Act 1, Scene 1

Enter THESEUS, HIPPOLYTA, and PHILOSTRATE, with others

THESEUS
Now, fair Hippolyta, our nuptial hour
Draws on apace. Four happy days bring in
Another moon. But oh, methinks how slow
This old moon wanes! She lingers my desires,
Like to a stepdame or a dowager
Long withering out a young man’s revenue.

5

THESEUS
Our wedding day is almost here, my beautiful
Hippolyta. We’ll be getting married in four days,
on the day of the new moon. But it seems to me
that the days are passing too slowly—the old
moon is taking too long to fade away! That old,
slow moon is keeping me from getting what I
want, just like an old widow makes her stepson
wait to get his inheritance.

10

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.

HIPPOLYTA
No, you’ll see, four days will quickly turn into four
nights. And since we dream at night, time passes
quickly then. Finally the new moon, curved like a
silver bow in the sky, will look down on our
wedding celebration.

15

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.

THESEUS
Go, Philostrate, get the young people of Athens
ready to celebrate and have a good time.
Sadness is only appropriate for funerals. We
don’t want it at our festivities.

Exit PHILOSTRATE

Hippolyta, I wooed thee with my sword
And won thy love doing thee injuries.
But I will wed thee in another key,
With pomp, with triumph, and with reveling.

EGEUS enters with his daughter HERMIA,
and LYSANDER and DEMETRIUS

EGEUS
20 Happy be Theseus, our renownèd duke.

Act 1, Scene 1, Page 2

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,
25 This man hath my consent to marry her.—
Stand forth, Lysander.—And my gracious duke,
This man hath bewitched the bosom of my child.—
Thou, thou, Lysander, thou hast given her rhymes,
And interchanged love tokens with my child.
30 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, gauds, conceits,
Knacks, trifles, nosegays, sweetmeats—messengers
Of strong prevailment in unhardened youth.
With cunning hast thou filched my daughter’s heart,
Turned her obedience (which is due to me)
To stubborn harshness.—And, my gracious duke,
Be it so she will not here before your grace
Consent to marry with Demetrius,
I beg the ancient privilege of Athens.
As she is mine, I may dispose of her—
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 advised, fair maid:
To you your father should be as a god,
One that composed your beauties, yea, and one
To whom you are but as a form in wax,
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 looked 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
What do you have to say for yourself, Hermia?
Think carefully, pretty girl. You should think of
your father as a god, since he’s the one who gave
you your beauty. To him, you’re like a figure that
he’s sculpted out of wax, and he has the power to
keep that figure intact or to disfigure it. Demetrius
is an admirable man.

HERMIA
I wish my father could see them with my eyes.

THESEUS
No, you must see them as your father sees them.

HERMIA
I wish my father could see them with my eyes.

THESEUS
You'll either be executed or you’ll never see
another man again. So think carefully about what
you want, beautiful Hermia. Consider how young
you are, and question your feelings. Then decide
whether you could stand to be a nun, wearing a
priestess’s habit and caged up in a cloister
forever, living your entire life without a husband or
children, weakly chanting hymns to the cold and
virginal goddess of the moon. People who can
restrain their passions and stay virgins forever
are holy. But although a virgin priestess might be
rewarded in heaven, a married woman is happier...
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 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.

DEMOTRIS
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?

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
(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,
(If not with vantage) as Demetrius’.
And—which is more than all these boasts can be—
I am beloved of beauteous Hermia.

WHY should not I then prosecute my right?
Demetrius, I’ll 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 overfull of self-affairs,
My mind did lose it.—But, Demetrius, come.

EGEUS
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.

Lyseu
We're following you not only because it is our
duty, but also because we want to.

Exeunt. Manent 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
Betem 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.

Hermia
O cross! Too high to be enthralled to low.

Lysander

Or else misgraffèd in respect of years—
O spite! Too old to be engaged to young.

Lysander

Or else it stood upon the choice of friends—
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 collied night;
That, in a spleen, unfolds both heaven and Earth,
And ere a man hath power to say "Behold!"
The jaws of darkness do devour it up.

Lysander

Or, even if the lovers are a good match, their
love might be ruined by war, death, or sickness,
so that the affair only lasts an instant. Their time
together might be as fleeting as a shadow or as
short as a dream, lasting only as long as it takes
a lightning bolt to flash across the sky. Before
you can say “look,” it's gone. That's how intense
things like love are quickly destroyed.
So quick bright things come to confusion.

HERMIA

If then true lovers have been ever crossed,
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 tomorrow night.

HERMIA

If true lovers are always thwarted, then it must be
a rule of fate. So let's try to be patient as we deal
with our problem. It's as normal a part of love as
dreams, sighs, wishes, and tears.

LYSANDER

That's the right attitude. So, listen, Hermia. I
have an aunt who is a widow, who's very rich
and doesn't have any children. She lives about
twenty miles from Athens, and she thinks of me
as a son. I could marry you there, gentle Hermia,
where the strict laws of Athens can't touch us. So
here's the plan. If you love me, sneak out of your
father's house tomorrow night and meet me in
the forest a few miles outside of town.

Act 1, Scene 1, Page 7

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,
By that fire which burned the Carthage queen
When the false Troyan 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,
Tomorrow truly will I meet with thee.

LYSANDER

Keep promise, love. Look, here comes Helena.

HERMIA

Godspeed, fair Helena! Whither away?

HELENA

Call you me "fair"? That "fair" again unsay.
Demetrius loves your fair. O happy fair!
Your eyes are lodestars, and your tongue's sweet air
More tunable than lark to shepherd's ear
When wheat is green, when hawthorn buds appear.
Sickness is catching. Oh, were favor 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.

HERMIA

You remember the place—I met you there once
with Helena to celebrate May Day.—I'll wait for
you there.

HELENA

Hello, beautiful Helena! Where are you going?

HELENA

Did you just call me "beautiful"? Take it back.
You're the beautiful one as far as Demetrius is
concerned. Oh, you're so lucky! Your eyes are
like stars, and your voice is more musical than a
lark's song is to a shepherd in the springtime.
Sickness is contagious—I wish beauty were
contagious too! I would catch your good looks
before I left. My ear would be infected by your
voice, my eye by your eye, and my tongue would
come down with a bad case of your melodious
Original Text  
Were the world mine, Demetrius being bated,  
The rest I'd give to be to you translated.

Modern Text  
speech. If the world were mine, I’d give it all up—everything except Demetrius—to be you.

Act 1, Scene 1, Page 8  
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  
Oh, that your frowns would teach my smiles such skill!

HERMIA  
I give him curses, yet he gives me love.

HELENA  
Oh, 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  
Seemed Athens as a paradise to me.

LYSANDER  
Helen, to you our minds we will unfold.  
Tomorrow night when Phoebe doth behold  
Her silver visage in the watery glass,  
Decking with liquid pearl the bladed grass  
(A time that lovers’ flights doth still conceal),  
Through Athens’ gates have we devised to steal.

HERMIA  
(to HELENA) And in the wood where often you and I  
Upon faint primrose beds were wont to lie,  
Emptying our bosoms of their counsel sweet,

Act 1, Scene 1, Page 9  
There my Lysander and myself shall meet.  
And thence from Athens turn away our eyes

From then on we’ll turn our backs on Athens.  
We’ll look for new friends and keep the company
**Original Text**

To seek new friends and stranger companies.

220 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.

**Modern Text**

of strangers. Goodbye, old friend. Pray for us, and I hope you win over Demetrius!—Keep your promise, Lysander. We need to stay away from each other until midnight tomorrow.

**LYSANDER**

I will, my Hermia.

**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.

**Modern Text**

It’s amazing how much happier some people are than others! People throughout Athens think I’m as beautiful as Hermia. But so what? Demetrius doesn’t think so, and that’s all that matters. He refuses to admit what everyone else knows. But even though he’s making a mistake by obsessing over Hermia so much, I’m also making a mistake, since I obsess over him. Love can make worthless things beautiful. When we’re in love, we don’t see with our eyes but with our minds. That’s why paintings of Cupid, the god of love, always show him as blind. And love doesn’t have good judgment either—Cupid, has wings and no eyes, so he’s bound to be reckless and hasty. That’s why they say love is a child. because it makes such bad choices. Just as boys like to play games by telling lies, Cupid breaks his promises all the time. Before Demetrius ever saw Hermia, he showered me with promises and swore he’d be mine forever.

**Act 1, Scene 1, Page 10**

And when this hail some heat from Hermia felt, 245 So he dissolved, and showers of oaths did melt. I will go tell him of fair Hermia’s flight. Then to the wood will he tomorrow night Pursue her. And for this intelligence If I have thanks, it is a dear expense.

**Modern Text**

But when he got all hot and bothered over Hermia, his promises melted away. I’ll go tell Demetrius that Hermia is running away tomorrow night. He’ll run after her. If he’s grateful to me for this information, it’ll be worth my pain in helping him pursue my rival Hermia. At least I’ll get to see him when he goes, and then again when he comes back.

**Act 1, 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?

**Modern Text**

Enter QUINCE, the carpenter, enters with SNUG, the cabinetmaker; BOTTOM, the weaver; FLUTE, the bellows-repairman; SNOUT, the handyman; and STARVELING, the tailor.

QUINCE

Is everyone here?
Original Text

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 Thisbe.

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, spread yourselves.

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

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

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

Modern Text

BOTTOM
You should call their names generally, one person at a time, in the order in which their names appear on this piece of paper.

QUINCE
This is a list of the names of all the men in Athens who are good enough to act in the play we’re going to perform for the duke and duchess on their wedding night.

BOTTOM
First, Peter Quince, tell us what the play is about, then read the names of the actors, and then shut up.

QUINCE
All right. Our play is called A Very Tragic Comedy About the Horrible Deaths of Pyramus and Thisbe.

BOTTOM
Let me tell you, it’s a great piece of work, and very—funny.—Now, Peter Quince, call the names of the actors on the list. Men, gather around him.

QUINCE
Answer when I call your name.—Nick Bottom, the weaver?

BOTTOM
Here. Tell me which part I’m going to play, then go on.

QUINCE
You, Nick Bottom, have been cast as Pyramus.

Act 1, Scene 2, Page 2

BOTTOM
What is Pyramus? A lover or a tyrant?

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

BOTTOM
That will ask some tears in the true performing of it. If I do it, let the audience look to their eyes. I will move storms. I will condole in some measure.—To the rest.—Yet my chief humor is for a tyrant. I could play Ercles rarely, or a part to tear a cat in to make all split.

   The raging rocks
   And shivering shocks
   Shall break the locks
   Of prison gates.
   And Phoebus’ car
   Shall shine from far
   And make and mar
   The foolish Fates.
This was lofty!—Now name the rest of the players.—This is Ercles’ vein, a tyrant’s vein. A lover is more
condoling.

Away, and make and mar
Foolish fate.
Oh, that was truly inspired!—Now tell us who the other actors are.—By the way, my performance just now was in the style of Hercules, the tyrant style. A lover would have to be weepier, of course.

Francis Flute, the bellows-repairman?
Here, Peter Quince.
Flute, you must take Thisbe on you.

Francis Flute, the bellows-mender?
Here, Peter Quince.
Flute, you’ll be playing the role of Thisbe.

What is Thisbe? A wandering knight?
It is the lady that Pyramus must love.
Nay, faith, let me not play a woman. I have a beard coming.
That’s all one. You shall play it in a mask, and you may speak as small as you will.
An I may hide my face, let me play Thisbe too! I’ll speak in a monstrous little voice: “Thisne, Thisne!”—“Ah, Pyramus, my lover dear, thy Thisbe dear and lady dear!”
No, no. You must play Pyramus.—And Flute, you Thisbe.
Well, proceed.
Robin Starveling, the tailor?
Here, Peter Quince.
Robin Starveling, you must play Thisbe’s mother.—Tom Snout, the tinker?
Here, Peter Quince.
You, Pyramus’ father.—Myself, Thisbe’s father.—Snug the joiner, you, the lion’s part.—And I hope here is a play fitted.

Who’s Thisbe? A knight on a quest?
Thisbe is the lady Pyramus is in love with.
No, come on, don’t make me play a woman. I’m growing a beard.
That doesn’t matter. You’ll wear a mask, and you can make your voice as high as you want to.
In that case, if I can wear a mask, let me play Thisbe too! I’ll be Pyramus first: “Thisne, Thisne!”—And then in falsetto: “Ah, Pyramus, my dear lover! I’m your dear Thisbe, your dear lady!”
No, no. Bottom, you’re Pyramus.—And Flute, you’re Thisbe.
All right. Go on.
Robin Starveling, the tailor?
Here, Peter Quince.
Robin Starveling, you’re going to play Thisbe’s mother.—Tom Snout, the handyman.
Here, Peter Quince.
You’ll be Pyramus’s father—I’ll play Thisbe’s father myself—Snug, the cabinetmaker, you’ll play the part of the lion.—So that’s everyone. I hope this play is well cast now.
Act 1, Scene 2, Page 4

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

SNUG
Do you have the lion’s part written down? If you do, please give it to me, because I need to start learning the lines. It takes me a long time to learn things.

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

QUINCE
You can improvise the whole thing. It’s just 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.”

BOTTOM
Let me play the lion too. I’ll roar so well that it’ll be an inspiration to anyone who hears me. I’ll roar so well that the duke will 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.

QUINCE
If you roar too ferociously, you’ll scare the duchess and the other ladies and make them scream. And that would get us all executed.

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

ALL
Yeah, that would get every single one of us executed.

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.

BOTTOM
Well, my friends, you’ve got to admit that if you scare the living daylights out of the ladies, they’d have no choice but to execute us. But I’ll soften my voice—you know, aggravate it, so to speak—so that I’ll roar as gently as a baby dove. I’ll roar like a sweet, peaceful nightingale.

QUINCE
You can play no part but Pyramus. For Pyramus is a sweet-faced man, a proper man as one shall see in a summer’s day, a most lovely, gentlemanlike man. Therefore you must needs play Pyramus.

QUINCE
You can’t play any part except Pyramus. Because Pyramus is a good-looking man, the most handsome man that you could find on a summer’s day, a lovely gentlemanly man. So you’re the only one who could play Pyramus.

BOTTOM
Well, I will undertake it. What beard were I best to play it in?

BOTTOM
Well then, I’ll do it. What kind of beard should I wear for the part?

QUINCE
Why, what will you.

QUINCE
Whatever kind you want, I guess.

Act 1, Scene 2, Page 5

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

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

Exeunt

They all exit.

Act 2, Scene 1

Enter a FAIRY at one side and ROBIN (ROBIN GOODFELLOW) at another

ROBIN

How now, spirit? Whither wander you?

FAIRY

Over hill, over dale,
Thorough bush, thorough brier,
Over park, over pale,
Thorough flood, thorough fire.
I do wander everywhere
Swifter than the moon’s sphere.
And I serve the fairy queen
To dew her orbs upon the green.
The cowslips tall her pensioners be.
In their gold coats spots you see.
Those be rubies, fairy favors.
In those freckles live their savors.
I must go seek some dewdrops here
And hang a pearl in every cowslip’s ear.
Farewell, thou lob of spirits. I’ll be gone.
Our queen and all our elves come here anon.

ROBIN

The king doth keep his revels here tonight.
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,
Crows him with flowers, and makes him all her joy.

and I beg you to please learn them by tomorrow night. Meet me in the duke’s forest a mile outside of town. It’s best to rehearse there, because if we do it here in the city, we’ll be bothered by crowds of people and everyone will know the plot of our play. Meanwhile, I’ll make a list of props that we’ll need for the play. Now make sure you show up, all of you. Don’t leave me in the lurch.

BOTTOM

We’ll be there, and there we’ll rehearse courageously and wonderfully, truly obscenely. Work hard, know your lines. Goodbye.

QUINCE

We’ll meet at the giant oak tree in the duke’s forest.

BOTTOM

Got it? Be there, or don’t show your face again.
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 
Called Robin Goodfellow. Are not you he 
That frights the maidens of the villagery, 
Skim milk, and sometimes labor in the quern 
And bootless make the breathless housewife churn, 
And sometime make the drink to bear no barm, 
Those that “Hobgoblin” call you, and “sweet Puck,”
You do their work, and they shall have good luck. 
Are not you he?

ROBIN 
Thou speak’st aright. 
I am that merry wanderer of the night. 
I jest to Oberon and make him smile 
When I a fat and bean-fed horse beguile, 
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 
Sometimes for three-foot stool mistaketh me. 
Then slip I from her bum, down topples she, 
And “Tailor!” cries, and falls into a cough, 
And then the whole quire hold their hips and laugh, 
And waxen in their mirth, and neeze, and swear 
A merrier hour was never wasted there. 
But, room, fairy! Here comes Oberon.

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

Enter OBERON, the King of Fairies, at one side with 
his train, and TITANIA, the Queen, at the other, with hers

OBERON 
Ill met by moonlight, proud Titania. 

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

OBERON, the Fairy King, and his followers enter. 
On the opposite side of the stage, TITANIA, the 
Fairy Queen, and her followers enter.

OBERON 
How not nice to see you, Titania.

TITANIA 
What, are you jealous, Oberon?—Fairies, let’s 
get out of here. I’ve sworn I’ll never sleep with
OBERON
Tarry, rash wanton. Am not I thy lord?

TITANIA
Then I must be thy lady. But I know
When thou hast stolen away from Fairyland,
And in the shape of Corin sat all day,
Playing on pipes of corn and versing love
To amorous Phillida. Why art thou here,

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Come from the farthest step of India?
But that, forsooth, the bouncing Amazon,
Your buskined 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,
Knowing I know thy love to Theseus? Glance at my
credit with Hippolyta,
Didst thou not lead him through the glimmering night
From Perigouna, whom he ravishèd?

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And make him with fair Ægles 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 pavèd 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 disturbed our sport.
Therefore the winds, piping to us in vain,
As in revenge, have sucked up from the sea
Contagious fogs, which falling in the land
Have every pelting river made so proud
That they have overborne their continents.

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The ox hath therefore stretched his yoke in vain,
The ploughman lost his sweat, and the green corn
Hath rotted ere his youth attained a beard.
The fold stands empty in the drownèd field,
And crows are fatted with the murrain flock.
The nine-men's-morris is filled up with mud,
And the quaint mazes in the wanton green
For lack of tread are undistinguishable.

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The human mortals want their winter here.
No night is now with hymn or carol blessed.
Therefore the moon, the governor of floods,
Pale in her anger, washes all the air,
That rheumatic diseases do abound.
And thorough this distemperature we see

TITANIA
These are nothing but jealous lies. Since the
beginning of midsummer, my fairies and I haven't
been able to meet anywhere to do our dances in
the wind without being disturbed by you and your
arguments. We haven't been able to meet on a
hill or in a valley, in the forest or a meadow, by a
pebbly fountain or a rushing stream, or on the
beach by the ocean without you disturbing us.
And because you interrupt us so that we can't
dance for them, the winds have made fogs rise
up out of the sea and fall down on the rivers so
that the rivers flood, just to get revenge on you.
So all the work that oxen and farmers have done
in plowing the fields has been for nothing,
because the unripe grain has rotted before it was
ripe. Sheep pens are empty in the middle of the
flooded fields, and the crows get fat from eating
the dead bodies of infected sheep. All the fields
where people usually play games are filled with
mud, and you can't even see the elaborate
mazes that people create in the grass, because
no one walks in them anymore and they've all
grown over. It's not winter here for the human
mortals, so they're not protected by the holy
hymns and carols that they sing in winter. So the
pale, angry moon, who controls the tides, fills the
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 chiding autumn, angry winter change
Their wonted liveries, and the mazèd 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 Fairyland buys not the child of me.
His mother was a votaress of my order,
And in the spicèd Indian air by night
Full often hath she gossiped by my side,
And sat with me on Neptune's yellow sands,
When we have laughed 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.

OBERON
Give me that boy and I will go with thee.

TITANIA
Not for thy fairy kingdom.—Fairies, away!

OBERON
How long do you plan to stay here in this forest?

TITANIA
Maybe until after Theseus's wedding day. If you behave yourself and join us in our circle dance and moonlight celebrations, then you can come with us. If not, leave me alone, and I'll stay away from your turf.

OBERON
Give me that boy and I'll come with you.

TITANIA
Not for your entire fairy kingdom.—Come, fairies, let's go. We're going to have an out-and-out brawl if I stay any longer.

Exeunt TITANIA and her train

TITANIA and her FAIRIES exit.
Act 2, Scene 1, Page 6

**Original Text**

**OBERON**

Well, go thy way. Thou shalt not from this grove
Till I torment thee for this injury.—(to ROBIN
GOODFELLOW)

My gentle Puck, come hither. Thou rememberest
Since once I sat upon a promontory
And heard a mermaid on a dolphin's back
Uttering such dulcet and harmonious breath
That the rude sea grew civil at her song
And certain stars shot madly from their spheres
To hear the seamaid's music?

**ROBIN**

I remember.

**OBERON**

That very time I saw (but thou couldst not)
Flying between the cold moon and the Earth,
Cupid all armed. A certain aim he took
At a fair vestal thronèd by the west,
And loosed his love shaft smartly from his bow
As it should pierce a hundred thousand hearts.

But I might see young Cupid's fiery shaft
Quenched in the chaste beams of the watery moon,
And the imperial votaress passèd on,
In maiden meditation, fancy-free.

Yet marked 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 flower. The herb I showed thee once.

**ROBIN**

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

**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 of her sight—
As I can take it with another herb—

**Modern Text**

**OBERON**

Well, go on your way, then. You won’t leave this
grove until I’ve paid you back for this
insult. (to ROBIN GOODFELLOW) My dear Puck,
come here. You remember the time when I was
sitting on a cliff, and I heard a mermaid sitting on
a dolphin’s back sing such a sweet and
harmonious song that it calmed the stormy sea
and made stars shoot out of the sky so they
could hear her better?

**ROBIN**

Yes, I remember.

**OBERON**

That same night, I saw Cupid flying from
the moon to the earth, with all of his arrows ready.
(You couldn’t see him, but I could.) He took aim
at a beautiful young virgin who was sitting on a
throne in the western part of the world, and he
shot his arrow of love well enough to have
pierced a hundred thousand hearts. But I could
see that Cupid’s fiery arrow was put out by
watery, virginal moonbeams, so the royal virgin
continued her virginal thoughts without being
interrupted by thoughts of love. But I paid
attention to where Cupid’s arrow fell. It fell on a
little western flower, which used to be white as
milk but now has turned purple from being
wounded by the arrow of love. Young girls call it
“love-in-idleness.” Bring me that flower. I showed
it to you once. If its juice is put on someone’s
eyelids while they’re asleep, that person will fall
in love with the next living creature he or she
sees. Bring me this plant, and get back here
before the sea monster has time to swim three
miles.

**ROBIN**

I could go around the world in forty minutes.

Act 2, Scene 1, Page 7

**Exit ROBIN**

**OBERON**

When I have the juice of that flower, I’ll trickle
some drops of it on Titania’s eyes while she’s
sleeping. She’ll fall madly in love with the first
thing she sees when she wakes up—even if it’s
a lion, a bear, a wolf, a bull, a monkey, or an
ape. And before I make her normal again—I can
cure her by treating her with another plant—I’ll
make her give me that little boy as my page. But
who’s that coming this way? I’ll make myself
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?

DEMETRIUS
Look, I don’t love you, so stop following me around. Where are Lysander and beautiful Hermia? Lysander I want to stop, but Hermia stops my heart from beating. You told me they escaped into this forest. And here I am, going crazy in the middle of the woods because I can’t find my Hermia. Go away, get out of here, and stop following me.

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.

HELENA
You attract me to you, you cruel magnet! But you must not attract iron, because my heart is as true as steel. If you let go of your power to attract me, I won’t have any 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?

DEMETRIUS
Do I ask you to follow me? Do I speak to you kindly? Don’t I tell you in the clearest terms that I do not and 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.

HELENA
Yes, but that makes me love you even more. I’m your little dog, Demetrius. The more you beat me, the more I’ll love you. Treat me like you would treat a dog—kick me, hit me, neglect me, try to lose me. Just let me follow behind you, even though I’m not good enough for you. Could I ask for a worse place in your heart than to be treated as you would treat a dog? And yet I would consider it an honor to be your dog.

DEMETRIUS
Tempt not too much the hatred of my spirit. For I am sick when I do look on thee.

DEMETRIUS
Don’t push it. Just looking at you makes me sick.

HELENA
And I am sick when I look not on you.

HELENA
And I get sick when I can’t look at 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.

DEMETRIUS
You’re risking your reputation by leaving the city and stalking someone who doesn’t love you. Standing around alone in a deserted area in the middle of the night isn’t the best way to protect 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 changed.

HELENA
The wildest animal isn’t as cruel as you are. Run whenever you want to. The story of Daphne and Apollo will be changed:

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 valor 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 wooed 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.

Enter ROBIN
Hast thou the flower there? Welcome, wanderer.

ROBIN
Ay, there it is.

OBERON
I pray thee, give it me.

(takes flower from ROBIN)

I know a bank where the wild thyme blows,
Where oxlips and the nodding violet grows,
Quite overcanopied with luscious woodbine,
With sweet musk roses and with eglantine.

OBERON
Goodbye, nymph. Before he leaves this part of the forest, you’ll change places: you’ll be the one running away, and he’ll be in love with you.

ROBIN
Do you have the flower? Welcome, traveler.

ROBIN
Yes, here it is.

OBERON
Please, give it to me. (he takes the flower from ROBIN) I know a place where wild thyme blooms, and oxlips and violets grow. It’s covered over with luscious honeysuckle, sweet muskroses and sweetbrier.
There sleeps Titania sometime of the night,
Lulled in these flowers with dances and delight.
And there the snake throws her eameled 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.

(gives ROBIN some of the flower)
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.
And look thou meet me ere the first cock crow.

ROBIN
Fear not, my lord. Your servant shall do so.

Titania sleeps there sometimes at night, lulled to sleep among the flowers by dances and other delights. Snakes shed their skin there, and the shed skin is wide enough to wrap a fairy in. I'll put the juice of this flower on Titania's eyes, and fill her with horrible delusions and desires. (he gives ROBIN part of the flower) You take some of it too, and look around in this part of the forest. A sweet Athenian lady is in love with a young man who wants nothing to do with her. Put some of this flower's juice on his eyes, and make sure to do it in such a way that the next thing he sees will be the lady. You'll be able to tell it's him because he's wearing Athenian clothes. Do it carefully, so that he'll end up loving her more than she loves him. And then make sure to meet me before the rooster's first crow at dawn.

ROBIN
Don't worry, sir. I'm at your service.

Enter TITANIA, Queen of Fairies, with her train of FAIRIES.

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 reremice 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.

FAIRIES sing

FIRST FAIRY
(sings)
You spotted snakes with double tongue,
Thorny hedgehogs, be not seen.
Newts and blindworms, do no wrong.
Come not near our fairy queen.

FAIRIES
(sing)
Philomel, with melody
Sing in our sweet lullaby.
Lulla, lulla, lullaby, lulla, lulla, lullaby.
Never harm
Nor spell nor charm
Come our lovely lady nigh.
So good night, with lullaby.

FIRST FAIRY
(sings)
Snakes with forked tongues,
And porcupines, don't be seen.
Deadly lizards, don't be mean.
Don't come near our fairy queen.

FAIRIES
(singing)
Nightingale, melodiously
Sing our sweet lullaby.
Lulla, lulla, lullaby, lulla, lulla, lullaby.
Let no harm
Or spell or charm
Come near our lovely lady.
Say good night with a lullaby.

FIRST FAIRY
(singing)
Weaving spiders, come not here.
Hence, you long-legged spinners, hence!

Spiders with your webs, stay away.
You long-legged things, begone!

Act 2, Scene 2, Page 2

Weft black, approach not near.
Worm nor snail, do no offense.

FAIRIES
(sing)
Philomel, with melody
Sing in our sweet lullaby.
Lulla, lulla, lullaby, lulla, lulla, lullaby.
Never harm
Nor spell nor charm
Come our lovely lady nigh.
So good night, with lullaby.

Black beetles, don’t come near.
Worms and snails, don’t be bad.

FAIRIES
(singing)
Nightingale, melodiously
Sing our sweet lullaby.
Lulla, lulla, lullaby, lulla, lulla, lullaby.
Let no harm
Or spell or charm
Come near our lovely lady.
Say good night with a lullaby.

FAIRIES
(singing)
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Say good night with a lullaby.

FAIRIES
(singing)
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Sing our sweet lullaby.
Lulla, lulla, lullaby, lulla, lulla, lullaby.
Let no harm
Or spell or charm
Come near our lovely lady.
Say good night with a lullaby.

SECOND FAIRY
Hence, away! Now all is well.
One aloof stand sentinel.

SECOND FAIRY
Okay, let’s go! Everything’s fine now. One of us will stay and stand guard.

FAIRIES
Exit.
FAIRIES exit.

OBERON
(he squeezes flower juice on TITANIA ’s eyelids)
Whatever you see first when you wake up, think of it as your true love. Love him and yearn for him, even if he’s a lynx, a cat, a bear, a leopard, or a wild boar. Whatever’s there when you wake up will be dear to you. Wake up when something nasty is nearby.

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OBERON
(ohe squeeze
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 interchainèd with an oath—  
So then two bosoms and a single troth.  
Then by your side no bed room me deny.  
For, lying so, Hermia, I do not lie.  

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

Thy love ne’er alter till thy sweet life end!  
LYSANDER  
Amen, amen to that fair prayer, say I.  
And then end life when I end loyalty!  
Here is my bed. Sleep give thee all his rest!  

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

HERMIA and LYSANDER sleep  
Enter ROBIN  

ROBIN  
Through the forest have I gone.  
But Athenian found I none,  
On whose eyes I might approve  
This flower’s force in stirring love.  

(see LYSANDER and HERMIA)  
Night and silence! Who is here?  
Weeds of Athens he doth wear.  
This is he, my master said,  
Despisèd 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.  

(squeezes flower juice on LYSANDER’s eyelids)  
Churl, upon thy eyes I throw  
All the power this charm doth owe.  
When thou wakest, let love forbid  
Sleep his seat on thy eyelid.  
So awake when I am gone,  

No, Lysander. Please, for my sake, sleep a little  
farther away. Don’t sleep so close to me.  

LYSANDER  
Oh, sweetheart, I didn’t mean anything naughty  
when I said that. When lovers talk to each other,  
their hearts should understand each other. I just  
meant that our hearts are joined, so we can  
almost think of them as one heart. Our two bodies  
are linked together by the promises we’ve made  
to each other, so there are two bodies and one  
faithful vow. So let me sleep next to you. If I  
lie next to you, I won’t lie to you—I’ll be faithful  
and respect you.  

HERMIA  
Lysander’s got a way with words. I would  
certainly be rude and shameful if I had implied  
that you were a liar. But please, darling, sleep a  
little farther away so we can behave properly. It’s  
only proper for a well-behaved bachelor and a  
well-behaved girl to be physically separated like  
this. Stay away for now, and good night, my  
sweet friend. I hope your love for me remains this  
strong for your entire life!  

LYSANDER  
Amen to that. I hope my life ends before my  
loyalty to you does. I’ll sleep over here. Sleep  
well.

ROBIN  
I’ve been through the entire forest, but I haven’t  
found any Athenian man to use the flower on. (he  
sees LYSANDER and HERMIA) Wait a second,  
who’s this? He’s wearing Athenian clothes. This  
must be the guy who rejected the Athenian girl.  
And here’s the girl, sleeping soundly on the damp  
and dirty ground. Pretty girl! She shouldn’t lie  
near this rude and heartless man. (he puts flower  
juice on LYSANDER’s eyelids) Jerk, I throw all  
the power of this magic charm on your eyes.  
When you wake up, let love keep you from going  
back to sleep. Wake up when I’m gone, because  
now I have to go to Oberon.
For I must now to Oberon.

Exit ROBIN

Enter DEMETRIUS and HELENA, running

ROBIN exits.

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.

Act 2, Scene 2, Page 5

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

Exit DEMETRIUS

DEMETRIUS exits.

HELENA
Oh, 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 blessèd and attractive eyes.

How came her eyes so bright? Not with salt tears. If so, my eyes are oftener washed than hers. No, no, I am 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? (sees LYSANDER) 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? Oh, how fit a word

Is that vile name to perish on my sword!

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

LYSANDER
Content with Hermia? No. I do repent The tedious minutes I with her have spent. Not Hermia but Helena I love. Who will not change a raven for a dove? The will of man is by his reason swayed, And reason says you are the worthier maid.

LYSANDER
(waking up) I’d even run through fire if you told me to. Radiant, beautiful Helena! I feel like Mother Nature has allowed me to see into your heart, as if by magic. Where is Demetrius? Oh, I’d kill that name with my sword if I could!

LYSANDER
Don’t say that, Lysander. Don’t say that. Why do you care that he loves Hermia? What does it matter? Hermia still loves you, so be happy.

HELENA
Happy with Hermia? No. I regret all the boring time I wasted with her. I don’t love Hermia; I love Helena. Who wouldn’t love a dove more than a crow? A man’s desires are influenced by his logical mind, and it’s simply logical that you’re more worthy of love than Hermia is.
Act 2, Scene 2, Page 6

90 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,

Fruits and vegetables don't ripen until the right season of the year. Likewise, I'm young, and my sense of reason has just ripened. I can finally see the light. My logic has more control over my desires than it used to, and it's telling me to look into your eyes, where I see every love story ever told.

HELENA
Why does everyone always make fun of me? What have I done to deserve this kind of treatment from you? Is it not enough, is it not enough, young man, that I'll never be pretty enough to get a kind look from Demetrius? Do you have to harp on my inadequacy? My God, it's wrong for you to woo me in such a cruel, disdainful way. But goodbye. I have to tell you, I thought you were a much kinder person than this. Oh, how awful that a lady who's been rejected by one man should therefore be treated horribly by another one!

Exit HELENA

LYSANDER
She sees not Hermia.—Hermia, sleep thou there. And never mayst thou come Lysander near!

Eating too many sweets makes people sick to their stomachs, and people always hate the mistakes they made in the past worse than anyone else hates those mistakes. Hermia, you're the sweet I've had too much of, and the mistake I used to make, so I hate you more than anyone else does.—I'll use all my talents and efforts to serve Helen and bring her honor.

Exit LYSANDER

Act 2, Scene 2, Page 7

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

HERMIA
(waking up) Help me, Lysander, help me! Get this snake off of my chest. Oh, my God! What a terrible dream I just had! Lysander, look how I'm shaking from fear. I thought a snake was eating my heart while you sat smiling and watching. Lysander!—What, is he gone?—Lysander, my lord!—What, is he out of earshot? Gone? No answer, nothing? Oh, God, where are you? Say something if you can hear me. Say something, please! I'm almost fainting with fear. Nothing? Then I guess you're nowhere nearby. I'll find you—or die—right away.

Exit HERMIA

Act 3, Scene 1
While TITANIA is asleep onstage, the clowns—
BOTTOM, QUINCE, FLUTE, SNUG, SNOUT, and STARVELING—enter.

BOTTOM
Are we all here?

QUINCE
Right on time. This is the perfect place to rehearse. This clearing will be the stage, and this hawthorn bush will be our dressing room. Let’s put on our play exactly as we’ll perform it for the duke.

BOTTOM
Peter Quince—

QUINCE
What is it, jolly Bottom?

BOTTOM
There are things in this comedy of Pyramus and Thisbe that will never work. First of all, Pyramus has to take out a sword to kill himself, which the ladies in the audience won’t be able to stand. What should we do about that?

SNOUT
By God, that’s a real problem, it’s true.

STARVELING
I think we’ll have to leave out all the killing, come to think of it.

BOTTOM
Not at all! I’ve got a plan that will fix everything. Write me a prologue that I can recite to the audience before the play starts. I’ll tell them that we won’t hurt anyone with our swords, and that Pyramus isn’t really dead. And to make it even clearer, we can tell them that I’m playing Pyramus but I’m not really Pyramus—really, I’m Bottom the weaver. That’ll keep them from being afraid.

Act 3, Scene 1, Page 2

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

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

SNOUT
Will not the ladies be afeard of the lion?

STARVELING
I fear it, I promise you.

BOTTOM
Masters, you ought to consider with yourselves. To bring in—God shield us!—a lion among ladies is a
**Original Text**

most dreadful thing. For there is not a more fearful wildfowl 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 Thisbe meet by moonlight.

**Act 3, Scene 1, Page 3**

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

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

QUINCE
(takes out a book) 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 Thisbe, says the story, did talk through the chink of a wall.

SNOUT

**Modern Text**

terrible. There's no scarier wild bird than the living lion, and we should remember that.

SNOUT
So we need another prologue to tell everyone he's not a real lion.

BOTTOM
No, we can just announce the actor's name, and let his face show through the lion costume, and have him say something himself. He should say the following, or something else to the same defect—"Ladies," or "Lovely ladies," "I would like to ask you" or "I would like to request of you" or "I would like to beg you" not to be afraid, and not to tremble with fear. I value your lives as highly as my own. If you thought I was a real lion, I would be risking my life. But no, I am not at all a lion. I am a man, just like other men." And then he should say his name, and tell them plainly that he's Snug the carpenter.

QUINCE
All right, that's what we'll do then. But there are two things we still have to figure out. How are we going to bring moonlight into a room? Because, you know, Pyramus and Thisbe meet by moonlight.

SNOUT
Will the moon be shining on the night we're performing our play?

BOTTOM
We need a calendar! Look in the almanac. Look up moonshine, look up moonshine!

QUINCE
(he takes out a book) Yes, the moon will shine that night.

BOTTOM
Well then, you can leave one of the windows open in the big hall where we'll be performing, and the moon can shine in through the window.

QUINCE
Yes, or else someone will have to come in carrying a bundle of sticks and a lantern and say he's come to disfigure, or represent, the character of Moonshine, because the man in the moon is supposed to carry sticks and a lantern. But there's still another problem: we need to have a wall in the big hall, because according to the story, Pyramus and Thisbe talked through a little hole in 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 roughcast about him to signify wall. And let him hold his fingers thus, and through that cranny shall Pyramus and Thisbe whisper.

QUINCE
If that may be then all is well. Come, sit down, every mother’s son, and rehearse your parts.—Pyramus, you begin. When you have spoken your speech, enter into that brake.—And so everyone according to his cue.

ROBIN
(aside) What hempen homespuns have we swaggering here, So near the cradle of the fairy queen? What, a play toward? I’ll be an auditor. An actor too, perhaps, if I see cause.

QUINCE
Speak, Pyramus.—Thisbe, stand forth.

BOTTOM
(as PYRAMUS) Thisbe, the flowers of odious savors sweet—

QUINCE
“Odors,” “odors.”

BOTTOM
(as PYRAMUS) —odors savors sweet, So hath thy breath, my dearest Thisbe dear. And by and by I will to thee appear.

But hark, a voice! Stay thou but here awhile,

Exit BOTTOM

ROBIN
(to himself) Who are these country bumpkins swaggering around so close to where the fairy queen is sleeping? What? Are they about to put on a play? I’ll watch. And I’ll act in it, too, if I feel like it.

QUINCE
Speak, Pyramus.—Thisbe, come forward.

BOTTOM
(as PYRAMUS) Thisbe, flowers with sweet odious smells—

QUINCE
“Odors,” “odors.”

BOTTOM
(as PYRAMUS) —odors and smells are like your breath, my dearest Thisbe dear. But what’s that, a voice! Wait here a while. I’ll be right back!

Exit ROBIN

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

ROBIN
(to himself) That’s the strangest Pyramus I’ve ever seen.

Exit ROBIN

FLUTE
Am I supposed to talk now?

QUINCE
Yes, you are. You’re supposed to show that you understand that Pyramus just went to check on a noise he heard and is coming right back.

FLUTE
(as THISBE) Most radiant Pyramus, most lily-white of hue,
Of color like the red rose on triumphant brier,
Most brisky juvenal and eke most lovely Jew,
As true as truest horse that yet would never tire.
I’ll meet thee, Pyramus, at Ninny’s tomb.

(as THISBE) Most radiant Pyramus, you are as white as a lily, and the color of a red rose on a splendid rosebush, a very lively young man and also a lovely Jew. You are as reliable as a horse that never gets tired. I’ll meet you, Pyramus, at Ninny’s grave.

Act 3, Scene 1, Page 5

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
45 Oh. (as thisbe) As true as truest horse that yet would never tire.

Enter BOTTOM, with an ass’s head, and ROBIN

BOTTOM
(as PYRAMUS) If I were fair, Thisbe, I were only thine.

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

Enter QUINCE, FLUTE, SNUG, SNOUT, and STARVELING

ROBIN
I’ll follow you. I’ll lead you about a round Through bog, through bush, through brake, through brier.

Sometimes 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 ROBIN

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

Enter SNOUT

Act 3, Scene 1, Page 6

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

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

Exit SNOUT

SNOUT
Oh, Bottom, you’ve changed! What have you got on your head?

BOTTOM
What do you think I’ve got on my head? You’re acting like an ass, don’t you think?

Exit SNOUT
Enter QUINCE

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

Exit QUINCE

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

(sings)
The ouzel cock, so black of hue
With orange-tawny bill,
The throttle with his note so true,
The wren with little quill—

TITANIA
60 (waking) What angel wakes me from my flowery bed?

BOTTOM
(singing)
The finch, the sparrow, and the lark,
The plainsong cuckoo gray,
Whose note full many a man doth mark
And dares not answer “Nay”—

Act 3, Scene 1, Page 7

For indeed, who would set his wit to so foolish a bird? Who would give a bird the lie, though he cry “cuckoo” never so?

TITANIA
I pray thee, gentle mortal, sing again.

Mine ear is much enamored 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, thou shouldst have little reason for that.
And yet, to say the truth, reason and love keep little company together nowadays. The more the pity that some honest neighbors 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.

Of course they don’t say “no”! Who’d waste his time talking to such a stupid bird? Who’d bother to accuse a bird of lying, even if the bird were telling him that his wife was cheating on him?

TITANIA
Please sing again, sweet human. I love to listen to your voice, and I love to look at your body. I know this is the first time I’ve ever seen you, but you’re so wonderful that I can’t help swearing to you that I love you.

BOTTOM
I don’t think you’ve got much of a reason to love me. But to tell you the truth, reason and love have very little to do with each other these days. It’s too bad some mutual friend of theirs doesn’t introduce them. Ha, ha! No, I’m just kidding.

TITANIA
You’re as wise as you are beautiful.

BOTTOM
No, that’s not true. But if I were smart enough to get out of this forest, I’d be wise enough to satisfy myself.

TITANIA
Don’t bother wishing you could leave this forest,
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 pressèd flowers dost sleep.
And I will purge thy mortal grossness so
That thou shalt like an airy spirit go.—
Peaseblossom, Cobweb, Moth, and Mustardseed!

because you’re going to stay here whether you want to or not. I’m no ordinary fairy. I rule over the summer, and I love you. So come with me. I’ll give you fairies as servants, and they’ll bring you jewels from the depths of the ocean, and sing to you while you sleep on a bed of flowers. And I’ll turn you into a spirit like us, so you won’t die as humans do.—Come here, Peaseblossom, Cobweb, Moth, and Mustardseed!

Enter four fairies: 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 glowworms’ 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.

TITANIA
Be kind and polite to this gentleman. Follow him around. Leap and dance for him. Feed him apricots and blackberries, with purple grapes, green figs, and mulberries. Steal honey from the bumblebees, and make candles out of the bees’ wax. Light them with the light of glowworms, so my love will have light when he goes to bed and wakes up. Pluck off colorful butterfly wings, and use them to fan moonbeams away from his eyes as he sleeps. Bow to him, fairies, and curtsy to him.

PEASEBLOSSOM
Hello, mortal!

COBWEB
Hello!

MOTH
Hello!

MUSTARDSEED
Hello!

BOTTOM
I beg your pardon, sirs.—Please tell me your name, sir?
COBWEB
Cobweb.

BOTTOM
100 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
105 Mustardseed.

BOTTOM
Good Master Mustardseed, I know your patience well. That same cowardly, giantlike ox-beef hath devoured 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 watery eye. And when she weeps, weeps every little flower, Lamenting some enforcèd chastity. Tie up my love’s tongue. Bring him silently.

Exeunt

Act 3, Scene 2

Enter OBERON, King of Fairies, solus

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

Enter ROBIN

ROBIN
Here comes my messenger.—How now, mad spirit? What night-rule now about this haunted grove?

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,

Enter OBERON, the Fairy King, enters.

OBERON
I wonder if Titania is awake yet, and if she is, I wonder what the first thing she saw was. Whatever it is, she must be completely in love with it now.

ROBIN enters.

Ah, here comes my messenger.—What’s going on, you crazy spirit? What havoc have you wreaked in this part of the forest?

My mistress Titania is in love with a monster. While she was sleeping in her bed of flowers, a group of bumbling idiots, rough workmen from Athens, got together nearby to rehearse some play they plan to perform on Theseus's wedding
Were met together to rehearse a play
Intended for great Theseus’ nuptial day.
The shallowest thick-skin of that barren sort,
Who Pyramus presented in their sport,

Forsook his scene and entered in a brake,
When I did him at this advantage take,
An ass’s nole I fixèd on his head.
Anon his Thisbe must be answerèd,
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.

Pyramus there, transformed into someone with a
donkey’s head. At that exact moment, Titania
woke up and immediately fell in love with him, an
ass.

Enter DEMETRIUS and HERMIA

OBERON
(aside to ROBIN) Stand close. This is the same
Athenian.

ROBIN
(aside to OBERON) This is the woman, but not this
the man.

DEMETRIUS
Oh, why rebuke you him that loves you so?
Lay breath so bitter on your bitter foe.

HERMIA
45 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.

much worse, because I'm afraid you've given me good reason to curse you. If you killed Lysander while he was sleeping, then you're already up to your ankles in blood. You might as well jump right into a bloodbath and kill me, too.

He was more faithful to me than the sun is to the daytime. Would he have snuck away from me while I was asleep? I'll believe that when I believe that there's a hole through the center of the earth, and the moon has passed all the way through to the other side. The only possibility is that you've murdered him. A murderer should look like you do, so pale and grim.

DEMETRIUS
That's how someone who's been murdered should look, and that's how I look. You've pierced me through the heart with your cruelty, and yet you, the murderer, look as bright and clear as a star in the sky.

HERMIA
What does that have to do with my Lysander? Where is he? Oh, good Demetrius, will you find him for me?

DEMETRIUS
I would rather feed his corpse to my dogs.

HERMIA
Get out, dog! You've driven me to my wit's end. Did you kill him, then? From now on I won't even consider you a human being. Oh, just tell the truth for once. tell the truth, if only for my sake.—Would you have even dared to look at him when he was awake? And did you kill him while he was sleeping? Oh, how brave of you! A snake could do that as easily as you could. A snake did do it, because no snake ever had a more forked, lying tongue than you have.

DEMETRIUS
You're getting all worked up over a misunderstanding. I didn't kill Lysander. ?As far as I know, he's not even dead.

HERMIA
Then please tell me he's all right.

DEMETRIUS
If I told you that, what would I get out of it?

HERMIA
The privilege of never seeing me again. And now I'm going to leave your despised company. You'll
See me no more, whether he be dead or no.  
Exit HERMIA

DEMETRIUS
There is no following her in this fierce vein.
Here therefore for a while I will remain.
So sorrow’s heaviness doth heavier grow
For debt that bankrupt sleep doth sorrow owe,
Which now in some slight measure it will pay,
If for his tender here I make some stay.
(lies down and sleeps)

HERMIA exits.

DEMETRIUS
I can’t go after her when she’s in a rage like this.
So I’ll stay here for a while. Sadness gets worse
when you haven’t had enough sleep. I’ll try to
sleep a little here. (DEMETRIUS lies down and falls asleep)

OBERON
(to ROBIN) 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 turned, and not a false turned true.

ROBIN
Then fate o’errules 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.

ROBIN
I go, I go. Look how I go,
Swifter than arrow from the Tartar’s bow.

ROBIN enters.

OBERON
(squeezing flower juice into DEMETRIUS ’s eyes)
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.

ROBIN
Captain of our fairy band,
Helena is here at hand,
And the youth, mistook by me,
Pleading for a lover’s fee.

ROBIN enters.

OBERON
(putting flower juice on DEMETRIUS ’s eyelids)
You purple flower, hit by Cupid’s arrow, sink into
the pupils of this man’s eyes. When he sees the
girl he should love, make her seem as bright to
him as the evening star. Young man, when you
wake up, if she’s nearby, beg her to cure your
lovesickness.

ROBIN
Helena is nearby, boss. The young man who I
mistook for this one is there too, begging her to
love him. Should we watch this ridiculous scene?
Lord, what fools these mortals are!
Shall we their fond pageant see?
Lord, what fools these mortals be!

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

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

Enter LYSANDER and HELENA

LYSANDER
Why should you think that I should woo in scorn?

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
(waking) O Helena, goddess, nymph, perfect, divine!
To what, my love, shall I compare thine eyne?
Crystal is muddy. Oh, how ripe in show
Thy lips, those kissing cherries, tempting grow!
That pure congealèd white, high Taurus’ snow,
Fanned with the eastern wind, turns to a crow.
When thou hold’st up thy hand. Oh, 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.

DEMETRIUS
(waking up) Oh Helena, you goddess, you divine
and perfect nymph! What can I compare your eyes to? Crystal isn’t as clear as they are. Oh, your lips are as ripe as a pair of tempting cherries touching each other! The pure white of the snow on a mountaintop seems black as a crow’s wing next to the whiteness of your hands. Oh, let me kiss your beautiful white hand. It’ll make me so happy!

HELENA
Damn it! I see you’re all determined to gang up on me for a few laughs. If you had any manners
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

at all, you wouldn’t treat me like this. Can’t you just hate me, as I know you do? Do you have to get together to humiliate me too? If you were real men, as you pretend to be, you wouldn’t treat a lady this way, making vows and promises and praising my beauty when I know you’re really both disgusted by me. You’re competing for

Hermia’s love, and now you’re competing to see which one of you can make fun of me the most. That’s a great idea, a really manly thing to do—making a poor girl cry! No respectable person would offend an innocent girl just to have some fun.

To vow, and swear, and superpraise my parts,
When I am sure you hate me with your hearts.
You both are rivals, and love Hermia,
And now both rivals to mock Helena—
A trim exploit, a manly enterprise,
To conjure tears up in a poor maid’s eyes
With your derision! None of noble sort
Would so offend a virgin, and extort
A poor soul’s patience, all to make you sport.

LYSANDER
You are unkind, Demetrius. Be not so.

For you love Hermia. This you know I know.
And here, with all good will, with all my heart,
In Hermia’s love I yield you up my part.
And yours of Helena to me bequeath,
Whom I do love and will do till my death.

HELENA
Never did mockers waste more idle breath.

DEMETRIUS
Lysander, keep thy Hermia. I will none.
If e’er I loved her, all that love is gone.
My heart to her but as guest-wise sojourned,
And now to Helen is it home returned,

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?

I couldn’t see you, Lysander, but I heard your voice, and that’s how I found you. Why did you leave me alone so unkindly?
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?

HERMIA
You can’t mean what you’re saying. It’s impossible.

HELENA
So, she’s in on this too! Now I see that all three
of them have gotten together to play this cruel
trick on me. Hurtful Hermia, you ungrateful girl,
have you conspired with these two to provoke
me with this horrible teasing? Have you forgotten
all the talks we’ve had together, the vows we
made to be like sisters to one another, all the
hours we spent together, wishing that we never
had to say goodbye—have you forgotten? Our
friendship in our schooldays, our childhood
innocence? We used to sit together and sew one
flower with our two needles, sewing it on one
piece of cloth, sitting on the same cushion,
singing one song in the same key, as if our
hands, our sides, our voices and our minds were
stuck together. We grew together like twin
cherries—which seemed to be separate but were
also together—two lovely cherries on one stem.

We seemed to have two separate bodies, but we
had one heart. Do you want to destroy our old
friendship by joining these men to insult your
poor friend? It’s not friendly, and it’s not ladylike.
All women would be angry with you for doing it,
even though I’m the only one who’s hurt by it.

HERMIA
I’m completely dumbfounded by what you’re saying. I’m not insulting you. It sounds more like
you’re insulting me.

HELENA
Come on, confess. Didn’t you send Lysander, as
an insult, to follow me around praising my eyes
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 unloved?
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
Oh, excellent!

HERMIA
I promise, 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.
and my face? Haven't you made your other love,
Demetrius—who kicked me with his foot not long ago—call me a goddess and a divine, rare,
precious, heavenly creature? Why does he talk like that to a girl he can't stand? And why does
Lysander deny that he loves you, when he loves you so deeply? Why would he show me any
affection, unless you told him to? Why does it matter that I'm not as lucky or lovable as you are
and that the love I feel is unrequited? You should pity me for that reason, not hate me.

HERMIA
I don’t know what you’re talking about.

HELENA
Oh, fine. All right, go ahead, keep up your little
game, pretend to be sympathetic, but then nudge
each other and wink and make faces at me when
I turn my back. Keep up your wonderful game.
You’re doing such a good job on this trick,
someone should write a book about it.

If you had any sense of pity, or manners, you
wouldn’t pretend to fight over me like this. But
goodbye. It’s partly my own fault, since I followed
you here. Leaving—or dying—will soon take care
of everything.

LYSANDER
Stay, lovely Helena. Listen to my excuse. My
love, my life, my soul, beautiful Helena!

HELENA
That’s a good one.

HERMIA
Don’t insult her like that, Lysander darling.

DEMETRIUS
If Hermia’s begging can’t make
you stop insulting Helena, I can force you to do
so.

LYSANDER
You can’t force me any more than Hermia can
beg me. Your threats are no stronger than her
whining.—Helena, I love you. I swear I do. I’ll
give my life for you, just to prove this guy wrong
when he says I don’t love you.

DEMETRIUS
I say that I love you more than he does.

LYSANDER
If that’s what you say, go fight a duel with me
and prove it.
DEMETRIUS
Quick, come.

HERMIA
Lysander, whereto tends all this?

LYSANDER
Away, you Ethiope!

DEMETRIUS
No, no. He'll seem to break loose.

LYSANDER
Hang off, thou cat, thou burr! Vile thing, let loose
Or I will shake thee from me like a serpent.

HERMIA
Thy love? Out, tawny Tartar, out!

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?

LYSANDER
Ay, by my life,

LYSANDER
What? Do you want me to hit Hermia, hurt her, kill her? Sure, I hate her, but I wouldn't hurt her.

HERMIA
What? Do you want me to hit Hermia, hurt her, kill her? I'm as beautiful now as I was a little while ago. You still loved me when we fell asleep, but when you woke up you left me. So you left me—Oh, God help me!—For real?
Act 3, Scene 2, Page 12

Be certain, nothing truer. 'Tis no jest
That I do hate thee and love Helena.

HERMIA
O me!

(to HELENA) You juggler! You canker-blossom!
You thief of love! What, have you come by night
And stolen my love's heart from him?

HELENA
Fine, 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 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
(to LYSANDER and DEMETRIUS)
I pray you, though you mock me, gentlemen,
Let her not hurt me. I was never cursed.
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.

Act 3, Scene 2, Page 13

HERMIA
"Lower"? Hark, again!

HELENA
Good Hermia, do not be so bitter with me.
I evermore did love you, Hermia,
Did ever keep your counsels, never wronged you—
Save that, in love unto Demetrius,
I told him of your stealth unto this wood.

HERMIA
O me!

(to HELENA) You juggler! You canker-blossom!
You thief of love! What, have you come by night
And stolen my love's heart from him?

HELENA
Oh, no! (to HELENA) You trickster, you snake!
You thief! What, did you sneak in at night and
steal my love's heart from him?

HELENA
Oh, that's very nice! You ought to be ashamed of
yourself! You're going to make me mad enough
to answer you? Damn you, you faker, you puppet!

HERMIA
"Puppet"? Why "puppet"?—Oh, I see where this
is going. She's talking about our difference in
height. She's paraded in front of him to show off
how tall she is. She won him over with her
height.—Does he have such a high opinion of
you because I'm so short? Is that it? So how
short am I? I'm not too short to gouge your
eyes out with my fingernails.

HERMIA
(to LYSANDER and DEMETRIUS) Please don't
let her hurt me, gentlemen, however much you
want to tease me. I never was much good with
insults. I'm not mean and catty like her. I'm a nice
shy girl. Please don't let her hit me. Maybe you
think that because she's shorter than me I can
take her.

HERMIA
"Shorter!" See, she's doing it again!

HELENA
Good Hermia, please don't act so bitter toward
me. I always loved you, Hermia, and gave you
advice. I never did anything to hurt you—except
once, when I told Demetrius that you planned to
sneak off into this forest. And I only did that
because I loved Demetrius so much. He followed
you. And I followed him because I loved him. But
he told me to get lost and threatened to hit me,
kick me—even kill me. Now just let me go quietly
back to Athens. I'll carry my mistakes back with
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
(to LYSANDER) No, sir, she shall not, though you take her part.

HELENA
Oh, when she’s angry, she is keen and shrewd! She was a vixen when she went to school.

And though she be but little, she is fierce.

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

“Little” again? Nothing but “little” and “short”!—
Why are you letting her insult me like this? Let me at her!.

Lysander’s not holding onto me anymore. Follow me if you’re brave enough, and we’ll fight over Helena.

DEMETERS
“Follow”? No, I’ll walk right next to you, side by side.

DEMETERS and LYSANDER exit.

HERMIA
All this fighting is because of you. Stay where you are.

HELENA
I’m not sticking around here any more. I don’t trust you. You might be a better fighter than I am, but my legs are longer and I can run away faster.
Act 3, Scene 2, Page 15

Original Text

My legs are longer though, to run away.

Exit

HERMIA

I am amazed and know not what to say.

Exit

HERMIA

ROBIN

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

OBERON

This is thy negligence. Still thou mistakest,
Or else committ'st thy knaveries willfully.

As you can see, these lovers are looking for a place to fight. Hurry up, Robin, and make the night dark and cloudy. Cover the sky with a low-hanging fog, as dark as hell, and get these overeager rivals so completely lost in the woods that they can’t run into each other. Imitate Lysander’s voice and egg Demetrius on with insults. Then rant for a while in Demetrius’s voice, and egg Lysander on. That way you’ll get them away from each other until they’re so exhausted that they’ll sleep like the dead. (OBERON gives a new flower to ROBIN) When they’re asleep, crush some of this flower’s juice into Lysander’s eyes. The flower’s juice has the power to erase all the damage that’s been done to his eyes, and to make him see normally, the way he used to. When they wake up, all this trouble and conflict will seem like a dream or a meaningless vision. Then the lovers will go back to Athens, united together until death. While you’re busy with that, I’ll go see Queen Titania and ask her once again for the Indian boy. And then I’ll undo the spell that I cast over her, so she won’t be in love with that monster anymore. Then everything will be peaceful again.

Act 3, Scene 2, Page 16

ROBIN

My fairy lord, this must be done with haste.

ROBIN

We’ve got to act fast, my lord of the fairies.
No Fear Shakespeare – A Midsummer Night’s Dream (by SparkNotes)

Original Text

For night’s swift dragons cut the clouds full fast,  
And yonder shines Aurora’s harbinger,  
At whose approach, ghosts, wandering here and there,  
Troop home to churchyards. Damnèd spirits all,  
That in crossways and floods have burial,  
Already to their wormy beds are gone.  
For fear lest day should look their shames upon,  
They willfully themselves exile from light  
And must for aye consort with black-browed night.

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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 blessèd 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

ROBIN  
Up and down, up and down,  
I will lead them up and down.  
I am feared in field and town.  
Goblin, lead them up and down.  
Here comes one.

Enter LYSANDER

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

ROBIN  
(as DEMETRIUS)  
Here, villain. Drawn and ready. Where art thou?

LYSANDER  
I will be with thee straight.

ROBIN  
(as DEMETRIUS)  
Follow me then  
To plainer ground.

Exit LYSANDER  
Enter DEMETRIUS

DEMETRIUS  
Lysander, speak again!  
Thou runaway, thou coward, art thou fled?  
Speak! In some bush? Where dost thou hide thy head?

ROBIN  
(as LYSANDER) Thou coward, art thou bragging to

Act 3, Scene 2, Page 17

Modern Text

Night’s fading quickly, and in the distance the morning star is shining, warning us that dawn is coming. At dawn, the ghosts that have been wandering around all night go home to the graveyards. The souls of people who weren’t buried in holy ground, but instead lie rotting by the side of the road or at the bottom of a river, have already gone back to their wormy graves. They weren’t buried in a real graveyard because they committed suicide, and they don’t want their shame to be seen in daylight, so they avoid sunlight and stay forever in the darkness of night.

OBERON

But we’re not like that. We’re a different kind of spirit, and we don’t have to run away from the sunlight. I like the morning. I often wander around in the woods like a forest ranger until the sun rises in the fiery red sky over the ocean, turning the salty green water to gold. But you should hurry anyway. Don’t delay. We still have time to get all of this done before daybreak.

ROBIN

Up and down, up and down,  
I will lead them up and down.  
The people fear me in the country and the town.  
Goblin, lead them up and down.  
Here comes one of them now.

Enter LYSANDER

LYSANDER  
Where are you, Demetrius, you arrogant bastard? Say something.

ROBIN  
(as DEMETRIUS)  
I’m over here, you villain, with my sword out and ready to fight.  
Where are you?

LYSANDER  
I’m coming.

ROBIN  
(as DEMETRIUS’s voice) Let’s go to a flatter area where we can fight more easily.

LYSANDER exits.

DEMETRIUS

Lysander, say something! You coward, did you run away from me? Say something! Are you behind some bush? Where are you hiding?

ROBIN  
(as LYSANDER’s voice) You coward, are you
the stars,  
Telling the bushes that thou look'st for wars,  
And wilt not come? Come, recreant. Come, thou child!  
I'll whip thee with a rod. He is defiled  
That draws a sword on thee.

DEMETRIUS  
Yea, art thou there?

ROBIN  
(as LYSANDER)  
Follow my voice. We'll try no manhood here.

Exeunt

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,

ROBIN  
(as LYSANDER to DEMETRIUS)  
Ho, ho, ho! Coward, why comest thou not?

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

ROBIN  
(as LYSANDER)  
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 enters.
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.
(lies down and sleeps)

HELENA
Oh, what a long, tedious, exhausting night! I wish
it would end. I wish the comforting light of day
would shine so I can go back to Athens and get
away from these people who hate me so much. I
hope I’ll be able to sleep and escape my troubles
for a while. People can sometimes forget their
difficulties when they’re asleep. (HELENA lies
down and sleeps)

Act 3, Scene 2, Page 19

ROBIN
Yet but three? Come one more.
Two of both kinds make up four.
Here she comes, cursed and sad.
Cupid is a knavish lad
Thus to make poor females mad.

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)

HERMIA
I’ve never been more exhausted or upset. I’m all
wet from the dew and scratched up by thorns,
and I can’t crawl any farther. I just can’t go on.
My legs can’t hold themselves up. I’ll sleep here
until morning. If they do fight, I hope Lysander is
safe! (HERMIA lies down and sleeps)

ROBIN
On the ground
Sleep sound.
I’ll apply
To your eye.
Gentle lover, remedy.
(squeezes flower juice into LYSANDER’s eyes)
When thou wakest,
Thou takest
True delight
In the sight
Of thy former lady’s eye.
And the country proverb known—
That every man should take his own—
In your waking shall be shown.
Jack shall have Jill.
Nought shall go ill.
The man shall have his mare again, and all shall be
well.

ROBIN
Sleep well there on the ground. I’ll cure you,
gentle lover, by putting this medicine on your
eyes. (ROBIN puts the nectar of the flower
on LYSANDER’s eyelids) When you wake you
will be truly delighted to see the woman you once
loved. And when you wake up, you’ll be a
walking illustration of the well-known country
proverb. “Jack will have Jill and everything will be
all right.”

Exit ROBIN

Act 4, Scene 1

LYSANDER, DEMETRIUS, HELENA, and HERMIA sleep.
Enter TITANIA, Queen of the Fairies; and BOTTOM, with the ass’s
head; and
fairies PEASEBLOSSOM, COBWEB, MOTH, MUSTARDSEED; OB

DEMETRIUS, HELENA, HERMIA,
and LYSANDER are still sleeping on
the stage. TITANIA enters
with BOTTOM, who still has a donkey’s
TITANIA
(to BOTTOM) Come, sit thee down upon this flowery bed
While I thy amiable cheeks do coy,
And stick musk roses in thy sleek, smooth head,
And kiss thy fair large ears, my gentle joy.

BOTTOM
Where’s Peaseblossom?
PEASEBLOSSOM
Ready.
BOTTOM
Scratch my head, Peaseblossom. Where’s Monsieur Cobweb?
COBWEB
Ready.
BOTTOM
Monsieur Cobweb, good monsieur, get you your weapons in your
hand and kill me a red-hipped humble-bee on the top of a thistle.
And, good monsieur, bring me the honey bag. Do not fret yourself
too much in the action, monsieur. And good monsieur, have a care
the honey bag break not. I would be loath to have you overflown
with a honey bag, signor.

Exit COBWEB

MUSTARDSEED
Ready.

Act 4, Scene 1, Page 2

BOTTOM
Give me your neaf, Monsieur Mustardseed. Pray you,
leave your courtesy, good monsieur.
MUSTARDSEED
What’s your will?
BOTTOM
Nothing, good monsieur, but to help Cavalery
Cobweb to scratch. I must to the barber’s, monsieur,
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
Give me your first, Mr. Mustardseed. Please, stop
bowing, good sir.
MUSTARDSEED
What would you like me to do?
BOTTOM
Nothing, good sir, except to help Sir Cobweb
scratch my head. I should go to the barber’s,
monseur, because I think I’m getting really hairy
around the face. And I’m such a sensitive ass that
if my hair even tickles me a little, I need to
scratch.
TITANIA
Would you like to 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

Act 4, Scene 1, Page 3

So doth the woodbine the sweet honeysuckle
Gently entwist. The female ivy so
Enrings the barky fingers of the elm.
Oh, how I love thee! How I dote on thee!

TITANIA and BOTTOM sleep

Enter ROBIN

OBERON
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 favors from this hateful fool,
I did upbraid her and fall out with her.
For she his hairy temples then had rounded
With a coronet of fresh and fragrant flowers,
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 begged my patience,
I then did ask of her her changeling child,
Which straight she gave me and her fairy sent
To bear him to my bower in Fairyland.

And now I have the boy, I will undo
This hateful imperfection of her eyes.
And, gentle Puck, take this transformèd scalp
From off the head of this Athenian swain,
That, he awaking when the other do,
Act 4, Scene 1, Page 4

Be as thou wast wont to be.

See as thou wast wont to see.

Dian’s bud o’er Cupid’s flower
Hath such force and blessèd power.
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.

How came these things to pass?

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!

ROBIN
(taking the ass’s head off BOTTOM)
Now when thou wakest, with thine own fool’s eyes peep.

OBERON
Sound, music!—Come, my queen, take hands with me,
And rock the ground whereon these sleepers be.
(dances with TITANIA)
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.

Act 4, Scene 1, Page 5

ROBIN
Fairy King, attend, and mark.
I do hear the morning lark.

OBERON

ROBIN
Listen, Fairy King. I can hear the lark singing.
Morning’s here.

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

**TITANIA**  
Come, my lord, and in our flight  
Tell me how it came this night  
That I sleeping here was found  
With these mortals on the ground.

**Exeunt OBERON, TITANIA, and ROBIN**

A hunting horn blows. **THESEUS enters with his servants, EGEUS and HIPPOLYTA.**

**THESEUS**

Go, one of you, find out the forester.  
For now our observation is performed.  
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 one of the train**

We will, fair queen, up to the mountain’s top,  
And mark the musical confusion  
Of hounds and echo in conjunction.

**HIPPOLYTA**

I was with Hercules and Cadmus once,  
When in a wood of Crete they bayed the bear  
With hounds of Sparta. Never did I hear  
Such gallant chiding. For, besides the groves,  
The skies, the fountains, every region near  
Seemed all one mutual cry. I never heard  
So musical a discord, such sweet thunder.

**THESEUS**

My hounds are bred out of the Spartan kind,  
So flewed, so sanded, and their heads are hung  
With ears that sweep away the morning dew,  
Crook-kneed, and dew-lapped like Thessalian bulls,  
Slow in pursuit, but matched in mouth like bells,  
Each under each. A cry more tunable  
Was never hollaed to, nor cheered with horn,  
In Crete, in Sparta, nor in Thessaly.  
Judge when you hear.  
(sees the four sleeping lovers)  
But, soft! What nymphs are these?

**EGEUS**

My lord, this is my daughter here asleep.
Original Text

115 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

120 Came here in grace our solemnity. But speak, Egeus. Is not this the day That Hermia should give answer of her choice?

EGEUS

It is, my lord.

THESEUS

Go, bid the huntsmen wake them with their horns.

Exit one of the train

Wind horns and shout within LYSANDER, DEMETRIUS, HELENA, and HERMIA wake and start up

125 Good morrow, friends. Saint Valentine is past.

Act 4, Scene 1, Page 7

Begin these woodbirds but to couple now? Are you lovebirds only starting to pair up now?

LYSANDER, DEMETRIUS, HELENA, and HERMIA kneel

LYSANDER

Pardon, my lord.

THESEUS

I pray you all, stand up.

LYSANDER, DEMETRIUS, HELENA, and HERMIA stand

(to LYSANDER and DEMETRIUS)

I know you two are rival enemies.

130 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 amazèdly, Half sleep, half waking. But as yet, I swear, I cannot truly say how I came here. But as I think—for truly would I speak, And now do I bethink me, so it is— I came with Hermia hither. Our intent Was to be gone from Athens, where we might, Without the peril of the Athenian law—

EGEUS

(to THESEUS) Enough, enough, my lord. You have enough! I beg the law, the law, upon his head.— They would have stol’n away, they would, over there, and this is Lysander here, and this is Demetrius, and this is Helena, old Nedar’s daughter. I don’t understand why they’re all here together.

THESEUS

They probably woke up early to celebrate May Day and came here for my celebration when they heard I’d be here. But tell me, Egeus. Isn’t today the day when Hermia has to tell us her decision about whether she’ll marry Demetrius?

EGEUS

It is, my lord.

THESEUS

Go tell the hunters to blow their horns and wake them up.

Someone shouts offstage. Horns are blown LYSANDER, DEMETRIUS, HELENA, and HERMIA, wake up.

Good morning, my friends. Valentine’s Day is over.

(two are enemies. Has the world really become so gentle and peaceful that people who hate each other have started to trust each other and sleep beside each other without being afraid?)

LYSANDER

Forgive us, my lord.

THESEUS

Please, all of you, stand up.

LYSANDER, DEMETRIUS, HELENA, and HERMIA get up.

(to LYSANDER and DEMETRIUS) I know you two are enemies. Has the world really become so gentle and peaceful that people who hate each other have started to trust each other and sleep beside each other without being afraid?

LYSANDER

My lord, what I say may be a little confused, since I’m half asleep and half awake. I swear, at the moment I really couldn’t tell you how I ended up here. But I think—I want to tell you the truth, and now that I think about it, I think this is true—I came here with Hermia. We were planning to leave Athens to escape the Athenian law and—

EGEUS

(to THESEUS) Enough, enough, my lord. You’ve heard enough evidence! I insist that the law punish him—They were going to run away, Demetrius, they were running away to defeat us,
Original Text

145 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
(to THESEUS) My lord, fair Helen told me of their stealth,
Of this their purpose hither to this wood.
150 And I in fury hither followed them,
Fair Helena in fancy following me.

Modern Text

robbing you of your wife and me of my fatherly right to decide who my son-in-law will be.

DEMETRIUS
(to THESEUS) My lord, the beautiful Helena told me about their secret plan to escape into this forest. I was furious and followed them here, and the lovely Helena was so in love with me that she followed me.

Act 4, Scene 1, Page 8

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
155 Which in my childhood I did dote upon.
And all the faith, the virtue of my heart,
The object and the pleasure of mine eye,
Is only Helena. To her, my lord,
Was I betrothed ere I saw Hermia.
160 But like in sickness did I loathe this food.
But as in health, come to my natural taste,
Now I do wish it, love it, long for it,
And will for evermore be true to it.

THESEUS
Fair lovers, you are fortunately met.
165 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 purposed 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

THESEUS
You pretty lovers are lucky you met me here.
We'll talk more about this later.—Egeus, I'm overriding your wishes. These couples will be married along with me and Hippolyta in the temple later today.—And now, since the morning is almost over, we'll give up on the idea of hunting. Come with us to Athens. We three couples will celebrate with a sumptuous feast. Come, Hippolyta.

THESEUS, HIPPOLYTA, and EGEUS exit with their followers.

DEMETRIUS
These things seem small and undistinguishable,
175 Like far-off mountains turnèd into clouds.

HERMIA
When everything seems double. Methinks I see these things with parted eye,

HELENA
So methinks.

Act 4, Scene 1, Page 9

And I have found Demetrius like a jewel,
Mine own, and not mine own.

I won Demetrius so easily, as if he were a precious diamond I just found lying around. It's
mire because I found it, but I feel like someone else could easily come and claim it was hers.

DEMETRIUS Are you sure we’re awake? It seems to me we’re still sleeping, still dreaming. Do you remember seeing the duke here? Did he tell us to follow him?

HERMIA Yes, he did. And my father was here too.

HELENA And Hippolyta.

LYSANDER And he told us to follow him to the temple.

DEMETRIUS Well, then, we’re awake. Let’s follow him. We can tell one another our dreams along the way.

Exeunt LYSANDER, DEMETRIUS, HELENA, and HERMIA

BOTTOM (waking up) Tell me when my cue comes, and I’ll say my line. My next cue is “Most handsome Pyramus.” Hey! Peter Quince? Flute the bellows-repairman? Snout the handyman? Starveling? My God, they’ve all run away and left me sleeping here? What a weird dream I had.—You can’t even describe such a weird dream. You’d be an ass if you even tried to explain it. I thought I was—no, nobody can even describe what I was. I thought I was, I thought I had—but a person would be an idiot to try to say what I thought I had. No eye has ever heard, no ear has ever seen, no hand has tasted, or tongue felt, or heart described what my dream was like. I’ll get Peter Quince to write this dream down as a ballad.

Exit BOTTOM exits.

Act 4, Scene 1

It shall be called “Bottom’s Dream” because it hath no bottom. And I will sing it in the latter end of a play before the duke. Peradventure, to make it the more gracious, I shall sing it at her death.

I’ll call it “Bottom’s Dream” because it’s so deep that it has no bottom. And I’ll sing it for the duke in the intermission of a play. Or maybe, to make it even more lovely, I’ll sing it when the heroine dies.

Exit

Act 4, Scene 2

Enter QUINCE, FLUTE, SNOOT, and STARVELING

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

STARVELING

QUINCE Have you sent anyone to Bottom’s house? Has he come home yet?

STARVELING
He cannot be heard of. Out of doubt he is transported.

**FLUTE**
If he come not, then the play is marred. It goes not forward. Doth it?

**QUINCE**
It is not possible. You have not a man in all Athens able to discharge Pyramus but he.

**FLUTE**
No, he hath simply the best wit of any handicraft man in Athens.

**QUINCE**
Yea, and the best person too. And he is a very paramour for a sweet voice.

**FLUTE**
You must say “paragon.” A “paramour” is, God bless us, a thing of naught.

*Enter SNUG*

**SNUG**
Masters, the duke is coming from the temple, and there is two or three lords and ladies more married. If our sport had gone forward, we had all been made men.

**FLUTE**
O sweet bully Bottom! 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.

*Enter BOTTOM*

**BOTTOM**
Where are these lads? Where are these hearts?

**QUINCE**
Bottom! O most courageous day! O most happy hour!

**BOTTOM**
Masters, I am to discourse wonders—but ask me not what, for if I tell you I am no true Athenian. I will tell you 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

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Act 4, Scene 2, Page 2

10 He would have deserved it. Sixpence a day in Pyramus, or nothing.

*Enter BOTTOM*

**BOTTOM**
Where are my guys? Where are my good fellows?

**QUINCE**
Bottom! Oh, how wonderful to see you! Oh, what a relief!

**BOTTOM**
Masters, I’ve got some amazing things to tell you—but don’t ask me to tell you what. I swear by my Athenian citizenship that I won’t tell you anything. I’ll tell you everything exactly as it happened.

**QUINCE**
Tell us, Bottom.

**BOTTOM**
No, you won’t get a word out of me. All I’ll tell you is that the duke has had dinner already. Now it’s

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No Fear Shakespeare – A Midsummer Night’s Dream (by SparkNotes)
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 preferred. In any case, let Thisbe have clean linen. And let not him that plays the lion pair his nails, for they shall hang out for the lion’s claws. And most dear actors, eat no onions 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**

They all exit.

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**Act 5, Scene 1**

Enter **THESEUS, HIPPOLYTA, and PHILOSTRATE, with other attendant lords**

**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 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 supposed a bear!

**HIPPOLYTA**

But all the story of the night told over, And all their minds transfigured so together, More witnesseth than fancy’s images And grows to something of great constancy, But, howsoever, strange and admirable.
Enter lovers: **LYSANDER, DEMETRIUS, HELENA, and HERMIA**

**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 bedtime?
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 abridgement have you for this evening?
What masque, what music? How shall we beguile
The lazy time if not with some delight?

**PHILOSTRATE**
(giving **THESEUS** a document)
There is a brief, how many sports are ripe.
Make choice of which your highness will see first.

**THESEUS**
(reads)
“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 played
When I from Thebes came last a conqueror.

**PHILOSTRATE**
Here I am, Theseus.

**THESEUS**
Tell us what entertainment you’ve prepared for the evening. Which plays, what music? How will we pass the time without some entertainment?

**PHILOSTRATE**
(giving **THESEUS** a piece of paper) Here’s a list of all of the acts that have been prepared. Choose which one you want to see first.

**THESEUS**
(reading) “The battle between Hercules and the Centaurs, to be sung by an Athenian eunuch, accompanied by a harp.” No, we won’t see that. I’ve already told that story to Hippolyta, while praising my cousin Hercules. What else? “The riot of the drunk Bacchanals who rip the singer Orpheus to shreds.” That’s an old show, and I saw it the last time I came back from conquering Thebes. “The nine Muses mourning the death of learning and scholarship.” That’s some sharp, critical satire, and it’s not appropriate for a wedding. “A tedious short drama about young Pyramus and his love Thisbe, a very sad and tragic comedy.” A sad comedy? Short but still tedious? That’s like hot ice and strange snow. How can this drama be so many contradictory things?

**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 rehearsed, 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 labored in their minds till now,  
And now have toiled their unbreathed memories  
With this same play against your nuptial.

THESEUS  
And we will hear it.

PHILOSTRATE  
No, my noble lord.  
It is not for you. I have heard it over,  
And it is nothing, nothing in the world—  
Unless you can find sport in their intents,  
Extremely stretched and conned with cru 'l pain

To do you service.

---

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.

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 don't like seeing poor people overburdened or  
looking bad when they're trying to do something good.

THESEUS  
You won't see anything like that, sweetheart.

HIPPOLYTA  
He just said that they're no good at acting.

THESEUS  
Then we're even kinder people for thanking them  
for something that they're not good at. We'll  
entertain ourselves by accepting their mistakes.  
When poor dutiful people can't do certain things  
well, generous people can consider the effort they  
put into it rather than the effect that they produce.  
In my travels, great scholars have come up to  
me, meaning to greet me with well-rehearsed  
welcoming speeches, and I have seen them
And in conclusion dumbly have broke off, Not paying me a welcome. Trust me, sweet, Out of this silence yet I picked 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.

Love, therefore, and tongue-tied simplicity can say the most even when they’re saying the least, in my opinion.

Enter PHILOSTRATE

PHILOSTRATE enters.

Act 5, Scene 1, Page 5

PHILOSTRATE

So please your grace, the Prologue is addressed.

THESEUS

Let him approach.

Enter QUINCE as the PROLOGUE

PROLOGUE

(delivered by QUINCE)

If we offend, it is with our good will. That you should think we come not to offend,

But with good will. To show our simple skill,

That is the true beginning of our end. Consider then we come but in despite.

We do not come as minding to contest you, Our true intent is. All for your delight

We are not here. That you should here repent you, The actors are at hand, and by their show You shall know all that you are like to know.

THESEUS

This fellow doth not stand upon points.

LYSANDER

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

HIPPOLYTA

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

Act 5, Scene 1, Page 6

THESEUS

His speech was like a tangled chain. Nothing impaired, but all

THESEUS

His speech was like a tangled chain. It went on and on and was a total mess. Who’s next?
Enter BOTTOM as PYRAMUS, and FLUTE as THISBE, and SNOUT as WALL, and STARVELING as MOONSHINE, and SNUG as LION.

PROLOGUE
(delivered by QUINCE)

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 Thisbe is certain. This man, with lime and roughcast, doth present Wall, that vile wall which did these lovers sunder. And through Wall's 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 Thisbe, 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 Thisbe's mantle slain. Wherewith, 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 Lion, Moonshine, Wall, and
Original Text

lovers twain
At large discourse, while here they
do remain.

Act 5, Scene 1, Page 7

THESEUS
I wonder if the lion be to speak.

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

Exeunt PROLOGUE, PYRAMUS, THISBE, LION, and MOONSHINE

WALL
(played by SNOUT) In this same interlude it doth
befall
That I, one Snout by name, present a wall.
And such a wall, as I would have you think,
That had in it a crannied hole, or chink,
Through which the lovers, Pyramus and Thisbe,
Did whisper often very secretly.
This loam, this roughcast, 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

PYRAMUS
O grim-looked night! O night with hue so black!
O night, which ever art when day is not!
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!

THESEUS
I’m afraid my Thisbe has forgotten her
promise!—And you, oh Wall, oh sweet, oh lovely
Wall, you stand between her father’s property
and mine, you Wall, oh Wall, oh sweet and lovely
Wall. Show me your hole to stick my eye up
against!

WALL holds up fingers as chink

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!

WALL holds up two fingers

Thank you, you’re such a polite wall. God bless
you for doing this. But what’s this I see? I don’t
see any Thisbe. Oh wicked wall, through which I
don’t see any happiness! Damn your stones for
### Original Text

Cursed be thy stones for thus deceiving me!

**THESEUS**
The wall, methinks, being sensible, should curse again.

**BOTTOM**
*(out of character)* No, in truth, sir, he should not. “Deceiving me” is Thisbe’s cue. She is to enter now and I am to spy her through the wall. You shall see, it will fall pat as I told you. Yonder she comes.

*Enter THISBE*

**THISBE** *
*(played by FLUTE)*

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

**PYRAMUS**
I see a voice. Now will I to the chink, 
To spy an I can hear my Thisbe’s face. Thisbe?

**THISBE**
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.

**THISBE**
And I like Helen, till the Fates me kill.

**PYRAMUS**
Not Shafalus to Procrus was so true.

**THISBE**
As Shafalus to Procrus, I to you.

**PYRAMUS**
Oh, kiss me through the hole of this vile wall!

**THISBE**
I kiss the wall’s hole, not your lips at all.

**PYRAMUS**
Wilt thou at Ninny’s tomb meet me straightway?

**THISBE**
Tide life, tide death, I come without delay.

*Exeunt PYRAMUS and THISBE*

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

*Exit WALL*

### Modern Text

disappointing me like this!

**THESEUS**
Since the wall is conscious, it should curse back at him.

**BOTTOM**
*(out of character)* No, actually, sir, he shouldn’t say anything. It’s not his turn, it’s Thisbe’s. “Disappointing me like this” is Thisbe’s cue. She’s supposed to enter now, and I’ll see her through the wall. You’ll see, it’ll happen exactly like I say. Here she comes.

**THISBE**
*(played by FLUTE)* Oh wall, you’ve often heard me moaning because you keep me separated from my handsome Pyramus! My cherry lips have often kissed your bricks, which are stuck together with cement.

**PYRAMUS**
I see a voice! I’ll go to the hole to see if I can hear my Thisbe’s face. Thisbe?

**THISBE**
You are my love, my love, I think.

**PYRAMUS**
I’m your love, no matter what you think. And I’m still faithful to you, just like the famous Limander.

**THISBE**
And I’ll be as faithful to you as Helen of Troy, until the day I die.

**PYRAMUS**
Not even Shafalus was as faithful to his lover Procrus as I am to you.

**THISBE**
Me too, I’m as faithful as Shafalus to Procrus.

**PYRAMUS**
Oh, kiss me through the hole in this nasty wall.

**THISBE**
But I’m only kissing the wall’s hole, not your lips at all.

**PYRAMUS**
Will you meet me right away at Ninny’s grave?

**THISBE**
Neither death nor life will stop me from coming.

*PYRAMUS and THISBE exit.*

**WALL**
I, Wall, have done my part. Now that I’m done, Wall can go away.

*WALL exits.*
Act 5, Scene 1, Page 10

THESEUS
200 Now is the mural down between the two neighbors.

DEMETRIUS
No remedy, my lord, when walls are so willful 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
205 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.

LION
(played by SNUG)
You, ladies, you whose gentle hearts do fear

210 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, of a good conscience.

DEMETRIUS
A very best at a beast, my lord, that e’er I saw.

Act 5, Scene 1, Page 11

LYSANDER
This lion is a very fox, for his valor.

THESEUS
True. And a goose for his discretion.

DEMETRIUS
Not so, my lord. For his valor cannot carry his discretion, and the fox carries the goose.

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

MOONSHINE

LYSANDER
He’s as brave as a fox.

THESEUS
True. And as wise as a goose.

DEMETRIUS
Oh, that’s not true, my lord. He’s not brave enough to be wise.

THESEUS
He’s not wise enough to be brave. Anyway, he is what he is. Let’s listen to the moon.

MOONSHINE
(played by STARVELING) 
This lanthorn doth the hornèd 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 hornèd 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 lanthorn. 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 aweary 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.

MOONSHINE
All that I have to say is to tell you that the lanthorn is the moon; I, the man in the moon; this thornbush, my thornbush; and this dog, my dog.

DEMETRIUS
Why, all these should be in the lanthorn, for all these are in the moon.—But silence! Here comes Thisbe.

ENTERS THISBE

THISBE
This is old Ninny’s tomb. Where is my love?

LION
(roaring) Oh!

THISBE runs off, dropping her mantle

DEMETRIUS
Well roared, Lion!

THESEUS
Well run, Thisbe!

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

LION bloodies THISBE’s mantle

Enter THISBE

THISBE
This is old Ninny’s tomb. But where is my love?

LION
(roaring) Hey!

THISBE runs off, dropping her cloak

DEMETRIUS
Good roaring, Lion!

THESEUS
Good running, Thisbe!

HIPPOLYTA
Good shining, Moon!—Really, the Moon shines very well.
**Act 5, Scene 1, Page 13**

**DEMETRIUS**
And then came Pyramus.

**LYSANDER**
And so the lion vanished.

**PYRAMUS**
255 Sweet Moon, I thank thee for thy sunny beams.
I thank thee, Moon, for shining now so bright.
For by thy gracious, golden, glittering gleams,
I trust to take of truest Thisbe sight.—
But stay, O spite!
260 But mark, poor knight,
What dreadful dole is here!
Eyes, do you see?
How can it be?
O dainty duck! O dear!
265 Thy mantle good,
What, stained with blood?
Approach, ye Furies fell!
O Fates, come, come,
Cut thread and thrum.
270 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?
275 Since lion vile hath here deflowered my dear,
Which is—no, no—which was the fairest dame
That lived, that loved, that liked, that looked with cheer.
Come, tears, confound!
280 Out, sword, and wound!
The pap of Pyramus—

**Act 5, Scene 1, Page 14**

**THESEUS**
You could get sad watching this actor’s passionate lament—if one of your good friends happened to die right at the same time.

**HIPPOLYTA**
Damned if I don’t feel sorry for him.

**PYRAMUS**
Oh, Mother Nature, why did you create lions? A mean and awful lion has deflowered my darling, who is—no, no, who was the most beautiful lady who ever lived, or loved, or liked, or looked. Come on, tears, pour over me! Come on out, sword, and wound Pyramus in the chest—yes, right here on the left side where his heart is. (PYRAMUS stabs himself)

**THESEUS**
It with blood.

**DEMETRIUS**
That's good, Lion! Shake it around like a cat with a mouse.

**PYRAMUS**
enters.
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 prove an ass.

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

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

Enter THISBE

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 Thisbe, is the better. He for a man, God warrant us, she for a woman, God bless us.

LYSANDER
A mote will turn the balance, which Pyramus, which Thisbe, is the better. He for a man, God warrant us, she for a woman, God bless us.

300 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 Thisbe, is the better. He for a man, God warrant us, she for a woman, God bless us.

LYSANDER
Look, she’s spotted him with those sweet eyes of hers.

DEMETRIUS
And thus she means, videlicet—

THISBE
Asleep, my love?
What, dead, my dove?
O Pyramus, arise!

310 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.

LYSANDER
Look, she’s spotted him with those sweet eyes of hers.

DEMETRIUS
And now she’ll start moaning, of course—

THISBE
Are you asleep, my love? What, are you dead, my dove? Oh, Pyramus, get up! Speak, speak.
Can’t you talk? Dead, dead? The dirt of a grave must cover your sweet eyes! Your lily-white lips, your cherry-red nose, and your buttercup-yellow cheeks are gone, gone forever. Lovers, moan and weep. His eyes were as green as leeks. Oh, Fate, come, come to me, with hands as pale as milk. Soak your hands in blood and gore, since you have cut the thread of his life with scissors. Tongue, do not speak. Come, trusty sword. Come, blade, drench my breast with blood. (she
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 Thisbe ends.

Adieu, adieu, adieu.
(dies)

THESEUS
Moonshine and Lion are left to bury the dead.

DEMETRIUS
Ay, and Wall too.

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Act 5, Scene 1, Page 16

BOTTOM
(out of character) No, 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 needs none to be blamed. Marry, if he that writ it had played Pyramus and hanged himself in Thisbe's garter, it would have been a fine tragedy. And so it is, truly, and very notably discharged. But come, your Bergomask. Let your epilogue alone.

Bergomask dance

Exeunt BOTTOM and FLUTE

The iron tongue of midnight hath told twelve.
Lovers, to bed. 'Tis almost fairy time.

I fear we shall oversleep the coming morn
As much as we this night have overwatched.
This palpable-gross play hath well beguiled
The heavy gait of night. Sweet friends, to bed.
A fortnight hold we this solemnity,
In nightly revels and new jollity.

Exeunt

Enter ROBIN

ROBIN
Now the hungry lion roars
And the wolf behowls the moon,
Whilst the heavy ploughman snores,
All with weary task fordone.
Now the wasted brands do glow,
Act 5, Scene 1, Page 17

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, King and Queen of Fairies, 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, TITANIA, and the FAIRIES sing and dance

OBERON (sings)
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.

Act 5, Scene 1, Page 18

Never mole, harelip, nor scar,
Nor mark prodigious, such as are
Despised in nativity,
Shall upon their children be.
With this field dew consecrate,

They won’t have moles, or harelips, or scars, or abnormal markings, or anything else that might alarm someone if their baby was born with it. Use this blessed dew from the fields to bless each room in the palace with sweet peace. And the
Every fairy take his gait.
And each several chamber bless
Through this palace with sweet peace.
And the owner of it blessed
Ever shall in safety rest.
Trip away. Make no stay.
Meet me all by break of day.

blessed owner will always be safe. Run along.
Don’t stay long. Meet me at dawn.

Exeunt all but ROBIN

If we shadows have offended,
Think but this, and all is mended—
That you have but slumbered here
While these visions did appear.
And this weak and idle theme,
No more yielding but a dream,
Gentles, do not reprehend.
If you pardon, we will mend.
And, as I am an honest Puck,
If we have unleavened luck
Now to ‘scape the serpent’s tongue,
We will make amends ere long.
Else the Puck a liar call.
So good night unto you all.
Give me your hands if we be friends,
And Robin shall restore amends.

They all exit except for ROBIN.

If we actors have offended you, just think of it this way and everything will be all right—you were asleep when you saw these visions, and this silly and pathetic story was no more real than a dream. Ladies and gentlemen, don’t get upset with me. If you forgive us, we’ll make everything all right. I’m an honest Puck, and I swear that if we’re lucky enough not to get hissed at, we’ll make it up to you soon. If not, then I’m a liar. So good night to everyone. Give me some applause, if we’re friends, and Robin will make everything up to you.

Exit
He exits.