

A MIDSUMMER NIGHT'S DREAM

by William Shakespeare

Persons Represented.

THESEUS, Duke of Athens.

EGEUS, Father to Hermia.

LYSANDER, in love with Hermia.

DEMETRIUS, in love with Hermia.

PHILOSTRATE, Master of the Revels to Theseus.

QUINCE, the Carpenter. (PROLOGUE)

SNUG, the Joiner. (LION)

BOTTOM, the Weaver. (PYRAMUS)

FLUTE, the Bellows-mender. (THISBE)

SNOUT, the Tinker. (WALL)

STARVELING, the Tailor. (MOONSHINE)

HIPPOLYTA, Queen of the Amazons, betrothed to Theseus.

HERMIA, daughter to Egeus, in love with Lysander. (petite)

HELENA, in love with Demetrius. (tall)

OBERON, King of the Fairies.

TITANIA, Queen of the Fairies.

PUCK, or ROBIN GOODFELLOW, a Fairy.

FAIRY 1

FAIRY 2

FAIRY 3

INDIAN BOY (changeling)

SCENE: Athens, and a wood not far from it.

ACT I SCENE I

Athens. A room in the Palace of THESEUS. On stage
[Enter THESEUS, HIPPOLYTA, PHILOSTRATE, and Attendants USL.]

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. (sits on throne SL)

HIPPOLYTA Four days will quickly steep themselves in nights;
Four nights will quickly dream away the time;
And then the moon, like to a silver bow
New bent in heaven, shall behold the night
Of our solemnities.

THESEUS Go, Philostrate,
Stir up the Athenian youth to merriments;
Awake the pert and nimble spirit of mirth.

[Exit PHILOSTRATE USR.]
[Enter EGEUS, HERMIA, LYSANDER, and DEMETRIUS. USL]

EGEUS Happy be Theseus, our renowned duke!

THESEUS Thanks, good Egeus: what's the news with thee?

EGEUS Full of vexation come I, with complaint
Against my child, my daughter Hermia.—
Stand forth, Demetrius.—My noble lord,
This man hath my consent to marry her:—
Stand forth, Lysander;—and, my gracious duke,
This man hath bewitch'd the bosom of my child.
Thou, thou, Lysander, thou hast given her rhymes,
And interchang'd love-tokens with my child:
With cunning hast thou filch'd my daughter's heart;
Turned her obedience, which is due to me,
To stubborn harshness.—And, my gracious duke,
As she is mine I may dispose of her:
Which shall be either to this gentleman
Or to her death; according to our law

THESEUS What say you, Hermia? be advis'd, fair maid:
To you your father should be as a god;
Demetrius is a worthy gentleman.

HERMIA So is Lysander.

THESEUS In himself he is:
 But, in this kind, wanting your father's voice,
 The other must be held the worthier.

HERMIA I would my father look'd but with my eyes.

THESEUS Rather your eyes must with his judgment look.

HERMIA I do entreat your grace to pardon me.
 I know not by what power I am made bold,
 But I beseech your grace that I may know
 The worst that may befall me in this case
 If I refuse to wed Demetrius.

THESEUS Either to die the death, or to abjure
 For ever the society of men.

HERMIA So will I grow, so live, so die, my lord,
 Ere I will yield my virgin patent up
 Unto his lordship, whose unwished yoke
 My soul consents not to give sovereignty.

THESEUS Take time to pause; and by the next new moon,—
 The sealing-day betwixt my love and me
 For everlasting bond of fellowship,—
 Upon that day either prepare to die
 For disobedience to your father's will;
 Or else to wed Demetrius, as he would;
 Or on Diana's altar to protest
 For aye austerity and single life.

DEMETRIUS Relent, sweet Hermia;—and, Lysander, yield
 Thy crazed title to my certain right.

LYSANDER You have her father's love, Demetrius;
 Let me have Hermia's: do you marry him.

EGEUS Scornful Lysander! true, he hath my love;
 And what is mine my love shall render him;

LYSANDER 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.
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.

[Exeunt THESEUS, HIPPOLYTA, EGEUS, DEMETRIUS, and Train USL.]

LYSANDER How now, my love! why is your cheek so pale? (move DSR)
How chance the roses there do fade so fast?

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

LYSANDER The course of true love never did run smooth:
But either it was different in blood,—

HERMIA O cross! Too high to be enthralld to low!

LYSANDER Or else misgraffed in respect of years;—

HERMIA O spite! Too old to be engag'd to young!

LYSANDER Or else it stood upon the choice of friends:—

HERMIA O hell! to choose love by another's eye!

LYSANDER 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;
And in the wood, a league without the town,
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,
In that same place thou hast appointed me,
Tomorrow truly will I meet with thee.

LYSANDER Keep promise, love. Look, here comes Helena.

[Enter HELENA, Hall Door.]

HERMIA God speed fair Helena! Whither away?

HELENA Call you me fair? that fair again unsay.
Demetrius loves your fair. O happy fair!
Were the world mine, Demetrius being bated,
The rest I'd give to be to you translated.
O, teach me how you look; and with what art
You sway the motion of Demetrius' heart!

HERMIA I frown upon him, yet he loves me still.

HELENA O that your frowns would teach my smiles such skill!

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

HELENA O that my prayers could such affection move!

HERMIA The more I hate, the more he follows me.

HELENA The more I love, the more he hateth me.

HERMIA His folly, Helena, is no fault of mine.

HELENA None, but your beauty: would that fault were mine!

HERMIA Take comfort; he no more shall see my face;
Lysander and myself will fly this place.—

LYSANDER Helen, to you our minds we will unfold:
To-morrow night, when Phoebe doth behold
Her silver visage in the watery glass,
Decking with liquid pearl the bladed grass,—
A time that lovers' flights doth still conceal,—
Through Athens' gates have we devis'd to steal.

HERMIA And in the wood where often you and I
Upon faint primrose beds were wont to lie,
Emptying our bosoms of their counsel sweet,
There my Lysander and myself shall meet:
And thence from Athens turn away our eyes,
To seek new friends and stranger companies.
Farewell, sweet playfellow: pray thou for us,
And good luck grant thee thy Demetrius!—
Keep word, Lysander: we must starve our sight
From lovers' food, till morrow deep midnight.

LYSANDER I will, my Hermia.

[Exit HERMIA USR.]

LYSANDER Helena, adieu:
As you on him, Demetrius dote on you!

[Exit LYSANDER USR.]

HELENA How happy some o'er other some can be!
Through Athens I am thought as fair as she.
But what of that? Demetrius thinks not so;
He will not know what all but he do know.
And as he errs, doting on Hermia's eyes,
So I, admiring of his qualities.
Love looks not with the eyes, but with the mind;
And therefore is wing'd Cupid painted blind.
I will go tell him of fair Hermia's flight;
Then to the wood will he to-morrow night
Pursue her; and for this intelligence
If I have thanks, it is a dear expense:
But herein mean I to enrich my pain,
To have his sight thither and back again.

[HELENA remains on stage. Curtains. Music]

ACT I SCENE II

In the woods, on stage. BOTTOM, QUINCE on stage.

QUINCE Is all our company here?

[Enter Flute, USR. Others variously: Snug, Snout USR, Starveling Hall door, up steps]

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 duchess on his wedding-day at night.

BOTTOM First, good Peter Quince, say what the play treats on; then read the names of the actors; and so grow to a point.

QUINCE Marry, our play is—The most lamentable comedy and most cruel death of Pyramus and Thisby.

BOTTOM A very good piece of work, I assure you, and a merry.— Now, good Peter Quince, call forth your actors by the scroll.— Masters, 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.

BOTTOM What is Pyramus? a lover, or a tyrant?

QUINCE A lover, that kills himself most gallantly 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 humour is for a tyrant: I could play Ercles rarely, or a part to tear a cat in, to make all split.

The raging rocks
And shivering shocks
Shall break the locks
Of prison gates:

And Phibbus' car
Shall shine from far,
And make and mar
The foolish Fates.

This was lofty.—Now name the rest of the players.—This is Ercles' vein, a tyrant's vein;—a lover is more condoling.

QUINCE Francis Flute, the bellows-mender.

FLUTE Here, Peter Quince.

QUINCE Flute, you must take Thisby on you.

FLUTE What is Thisby? a wandering knight?

QUINCE It is the lady that Pyramus must love.

FLUTE Nay, faith, let not me play a woman; I have a beard coming.

QUINCE That's all one; you shall play it in a mask, and you may speak as small as you will.

BOTTOM An I may hide my face, let me play Thisby too: I'll speak in a monstrous little voice;—'Thisne, Thisne!'— 'Ah, Pyramus, my lover dear; thy Thisby dear! and lady dear!'

QUINCE No, no, you must play Pyramus; and, Flute, you Thisby.

BOTTOM Well, proceed.

QUINCE Robin Starveling, the tailor.

STARVELING Here, Peter Quince.

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

SNOUT Here, Peter Quince.

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

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

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

BOTTOM Let me play the lion too: I will roar that I will do any man's heart good to hear me; I will roar that I will make the duke say 'Let him roar again, let him roar again.'

QUINCE An you should do it too terribly, you would fright the duchess and the ladies, that they would shriek; and that were enough to hang us all.

ALL That would hang us every mother's son.

BOTTOM I grant you, friends, if you should fright the ladies out of their wits, they would have no more discretion but to hang us: but I will aggravate my voice so, that I will roar you as gently as any sucking dove; I will roar you an 'twere any nightingale.

QUINCE You can play no part but Pyramus; for Pyramus is a sweet-faced man; a proper man, as one shall see in a summer's day; a most lovely gentleman-like man; therefore you must needs play Pyramus.

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

QUINCE Why, what you will. But, masters, here are your parts: and I am to entreat you, request you, and desire you, to con them by to-morrow night; and meet me in the palace wood, a mile without the town, by moonlight; there will we rehearse.

BOTTOM We will meet; and there we may rehearse most obscenely and courageously. Take pains; be perfect; adieu.

QUINCE At the duke's oak we meet.

BOTTOM Enough; hold, or cut bow-strings.

[Exeunt as entrances. Lighting change. Music.]

ACT II SCENE I

A wood near Athens.
[Enter fairies USR, and PUCK USL.]

PUCK How now, spirit! whither wander you?

FAIRY 2 Over hill, over dale,
 Thorough bush, thorough brier,
 Over park, over pale,
 Thorough flood, thorough fire,

FAIRY 3 I do wander everywhere,
 Swifter than the moon's sphere;
 And I serve the fairy queen,
 To dew her orbs upon the green.

PUCK The king doth keep his revels here to-night;
 Take heed the Queen come not within his sight.
 For Oberon is passing fell and wrath,
 Because that she, as her attendant, hath
 A lovely boy, stol'n from an Indian king;
 She never had so sweet a changeling:
 And jealous Oberon would have the child
 Knight of his train, to trace the forests wild:
 But she perforce withholds the loved boy,
 Crowns him with flowers, and makes him all her joy:

FAIRY 1 Either I mistake your shape and making quite,
 Or else you are that shrewd and knavish sprite
 Call'd Robin Goodfellow: are not you he
 That frights the maidens of the villagery.
 Are not you he?

PUCK Thou speak'st aright;
 I am that merry wanderer of the night.
 But room, fairy, here comes Oberon.

FAIRY 1 And here my mistress.—Would that he were gone!

[Enter OBERON USL, with his Train, and TITANIA, with boy, USR. Fairies stands by them.]

OBERON Ill met by moonlight, proud Titania.

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

OBERON Tarry, rash wanton: am not I thy lord?

TITANIA Then I must be thy lady; Why art thou here,
Your buskin'd mistress and your warrior love,
To Theseus must be wedded; and you come
To give their bed joy and prosperity.

OBERON How canst thou thus, for shame, Titania,
Glance at my credit with Hippolyta,
Knowing I know thy love to Theseus?
I do but beg a little changeling boy
To be my henchman.

TITANIA Set your heart at rest;
The fairy-land buys not the child of me.

OBERON How long within this wood intend you stay?

TITANIA Perchance till after Theseus' wedding-day.
If you will patiently dance in our round,
And see our moonlight revels, go with us;
If not, shun me, and I will spare your haunts.

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

TITANIA Not for thy fairy kingdom. Fairies, away:
We shall chide downright if I longer stay.

[Exit TITANIA with Fairies and Boy.]

OBERON Well, go thy way: thou shalt not from this grove
Till I torment thee for this injury.—
My gentle Puck, come hither: thou remember'st
That very time I saw,—but thou couldst not,—
Cupid, all arm'd: a certain aim he took
And loos'd his love-shaft smartly from his bow,
As it should pierce a hundred thousand hearts;
Yet mark'd I where the bolt of Cupid fell:
It fell upon a little western flower,—
Before milk-white, now purple with love's wound,—
And maidens call it love-in-idleness.
Fetch me that flower, the herb I showed thee once:
The juice of it on sleeping eyelids laid
Will make or man or woman madly dote
Upon the next live creature that it sees.
Fetch me this herb: and be thou here again
Ere the leviathan can swim a league.

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

[Exit PUCK down steps (?though audience?).]

OBERON Having once this juice,
I'll watch Titania when she is asleep,
And drop the liquor of it in her eyes:
The next thing then she waking looks upon,—
Be it on lion, bear, or wolf, or bull,
On meddling monkey, or on busy ape,—
She shall pursue it with the soul of love.
And ere I take this charm from off her sight,—
As I can take it with another herb,
I'll make her render up her page to me.
But who comes here? I am invisible;
And I will overhear their conference. (moves onto apron)

[Enter DEMETRIUS USL, HELENA following him.]

DEMETRIUS I love thee not, therefore pursue me not.
Where is Lysander and fair Hermia?
The one I'll slay, the other slayeth me.
Thou told'st me they were stol'n into this wood,
And here am I, and wode within this wood,
Because I cannot meet with Hermia.
Hence, get thee gone, and follow me no more.

HELENA You draw me, you hard-hearted adamant;

DEMETRIUS Do I entice you? Do I speak you fair?
Or, rather, do I not in plainest truth
Tell you I do not, nor I cannot love you?

HELENA And even for that do I love you the more.
I am your spaniel; and, Demetrius,
The more you beat me, I will fawn on you:
What worser place can I beg in your love,
And yet a place of high respect with me,—
Than to be used as you use your dog?

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

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

DEMETRIUS I'll run from thee, and hide me in the brakes,
And leave thee to the mercy of wild beasts.

HELENA You do me mischief. Fie, Demetrius!
I'll follow thee, and make a heaven of hell,
To die upon the hand I love so well.

[Exeunt DEMETRIUS, USR, followed by HELENA.]

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

[Re-enter PUCK onto apron, via steps.]

Hast thou the flower there? Welcome, wanderer.

PUCK Ay, there it is.

OBERON I pray thee give it me.
I know a bank whereon the wild thyme blows,
Where ox-lips and the nodding violet grows;
Quite over-canopied with luscious woodbine,
With sweet musk-roses, and with eglantine:
There sleeps Titania sometime of the night,
Lulled in these flowers with dances and delight;
And there the snake throws her enamell'd skin,
Weed wide enough to wrap a fairy in:
And with the juice of this I'll streak her eyes,
And make her full of hateful fantasies.
Take thou some of it, and seek through this grove:
A sweet Athenian lady is in love
With a disdainful youth: anoint his eyes;
But do it when the next thing he espies
May be the lady: thou shalt know the man
By the Athenian garments he hath on.
Effect it with some care, that he may prove
More fond on her than she upon her love:
And look thou meet me ere the first cock crow.

PUCK Fear not, my lord; your servant shall do so.

[Exeunt, Puck down steps, Oberon across stage to USL. Fade to blackout. Music.]

ACT II SCENE II.

*Another part of the wood.
[Enter TITANIA **USR**, with **Fairies**.]*

TITANIA Come, now a roundel and a fairy song;
Then to your offices, and let me rest.

FAIRY 2 You spotted snakes, with double tongue,
Thorny hedgehogs, be not seen;
Newts and blind-worms do no wrong;
Come not near our fairy queen:

FAIRY 3 Weaving spiders, come not here;
Hence, you long-legg'd spinners, hence;
Beetles black, approach not near;
Worm nor snail do no offence.

FAIRY 1 Hence away; now all is well.
One, aloof, stand sentinel.

*[Exit **Fairies USL**. TITANIA sleeps.]
[Enter OBERON **up steps onto Apron**.]*

OBERON What thou seest when thou dost wake,
[Squeezes the flower on TITANIA'S eyelids.]
Do it for thy true-love take;
Love and languish for his sake;
Be it ounce, or cat, or bear,
Pard, or boar with bristled hair,
In thy eye that shall appear
When thou wak'st, it is thy dear;
Wake when some vile thing is near.

*[Exit **down steps**.]
[Enter LYSANDER and HERMIA **USR**.]*

LYSANDER Fair love, you faint with wandering in the wood;
And, to speak troth, I have forgot our way;
We'll rest us, Hermia, if you think it good,
And tarry for the comfort of the day.

HERMIA Be it so, Lysander: find you out a bed,
For I upon this bank will rest my head.

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

HERMIA Nay, good Lysander; for my sake, my dear,
Lie farther off yet, do not lie so near.
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!

[They sleep, Hermia DSR, Lysander DSL. Enter PUCK USL.]

PUCK Through the forest have I gone,
But Athenian found I none,
On whose eyes I might approve
This flower's force in stirring love.
Night and silence! Who is here?
Weeds of Athens he doth wear:
This is he, my master said,
Despised the Athenian maid;
And here the maiden, sleeping sound,
On the dank and dirty ground.
Pretty soul! she durst not lie
Near this lack-love, this kill-courtesy.
Churl, upon thy eyes I throw
All the power this charm doth owe;
When thou wak'st let love forbid
Sleep his seat on thy eyelid:
So awake when I am gone;
For I must now to Oberon.

[Exit down steps.]

[Enter DEMETRIUS and HELENA USL, running.]

HELENA Stay, though thou kill me, sweet Demetrius.

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

HELENA O, wilt thou darkling leave me? do not so.

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

[Exit DEMETRIUS USR.]

HELENA O, I am out of breath in this fond chase!
The more my prayer, the lesser is my grace.
Happy is Hermia, wheresoe'er she lies,
For she hath blessed and attractive eyes.
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.
Where is Demetrius? O, how fit a word
Is that vile name to perish on my sword!

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

LYSANDER. Content with Hermia? No: I do repent
The tedious minutes I with her have spent.
Not Hermia but Helena I love:
Who will not change a raven for a dove?

HELENA Wherefore was I to this keen mockery born?
When at your hands did I deserve this scorn?
O, that a lady of one man refus'd
Should of another therefore be abus'd!

[Exit USL.]

LYSANDER She sees not Hermia:—Hermia, sleep thou there;
And never mayst thou come Lysander near!
And, all my powers, address your love and might
To honour Helen, and to be her knight!

[Exit USL.]

HERMIA *[Starting.]*
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 are not nigh:
Either death or you I'll find immediately.

[Exit USR.]

ACT III SCENE I.

The Wood. The Queen of Fairies lying asleep.

*[Enter BOTTOM, QUINCE, SNOUT **USL**, SNUG, FLUTE, STARVELING **up steps**.]*

BOTTOM Are we all met?

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

BOTTOM Peter Quince,—

QUINCE What sayest thou, bully Bottom?

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

SNOUT By'r lakin, a parlous fear.

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

BOTTOM Not a whit: I have a device to make all well. Write me a prologue; and let the prologue seem to say we will do no harm with our swords, and that Pyramus is not killed indeed; and for the more better assurance, tell them that I Pyramus am not Pyramus but Bottom the weaver: this will put them out of fear.

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 most dreadful thing: for there is not a more fearful wild-fowl than your lion living; and we ought to look to it.

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.

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

BOTTOM A calendar, a calendar! look in the almanack; find out moonshine, find out moonshine.

QUINCE Yes, it doth shine that night.

BOTTOM Why, then may you leave a casement of the great chamber-window, where we play, open; and the moon may shine in at the casement.

QUINCE Ay; or else one must come in with a bush of thorns and a lantern, and say he comes to disfigure or to present the person of moonshine. Then there is another thing: we must have a wall in the great chamber; for Pyramus and Thisby, says the story, did talk through the chink of a wall.

SNOUT You can never bring in a wall.—What say you, Bottom?

BOTTOM Some man or other must present wall: and let him have some plaster, or some loam, or some rough-cast about him, to signify wall; and let him hold his fingers thus, and through that cranny shall Pyramus and Thisby whisper.

QUINCE If that may be, then all is well. Come, sit down, every mother's son, and rehearse your parts. Pyramus, you begin: when you have spoken your speech, enter into that brake; and so every one according to his cue.

[Enter PUCK through curtains to DSR.]

PUCK 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.—Thisby, stand forth.

PYRAMUS 'Thisby, the flowers of odious savours sweet,'

QUINCE Odours, odours.

PYRAMUS '—odours savours sweet:
So hath thy breath, my dearest Thisby dear.—
But hark, a voice! stay thou but here awhile,
And by and by I will to thee appear.'

[Exit DSR.]

PUCK A stranger Pyramus than e'er played here!

[Aside.—Exit DSR.]

THISBE 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.

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

QUINCE Ninus' tomb, man: why, you must not speak that yet: that you answer to Pyramus. You speak all your part at once, cues, and all.—Pyramus enter: your cue is past; it is 'never tire.'

[Re-enter PUCK, and BOTTOM with an ass's head USR.]

THISBE O,—As true as truest horse, that yet would never tire.'

PYRAMUS 'If I were fair, Thisby, I were only thine:—'

QUINCE O monstrous! O strange! we are haunted. Pray, masters! fly, masters! Help!

[Exeunt Clowns USL or down steps.]

PUCK I'll follow you; I'll lead you about a round,
Through bog, through bush, through brake, through brier;
Sometime a horse I'll be, sometime a hound,
A hog, a headless bear, sometime a fire;
And neigh, and bark, and grunt, and roar, and burn,
Like horse, hound, hog, bear, fire, at every turn.

[Exit USR.]

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

[Re-enter SNOUT USL.]

SNOUT 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?

[Re-enter QUINCE USL.]

QUINCE Bless thee, Bottom! bless thee! thou art translated.

[Exit, both USL.]

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

TITANIA *[Waking.]*
What angel wakes me from my flowery bed?

BOTTOM *[Sings.]*
The finch, the sparrow, and the lark,
The plain-song cuckoo gray,
Whose note full many a man doth mark,
And dares not answer nay;—

TITANIA I pray thee, gentle mortal, sing again; *(moves onto stage)*
Mine ear is much enamour'd of thy note.
So is mine eye enthralled to thy shape;
And thy fair virtue's force perforce doth move me,
On the first view, to say, to swear, I love thee.

BOTTOM Methinks, mistress, you should have little reason for that: and yet, to say the truth, reason and love keep little company together now-a-days.

TITANIA Thou art as wise as thou art beautiful.

BOTTOM Not so, neither: but if I had wit enough to get out of this wood, I have enough to serve mine own turn.

TITANIA Out of this wood do not desire to go;
Thou shalt remain here whether thou wilt or no.
And I do love thee: therefore, go with me,
I'll give thee fairies to attend on thee;
Come, wait upon him; lead him to my bower. *(call to Fairy)*
Tie up my love's tongue, bring him silently.

[Move to go towards apron. Curtains. Music]

ACT III SCENE II

Another part of the wood. Curtains. OBERON on stage. SL block on hall floor.

OBERON I wonder if Titania be awak'd;
Then, what it was that next came in her eye,
Which she must dote on in extremity.
[Enter PUCK up steps.]
Here comes my messenger.—How now, mad spirit?
What night-rule now about this haunted grove?

PUCK My mistress with a monster is in love.
Near to her close and consecrated bower,
While she was in her dull and sleeping hour,
A crew of patches, rude mechanicals,
That work for bread upon Athenian stalls,
Were met together to rehearse a play
Intended for great Theseus' nuptial day.
The shallowest thickskin of that barren sort
Who Pyramus presented in their sport,
An ass's nowl I fixèd on his head;
Anon, his Thisbe must be answerèd.
When in that moment,—so it came to pass,—
Titania wak'd, and straightway lov'd an ass.

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

PUCK I took him sleeping,—that is finish'd too,—
And the Athenian woman by his side;
That, when he wak'd, of force she must be ey'd.

[Enter DEMETRIUS and HERMIA USL.]

OBERON Stand close; this is the same Athenian. *(both move onto apron)*

PUCK This is the woman, but not this the man.

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

HERMIA Now I but chide, but I should use thee worse;
For thou, I fear, hast giv'n 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.

DEMETRIUS You spend your passion on a mispris'd mood:
I am not guilty of Lysander's blood;
Nor is he dead, for aught that I can tell.

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

DEMETRIUS An if I could, what should I get therefore?

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

*[Exit **USR.**]*

DEMETRIUS There is no following her in this fierce vein:
Here, therefore, for a while I will remain.

*[Lies down **DSL.**]*

OBERON What hast thou done? thou hast mistaken quite,
And laid the love-juice on some true-love's sight:
About the wood go, swifter than the wind,
And Helena of Athens look thou find.

PUCK I go, I go; look how I go,—
Swifter than arrow from the Tartar's bow.

*[Exit **down steps.**]*

OBERON Flower of this purple dye, (**cross to Demetrius on stage**)
Hit with Cupid's archery,
Sink in apple of his eye!
When his love he doth espy,
Let her shine as gloriously
As the Venus of the sky.—
When thou wak'st, if she be by,
Beg of her for remedy.

*[Re-enter **PUCK up steps.**]*

PUCK Captain of our fairy band,
Helena is here at hand,
And the youth mistook by me
Pleading for a lover's fee;
Shall we their fond pageant see?
Lord, what fools these mortals be!

OBERON Stand aside: the noise they make (both move back to apron)
Will cause Demetrius to awake.

[Enter LYSANDER and HELENA USL.]

LYSANDER Why should you think that I should woo in scorn?
Scorn and derision never come in tears.
Look when I vow, I weep; and vows so born,
In their nativity all truth appears.

HELENA You do advance your cunning more and more.
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:

LYSANDER Demetrius loves her, and he loves not you.

DEMETRIUS *[Awaking.]*
O Helen, goddess, nymph, perfect, divine!
To what, my love, shall I compare thine eyne?

HELENA O spite! O hell! I see you all are bent
To set against me for your merriment.
If you were civil, and knew courtesy,
You would not do me thus much injury.

LYSANDER You are unkind, Demetrius; be not so;
For you love Hermia: this you know I know:

DEMETRIUS Lysander, keep thy Hermia; I will none:
If e'er I lov'd her, all that love is gone.

[Enter HERMIA USR.]

HERMIA Thou art not by mine eye, Lysander, found;
Mine ear, I thank it, brought me to thy sound.
But why unkindly didst thou leave me so?

LYSANDER Why should he stay whom love doth press to go?
Why seek'st thou me? could not this make thee know
The hate I bare thee made me leave thee so?

HERMIA You speak not as you think; it cannot be.

HELENA Lo, she is one of this confederacy!
Now I perceive they have conjoin'd all three
To fashion this false sport in spite of me.

Injurious Hermia! most ungrateful maid!
Is all the counsel that we two have shar'd,
The sisters' vows, the hours that we have spent,
When we have chid the hasty-footed time
For parting us,—O, is all forgot?
All school-days' friendship, childhood innocence?
And will you rent our ancient love asunder,
To join with men in scorning your poor friend?

HERMIA I am amazèd at your passionate words:
I scorn you not; it seems that you scorn me.

HELENA Have you not set Lysander, as in scorn,
To follow me, and praise my eyes and face?
And made your other love, Demetrius,—
Who even but now did spurn me with his foot,—
To call me goddess, nymph, divine, and rare,

HERMIA I understand not what you mean by this.

HELENA *If you have any pity, grace, or manners,*
You would not make me such an argument.
But fare ye well: 'tis partly my own fault;
Which death, or absence, soon shall remedy.

LYSANDER Stay, gentle Helena; hear my excuse;
My love, my life, my soul, fair Helena!

HELENA O excellent!

HERMIA Sweet, do not scorn her so.

DEMETRIUS I say I love thee more than he can do.

LYSANDER If thou say so, withdraw, and prove it too.

DEMETRIUS Quick, come,—

HERMIA Lysander, whereto tends all this?

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

HERMIA Why are you grown so rude? what change is this,
Am not I Hermia? Are not you Lysander?
I am as fair now as I was erewhile.
Since night you lov'd me; yet since night you left me:

Why then, you left me,—O, the gods forbid!—
In earnest, shall I say?

LYSANDER Ay, by my life;
And never did desire to see thee more.
Therefore be out of hope, of question, doubt,
Be certain, nothing truer; 'tis no jest
That I do hate thee and love Helena.

HERMIA You thief of love! What! have you come by night,
And stol'n my love's heart from him?

HELENA Fine, i'faith!
Have you no modesty, no maiden shame,
No touch of bashfulness? What! will you tear
Impatient answers from my gentle tongue?
Fie, fie! you counterfeit, you puppet, you!

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

HELENA Good Hermia, do not be so bitter with me.
I evermore did love you, Hermia;
Did ever keep your counsels; never wrong'd you;
Save that, in love unto Demetrius,
I told him of your stealth unto this wood:
He follow'd you; for love I follow'd him;
But he hath chid me hence, and threaten'd me
To strike me, spurn me, nay, to kill me too:
And now, so you will let me quiet go,
To Athens will I bear my folly back,
And follow you no farther. 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 Let her alone: speak not of Helena.

LYSANDER Now follow, if thou dar'st, to try whose right,
 Of thine or mine, is most in Helena.

DEMETRIUS Follow? nay, I'll go with thee, cheek by jowl.

[Exeunt LYSANDER and DEMETRIUS down steps.]

HERMIA You, mistress, all this coil is 'long of you:
 Nay, go not back.

HELENA I will not trust you, I;
 Nor longer stay in your curst company.
 Your hands than mine are quicker for a fray;
 My legs are longer though, to run away.
 [Exit USL.]

HERMIA I am amaz'd, and know not what to say.
 [Exit, pursuing HELENA.]

OBERON This is thy negligence: still thou mistak'st, *(move, with Puck, onto stage)*
 Or else commit'st thy knaveries willfully.

PUCK Believe me, king of shadows, I mistook.
 Did not you tell me I should know the man
 By the Athenian garments he had on?
 And so far blameless proves my enterprise
 That I have 'nointed an Athenian's eyes.

OBERON Thou seest these lovers seek a place to fight;
 Hie therefore, Robin, overcast the night;
 And lead these testy rivals so astray
 As one come not within another's way.
 Till o'er their brows death-counterfeiting sleep
 With leaden legs and batty wings doth creep:
 Then crush this herb into Lysander's eye;
 Whose liquor hath this virtuous property,
 To take from thence all error with his might
 And make his eyeballs roll with wonted sight.
 Whiles I in this affair do thee employ,

I'll to my queen, and beg her Indian boy;
And then I will her charmed eye release
From monster's view, and all things shall be peace.
[Exit OBERON USL.]

PUCK Up and down, up and down;
I will lead them up and down:
I am fear'd in field and town.
Goblin, lead them up and down.
Here comes one. *(move to steps)*

[Enter LYSANDER USL.]

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

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

LYSANDER I will be with thee straight.

PUCK Follow me, then, *(onto SL block)*
To plainer ground.

[Exit LYSANDER as following the voice USL.]

[Enter DEMETRIUS DSR.]

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

PUCK 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? *(cross to DSL)*

PUCK Follow my voice; we'll try no manhood here. *(on steps)*

[Exeunt DSR.]

[Re-enter LYSANDER USL.]

LYSANDER The villain is much lighter heeled than I:
I follow'd fast, but faster he did fly;
That fallen am I in dark uneven way,
And here will rest me. Come, thou gentle day!
[Lies down DSL.]
For if but once thou show me thy grey light,
I'll find Demetrius, and revenge this spite.
[Sleeps.]

[Re-enter DEMETRIUS DSR. Puck to SL block.]

PUCK Ho, ho, ho, ho! Coward, why com'st thou not?

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

PUCK Come hither; I am here.

DEMETRIUS Nay, then, thou mock'st me. Thou shalt buy this dear,
If ever I thy face by daylight see:
Now, go thy way. Faintness constraineth me
To measure out my length on this cold bed.—
By day's approach look to be visited.

[Lies down and sleeps DSR.]

[Enter HELENA USL.]

HELENA O weary night, O long and tedious night,
Abate thy hours! Shine comforts from the east,
And sleep, that sometimes shuts up sorrow's eye,
Steal me awhile from mine own company.
[Sleeps SR.]

PUCK Yet but three? Come one more;
Two of both kinds makes up four.
Here she comes, curst and sad:—
Cupid is a knavish lad,
Thus to make poor females mad.

[Enter HERMIA USR.]

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 SL.]

(Puck goes onto stage)

PUCK

On the ground

Sleep sound:

I'll apply

To your eye,

Gentle lover, remedy.

[Squeezing the juice on LYSANDER'S eye.]

When thou wak'st,

Thou tak'st

True delight

In the sight

Of thy former lady's eye:

And the country proverb known,

That every man should take his own,

In your waking shall be shown:

Jack shall have Jill;

Nought shall go ill;

The man shall have his mare again, and all shall be well.

[DEMETRIUS, HELENA &c, sleep.]

<SR> Demetrius ... Helena ... Hermia ... Lysander <SL>

*Curtains
INTERVAL*

ACT IV SCENE I

The Wood.

[Enter TITANIA and BOTTOM up steps onto apron; Fairies attending. OBERON unseen.]

TITANIA 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 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. *(exit Fairies through curtains)*
 So doth the woodbine the sweet honeysuckle
 Gently entwist,—the female ivy so
 Enrings the barky fingers of the elm.
 O, how I love thee! how I dote on thee!

[They sleep.]

[OBERON advances up steps. Enter PUCK onto apron, through curtains.]

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 favours for this hateful fool,
 I did upbraid her and fall out with her:
 When I had, at my pleasure, taunted her,
 And she, in mild terms, begg'd my patience,
 I then did ask of her her changeling child;
 Which straight she gave me, and her fairy sent
 To bear him to my bower in fairy-land.
 And now I have the boy, I will undo
 This hateful imperfection of her eyes.
 And, gentle Puck, take this transformed scalp
 From off the head of this Athenian swain,
 But first I will release the fairy queen.
 Be as thou wast wont to be;

[Touching her eyes with an herb.]

 See as thou was wont to see.
 Dian's bud o'er Cupid's flower
 Hath such force and blessed power.
 Now, my Titania; wake you, my sweet queen.

TITANIA My Oberon! what visions have I seen!
 Methought I was enamour'd of an ass.

OBERON There lies your love.

TITANIA How came these things to pass?
O, how mine eyes do loathe his visage now!

OBERON Silence awhile.—Robin, take off this head.

PUCK Now when thou wak'st, with thine own fool's eyes peep.

OBERON Now thou and I are new in amity,
And will to-morrow midnight solemnly
Dance in Duke Theseus' house triumphantly,
And bless it to all fair prosperity:
There shall the pairs of faithful lovers be
Wedded, with Theseus, all in jollity.

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 down steps, leaving Bottom. Horns sound within.]
[Enter THESEUS, HIPPOLYTA, EGEUS, and Train USL.]

EGEUS My lord, this is my daughter here asleep;
And this Lysander; this Demetrius is;
This Helena, old Nedar's Helena:
I wonder of their being here together.

THESEUS No doubt they rose up early to observe
The rite of May; and, hearing our intent,
Came here in grace of our solemnity.—
But speak, Egeus; is not this the day
That Hermia should give answer of her choice?

EGEUS It is, my lord.

THESEUS Go, bid the huntsmen wake them with their horns.

[Horns, and shout within.]
DEMETRIUS, LYSANDER, HERMIA, and HELENA awake and start up.]

Good-morrow, friends. Saint Valentine is past;
Begin these wood-birds but to couple now?

LYSANDER Pardon, my lord.

[He and the rest kneel to THESEUS.]

THESEUS I pray you all, stand up.
I know you two are rival enemies;
How comes this gentle concord in the world,

LYSANDER My lord, I shall reply amazedly,
Half 'sleep, half waking; but as yet, I swear,
I cannot truly say how I came here:
But, as I think,—for truly would I speak—
And now I do bethink me, so it is,—
I came with Hermia hither: our intent
Was to be gone from Athens, where we might be,
Without the peril of the Athenian law.

EGEUS Enough, enough, my lord; you have enough;
I beg the law, the law upon his head.—
They would have stol'n away, they would, Demetrius,
Thereby to have defeated you and me:

DEMETRIUS My lord, fair Helen told me of their stealth,
Of this their purpose hither to this wood;
And I in fury hither follow'd them,
Fair Helena in fancy following me.
But, my good lord, I wot not by what power,—
But by some power it is,—my love to Hermia,
Melted as the snow—seems to me now
As the remembrance of an idle gaud
Which in my childhood I did dote upon:
And all the faith, the virtue of my heart,
The object and the pleasure of mine eye,
Is only Helena. To her, my lord,
Was I betroth'd ere I saw Hermia.

THESEUS Fair lovers, you are fortunately met:
Of this discourse we more will hear anon.—
Egeus, I will overbear your will;
For in the temple, by and by with us,
These couples shall eternally be knit.
Come, Hippolyta.

*[Exeunt THESEUS, HIPPOLYTA, EGEUS, and Train **USR.**]*

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

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

HELENA So methinks:
And I have found Demetrius like a jewel.
Mine own, and not mine own.

DEMETRIUS Are you sure
That we are awake? It seems to me
That yet we sleep, we dream.—Do not you think
The duke was here, and bid us follow him?

HERMIA Yea, and my father.

HELENA And Hippolyta.

LYSANDER And he did bid us follow to the temple.

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

*[Exeunt **USR.**]
[As they go out, **BOTTOM** awakes.]*

BOTTOM When my cue comes, call me, and I will answer. My next is 'Most fair
Pyramus.'—Heigh-ho!—Peter Quince! Flute, the bellows-mender! Snout, the
tinker! Starveling!
God's my life, stol'n hence, and left me asleep! I have had a most rare vision.
I have had a dream—past the wit of man to say what dream it was.—Man is
but an ass if he go about to expound this dream. Methought I was—there is
no man can tell what.
Methought I was, and methought I had,—but man is but a patched fool, if he
will offer to say what methought I had.
The eye of man hath not heard, the ear of man hath not seen; man's hand is
not able to taste, his tongue to conceive, nor his heart to report, what my
dream was.
I will get Peter Quince to write a ballad of this dream: it shall be 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.

*[Exit down steps.]
(Curtains. Move bean bags, trees, etc.)*

ACT IV SCENE II

[QUINCE, FLUTE, SNOUT, and STARVELING are on stage.]

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

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

FLUTE If he come not, then the play is 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 USL.]

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

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

[Enter BOTTOM USR.]

BOTTOM Where are these lads? where are these hearts?

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

BOTTOM Masters, I am to discourse wonders: but ask me not what; for if I tell you, I am not true Athenian. I will tell you everything, right as it fell out.

QUINCE Let us hear, sweet Bottom.

BOTTOM Not a word of me. All that I will tell you is, that the duke hath dined. Get your apparel together; good strings to your beards, new ribbons to your pumps; meet presently at the palace; every man look over his part; for the short and the long is, our play is preferred. No more words: away! go; away!
[Exeunt. Disperse variously. Curtains. Music.]

ACT V

*Athens. An Apartment in the Palace of THESEUS.
[Enter THESEUS, HIPPOLYTA, PHILOSTRATE, and Attendants USL.]*

HIPPOLYTA 'Tis strange, my Theseus, that these lovers speak of.

THESEUS Lovers and madmen have such seething brains,
Such shaping fantasies, that apprehend
More than cool reason ever comprehends.

[Enter LYSANDER, DEMETRIUS, HERMIA, and HELENA up steps.]

THESEUS Here come the lovers, full of joy and mirth.—
Come now; what masques, what dances shall we have,
To wear away this long age of three hours
Between our after-supper and bed-time?
Call Philostrate.

PHILOSTRATE Here, mighty Theseus.

THESEUS Say, what abridgment have you for this evening?
What masque? what music? How shall we beguile
The lazy time, if not with some delight?

[Philostrate gives Theseus a paper.]

THESEUS *[Reads.]*
'A tedious brief scene of young Pyramus
And his love Thisbe; very tragical mirth.'
Merry and tragical! tedious and brief!
That is hot ice and wondrous strange snow.
What are they that do play it?

PHILOSTRATE Hard-handed men that work in Athens here,
Which never labour'd in their minds till now;

THESEUS And we will hear it.

PHILOSTRATE No, my noble lord,
It is not for you: I have heard it over,
And it is nothing, nothing in the world;
Unless you can find sport in their intents,
Extremely stretch'd and conn'd with cruel pain,
To do you service.

THESEUS I will hear that play;
For never anything can be amiss
When simpleness and duty tender it.
Go, bring them in: and take your places, ladies.

[Exit PHILOSTRATE USL.]

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.

[Enter PHILOSTRATE USL.]

PHILOSTRATE So please your grace, the prologue is address'd.

THESEUS Let him approach. *(court sits SR)*

[Flourish of trumpets. Enter PROLOGUE.]

PROLOGUE 'If we offend, it is with our good will.
That you should think, we come not to offend,
But with good will. To show our simple skill,
That is the true beginning of our end.
Consider then, we come but in despite.
We do not come, as minding to content you,
Our true intent is. All for your delight
We are not here. That you should here repent you,
The actors are at hand: and, by their show,
You shall know all that you are like to know,'

THESEUS This fellow doth not stand upon points.

LYSANDER His speech was like a tangled chain; nothing impaired, but all disordered.
Who is next?

[Enter PYRAMUS and THISBE, WALL, MOONSHINE, and LION, as in dumb show, standing in line.]

PROLOGUE *[Reads]*
Gentles, perchance you wonder at this show;
But wonder on, till truth make all things plain.
This man is Pyramus, if you would know;
This beauteous lady Thisby is certain.
This man, with lime and rough-cast, doth present
Wall, that vile Wall which did these lovers sunder;
And through 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 by name Lion hight,
The trusty Thisby, coming first by night,
Did scare away, or rather did affright;
And as she fled, her mantle she did fall;
Which Lion vile with bloody mouth did stain:
Anon comes Pyramus, sweet youth, and tall,
And finds his trusty Thisby's mantle slain;
Whereat with blade, with bloody blameful blade,
He bravely broach'd his boiling bloody breast;
And Thisby, tarrying in mulberry shade,
His dagger drew, and died. For all the rest,
Let Lion, Moonshine, Wall, and lovers twain,
At large discourse while here they do remain.

[PROLOGUE, THISBE, LION, MOONSHINE, Pyramus stand at back, facing wall.]

THESEUS I wonder if the lion be to speak.

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

WALL In this same interlude it doth befall
That I, one Snout by name, present a wall:
And such a wall as I would have you think
That had in it a crannied hole or chink,
Through which the lovers, Pyramus and Thisby,
Did whisper often very secretly.
This loam, this rough-cast, and this stone, doth show
That I am that same wall; the truth is so:
And this the cranny is, right and sinister,
Through which the fearful lovers are to whisper.

THESEUS Would you desire lime and hair to speak better?

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

THESEUS Pyramus draws near the wall; silence.

[Enter PYRAMUS.]

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

[WALL holds up his fingers.]

Thanks, courteous wall: Jove shield thee well for this!
But what see I? No Thisby do I see.
O wicked wall, through whom I see no bliss,
Curs'd be thy stones for thus deceiving me!

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

PYRAMUS No, in truth, sir, he should not. 'Deceiving me' is Thisby's cue: she is to enter now, and I am to spy her through the wall. You shall see it will fall pat as I told you.—Yonder she comes.

[Enter THISBE.]

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

PYRAMUS I see a voice; now will I to the chink,
To spy an I can hear my Thisby's face.
Thisby!

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 O, 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.

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

[Exeunt WALL, PYRAMUS and THISBE.]

HIPPOLYTA This is the silliest stuff that ever I heard.

THESEUS The best in this kind are but shadows; and the worst are no worse, if
imagination amend them.

HIPPOLYTA It must be your imagination then, and not theirs.

THESEUS If we imagine no worse of them than they of themselves, they may pass for
excellent men. Here come two noble beasts in, a moon and a lion.

[Enter LION and MOONSHINE.]

LION You, ladies, you, whose gentle hearts do fear
The smallest monstrous mouse that creeps on floor,
May now, perchance, both quake and tremble here,
When lion rough in wildest rage doth roar.
Then know that I, one Snug the joiner, am
A lion fell, nor else no lion's dam:
For, if I should as lion come in strife
Into this place, 'twere pity on my life.

THESEUS A very gentle beast, and of a good conscience.

DEMETRIUS The very best at a beast, my lord, that e'er I saw.

THESEUS Let us listen to the moon.

MOONSHINE This lanthorn doth the horned moon present:

DEMETRIUS He should have worn the horns on his head.

MOONSHINE This lanthorn doth the horned moon present;
Myself the man i' the moon do seem to be.

THESEUS This is the greatest error of all the rest: the man should be put into the
lantern. How is it else the man i' the moon?

DEMETRIUS He dares not come there for the candle: for, you see, it is already in snuff.

LYSANDER Proceed, moon.

MOON All that I have to say, is to tell you that the lantern is the moon; I, the man i' the moon; this thorn-bush, my thorn-bush; and this dog, my dog.

DEMETRIUS Why, all these should be in the lantern; for all these are in the moon. But silence; here comes Thisbe.

[Enter THISBE.]

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

LION Oh!

[The LION roars.—THISBE runs off.]

DEMETRIUS Well roared, lion.

THESEUS Well run, Thisbe.

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

[The LION tears THISBE'S Mantle, and exit.]

THESEUS Well moused, lion.

DEMETRIUS And so comes Pyramus.

LYSANDER And then the lion vanishes.

[Enter PYRAMUS.]

PYRAMUS Sweet moon, I thank thee for thy sunny beams;
I thank thee, moon, for shining now so bright:
For, by thy gracious golden, glittering streams,
I trust to take of truest Thisby's sight.
But stay;—O spite!
But mark,—poor knight,
What dreadful dole is here!
Eyes, do you see?
How can it be?
O dainty duck! O dear!
Thy mantle good,
What! stained with blood?
Approach, ye furies fell!
O fates! come, come;
Cut thread and thrum;
Quail, rush, conclude, and quell!

THESEUS This passion, and the death of a dear friend, would go near to make a man look sad.

HIPPOLYTA Beshrew my heart, but I pity the man.

PYRAMUS O wherefore, nature, didst thou lions frame?
Since lion vile hath here deflower'd my dear;
Which is—no, no—which was the fairest dame
That liv'd, that lov'd, that lik'd, that look'd with cheer.
Come, tears, confound;
Out, sword, and wound
The pap of Pyramus:
Ay, that left pap,
Where heart doth hop:—
Thus die I, thus, thus, thus.
Now am I dead,
Now am I fled;
My soul is in the sky:
Tongue, lose thy light!
Moon, take thy flight!
Now die, die, die, die, die.

[Dies. Exit MOONSHINE.]

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.]

LYSANDER She hath spied him already with those sweet eyes.

DEMETRIUS And thus she moans—

THISBE Asleep, my love?
What, dead, my dove?
O Pyramus, arise,
Speak, speak. Quite dumb?
Dead, dead? A tomb
Must cover thy sweet eyes.
These lily lips,
This cherry nose,
These yellow cowslip cheeks,

Are gone, are gone:
Lovers, make moan!
His eyes were green as leeks.
O Sisters Three,
Come, come to me,
With hands as pale as milk;
Lay them in gore,
Since you have shore
With shears his thread of silk.
Tongue, not a word:—
Come, trusty sword;
Come, blade, my breast imbrue;
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.

BOTTOM No, I assure you; the wall is down that parted their fathers. Will it please you to see the epilogue? *(calls others forward)*

THESEUS No epilogue, I pray you; for your play needs no excuse.
(Quince leads others in a bow, then leads them off USL)
Never excuse; for when the players are all dead there need none to be blamed.

The iron tongue of midnight hath told twelve:—
Lovers, to bed; 'tis almost fairy time.
I fear we shall out-sleep the coming morn,
As much as we this night have overwatch'd.
This palpable-gross play hath well beguil'd
The heavy gait of night.—Sweet friends, to bed.—

[Exeunt USR.]

[Enter PUCK DSR onto stage.]

PUCK Now the hungry lion roars,
And the wolf behowls the moon;
Whilst the heavy ploughman snores,
All with weary task fordone.

[Enter OBERON with Indian boy and TITANIA, with Fairies up steps onto apron.]

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:

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.
Trip away: Make no stay:
Meet me all by break of day.

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

(Curtains)