

A Midsummer Night's Dream

William Shakespeare /Adapted by B. Cobb from
<http://shakespeare.mit.edu/midsummer/full.html>

SCENE 1

CAST:

THESEUS, Duke of Athens

HIPPOLYTA, fiancée of Theseus; Amazon queen

EGEUS, Athenian courtier

HERMIA, daughter of Egeus

LYSANDER, Athenian youth

DEMETRIUS, Athenian youth

HELENA, best friend of Hermia

Enter THESEUS, HIPPOLYTA

THESEUS

Now, fair Hippolyta, our nuptial hour
Draws on apace; four happy days bring in
Another moon: but, O, methinks, how slow
This old moon wanes!

HIPPOLYTA

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

THESEUS

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.
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 revelling.

Enter EGEUS, DEMETRIUS, LYSANDER, HERMIA

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: my gracious duke,
This man hath bewitch'd the very heart of my child,
Hast given her rhymes, verses of feigning love,
And stolen the impression of her fantasy
With bracelets of his hair, rings, gawds, conceits,
Knacks, trifles, nosegays, sweetmeats, messengers
Of strong prevailment in unhardened youth:
With cunning hast thou, Lysander,
Turn'd her obedience, which is due to me,
To stubborn harshness: my gracious duke,
If 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?

Demetrius is a worthy gentleman.

HERMIA So is Lysander.

THESEUS In himself he is;

But in this kind, wanting your father's voice,
The other must be held the worthier.

HERMIA

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

THESEUS

Rather your eyes must with his judgment look.

HERMIA

I do entreat your grace to pardon me.
I know not by what power I am made bold,
Nor how it may concern my modesty,
In such a presence here to plead my thoughts;
But I beseech your grace that I may know
The worst that may befall me in this case,
If I refuse to wed Demetrius.

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

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.

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: you marry him!

EGEUS

Scornful Lysander! true, he hath my love,
And what is mine my love shall render him.
And she is mine, and all my right of her
I do estate unto Demetrius.

LYSANDER

I am, my lord, as well derived as he,
As well possess'd; my love is more than his;
My fortunes every way as fairly rank'd,
If not with vantage, as Demetrius';
And, which is more than all these boasts can be,
I am beloved of beauteous Hermia:

Why should not I then prosecute my right?
Demetrius, I'll avouch it to his head,
Loved 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;
Demetrius, come; and Egeus, 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?

EGEUS With duty and desire we follow you.

Exeunt all but LYSANDER and HERMIA

LYSANDER

Ay me! for aught that I could ever read,
Could ever hear by tale or history,
The course of true love never did run smooth;
But, either it was different in blood,--

HERMIA

O cross! too high to be enthral'd to low.

LYSANDER

Or else misgraffèd in respect of years,--

HERMIA

O spite! too old to be engaged to young.

LYSANDER

Or else it stood upon the choice of friends,--

HERMIA

O choice! 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 --

HERMIA

If then true lovers have been ever cross'd,

It stands as an edict in destiny:

Then let us teach our trial patience,

Because it is a customary cross,

As due to love as thoughts and dreams and sighs,

Wishes and tears, poor fancy's followers.

LYSANDER

A good persuasion: therefore, hear me, Hermia.

I have a widow aunt

Of great revenue, and she hath no child:

From Athens is her house some 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.

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,
In that same place thou hast appointed me,
To-morrow truly will I meet with thee.

LYSANDER

Keep promise, love. Look, here comes Helena.

Enter HELENA

HERMIA God speed fair Helena! whither away?

HELENA Call you me fair? that fair again unsay.

Demetrius loves your fair: O happy fair!

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 devised to steal.

HERMIA

Farewell, sweet playfellow: pray thou for us;

And good luck grant thee thy Demetrius!

LYSANDER Helena, adieu:

As you on him, Demetrius dote on you!

Exit LYSANDER AND 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:

And as he errs, doting on Hermia's eyes,

So I, admiring of his qualities:

For ere Demetrius look'd on Hermia's eyne,

He hail'd down oaths that he was only mine;

I will go tell him of fair Hermia's flight:

Then to the wood will he to-morrow night

Pursue her; and for this intelligence

If I have thanks, it is a dear expense:

But herein mean I to enrich my pain,

To have his sight thither and back again.

Exit

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SCENE 2

CAST:

PETER QUINCE, Athenian worker

NICK BOTTOM, Athenian worker

FRANCIS FLUTE, Athenian worker

SNUG THE JOINER, Athenian worker

Enter QUINCE, BOTTOM, FLUTE, SNUG

QUINCE

Is all our company here?

BOTTOM

You were best to call them generally, man by man, according to the scrip.

QUINCE

Here is the scroll of every man's name, which is thought fit, through all Athens, to play in our interlude before the duke and the duchess, on his wedding-day at night.

BOTTOM

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

QUINCE

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

BOTTOM

A very good piece of work, I assure you, and a merry. Now, good Peter Quince, call forth your actors by the scroll. Masters, 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 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 Hercules rarely, or a part to tear a cat in, to make all split.

[overdramatically]

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.

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 me not 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, lover dear! thy Thisby dear, and lady dear!'

QUINCE

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

BOTTOM

Well, proceed.

QUINCE

[points to a classmate not in this scene] Robin Starveling, you must play Thisby's mother. *[points to another classmate not in this scene]* Tom Snout, the tinker, 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.

BOTTOM, SNUG, FLUTE

[in unison]

That would hang us, every mother's son.

BOTTOM

I grant you, friends, if that 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.

QUINCE

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 bow-strings.

Exeunt

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SCENE 3

CAST:

DEMETRIUS, Athenian youth

HELENA, Athenian youth

OBERON, King of the Fairies

PUCK, Oberon's servant fairy

TITANIA, Queen of the Fairies (2 lines)

LYSANDER, Athenian youth

HERMIA, Athenian youth

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 stolen unto this wood;
And here am I, and woe within this wood,
Because I cannot meet my Hermia.
Hence, get thee gone, and follow me no more.

HELENA

You draw me, you hard-hearted adamant;
But yet you draw not iron, for my heart
Is true as steel: leave you your power to draw,
And I shall have no power to follow you.

DEMETRIUS

Do I entice you? do I speak you fair?
Or, rather, do I not in plain 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 mistreat me, I will fawn on you:
Use me but as your spaniel, spurn me, strike me,
Neglect me, lose me; only give me leave,
Unworthy as I am, to follow you.

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:
Apollo flies, and Daphne holds the chase;

DEMETRIUS

Let me go! and, 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 wood and were not made to woo.

Exit DEMETRIUS, followed by HELENA

OBERON

Fare thee well, nymph: ere he do leave this grove,

Thou shalt fly him and he shall seek thy love.

Enter PUCK

Welcome, wanderer. Hast thou the flower there?

PUCK

Ay, there it is.

OBERON

I pray thee, give it me.
I know a bank where the wild thyme blows,
Where oxlips and the nodding violet grows,
There sleeps Titania sometime of the night,
Lull'd in these flowers with dances and delight;
There 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

Enter TITANIA, with her train

TITANIA

Fairies, sing me now asleep;
Then to your offices and let me rest.

FAIRIES

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

Exeunt Fairies. TITANIA sleeps

Enter OBERON and squeezes the flower on TITANIA's eyelids; TITANIA remains asleep on stage

OBERON

What thou seest when thou dost wake,
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 wakest, it is thy dear:
Wake when some vile thing is near. *Exit*
Enter LYSANDER and HERMIA

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 bodies and one troth.

HERMIA

Nay, good Lysander; for my sake, my dear,
Lie further off yet, do not lie so near.
Lie further off; in human modesty,
Such separation as may well be said
Becomes a virtuous bachelor and a maid,
So far be distant; and, good night, sweet friend:
Thy love ne'er alter till thy sweet life end!

LYSANDER

Amen, amen, to that fair prayer, say I;
And then end life when I end loyalty!
Here is my bed: sleep give thee all his rest!

HERMIA

With half that wish the wisher's eyes be press'd!

They sleep

Enter PUCK

PUCK

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

Exit

Enter DEMETRIUS and HELENA, running

HELENA

Stay, though thou kill me, sweet Demetrius.

DEMETRIUS

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

HELENA

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

DEMETRIUS

Stay, on thy peril: I alone will go.

Exit

HELENA

O, I am out of breath in this fond chase!
The more my prayer, the lesser is my grace.
Happy is Hermia, wheresoe'er she lies;
For she hath blessed and attractive eyes.
How came her eyes so bright? Not with salt tears:
If so, my eyes are oftener wash'd than hers.
No, no, I am as ugly as a bear;
For beasts that meet me run away for fear:
Therefore no marvel though Demetrius

Do, as a monster fly my presence thus.

What wicked and dissembling glass of mine
Made me compare with Hermia's spherish eye?
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

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? 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?

Is't not enough, is't not enough, young man,

That I did never, no, nor never can,

Deserve a sweet look from Demetrius' eye,

But you must flout my insufficiency?

But fare you well: perforce I must confess

I thought you lord of more true gentleness.

O, that a lady, of one man refused.

Should of another therefore be abused!

Exit

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

HERMIA

[Awaking] Help me, Lysander, help me! do thy best
To pluck this crawling serpent from my heart!

Ay me, for pity! what a dream was here!

Lysander, look how I do quake with fear:

I dreamt a serpent eat my heart away,

And you sat smiling at his cruel pray.

Lysander! what, removed? Lysander!

What, out of hearing? gone? no sound, no word?

No? then I well perceive you all not nigh

Either death or you I'll find immediately. *Exit*

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SCENE 4

CAST:

NICK BOTTOM, Athenian worker

PETER QUINCE, Athenian worker

SNUG, Athenian worker

FRANCIS FLUTE, Athenian worker

PUCK, fairy

Enter QUINCE, SNUG, BOTTOM, FLUTE, SNUG

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?

SNUG

Oh, now, a parlous fear. 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.

QUINCE

Well, we will have such a prologue

SNUG

Will not the ladies be afeard of the lion?

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 't.

SNUG

Therefore another prologue must tell that I am not a lion.

BOTTOM

Nay, you must name your name, and half your face must be seen through the lion's neck: and you

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 must you name your name, and tell them plainly that you are Snug the joiner.

QUINCE

Well it shall be so. But there is two hard things; that is, to bring the moonlight into a chamber; for, you know, Pyramus and Thisby meet by moonlight.

SNUG

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

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.

SNUG

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 [*he shows them with his hand*], and through that cranny shall Pyramus and Thisby whisper.

QUINCE

If that may be, then all is well. Come, sit down, every mother's son, and rehearse your parts.

Pyramus, you begin: when you have spoken your speech, enter into that brake: and so every one according to his cue.

Enter PUCK behind

PUCK

What hempen home-spuns 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.

BOTTOM

Thisby, the flowers of odious savors sweet,--

QUINCE

Odours, odours.

BOTTOM

--odours savours sweet:

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

Exit

PUCK

A stranger Pyramus than e'er played here.

Exit

FLUTE

Must I speak now?

QUINCE

Ay, marry, must you; for you must understand he goes
but to see a noise that he heard, and is to come again.

FLUTE

Most radiant Pyramus, most lily-white of hue,
Of color like the red rose on triumphant brier,
I'll meet thee, Pyramus, at Ninny's tomb.

QUINCE

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

FLUTE

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

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

BOTTOM

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

QUINCE

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

Exeunt QUINCE, SNUG, FLUTE, SNUG

BOTTOM

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

Re-enter SNUG

SNUG

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

Exit SNUG

Re-enter QUINCE

QUINCE

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

Exit

BOTTOM

I see their knavery: this is to make an ass of me;
to fright me, if they could. But I will not stir
from this place, do what they can: I will walk up
and down here, and 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,--

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SCENE 5

CAST:

BOTTOM, Athenian worker

TITANIA, Queen of the Fairies

COBWEB, **MUSTARDSEED**, fairy servants

OBERON, King of the Fairies

PUCK, Oberon's fairy servant

HERMIA, Athenian youth

DEMETRIUS, Athenian youth

BOTTOM

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 [Awaking]

What angel wakes me from my flowery bed?

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 doth move me

On the first view to say, to swear, I love thee.

BOTTOM

Methinks, mistress, you should have little reason
for that: and yet, to say the truth, reason and love keep
little company together now-a-days; the
more the pity that some honest neighbors will not
make them friends. Nay, I can glee 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:

I'll give thee fairies to attend on thee,

Peaseblossom! Cobweb! Moth! and Mustardseed!

Enter COBWEB and MUSTARDSEED

Be courteous to this gentleman;

Feed him with apricocks and dewberries,

And pluck the wings from painted butterflies

To fan the moonbeams from his sleeping eyes:

Nod to him, elves, and do him courtesies.

COBWEB

Hail!

MUSTARDSEED

Hail!

BOTTOM

I cry your worship's mercy, heartily: I beseech your
worship's name.

COBWEB

Cobweb.

BOTTOM

I shall desire you of more acquaintance, good
Cobweb: if I cut my finger, I shall make bold with
you. Your name, honest fairy?

MUSTARDSEED

Mustardseed.

BOTTOM

Good Mustardseed, I know your patience well: that
same cowardly, giant-like ox-beef hath devoured many
a gentleman of your house: I promise you your kindred
had made my eyes water ere now. I desire your more
acquaintance, good Mustardseed.

TITANIA

Come, wait upon him; lead him to my bower.

Tie up my love's tongue bring him silently.

Exeunt

Enter OBERON

OBERON

I wonder if Titania be awaked;.

Enter PUCK

Here comes my messenger.

How now, mad spirit!

PUCK

My mistress with a monster is in love.

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 waked, of force she must be eyed.

Enter HERMIA and DEMETRIUS

OBERON

Stand close: this is the same Athenian.

PUCK

This is the woman, but not this the man.

HERMIA

Where is my Lysander? where is he?

Ah, good Demetrius, wilt thou give him me?

DEMETRIUS

I had rather give his carcass to my hounds.

HERMIA

Out, dog! out, cur! Hast thou slain him, then?

DEMETRIUS

You spend your passion on a misprised mood:

I am not guilty of Lysander's blood;

Nor is he dead, for aught that I can tell.

HERMIA

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

DEMETRIUS

An if I could, what should I get therefore?

HERMIA

A privilege never to see me more.

And from thy hated presence part I so:

See me no more, whether he be dead or no.

Exit

DEMETRIUS

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

Lies down and sleeps

OBERON

What hast thou done?

About the wood go swifter than the wind,
And Helena of Athens look thou find:
All fancy-sick she is and pale of cheer,
With sighs of love, that costs the fresh blood dear:
By some illusion see thou bring her here:
I'll charm his eyes against she do appear.

PUCK

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

Exit

Re-enter PUCK

PUCK

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

OBERON

Stand aside: the noise they make
Will cause Demetrius to awake.

PUCK

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

A Midsummer Night's Dream

William Shakespeare / Adapted by B. Cobb from
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SCENE 6

CAST:

LYSANDER, Athenian youth

HELENA, Athenian youth

DEMETRIUS, Athenian youth

HERMIA, Athenian youth

Enter LYSANDER and HELENA [DEMETRIUS is sleeping on the ground]

LYSANDER

Why should you think that I should woo in scorn?

Scorn and derision never come in tears:

Look, when I vow, I weep;

How can these things in me seem scorn to you,

Bearing the badge of faith, to prove them true?

HELENA

O devilish-holy fray!

These vows are Hermia's: will you give her o'er?

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, seeing Helena*]

O Helena, goddess, nymph, perfect, divine!

To what, my love, shall I compare thine eyne?

Crystal is muddy. Hold'st up thy hand: O, let me kiss

This princess of pure white, this seal of bliss!

HELENA

O spite! O hate! I see you all are bent

To set against me for your merriment:

If you were men, as men you are in show,

You would not use a gentle lady so;

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 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.

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 sojourn'd,

And now to Helen is it home return'd,

There to remain.

LYSANDER

Helen, it is not so.

Enter HERMIA

DEMETRIUS

Look, where thy love comes; yonder is thy dear.

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 I 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 you fiery o's and eyes of light.

Why seek'st thou me? could not this make thee know,

The hate I bear thee made me go?

HERMIA

You speak not as you think: it cannot be.

HELENA

Lo, she is one of this confederacy!

Now I perceive you have conjoin'd all three

To fashion this false sport, in spite of me.

Injurious Hermia! most ungrateful maid!

Have you with these contrived

To bait me with this foul derision?

Is all the counsel that we two have shared,

The sisters' vows, the hours that we have spent,

O, is it all forgot? how we grew together,

Like to a double cherry,

Two lovely berries moulded on one stem --

And will you rend our ancient love asunder,

To join with men in scorning your poor friend?

It is not friendly, 'tis not maidenly:

Our sex, as well as I, may chide you for it,

Though I alone do feel the injury.

HERMIA

I am amazed at your passionate words.

I scorn you not: it seems that you scorn me.

HELENA

Have you not set Lysander, as in scorn,

To follow me and praise my eyes and face?

And made your other love, Demetrius,

Who even but now did spurn me with his foot,

To call me goddess, nymph, divine and rare,

Precious, celestial?

HERMIA

I understand not what you mean by this.

HELENA

Ay, do, persevere, counterfeit sad looks,

Make mouths upon me when I turn my back;

Wink each at other; hold the sweet jest up.

If you have any pity, grace, or manners,

You would not make me such a sport.

LYSANDER

Stay, gentle Helena; hear my excuse:

I love thee; by my life, I do.

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! let loose,

Or I will shake thee from me like a serpent!

HERMIA

Why are you grown so rude? what change is this?

Sweet love,--

LYSANDER

Thy love! Out, hated potion, hence!

HERMIA

Do you not jest?

HELENA

Yes, sooth; and so do you.

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?

Am not I Hermia? are not you Lysander?

I am as fair now as I was erewhile.

LYSANDER

Be certain, nothing truer; 'tis no jest

That I do hate thee and love Helena.

HERMIA

O me! you juggler! you canker-blossom!

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

And stolen my love's heart from him?

HELENA

Have you no modesty, no maiden shame,

No touch of bashfulness?

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

HERMIA

Puppet?

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 prevail'd with him.

And are you grown so high in his esteem;

Because I am so dwarfish and so low?

How low am I, thou painted maypole? speak;

How low am I? I am not yet so low

But that my nails can reach unto thine eyes.

HELENA

I pray you, though you mock me, gentlemen,

Let her not hurt me: You perhaps may think,

Because she is something lower than myself,

That I can match her.

HERMIA

Lower! hark, again.

HELENA

Good Hermia, do not be so bitter with me.

I evermore did love you,

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 further.

You see how simple and how fond I am.

HERMIA

Why, get you gone: who is't that hinders you?

HELENA

A foolish heart, that I leave here behind.

HERMIA

What, with Lysander?

HELENA

With Demetrius.

LYSANDER

Be not afraid; she shall not harm thee, Helena.

DEMETRIUS

No, sir, she shall not, though you take her part.

HELENA

O, when she'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.

LYSANDER

Get you gone, you dwarf;

You minimus, of hindering knot-grass made;

You bead, you acorn.

DEMETRIUS

You are too officious

In her behalf that scorns your services.

Let her alone: speak not of Helena;

Take not her part; for, if thou dost intend

Never so little show of love to her, thou shalt abide it.

LYSANDER [to Demetrius]

Now follow, if thou darest, to try whose right,

Of thine or mine, is most in Helena.

DEMETRIUS

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

Exeunt LYSANDER and DEMETRIUS

HERMIA

You, mistress, all this is 'cause of you:

HELENA

I will not trust you, I,

Nor longer stay in your curst company.

Your hands than mine are quicker for a fray,

My legs are longer though, to run away. *Exit*

HERMIA

I am amazed, and know not what to say. *Exit*

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SCENE 7

CAST:

OBERON, King of the Fairies

PUCK, Oberon's fairy servant

LYSANDER, Athenian youth

DEMETRIUS, Athenian youth

HELENA, Athenian youth

HERMIA, Athenian youth

OBERON

This is thy negligence: still thou mistak'st,
Or else committ'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 garment he had on?
And so far blameless proves my enterprise,
That I have anointed an Athenian's eyes;
And so far am I glad it so did sort
As this their jangling I esteem a sport.

OBERON

Thou see'st these lovers seek a place to fight:
Hie therefore, Robin, overcast the night;
[The starry welkin cover thou anon
With drooping fog as black as Acheron,]
And lead these testy rivals so astray
As one come not within another's way.
Whiles I in this affair do thee employ,
I'll to my queen and beg her Indian boy;
And then I will her charmed eye release
From monster's view, and all things shall be peace.

PUCK

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.

Re-enter LYSANDER

LYSANDER

Where art thou, proud Demetrius? speak thou now.

PUCK [imitating Demetrius' voice]

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

LYSANDER [grabbing at air]

I will be with thee straight.

PUCK [imitating Demetrius' voice]

Follow me, then,

To plainer ground.

Exit LYSANDER, as following the voice

Re-enter DEMETRIUS

DEMETRIUS

Lysander! speak again:

Thou runaway, thou coward, art thou fled?

Speak! In some bush? Where dost thou hide thy head?

PUCK [imitating Lysander's voice]

Thou coward, art thou bragging to the stars,
Telling the bushes that thou look'st for wars,
And wilt not come? Come, recreant; come, thou child;
I'll whip thee with a rod: he is defiled
That draws a sword on thee.

DEMETRIUS

Yea, art thou there?

PUCK [imitating Lysander's voice]

Follow my voice: we'll try no manhood here.

Exeunt

Re-enter LYSANDER

LYSANDER

He goes before me and still dares me on:
When I come where he calls, then he is gone.
The villain is much lighter-heel'd than I:
I follow'd fast, but faster he did fly;
That fallen am I in dark uneven way,
And here will rest me.

Lies down

[Come, thou gentle day!

For if but once thou show me thy grey light,
I'll find Demetrius and revenge this spite.]

Sleeps

Re-enter PUCK and DEMETRIUS

PUCK [imitating Lysander's voice]

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?

PUCK [imitating Lysander's voice]

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

Re-enter HELENA

HELENA

O weary night, O long and tedious night,
Abate thy hour! 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

PUCK

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

Re-enter HERMIA

HERMIA

Never so weary, never so in woe,
Bedabbled with the dew and torn with briers,
I can no further crawl, no further go;
My legs can keep no pace with my desires.
Here will I rest me till the break of day.
Heavens shield Lysander, if they mean a fray!

Lies down and sleeps

PUCK

On the ground
Sleep sound:
I'll apply
To your eye,
Gentle lover, remedy.

Squeezing the juice on LYSANDER's eyes

Jack shall have Jill;
Nought shall go ill;
And all shall be well.

Exit

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SCENE 8

CAST:

TITANIA, Queen of the Fairies

BOTTOM, Athenian worker

MUSTARDSEED, COBWEB, fairy servants

OBERON, King of the Fairies

*Enter TITANIA and BOTTOM; MUSTARDSEED,
COBWEB; OBERON behind 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

Where's Mustardseed?

MUSTARDSEED

Ready.

BOTTOM

Scratch my head, Mustardseed. Where's Cobweb?

COBWEB

Ready.

BOTTOM

Cobweb, help me to scratch. I must to the barber's, for
methinks I am marvellous hairy about the face; and I
am such a tender ass, if my hair do but tickle me,
I must scratch.

TITANIA

What, wilt thou hear some music, my sweet love?

BOTTOM

I have a reasonable good ear in music. Let's have
the tongs and the bones.

TITANIA

Or say, sweet love, what thou desirest to eat.

BOTTOM

Truly, a peck of provender: I could munch your good
dry oats. Methinks I have a great desire to a bottle
of hay: good hay, sweet hay, hath no fellow.

TITANIA

I have a venturous fairy that shall seek
The squirrel's hoard, and fetch thee new nuts.

BOTTOM

I had rather have a handful or two of dried peas.
But, I pray you, let none of your people stir me: I
have an exposition of sleep come upon me.

TITANIA

Sleep thou, and I will wind thee in my arms.
Fairies, begone, and be all ways away.

Exeunt fairies

O, how I love thee! how I dote on thee!

They sleep

OBERON

Her dotage now I do begin to pity:

For, meeting her of late behind the wood,
Seeking sweet favours from this pitiful fool,
I did upbraid her and fall out with 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 release the fairy queen.

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

Come, my queen, take hands with me,

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.

Exeunt all Fairies

Horns.

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SCENE 9

CAST:

THESEUS, Duke of Athens

HERMIA, Athenian youth

LYSANDER, Athenian youth

DEMETRIUS, Athenian youth

HELENA, Athenian youth

[Athenian youth asleep on ground]

Enter THESEUS

THESEUS

But, soft! what nymphs are these?

Bid the huntsmen wake them with their horns.

*Horns. LYSANDER, DEMETRIUS, HELENA, and
HERMIA wake*

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

LYSANDER

Pardon, my lord.

THESEUS

I pray you all, stand up.

I know you two are rival enemies:

How comes this gentle concord in the world,

That hatred is so far from jealousy,

To sleep by hate, and fear no enmity?

LYSANDER

My lord, I shall reply amazedly;

I cannot truly say how I came here;

I came with Hermia hither: our intent

Was to be gone from Athens, where we might,

Without the peril of the Athenian law.

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,

And all the faith, the virtue of my heart,

Is only Helena. To her, my lord,

Was I betroth'd ere I saw Hermia:

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:

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.

Exit THESEUS

DEMETRIUS

These things seem small and undistinguishable,

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

A Midsummer Night's Dream

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SCENE 10

CAST:

NICK BOTTOM, Athenian worker

PETER QUINCE, Athenian worker

FRANCIS FLUTE, Athenian worker

SNUG, Athenian worker

BOTTOM

[Awaking] When my cue comes, call me, and I will answer: my next is, 'Most fair Pyramus.' Heigh-ho! Peter Quince! Flute, the bellows-mender! Snout, the tinker! Starveling! God's my life, stolen 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.

Exit

Enter QUINCE, FLUTE, SNUG

QUINCE

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

SNUG

He cannot be heard of. Out of doubt he is transported. I fear to go seek him.

Exit Snug

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 are two or three lords and ladies more married: if our play had gone forward, we had all been made men.

FLUTE

O sweet bully Bottom! Thus hath he lost sixpence a day during his life; if he duke had not given him sixpence a day for playing Pyramus, I'll be hanged;

he would have deserved it: sixpence a day . . .

Enter BOTTOM

BOTTOM

Where are these lads? where are these hearts?

QUINCE

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

BOTTOM

The duke hath dined -- Get your apparel together, meet presently at the palace; every man look o'er his part; for the short and the long is, our play is preferred.

And, most dear actors, eat no onions nor garlic, for we are to utter sweet breath; and I do not doubt but to hear them say, it is a sweet comedy. No more words: away! go, away!

Exeunt

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SCENE 11

CAST:

HIPPOLYTA, Amazon queen

THESEUS, Duke of Athens, fiancé of Hippolyta

PHILOSTRATE, Theseus's servant

QUINCE, Athenian worker, as **PROLOGUE**

SNOUT, Athenian worker, as **WALL**

BOTTOM, Athenian worker, as **PYRAMUS**

FLUTE, Athenian worker, as **THISBE**

SNUG, Athenian worker, as **LION**

PUCK, fairy

*Enter THESEUS, HIPPOLYTA, PHILOSTRATE,
Lords and Attendants*

HIPPOLYTA

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

THESEUS

More strange than true: I never may believe
These antique fables, nor these fairy toys.
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.

THESEUS

Here come the lovers, full of joy and mirth.

*Enter LYSANDER, DEMETRIUS, HERMIA, and
HELENA*

Joy, gentle friends! joy and fresh days of love
Accompany your hearts!

Come now; what entertainments shall we have,
What revels are in hand?

PHILOSTRATE *Giving a paper*

Here 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.

Reads 'The thrice three Muses mourning for the death
Of Learning, late deceased in beggary.'

That is some satire, keen and critical,
Not sorting with a nuptial ceremony.

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.
How shall we find the concord of this discord?

PHILOSTRATE

A play there is, my lord, some ten words long,
Which is as brief as I have known a play;
But by ten words, my lord, it is too long, 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 labour'd in their minds till now,
And now have toil'd their unbreathed memories
With this same play, against your nuptial.

THESEUS

And we will hear it.

PHILOSTRATE

No, my noble lord; it is not for you: I have heard it,
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.

PHILOSTRATE

So please your grace, the Prologue is address'd.

THESEUS

Let him approach.

Flourish of trumpets; Enter QUINCE for the Prologue

QUINCE as PROLOGUE

If we offend, it is with our good will. We come not to
offend, but with good will, to show our simple skill,
that is the true beginning of our end. All for your
delight we are not here. The actors are at hand and by
their show you shall know all that you are like to
know. *Enter Bottom as Pyramus, Flute as Thisbe,
Snout as Wall, and Snug as Lion*

SNOUT as 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 Thisbe,
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.

BOTTOM as 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!
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!
Cursed be thy stones for thus deceiving me!

THESEUS

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

BOTTOM as PYRAMUS [*to Theseus*]

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*

FLUTE as 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.

BOTTOM as PYRAMUS

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

FLUTE as THISBE

My love thou art, my love I think.

BOTTOM as PYRAMUS

O kiss me through the hole of this vile wall!

FLUTE as THISBE

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

BOTTOM as PYRAMUS

Wilt thou at Ninny's tomb meet me straightway?

FLUTE as THISBE

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

Exeunt Pyramus and Thisbe

SNOUT as WALL

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

HIPPOLYTA

This is the silliest stuff that ever I heard.

Enter Snug as Lion

SNUG as 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 not a lion,
For, if I should as a lion come in strife
Into this place, 'twere pity on my life.

Enter Thisbe

FLUTE as THISBE

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

SNUG as LION

[Roaring] Oh-- *Thisbe runs off*

Lion shakes Thisbe's mantle, and exits;

Enter Pyramus

BOTTOM as PYRAMUS

Oh 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, stain'd with blood!
Approach, ye Furies fell! O Fates, come, come,
Cut thread and thrum;
Quail, crush, conclude, and quell!

HIPPOLYTA

Beshrew my heart, but I pity the man.

BOTTOM as PYRAMUS

Come, tears, confound; Out, sword, and wound
The pap of Pyramus; Ay, that left pap,
Where heart doth hop: *Stabs himself*
Thus die I, thus, thus, thus. Now am I dead,
Now am I fled; My soul is in the sky:
Tongue, lose thy light; Soul take thy flight:
Now die, die, die, die, die. *Dies. Re-enter Thisbe*

FLUTE as 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 bluish 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 heart imbrue: *Stabs herself*
And, farewell, friends; thus Thisby ends:
Adieu, adieu, adieu. *Dies*

THESEUS

And Lion is left to bury the dead.

DEMETRIUS

Ay, and Wall too. [*clock strikes twelve*]

BOTTOM [*back from the dead*]

No assure you; the wall is down that parted their
fathers. Will it please you to see the epilogue?

THESEUS

No epilogue, I pray you!

The iron tongue of midnight hath told twelve:

'tis almost fairy time. To all, goodnight! *Exeunt.*

Enter PUCK

PUCK

Now the hungry lion roars,
And the wolf behowls the moon;
And we fairies, that do run
Now are frolic: not a mouse
Shall disturb this hallow'd house:
I am sent with broom before,
To sweep the dust behind the door.

A Midsummer Night's Dream

William Shakespeare / Adapted by B. Cobb from

<http://shakespeare.mit.edu/midsummer/full.html>

EPILOGUE

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.
So good night unto you all.
Give me your hands, if we be friends,
And Robin shall restore amends.