

Plays for Young Audiences

A PARTNERSHIP OF SEATTLE CHILDREN'S THEATRE AND CHILDREN'S THEATRE COMPANY-MINNEAPOLIS

2400 THIRD AVENUE SOUTH
MINNEAPOLIS, MINNESOTA 55404
612-872-5108
FAX 612-874-8119

A Midsummer Night's Dream

Story by
William Shakespeare

Edit by
Don Fleming

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A Midsummer Night's Dream

Run Time: Under one hour

Cast: There are about 14 male parts and 9 female parts, but many can be played by either gender and many can be doubled or tripled. One possible way to do this cut with 13 actors:

Theseus/Oberon

Philostrate/Egeus/Puck

Lysander

Demetrius

Bottom

Quince/Fairy/Peaseblossom(combining Fairy and Peaseblossom)

Flute/Moth

Snug/Mustardseed

Starveling/Indian Boy

Snout/Cobweb

Hippolyta/Titania

Hermia

Helena

It is also possible to adjust the cast size by increasing or decreasing the numbers of fairies and attendants.

Set and Props: This cut is best served by staging that is simple, fast, flexible and creative. The most important contrast to establish is between the daylight world of Athens and the enchanted woodland night.

Place and Time: The action moves from Theseus' palace in ancient Athens to Quince's simple house to an enchanted wood outside the city, then back Quince's house and back to the palace. Though formally set in Mythical Greece, the feel of time and place owe just as much to an Elizabethan manor house.

A Midsummer Night's Dream

Persons in the Play:

The Court

Theseus, Duke of Athens
Hippolyta, his bride, an Amazon Queen
Philostrate, Theseus' master of the revels
Egeus, Hermia's father

The Lovers

Hermia, a girl in love with Lysander
Lysander, a boy in love with Hermia
Demetrius, a boy also in love with Hermia
Helena, Hermia's friend, in love with Demetrius

The Rude Mechanicals

Bottom, a weaver (plays Pyramus)
Quince, a carpenter (directs the play)
Flute, a bellows-mender (plays Thisbe)
Snug, a joiner (plays the Lion)
Starveling, a tailor (plays Moonshine)
Snout, a tinker (plays Wall)

The Fairies

Puck - a hobgoblin, servant to Oberon
Fairy - servant to Titania
Oberon, king of the fairies
Titania, queen of the fairies
Peaseblossom, a fairy, servant to Titania
Moth, a fairy, servant to Titania
Cobweb, a fairy, servant to Titania
Mustardseed, a fairy, servant to Titania
Indian Boy, (non-speaking), the child of an Indian King

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

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.

THESEUS

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, HERMIA, LYSANDER, and DEMETRIUS

EGEUS

Happy be Theseus, our renowned duke!

THESEUS

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

EGEUS

Full of vexation come I, with complaint
Against my child, my daughter Hermia.
Stand forth, Demetrius. My noble lord,
This man hath my consent to marry her.
Stand forth, Lysander: and my gracious duke,
This man hath bewitched the bosom of my child;
Thou, thou, Lysander, thou hast given her rhymes,
And interchanged love-tokens with my child:
With cunning hast thou filched my daughter's heart,
Turned her obedience, which is due to me,
To stubborn harshness: and, my gracious duke,
Be it so she will not here before your grace
Consent to marry with Demetrius,
I beg the ancient privilege of Athens,
As she is mine, I may dispose of her:
Which shall be either to this gentleman
Or to her death.

HERMIA

So will I die, my lord,
Ere I will yield
Unto his lordship.

THESEUS

Take time to pause; and, by the next new moon--
The sealing-day betwixt my love and me,
Upon that day either prepare to die
For disobedience to your father's will,
Or else to wed Demetrius, as he would.

DEMETRIUS

Relent, sweet Hermia: and, Lysander, yield.

LYSANDER

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

EGEUS

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

LYSANDER (to THESEUS)

My lord,
I am beloved of beauteous Hermia:
Demetrius, I'll avouch it to his head,
Made love to Nedar's daughter, Helena,
And won her soul; and she, sweet lady, dotes
Upon this spotted and inconstant man.

THESEUS

I must confess that I have heard so much,
And with Demetrius thought to have spoke thereof;
But, being over-full of self-affairs,
My mind did lose it. But, Demetrius, come;
And come, Egeus; you shall go with me,
I have some private business that concerns you both.
For you, fair Hermia, look you arm yourself
To fit your fancies to your father's will;
Or else the law of Athens yields you up
To death.
Come, my Hippolyta: what cheer, my love?
Demetrius and Egeus, go along.

EGEUS

With duty and desire we follow you.

Exeunt all but LYSANDER and HERMIA

LYSANDER

Ay me!

The course of true love never did run smooth;
It is momentary as a sound,
Swift as a shadow, short as any dream;
Brief as the lightning:
Ere a man hath power to say 'Behold!'
The jaws of darkness do devour it up.

HERMIA

Then let us teach our trial patience.

LYSANDER

A good persuasion: therefore, hear me, Hermia.
I have a widow aunt, a dowager
Of great revenue, and she hath no child:
From Athens is her house remote seven leagues;
And she respects me as her only son.
There, gentle Hermia, may I marry thee;
And to that place the sharp Athenian law
Cannot pursue us. If thou lovest me then,
Steal forth thy father's house to-morrow night;
And in the wood, a league without the town,
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,
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

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 darkness flight conceals,
Through Athens' gates have we devised to steal.

HERMIA

Into the wood, where often you and I
Upon faint primrose-beds were wont to lie,
Farewell, sweet playfellow: pray thou for us;
And good luck grant thee thy Demetrius!
Keep word, Lysander.

LYSANDER

I will, my Hermia.

Exit HERMIA

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

Exit

HELENA

How happy some over 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:
I will go tell him of fair Hermia's flight:
Then to the wood will he to-morrow night
Pursue her.
But herein mean I to enrich my pain,
To have his sight thither and back again.

Exit

*ACT I. SCENE II. Athens. QUINCE'S house. Enter QUINCE,
SNUG, BOTTOM, FLUTE, SNOUT, and STARVELING*

QUINCE

Is all our company here?

BOTTOM

First, good Peter Quince, say what the play is, 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.

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.

BOTTOM

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

Snug, the joiner; you have the lion's part.

SNUG

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

QUINCE

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

You can play no part but Pyramus; for Pyramus is a sweet-faced man; a proper man; a most lovely gentleman-like man: therefore you must needs play Pyramus.

BOTTOM

Well, I will undertake it.

QUINCE

Masters, here are your parts; meet me in the palace wood, a mile without the town, by moonlight; there will we rehearse. I pray you, fail me not.

BOTTOM

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

Exeunt

ACT II. SCENE I. A wood near Athens. Enter, from opposite sides, a FAIRY, and PUCK

PUCK

How now, spirit! whither wander you?

FAIRY

Over hill, over dale,
Through bush, through brier,
Over park, over pale,
Through flood, through fire,
I do wander everywhere,
Swifter than the moon's sphere;
And I serve the fairy queen,
To dew her orbs upon the green.
Farewell, thou lob of spirits; I'll be gone:
Our queen and all her elves come here anon.

PUCK

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

FAIRY

Either I mistake your shape and making quite,
Or else you are that shrewd and knavish sprite
Called Robin Goodfellow: are not you he?

PUCK

Thou speakest aright;
I am that merry wanderer of the night.
But, room, fairy! here comes Oberon.

FAIRY

And here my mistress. Would that he were gone!

*Enter, from one side, OBERON, with his attendants;
from the other, TITANIA, with hers and the INDIAN BOY*

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?
Never, since the middle summer's spring,
Met we on hill, in dale, forest or mead,
But with thy brawls thou hast disturbed our sport.

OBERON

Do you amend it then; it lies in you:
Why should Titania cross her Oberon?
I do but beg a little changeling boy,
To be my henchman.

TITANIA

Set your heart at rest:
The fairy land buys not the child of me.
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 the fairy kingdom. Fairies, away!
We shall chide downright, if I longer stay.

Exit TITANIA with her attendants

OBERON

Well, go thy way: thou shalt not from this grove
Till I torment thee for this injury.
My gentle Puck, come hither:
Thou rememberest a little western flower,
Maidens call it 'love-in-idleness.'
Fetch me that flower;
The juice of it on sleeping eye-lids laid
Will make or man or woman madly dote
Upon the next live creature that it sees.
Fetch me this herb

Exit PUCK

OBERON

Having once this juice,
I'll watch Titania when she is asleep,
And drop the liquor of it in her eyes.
The next thing that 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.

OBERON(CONT.)

But who comes here? I am invisible.

Enter DEMETRIUS, HELENA, following him

DEMETRIUS

I love thee not, therefore pursue me not.
Where is Lysander and fair Hermia?
Thou told'st me they were stolen unto this wood;
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.

DEMETRIUS

I am sick when I do look on thee.

HELENA

And I am sick when I look not on you.

DEMETRIUS

I'll run from thee 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.

DEMETRIUS

I will not stay thy questions; let me go:
For if thou follow me, do not believe
But I shall do thee mischief in the wood.

Exit

HELENA

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

Exit

OBERON

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

Re-enter PUCK

Hast thou the flower there? Welcome, wanderer.

PUCK

Ay, there it is.

OBERON

I pray thee, give it me.
I know a bank where the wild thyme blows,
Where oxlips and the nodding violet grows,
Quite over-canopied with luscious woodbine,
With sweet musk-roses and with eglantine:
There sleeps Titania sometime of the night,
Lulled in these flowers with dances and delight;
And there the snake throws her enamelled 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:
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

*ACT II. SCENE II. Another part of the wood.
Enter TITANIA, with her attendants*

FAIRIES(SINGING)

YOU SPOTTED SNAKES WITH DOUBLE TONGUE,
THORNY HEDGEHOGS, BE NOT SEEN;
NEWTS AND BLIND-WORMS, DO NO WRONG,
COME NOT NEAR OUR FAIRY QUEEN.

FAIRIES (CONT. SINGING)

NEVER HARM,
NOR SPELL NOR CHARM,
COME OUR LOVELY LADY NIGH;
SO, GOOD NIGHT, WITH LULLABY.
WEAVING SPIDERS, COME NOT HERE;
HENCE, YOU LONG-LEGGED SPINNERS, HENCE!
BEETLES BLACK, APPROACH NOT NEAR;
WORM NOR SNAIL, DO NO OFFENCE.

FAIRY

Hence, away! now all is well:
One aloof stand sentinel.

*Exeunt Fairies. TITANIA sleeps.
Enter OBERON and squeezes the flower on TITANIA's
eyelids*

OBERON

What thou seest when thou dost wake,
Do it for thy true-love take,
Love and languish for his sake:
In thy eye what shall appear
When thou wake, 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 truth, 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

Here is my bed: sleep give thee all his rest!

HERMIA

With half that wish the wisher's eyes be pressed!

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.
Churl, upon thy eyes I throw
All the power this charm doth owe.
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.

Exit

HELENA

O, I am out of breath in this fond chase!
The more my prayer, the lesser is my grace.
Happy is Hermia, wheresoever 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 washed than hers.
No, no, I am as ugly as a bear;
For beasts that meet me run away for fear:
Therefore no marvel though Demetrius
Do, as a monster fly my presence thus.
But who is here? Lysander! on the ground!
Lysander if you live, good sir, awake.

LYSANDER (AWAKING)

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?
Is it not enough, is it 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?
O, that a lady, of one man refused.
Should by 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 breast!
Ay me, for pity! what a dream was here!
Lysander, look how I do quake with fear:
Lysander! what, removed? Lysander! lord!
Alack, where are you? Speak, speak if you hear.
Speak, of all loves! I swoon almost with fear.
No? then I well perceive you all not nigh
Either death or you I'll find immediately.

Exit

ACT III. SCENE I. The same setting. TITANIA still lying asleep. Enter QUINCE, SNUG, BOTTOM, FLUTE, SNOOT, and STARVELING

BOTTOM

Are we all met?

QUINCE

Pat, pat; and here's a marvellous convenient place for our rehearsal.

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?

SNOOT

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.

QUINCE

Well, we will have such a prologue

SNOOT

Will not the ladies be afeard of the lion?

STARVELING

I fear it, I promise you.

BOTTOM

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,'--'I would entreat you,--not to fear, not to tremble. If you think I come hither as a lion, it were pity of my life: no I am no such thing; I am a man as other men are; and there indeed let him name his name, and tell them plainly he is Snug the joiner.

QUINCE

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

BOTTOM

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.

QUINCE

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, 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:

QUINCE (CONT.)

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!

QUINCE

Speak, Pyramus. Thisby, stand forth.

BOTTOM

Thisby, the flowers of odious savours 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

FLUTE

Must I speak now?

QUINCE

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

FLUTE

Most radiant Pyramus, most lily-white of hue,
Of colour like the red rose on triumphant briar,
As true as truest horse that yet would never tire,
I'll meet thee, Pyramus, at Ninny's tomb.

QUINCE

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

FLUTE

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

*Re-enter PUCK and OBERON, who conceal themselves, 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, SNOUT, and STARVELING

PUCK

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

Exit

BOTTOM

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

Re-enter SNOUT

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?

Exit SNOUT

Re-enter QUINCE

QUINCE

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

Exit

BOTTOM

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

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 --

TITANIA

I pray thee, gentle mortal, sing again:
Mine ear is much enamoured of thy note;
So is mine eye enthralled to thy shape;
On the first view I say, I 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. Nay, I can gleek upon
occasion.

TITANIA

Thou art as wise as thou art beautiful.

BOTTOM

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

TITANIA

Out of this wood do not desire to go:
Thou shalt remain here, whether thou wilt or no.
I do love thee: therefore, go with me;
I'll give thee fairies to attend on thee,

TITANIA (CONT.)

And they shall fetch thee jewels from the deep,
And sing while thou on pressed flowers dost sleep;
Peaseblossom! Cobweb! Moth! and Mustardseed!

Enter PEASEBLOSSOM, COBWEB, MOTH, and MUSTARDSEED

PEASEBLOSSOM

Ready.

COBWEB

And I.

MOTH

And I.

MUSTARDSEED

And I.

ALL FAIRIES

Where shall we go?

TITANIA

Be kind and courteous to this gentleman;
Feed him with apricots and dewberries,
With purple grapes, green figs, and mulberries;
Nod to him, elves, and do him courtesies.

PEASEBLOSSOM

Hail, mortal!

COBWEB

Hail!

MOTH

Hail!

MUSTARDSEED

Hail!

BOTTOM

I beseech your worship's name.

COBWEB

Cobweb.

BOTTOM

I shall desire you of more acquaintance, good Master Cobweb. Your name, honest gentleman?

PEASEBLOSSOM

Peaseblossom.

BOTTOM

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

MUSTARDSEED

Mustardseed.

BOTTOM

Good Master Mustardseed, I promise you your kindred had made my eyes water ere now. I desire your more acquaintance, good Master Mustardseed.

TITANIA

Come, wait upon him; lead him to my bower.
Tie up my love's tongue; bring him silently.

Exeunt TITANIA, BOTTOM, FAIRIES

OBERON

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

PUCK

I took him sleeping,--that is finished too,--
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.

DEMETRIUS

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

HERMIA

If thou hast slain Lysander in his sleep,
Being over shoes in blood, plunge in the deep,
And kill me too.
The sun was not so true unto the day
As he to me: would he have stolen away
From sleeping Hermia?
It cannot be but thou hast murdered him;
So should a murderer look, so dead, so grim.

DEMETRIUS

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

HERMIA

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

DEMETRIUS

I had rather give his carcass to my hounds.

HERMIA

Out, dog! out, cur! thou drivest me past the bounds
Of maiden's patience. Hast thou slain him, then?
Henceforth be never numbered among men!

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

And 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? 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:
By some illusion see thou bring her here:
I'll charm his eyes against she do appear.

PUCK

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

Exit

OBERON

Flower of this purple dye,
Sink in apple of his eye.
When his love he doth espy,
Let her shine as gloriously
As the Venus of the sky.

Re-enter PUCK

PUCK

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

OBERON

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

Enter LYSANDER and HELENA

LYSANDER

Why should you think that I should woo in scorn?
Look, when I vow, I weep;

HELENA

These vows are Hermia's.

LYSANDER

I had no judgment when to her I swore.

HELENA

Nor none, in my mind, now you give her over.

LYSANDER

Demetrius loves her, and he loves not you.

DEMETRIUS (AWAKING)

O Helena, goddess, nymph, perfect, divine!
To what, my love, shall I compare thine eyne?
Crystal is muddy. O, how ripe in show
Thy lips, those kissing cherries, tempting grow!

HELENA

O spite! O hell! I see you all are bent
To set against me for your merriment:
Can you not hate me, as I know you do,
But you must join in souls to mock me too?
To vow, and swear, and superpraise my parts,
When I am sure you hate me with your hearts.
You both are rivals, and love Hermia;
And now both rivals, to mock Helena:

LYSANDER

You are unkind, Demetrius; be not so;
For you love Hermia; this you know I know:
And here, with all good will, with all my heart,
In Hermia's love I yield you up my part;
And yours of Helena to me bequeath,
Whom I do love and will do till my death.

HELENA

Never did mockers waste more idle breath.

DEMETRIUS

Lysander, keep thy Hermia; I will none:
If ever I loved her, all that love is gone.

DEMETRIUS(CONT.)

My heart to her but as guest-wise sojourned,
And now to Helen is it home returned,
There to remain.

LYSANDER

Helen, it is not so.

DEMETRIUS

Disparage not the faith thou dost not know,
Lest, to thy peril, thou aby it dear.
Look, where thy love comes; yonder is thy dear.

Re-enter HERMIA

HERMIA

Lysander!
But why unkindly didst thou leave me so?

LYSANDER

Why should he stay, whom love doth press to go?

HERMIA

What love could press Lysander from my side?

LYSANDER

Lysander's love, that would not let him bide,
Fair Helena, who more engilds the night
Than all yon fiery oes and eyes of light.
Why seek'st thou me? could not this make thee know,
The hate I bear thee made me leave thee so?

HERMIA

You speak not as you think: it cannot be.

HELENA

Lo, she is one of this confederacy!
Now I perceive they have conjoined all three
To fashion this false sport, in spite of me.
Injurious Hermia! most ungrateful maid!
Have you conspired, have you with these contrived
To bait me with this foul derision?
Is all the counsel that we two have shared,
The sisters' vows, the hours that we have spent,
--O, is it all forgot?
And will you rent our ancient love asunder,
To join with men in scorning your poor friend?

HERMIA

I am amazed at your passionate words.
I scorn you not: it seems that you scorn me.

HELENA

Have you not set Lysander, as in scorn,
To follow me and praise my eyes and face?
And made your other love, Demetrius,
Who even but now did spurn me with his foot,
To call me goddess, nymph, divine and rare,
Precious, celestial? Wherefore speaks he this
To her he hates?
What thought I be not so in grace as you,
So hung upon with love, so fortunate?
This you should pity rather than despise.

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:
This sport, well carried, shall be chronicled.
But fare ye well.

HELENA begins to leave

LYSANDER

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

HELENA

O excellent!

HERMIA

Sweet, do not scorn her so.

DEMETRIUS

If she cannot entreat, I can compel.

LYSANDER

Helen, 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

Away!

DEMETRIUS

No, no; he'll
Seem to break loose; take on as you would follow,
But yet come not: you are a tame man, go!

LYSANDER

Hang off, thou cat, thou burr! vile thing, let loose,

HERMIA

Why are you grown so rude? what change is this?
Sweet love,--

LYSANDER

Thy love! out, tawny Tartar, out!

HERMIA

Do you not jest?

HELENA

Yes, sooth; and so do you.

LYSANDER

Demetrius, I will keep my word with thee.

DEMETRIUS

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

LYSANDER

What, should I hurt her, strike her, kill her dead?
Although I hate her, I'll not harm her so.

HERMIA

What, can you do me greater harm than hate?
Hate me! wherefore? O me! what news, my love!
Am not I Hermia? are not you Lysander?
I am as fair now as I was erewhile.
Since night you loved me; yet since night you left me:
Why, then you left me--O, the gods forbid!--
In earnest, shall I say?

LYSANDER

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

HERMIA

O me! you juggler! you canker-blossom!
You thief of love! what, have you come by night
And stolen my love's heart from him?

HELENA

What, will you tear
Impatient answers from my gentle tongue?
Fie, fie! you counterfeit, you puppet, you!

HERMIA

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

HELENA

I pray 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, Hermia,
Did ever keep your counsels, never wronged you;
Save that, in love unto Demetrius,
I told him of your stealth unto this wood.
He followed you; for love I followed him;
But he hath chid me hence and threatened me
To strike me, spurn me, nay, to kill me too:
And now, so you will let me quiet go,
To Athens will I bear my folly back
And follow you no further: let me go.

HERMIA

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

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 minimus! you bead! you acorn!

DEMETRIUS

Let her alone: speak not of Helena;
Take not her part.

LYSANDER

Now she holds me not.
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.