysander/Bottom
- Demetrius/Flute/Peaseblossom

ACT 1**Scene 1**

Enter Theseus and Hippolyta.

THESEUS

Now, fair Hippolyta, our nuptial hour
Draws on apace. Four happy days bring in
A new moon. O, how slowly this moon wanes!

HIPPOLYTA

Four days will quickly steep themselves in night;
Four nights will quickly dream away the time.

Enter Egeus and his daughter Hermia, and Lysander and Demetrius.

EGEUS

Happy be Theseus, our renownèd 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 bewitched the bosom of my child.
He hast by moonlight at her window sung;
With sweet poetry filched my daughter's heart.
Be it so, my gracious duke, that she must
Consent to marry with Demetrius.

THESEUS

Demetrius is a worthy gentleman.

HERMIA

So is Lysander.

THESEUS

In himself he is.
Your father holds the other worthier.

HERMIA

I would my father looked but with my eyes.

THESEUS

Rather your eyes must with his judgment look.

HERMIA

But I beseech your grace that I may know
The worst that may befall me in this case
If I refuse to wed Demetrius.

THESEUS

Either to die the death or to abjure
Forever the society of men.

HERMIA

So will I grow, so live, so die, my lord,
Ere I will yield my one heart up
Unto his Lordship whose unwishèd yoke
My soul consents not to give sovereignty.

THESEUS

Take time to pause, and by the next new moon
Either prepare to wed Demetrius
Or die for disobeying your father's will.

DEMETRIUS

Relent, sweet Hermia, and, Lysander, yield
Thy crazèd title to my certain right.

LYSANDER

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

To Theseus.

I am, my lord, as well derived as he,
As well possessed. My love is more than his;

My fortunes every way as fairly ranked
 And I am beloved of fair Hermia.
 Why should not I then prosecute my right?
 Demetrius, I'll avouch it to his face,
 Courted Nedar's dear daughter, Helena,
 And won her soul; and she, sweet lady, dotes
 Upon this spotted and inconstant man.

THESEUS

I must confess that I have heard so much,
 But, Demetrius, come; Egeus too.
 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
 To death or to a vow of single life.

All exit but Hermia and Lysander.

LYSANDER

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

HERMIA

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

LYSANDER

The course of true love never did run smooth.
 Therefore, hear me: I have a widow aunt,
 From Athens is her house remote seven leagues,
 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 tomorrow night,
 And in the wood a league without the town
 There will I stay for thee.

HERMIA

Good Lysander!

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

LYSANDER

Keep promise, love. Look, here comes Helena.

Enter Helena.

HERMIA

Godspeed, fair Helena. Whither away?

HELENA

Call you me "fair"? That "fair" again unsay.
Demetrius loves your fair. O happy fair!
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.
For anon, we will leave and fly this place.

LYSANDER

Through Athens' gates have we devised to steal.
And free from law, we shall our true love seal.

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.
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.

Hermia exits.

Helena, adieu.

As you on him, Demetrius dote on you!

Lysander exits.

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.
I will go tell him of fair Hermia's flight.
Then to the wood will he tomorrow night
Pursue her. And, for this intelligence
If I have thanks, it is a dear expense.
But herein mean I to enrich my pain,
To have his sight thither and back again.

She exits.

Scene 2

Enter Quince the carpenter, and Snug the joiner, and Bottom the weaver, and Flute the bellows-mender, and Snout the tinker, and Starveling the tailor.

QUINCE

Is all our company here?

Here is the scroll of every man's name which is thought fit to play in our interlude before the Duke and the Duchess on their wedding day.

BOTTOM

First, good Peter Quince, say what the play.

QUINCE

"The most lamentable comedy and most cruel death of Pyramus and Thisbe."

BOTTOM

A very good piece of work, I assure you. Now, good Peter Quince, call forth your actors.

QUINCE

Answer as I call. Nick Bottom, the weaver.

BOTTOM

Ready. Name what part I am for.

QUINCE

You, Nick Bottom, are set down for Pyramus.

BOTTOM

What is Pyramus—a lover or a tyrant?

QUINCE

A lover that kills himself most gallant for love.

BOTTOM

That will ask some tears in the true performing of it.

QUINCE

Francis Flute, the bellows-mender.

FLUTE

Here, Peter Quince.

QUINCE

Flute, you must take Thisbe on you.

FLUTE

What is Thisbe—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.

BOTTOM

Let me play Thisbe too. I'll speak in a little voice: "Ah Pyramus, my lover dear!"

QUINCE

No, no, you must play Pyramus—and, Flute, you Thisbe.
Snug the joiner, you shall be the lion. And here is the play fitted.

SNUG

Have you the lion's part written? 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 make the Duke say "Let him roar again!"

QUINCE

You can play no part but Pyramus.

Bottom starts to protest.

Pyramus is a sweet-faced man, a most lovely gentlemanlike man. Only you can play sh
a man.

BOTTOM

Very well, I will undertake it.

QUINCE

Good. Here are your parts, and I entreat you to con them by tomorrow night and meet me in the palace wood, a mile outside the town, by moonlight. There we may rehearse most courageously.

BOTTOM

Adieu.

QUINCE

At the Duke's Oak we meet.

All exit.

ACT 2**Scene 1**

Enter Peaseblossom at one door and Puck at another.

PUCK

How now, spirit? Whither wander you?

PEASEBLOSSOM

Over hill, over dale, thorough bush, thorough brier,
Over park, over pale, thorough flood, thorough fire;
So I serve the Fairy Queen,
To dew her orbs upon the green.

PUCK

The King doth keep his revels here tonight.
Take heed the Queen come not within his sight,
For she hath in her possession a sweet boy
Crowns him with flowers, makes him her joy.
But jealous Oberon would have the child
Knight of his train, to trace the forests wild.
But she perforce withholds the lovèd thing
Which causes the row between Queen and King.

PEASEBLOSSOM

Either I mistake your shape and making quite,
Or else you are that shrewd and knavish sprite
Called Puck.

PUCK

I am indeed in form and style.
I jest to Oberon and make him smile.
But here comes my King!

PEASEBLOSSOM

My mistress as well!
What happens next there is no way to tell!

*Enter Oberon the King of Fairies at one door and Titania the Queen
at another.*

OBERON

Ill met by moonlight, proud Titania.

TITANIA

What, jealous Oberon? You speak to me?
I have forsworn your bed and company.

OBERON

Tarry, rash wanton. Am not I thy lord?

TITANIA

Then I must be thy lady. But I know
Thou hast stolen away from Fairyland
To play on pipes and verse love
To amorous Hippolyta. Your buskined mistress
To Theseus must be wedded. Did you come
To give their bed joy and prosperity?

OBERON

How canst thou thus for shame, Titania,
Knowing I know thy love to Theseus?
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.

OBERON

Give me that boy and I will go with thee.

TITANIA

Not for thy kingdom! Now, I must away.
We shall chide downright if I longer stay.

Titania and Peaseblossom exit.

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
That very time I saw Cupid all armed?

PUCK

I remember.

OBERON

A certain aim he drew
Yet marked I where the bolt of Cupid fell.
Fetch me that flower; the herb I showed thee once.
The juice of it on sleeping eyelids laid
Will make man or woman or person madly dote
Upon the next live creature that it sees.

PUCK

I'll girdle the Earth in forty minutes.

He exits.

OBERON

Having possession of this charmèd 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
She shall pursue it with the soul of love.
And ere I take this charm from off her sight,
I'll make her render up her boy 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?
Hence, get thee gone, and follow me no more.

HELENA

You draw me, you hard-hearted adamant!

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.
O, I am your spaniel, Demetrius,
The more you shun me I will fawn on you.

DEMETRIUS

I am sick when I do look on thee.

HELENA

And I am sick when I look not on you.

DEMETRIUS

I'll run from thee, hiding among the trees
And leave thee to the mercy of wild beasts.

Demetrius exits.

HELENA

I'll follow thee and make a heaven of hell
To die upon the hand I love so well.

Helena exits. Enter Puck.

OBERON

Hast thou the flower there?

PUCK

Ay, here's your prize.

Gives him the flower.

OBERON

I shall streak with its juice Titania's eyes.
Take thou some of it, and seek through this grove.

Gives Puck part of the flower.

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.
 And look thou meet me ere the first cock crow.

PUCK

Fear not, my lord. Your servant shall do so.
They exit.

Scene 2

Enter Titania, with Peaseblossom.

TITANIA

Come, a fairy song: play me now asleep.

*Peaseblossom plays or sings a sweet song, as
 Titania falls asleep. Peaseblossom exits.*

Enter Oberon, who anoints Titania's eyelids with the nectar.

OBERON

What thou seest when thou dost wake
 Do it for thy true love take.
 Be that leopard, or dog, or boar, or deer,
 Wake when some vile thing is near.
He exits.

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. Make you a bed.
 I'll find a verdant bank to rest my head.

LYSANDER

One turf shall serve as pillow for us both;
One heart, one bed, two bosoms, and one troth.

HERMIA

Good Lysander, for love and courtesy,
I'll lie further off in human modesty.
I shall be but there; and good night, sweet friend.
Thy love ne'er alter til thy sweet life end!

Exits. Lysander lays down, and sleeps.

Enter Puck. He sees Lysander.

PUCK

Night and silence! Who is here?
Garb of Athens he doth wear.
This is he my master said
Despisèd the Athenian maid.
And there the maiden, sleeping sound
On the dank and dirty ground.
Churl, upon thy eyes I throw
All the power this charm doth owe.

He anoints Lysander's eyelids with the nectar and exits.

Enter Demetrius and Helena, running.

HELENA

Stay, though thou kill me, sweet Demetrius.

DEMETRIUS

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

Demetrius exits.

HELENA

O, I am full of love yet out of air.
He thinks I am as ugly as a bear.
Therefore no marvel though Demetrius
Do as a monster fly my presence thus.

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 up.

And run through fire I will for thy sweet sake.
 Transparent Helena! Nature shows art,
 That through thy bosom makes me see thy heart.

HELENA

Do not say so. Lysander, say not so.
 Thou art content with fair Hermia, no?

LYSANDER

Content with Hermia? 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?

HELENA

Wherefore was I to this keen mockery born?
 When at your hands did I deserve this scorn?
 Good troth, you do me wrong, good sooth, you do,
 In such disdainful manner me to woo.
 But fare you well. Perforce I must confess
 I thought you lord of more true gentleness.
 O, that a lady of one man refused
 Should of another therefore be abused!

She exits.

LYSANDER

She sees not Hermia.—Hermia, sleep thou there,
 And never mayst thou come Lysander near.
 I will use my power, my love and might
 To honor Helena and be her knight.

He exits.

HERMIA

Waking up suddenly from a bad dream.

Ay me, for pity! What a dream was here!
Lysander, look how I do quake with fear.
Methought a serpent ate my heart away,
And you sat smiling at his cruel prey.
Lysander! How now? Alack, are you here?
Gone? Out of hearing? I tremble with fear.
Go I to find you immediately.
I shall follow you obediently.

She rushes off.

ACT 3

Scene 1

Titania still asleep (off). Enter Bottom, Quince, Snout, Snug, and Flute.

BOTTOM

Are we all met?

QUINCE

Here's a convenient place for our rehearsal. This green plot shall be our stage and we will do it in action as we will do it before the Duke.

Puck, unseen, enters.

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.

BOTTOM

Peter Quince, there are things in this comedy of Pyramus and Thisbe that will never please. First, Pyramus must draw a sword to kill himself, which gentlefolk cannot abide. How answer you that?

SNUG

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

BOTTOM

Not a whit! Write a prologue, Peter Quince, and let the prologue say we will do no harm with our swords and that Pyramus is not killed indeed.

SNOUT

Will not the people be afeared of the lion too?

SNUG

A lion among all is a most dreadful thing.

BOTTOM

Therefore also the prologue must tell he is not a lion.

QUINCE

Very well, I shall write a prologue. But there is a hard thing: we must have a wall, for Pyramus and Thisbe, says the story, did talk through the chink of a wall.

SNOUT

You can never bring in a wall.

BOTTOM

Then you, Snout the tinker, must present Wall. Hold your fingers thus, and through that cranny shall Pyramus and Thisbe whisper.

QUINCE

If that may be, then all is well. Come, sit down, and rehearse your parts. Pyramus, you begin. Thisbe, stand forth.

BOTTOM/PYRAMUS

Thisbe, the flowers of odious savors sweet—

QUINCE

Odors, odors!

BOTTOM/PYRAMUS

...odors savors sweet. So hath thy breath, my dearest Thisbe dear.
— But hark, a voice! Stay thou but here awhile and by and by I will appear.
He exits.

PUCK

You shall appear, but as a stranger Pyramus than e'er played before.
Exits after Bottom.

FLUTE

Must I speak now?

QUINCE

Ay, marry, must you.

FLUTE/THISBE

Most radiant Pyramus, as bright as fire,
As true as truest horse, that yet would never tire.
I'll meet thee, Pyramus, at Ninny's tomb.

Starts to exit.

QUINCE

“Ninus’ tomb”! And, you must not exit or speak that yet. First you answer to Pyramus.
—Pyramus, enter. Your cue is past. It is “never tire.”

FLUTE/THISBE

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

Enter Puck, and Bottom with the head of an ass.

BOTTOM/PYRAMUS

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

QUINCE

O monstrous! O strange! We are haunted. Fly!

Quince, Flute, Snout, and Snug rush off. Puck, laughing, chases after.

BOTTOM

Why do they run away?

Enter Snout.

SNOUT

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

BOTTOM

What do you see? What do you see?

Snout exits. Enter Snug.

SNUG

Bless thee, Bottom, bless thee! Thou art translated!

Exits.

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, for this Bottom is no ass!

TITANIA

Waking (entering).

What angel wakes me from my flow'ry sleep?
 I pray thee, gentle mortal, speak again.
 Mine ear is much enamored of thy voice,
 So is mine eye enthralled to thy shape,
 And thy fair virtue's force perforce doth move me
 On the first view to say, to swear, I love thee.

BOTTOM

Methinks, mistress, you should have little reason for that. And yet, to say the truth,
 reason and love keep little company together nowadays.

TITANIA

Thou art as wise as thou art beautiful.
 And I do love thee. Therefore go with me.
 I'll give thee fairies to attend on thee.
 Peaseblossom!

Enter Peaseblossom.

Be kind to this gentleman.
 Feed him with apricots and dewberries,
 Make him a bed of clover and flowers,
 And in morn with the wings of painted butterflies
 Fan the moonbeams from his sleeping eyes.
 Come, wait upon him. Lead him to my bower.
 The moon, methinks, shall rise within the hour.

They exit.

Scene 2

Enter Oberon.

OBERON

I wonder if Titania be awaked;
 Then what it was that next came in her eye.

Enter Puck.

Here comes my messenger. How now, spirit?

PUCK

My mistress with a donkey is in love.
 Rude mechanicals met to rehearse a play
 Intended for great Theseus' nuptial day.
 An ass's pate I fixèd on one's head.
 So at his sight away his people fled,
 When in that moment, so it came to pass,
 Titania waked and straightway loved an ass.

OBERON

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

PUCK

I took him sleeping—that is finished, too.

Enter Demetrius and Hermia.

OBERON

Stand close. Here is the same Athenian.

PUCK

This is the woman, but not this the man.

HERMIA

Where is my Lysander? Tell, for my sake!
 Durst thou looked upon him, being awake?
 Or hast thou killed him? Left slain in some mud?

DEMETRIUS

I am not guilty of Lysander's blood,
 Nor is he dead, for aught that I can tell.

HERMIA

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

DEMETRIUS

And if I could, what should I get therefor?

HERMIA

A privilege never to see me more.
 And from thy hated presence part I so.
 See me no more, whether he be dead or no.

She exits.

DEMETRIUS

There is no following her in this fierce vein.
 Therefore, here in slumber shall I remain.

He lies down and falls asleep.

OBERON

To Puck.

What hast thou done? Thou hast mistaken quite
 And laid the love juice on some true-love's sight.
 Find fancy-sick Helena and bring her here.
 I'll charm his eyes against she do appear.

PUCK

I go, I go, look how I go.

He exits.

OBERON

Applying the nectar to Demetrius' eyes.

Flower of this purple dye,
 Sink in the apple of his eye.
 And when he wak'st, his love he'll see,
 And beg of her a remedy.

Enter Puck.

PUCK

Captain of our fairy band,
 Helena is here at hand,
 And the youth, mistook by me,
 Pleading for a lover's fee.
 Lord, what fools these mortals be!

OBERON

Stand aside. The noise they make

Will cause Demetrius to awake.

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.

HELENA

You do advance your cunning more and more.
These vows are Hermia's. To her you swore.

LYSANDER

Demetrius loves her, and he loves not you.

DEMETRIUS

Waking up.

O Helena, goddess, perfect, divine!
To what, my love, shall I compare thine eyne?
Thy cheeks are blossoms; and how ripe in show
Thy lips, those kissing cherries, tempting grow!

HELENA

O spite! O hell! I see you all are bent
To set against me for your merriment.
Can you not hate me, as I know you do,
But you must join in souls to mock me too?
If you were men, as men you are in show,
You would not use a gentle lady so.

LYSANDER

You are unkind, Demetrius. Be not so,
For you love Hermia; this you know I know.
In Hermia's love I yield you up my part.
Bequeath me yours of Helena, heart for heart.
For I do love her and will till my death.

HELENA

Never did mockers waste more idle breath.

DEMETRIUS

Lysander, keep thy Hermia. I will none.
 If e'er I loved her, all that love is gone.
 My heart to her but as guest-wise sojourned,
 Now to Helena is it home returned,

Enter Hermia.

HERMIA

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 bear thee made me leave thee so?

HERMIA

You speak not as you think. It cannot be.

HELENA

Lo, she is one of this confederacy!
 Now I perceive they have conjoined all three
 To fashion this false sport in spite of me.—
 Injurious Hermia, most ungrateful maid,
 Have you conspired, have you with these contrived,
 To bait me with this foul derision?
 Is all the counsel that we two have shared,

The sisters' vows, the hours that we have spent
 When we have chid the hasty-footed time
 For parting us—O, is all forgot?
 Will you rent our ancient love asunder,
 To join with men in scorning your poor friend?

HERMIA

Helena, I am amazed at your 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,
 Call me goddess, and perfect, and divine?

HERMIA

I understand not what you mean by this.

HELENA

Ay, do. Persever, counterfeit sad looks,
 Wink each at other, hold the sweet jest up.
 But fare you well. 'Tis partly my own fault,
 Which death or absence soon shall remedy.

LYSANDER

Stay, Helena, my love, my life, my soul.

HELENA

O excellent!

HERMIA

To Lysander.

Sweet, do not scorn her so.

LYSANDER

Helena, I love thee. By my life, I do.

DEMETRIUS

I say I love thee more than he can do.

HERMIA

Lysander, whereto tends all this?

Takes hold of Lysander.

LYSANDER

Hang off!

Thou cat, thou burr, thou vile thing! Let me loose.

HERMIA

Why are you grown so rude? What change is this,
Sweet? Do you not jest?

HELENA

Yes, and so do you.

LYSANDER

Off! I do hate you, but cannot harm you.

HERMIA

What, can you do me greater harm than hate?

Am not I Hermia? You not Lysander?

I am as fair now as I was erewhile.

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

LYSANDER

Hear me and believe: I love Helena.

Hermia turns him loose.

HERMIA

O me!

To Helena.

You juggler, you cankerblossom,

You thief of love! What, have you come by night

And stolen my one true love's heart from him?

HELENA

Have you no maiden shame? What, will you tear

Impatient answers from my gentle tongue?

Fie, fie, you counterfeit, you puppet, you!

HERMIA

“Puppet”? Why so? Ay, that way goes the game.
 Now I perceive that she hath made compare
 Between our statures; she hath urged her height,
 And with her personage, her tall personage,
 Her height, forsooth, she hath prevailed with him.
 And are you grown so high in his esteem
 Because I am so dwarfish and so low?
 How low am I, thou painted maypole? Speak!
 How low am I? I am not yet so low
 But that my nails can reach unto thine eyes.

HELENA

I pray, gentlemen, let her not hurt me!
 Hermia, I love you, never wronged you—
 Save that, in love unto Demetrius,
 I told him of your stealth unto this wood.
 He followed you; for love, I followed him.
 But now, so you will let me quiet go,
 To Athens will I bear my folly back
 And follow you no further. Let me go.

HERMIA

Then be gone. What is it that hinders you?

HELENA

A foolish heart that I leave here behind.

HERMIA

What, with Lysander?

HELENA

With Demetrius.

LYSANDER

Be not afraid. She shall not harm thee, Helena.

To Hermia.

Get you gone, you bead, you acorn, you stump.

DEMETRIUS

Lysander, you are far too officious
In her behalf that scorns your services.

LYSANDER

Then 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.
Demetrius and Lysander exit.

HERMIA

You, mistress, all this coil is long of you.
Hermia rushes at Helena, who runs off. A moment later, Helena re-enters quickly running the other direction.

HELENA

Her hands than mine are quicker for a fray.
My legs are longer though, to run away.

She exits.

OBERON

This is thy negligence. Still thou mistak'st.

PUCK

Did not you tell me I should know the man
By the Athenian garments he had on?

OBERON

Thou seest these lovers seek a place to fight.
Hie, therefore, Puck, overcast the night;
And lead these testy rivals so astray
As one come not within another's way.
Till o'er their brows death-counterfeiting sleep
With leaden legs and batty wings doth creep.
Then crush this herb into Lysander's sight,
He gives a flower to Puck.

And correct all errors you made this night.
 While I'll to my queen her charmed eye release
 From ass's view, and all things shall be peace.

He exits.

Enter Lysander.

LYSANDER

Where art thou, proud Demetrius? Speak now.

PUCK

In Demetrius' voice.

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

LYSANDER

Here, and ready. I will be with thee straight.

Lysander rushes off. Enter Demetrius.

DEMETRIUS

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

PUCK

In Lysander's voice.

Thou coward, art thou bragging to the night?
 Thou wilt not come to me to make things right?

DEMETRIUS

Do not let darkness hide thee. Art thou there?

He rushes off, followed by Puck. Enter Lysander.

LYSANDER

He goes before me and still dares me on.
 When I come where he calls, then he is gone.
 The villain is much lighter-heeled than I.
 I followed fast, but faster he did fly,
 That fallen am I in dark uneven way,
 So there will rest me. Come, thou gentle day.

Lies down and sleeps.

Enter Hermia.

HERMIA

Never so weary, how slowly I creep
I can no further run; here will I sleep.

Yawns and wanders off, sleepily.

Enter Puck and Demetrius.

PUCK

In Lysander's voice.

Demetrius, if thou darest, come at me!

Rushes off.

DEMETRIUS

Nay, I cannot, for sleep constraineth me
To measure out my length on this cold bed.
By day's approach you will be visited.

Lies down and sleeps.

Enter Helena.

HELENA

Steal me sleep, from mine own tender sorrow
Let me rest gently until tomorrow.

Lies down and sleeps.

PUCK

On the ground

Sleep sound.

I'll give thee

Remedy

Gentle lover, as you lie.

Puck applies the nectar to Lysander's eyes.

When thou wak'st,

Thou tak'st

True delight

In the sight

Of thy former true love's eye.
He exits.

ACT 4

Scene 1

Enter Titania and Bottom. Oberon watches them, unseen.

TITANIA

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

BOTTOM

Scratch my head.

(Titania does.)

I must to the barber's for a shave for methinks I am marvelous hairy about the face.

TITANIA

Wilt thou hear some music, my sweet love?

BOTTOM

Naaaaay, let nothing stir me. I have an exposition of sleep come upon me.

TITANIA

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

Titania and Bottom sleep.

Enter Puck.

OBERON

Welcome, good Puck. Seest thou this sweet sight?

Her dotage now I do begin to pity.

I will undo my hateful enchantment.

And, gentle Puck, remove his transformed head

That he, awaking when the other do,

May all to Athens back again repair

And think this night's accidents but a dream.

But first I will release the Fairy Queen.

He applies the nectar to her eyes.

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

TITANIA

Waking.

My Oberon, what visions have I seen!
Methought I was enamored of an ass.

OBERON

There lies your love.

TITANIA

How came these things to pass?

Puck removes the ass-head from Bottom.

OBERON

Come, my queen, take hands with me,
Now thou and I are new in amity,
And will tomorrow midnight solemnly
Dance in Duke Theseus' house triumphantly,
And bless it to all fair prosperity.
There shall the pairs of faithful lovers be
Wedded, with Theseus, all in jollity.

Oberon, Puck, and Titania exit.

BOTTOM

Waking up.

When my cue comes, call me, and I will answer.

Fully awake.

Hey-ho! Peter Quince! Flute the bellows-mender!
Snout the tinker! God's my life! Stolen
hence and left me asleep!

He exits.

Enter Theseus.

THESEUS

A verdant morning walk doth clear the mind
Before my evening's nuptials are nigh.
But soft! What nymphs are these?
Hermia here asleep; and Helena;
O'er there Lysander; this Demetrius is.

I wonder of their being here together.
 And is not this morning the very same
 That Hermia give answer of her choice?
 Good morrow, friends.

Hermia, Helena, Demetrius and Lysander all wake.

I pray you all, rise up.

They stand.

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 cannot say how I came here.
 But, as I think—for truly would I speak:
 I came with Hermia hither. Our intent
 Was to be gone hence from Athens and wed.

DEMETRIUS

My lord, Helena 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. It seems to me now
 The object and the pleasure of mine eye,
 Is only Helena. To her, my lord,
 Was I betrothed 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 forevermore be true to it.

THESEUS

Fair lovers, you are fortunately met.
 For in the sacred temple this same night,
 You couples shall eternally be knit.—
 Come, you four, to Athens. Away with me.
 We'll hold a feast in great solemnity.

Theseus exits.

DEMETRIUS

Things seem small and undistinguishable,
Like far-off mountains turned into clouds.

HERMIA

Methinks I see these things with parted eye,
When everything 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?

LYSANDER

And he did bid us follow to the temple.

HERMIA

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

Helena, Hermia, Lysander and Demetrius exit.

Scene 2

Enter Quince, Flute, Snug and Snout.

QUINCE

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

SNOUT

He cannot be heard of.

FLUTE

If he come not, then the play goes not forward, doth it?

Enter Bottom.

BOTTOM

Masters, the Duke is coming from the temple, and there are two couples more that are married.

QUINCE

Bottom! O most happy hour!

BOTTOM

Quickly! Get your apparel together. Every one look o'er your part. The play is on. No more words. Away! Come, away!

All rush off.

ACT 5

Scene 1

Enter Theseus and Hippolyta.

THESEUS

There are the lovers full of joy and mirth.

HIPPOLYTA

'Tis strange, my Theseus, what they spoke of.

THESEUS

More strange than true. I never will believe.

Waving and calling, off.

Fresh days of love accompany your hearts!

Well now, what revels are in hand tonight?

HIPPOLYTA

A play of brave Pyramus and Thisbe.

THESEUS

What are they that do play it?

HIPPOLYTA

Hard-handed souls that work in Athens here.

THESEUS

Then we will hear it. Now: begin the play!

They exit. A bit of music plays.

*Enter Quince. Bottom, Flute, Snout and Snug enter when
Announced in the prologue.*

QUINCE/PROLOGUE

“The most lamentable comedy and most cruel death of Pyramus and Thisbe.”

Prologue.

Here is Pyramus, this one fair Thisbe.

And here is the Wall that kept them at bay.

And this one—this monstrous Lion, shall he

Roar, snarl and scare gentle Thisbe away,

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 Thisbe's mantle slain.
 Whereat, with blade, with bloody blameful blade,
 He bravely broached his boiling bloody breast.
 And Thisbe, tarrying in mulberry shade,
 His dagger drew, and died. For all the rest,
 Let the Lion, the Wall, and lovers twain
 At large discourse, while here they do remain.

SNOUT/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,
 And this the cranny is, right and sinister,
 Through which the fearful lovers are to whisper.

BOTTOM/PYRAMUS

O grim-looking night! O night with hue so black!
 O night, which ever art when day is not!
 O night! O night! Alack, alack, alack!
 I fear my Thisbe's promise is forgot.
 And thou, O wall, O sweet, O lovely wall,
 That stand'st between her father's ground and mine,
 Thou wall, O wall, O sweet and lovely wall,
 Show me thy chink to blink through with mine eyne.
 Thanks, courteous wall. Jove shield thee well for this.
 But what see I? No Thisbe do I see.
 O wicked wall, through whom I see no bliss,
 Cursed be thy stones for thus deceiving me!

Enter Flute.

FLUTE/THISBE

O wall, full often hast thou heard my moans
 For parting my fair Pyramus and me.
 My cherry lips have often kissed thy stones,
 Thy stones with lime and hair knit up in thee.

BOTTOM/PYRAMUS

I see a voice! Now will I to the chink.
Thisbe?

FLUTE/THISBE

My love! Thou art my love, I think.

BOTTOM/PYRAMUS

O kiss me through the hole of this vile wall.

FLUTE/THISBE

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

BOTTOM/PYRAMUS

Wilt thou at Ninny's tomb meet me straightway?

FLUTE/THISBE

'Tide life, 'tide death, I come without delay.

Bottom and Flute exit.

SNOUT/WALL

Thus have I, Wall, my part discharged so,
And, being done, thus Wall away doth go.

He exits.

Enter Snug.

SNUG/LION

All you whose kind and gentle hearts do fear
The smallest mouse that creeps upon the floor,
May now perchance both quake and tremble here,
When lion rough in wildest rage doth roar.

Enter Flute.

FLUTE/THISBE

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

SNUG/LION

Roar.

Flute runs off, dropping Thisbe's mantle. Snug exits.

Enter Bottom.

BOTTOM/PYRAMUS

Sweet Moon, I thank thee for thy sunny beams.

For by thy gracious, golden, glittering gleams,

I trust to take of truest Thisbe sight.—

But stay! But mark! Ay, me! O spite!

Eyes, do you see!

How can it be!

For here, within this mud,

Thy mantle stained with blood?

Come, tears, confound!

Out, sword, and wound

The pap of Pyramus;

Ay, that left pap,

Where heart doth beat.

Stabs himself.

Thus die I, thus, thus, thus.

Now am I dead;

Now am I fled;

My soul is in the sky.

Now die, die, die, die, die.

Dies.

Enter Flute.

FLUTE/THISBE

Asleep, my love?

What, dead, my dove?

Speak, arise. Quite dumb?

Dead? Dead? A tomb

Must cover these lily lips,

This cherry nose,

These yellow cowslip cheeks.

His eyes were green as leeks!

Come, trusty sword,

Come, blade, my breast imbrue!
Stabs herself.

And farewell, friends.
 Thus Thisbe ends.
 Adieu, adieu, adieu.

Dies.

BOTTOM

Quickly popping back up.

Will it please you to see the Epilogue?

HIPPOLYTA

Re-entering with Theseus.

No epilogue, I pray you. For your play needs no excuse.

THESEUS

Lovers, to bed! 'Tis almost fairy time.

I fear we shall outsleep the coming morn.

Exits, looking longingly at Hippolyta.

HIPPOLYTA

Sweet friends, to bed.

A fortnight hold we this solemnity

In nightly revels and new jollity.

Rushes after Theseus. Bottom and Flute exit. Oberon and Titania enter.

OBERON

Now, until the break of day,

Through this house each fairy stray.

To the best bride-bed will we,

Which by us shall blessèd be.

TITANIA

So shall all the couples three

Ever true in loving be.

They exit as Puck enters.

PUCK

If we shadows have offended,
Think but this and all is mended:
That you have but slumbered here
While these visions did appear.
And this weak and idle theme,
No more yielding but a dream.
So goodnight, our story ends.
Give me hands, if we be friends.

END OF PLAY