

**A Midsummer Night's Dream**  
**By William Shakespeare**  
**Abridged by Robert Gonzalez, Ph.D.**

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PHILOSTRATE (f/m).....Master of the revels to Theseus.  
(5 lines)

### THE “RUDE MECHANICALS”:

NICK BOTTOM (f/m) .....A weaver. Plays Pyramus. (41 lines)

FRANCIS FLUTE (f/m).....A bellows-mender. Plays Thisby.  
(15 lines)

TOM SNOOT (f/m).....A tinker. Plays Wall. (2 lines)

SNUG (f/m).....A joiner. Plays Lion. (3 lines)

ROBIN STARVELING (f/m) .....A tailor. Plays Moonshine. (5 lines)

PETER QUINCE (f/m).....A carpenter. Plays Prologue. (29 lines)

### THE FAIRIES:

TITANIA (f/m).....Queen of the fairies. (18 lines)

OBERON (f/m) .....King of the fairies. (23 lines)

PUCK (f/m) .....Or Robin Goodfellow, Oberon’s  
“henchman”. (27 lines)

FAIRY (f/m).....Unnamed, reports to Titania. (4 lines)

COBWEB (f/m).....A fairy. (5 lines)

MOTH (f/m).....A fairy. (2 lines)

MUSTARDSEED (f/m) .....A fairy. (4 lines)

PEASEBLOSSOM (f/m).....A fairy. (4 lines)

**EXTRAS:** People of the Court and Fairies

**DURATION:** 90 Minutes

### PRODUCTION NOTES

**GENERAL:** There are relatively few stage directions, compared to most modern plays. Most of the direction can be found in the dialogue itself.

The scenes are coded in this manner: act.scene.section (beat). Thus, 3.2.3 indicates Act 3, scene 2, section or beat 3. The act and scene numbers correspond to the original divisions made by editors of Shakespeare’s works. The section or beat numbers are usually markers for entrances or exits of major characters, what are usually referred to as “French scenes.”

While not necessary, in my production of this play at the University of Tampa, I created a brief pantomimed prologue that gave the audience a taste of the backstory that immediately precedes the opening scene. This creative, directorial addition did make our production last slightly over 90 minutes. However, without it, if directed to keep the action and dialogue lively, will surely come in on or under one and one half hours. As such, this play can be performed without an intermission.

**CASTING:** Puck very easily can be, and has been, played by a boyish woman. Many other characters also can be cast non gender-specific – the fairies and some of the mechanicals, for example. Of course, all gender specificity can be cast aside, as only men played all characters in Shakespeare's day. Peter Brook also did a hugely successful and legendary production with all men. So, it would seem that the reverse – a production with all women actors – could be just as feasible. Certainly this would be the only option at non co-ed schools.

It is possible to double certain roles. The actor playing Puck can also play Philostrate, the actor playing Titania can also play Hippolyta, and the actor playing Oberon could also play Theseus. Any one of the rude mechanicals could play Egeus.

If the availability of actors allow, there can be as many fairies and people at court as desired.

**COSTUMES:** The costumes, of course, should follow the director's concept of the play, which certainly does not need to be set in the periods of Elizabethan England or the heroic age of Ancient Greece. The three sets of characters – the court, the fairies, and the “rude mechanicals” – should have consistent costumes within their groups. The fairies allow for quite fanciful conceptions (with inspirations to be drawn everywhere from classic paintings to modern street wear), the court should somehow suggest elevated dignity, the mechanicals should suggest rustic workmen. The outfitting and propping of the play-within-the-play definitely should suggest rank, though sincere, amateurism. It should seem as if the workmen have fashioned their costumes and props from the skills of their trade. Remember that they truly are trying to do their very best, so concentrating on their sincerity would be more dramatically effective than going for cheap laughs that broadly show

coarse acting. The sight of their costumes and props in performance should simultaneously evoke laughter and tender feelings. Pyramus might be clothed in some sort of armor, with perhaps a breastplate and helmet. Thisbe could have a woman's wig (possibly made of yellow yarn) and a cotton country dress. Wall could be clothed in a cloak or poncho with texture evoking stone. Moonshine might be clothed in white and blue to suggest moonshine colors and perhaps have a headdress with a crescent moon. Lion should have some sort of lion's head or headdress/hat & collar to suggest a mane. Peter Quince might wear his best clothes for the performance. These are just suggestions. Your own concept, creative vision, and the practicalities of your production will drive your choices more than anything.

**SET:** The three major locales need suggesting: the court, the forest, and the rustic village of the rude mechanicals. As with any Shakespearean play, where the action jumps quickly from scene to scene, these locales are best suggested simply and should be easily and swiftly changeable. A floor painted to fit all three locations would be a plus, as would simple columns (the court), hanging artificial foliage (the forest), and perhaps a village background (village of the rude mechanicals) that could be flown in and out as necessary. For improved visibility, a raked stage can be wonderful.

### PROPS

- Flower, preferably oversized, since fairies are tiny. (Puck, Oberon)
- Cloth backdrop on poles that can be anchored on the stage (Play-within-the-play)
- Wooden prop sword. (Pyramus)
- Scarf. (Thisbe)
- Lamp. (Moonshine)
- Toy dog on a leash. (Moonshine)

### AUTHOR NOTES

A *Midsummer Night's Dream* might be William Shakespeare's most popular play, and is certainly his most popular comedy. It contains love, foolishness, trickery, feuding, rivalry, fantasy, magic, and elegance. However, it is difficult to sustain a light comedy for three full hours, the play's usual length if unabridged. I aimed to create a condensed version of this lyrical comedy that actors could more easily memorize and perform, one that moved quickly enough to hold an audience's attention throughout. I wanted to do this by remaining fiercely true to the original, editing as seamlessly as possible to keep the plot clearly in focus, keeping only Shakespeare's words without adding any extra narration or interpolated dialogue. This play has been performed successfully all over the world in colleges, high schools, and middle schools over the past 6 years.

### PRODUCTION HISTORY

University of Tampa (adapter directed production)  
St. Paul College, St. Paul, MN  
Pleasant Grove High School, Pleasant Grove, UT  
Glimpse Entertainment Company, Oxford, MS  
Eudora High School, Eudora, KS  
Lake Wilderness Arboretum, Maple Valley, WA  
Nico Lindblom's Senior Project at Tahoma High, Tahoma, WA  
American International School of Bucharest, Voluntari, Romania  
Bonny Eagle High School, Standish, ME  
Balboa Park's Zoro Gardens, San Diego, CA  
Valley Christian High School, San Jose, CA  
Middle School Performing Arts, Latin School of Chicago, Chicago, IL

## 1.1.1

**SETTING:** *Athens. The palace of THESEUS.*

**AT RISE:** *THESEUS and HIPPOLYTA discovered lounging on a sofa.*

**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:**

Hippolyta, I woo'd 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.

## 1.1.2

*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 bewitch'd the bosom of my child;  
 Thou, thou, Lysander, thou hast given her rhymes,  
 And interchanged love-tokens with my child:  
 With cunning hast thou filch'd my daughter's heart,  
 Turn'd 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.

**THESEUS:**

What say you, Hermia? be advised 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.  
Therefore, fair Hermia, question your desires;  
Whether, if you yield not to your father's choice,  
You can endure the livery of a nun.

**HERMIA:**

So will I grow, so live, so die, my lord,  
Ere I will my virgin patent up.

**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---

**DEMETRIUS:** (*Interrupting.*)

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

**LYSANDER:**

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

**EGEUS:**

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

**LYSANDER:**

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,  
I am beloved of beauteous Hermia:  
Why should not I then prosecute my right?  
Demetrius, I'll avouch it to his head,  
Made love to Nedar's daughter, Helena,  
And won her soul; and she, sweet lady, dotes,  
Devoutly dotes, dotes in idolatry,  
Upon this spotted and inconstant man.

**THESEUS:**

I must confess that I have heard so much.  
Demetrius, come;  
And come, Egeus; you shall go with me,  
I have some private schooling for you both.  
For you, fair Hermia, look you arm yourself  
To fit your fancies to your father's will;  
Or else the law of Athens yields you up--  
Which by no means we may extenuate--  
To death, or to a vow of single life.  
Come, my Hippolyta:

*Exit all but LYSANDER and HERMIA.*

**1.1.3****LYSANDER:**

Ay me! for aught that I could ever read,  
Could ever hear by tale or history,  
The course of true love never did run smooth.

**HERMIA:**

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

**1.1.4**

*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:**

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.*

Helena, adieu:  
As you on him, Demetrius dote on you! (*Exit.*)

## 1.1.5

**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:  
 Love looks not with the eyes, but with the mind;  
 And therefore is wing'd Cupid painted blind:  
 For ere Demetrius look'd on Hermia's eyne,  
 He hail'd down oaths that he was only mine;  
 And when this hail some heat from Hermia felt,  
 So he dissolved, and showers of oaths did melt.  
 I will go tell him of fair Hermia's flight:  
 Then to the wood will he 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.)*

## 1.2.1

*QUINCE'S HOUSE.*

*Enter QUINCE, SNUG, BOTTOM, FLUTE, SNOUT, and STARVELING.*

**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.  
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. To the rest: yet my chief humour is for a  
tyrant: I could play Ercles rarely.

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.

**BOTTOM:**

If 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:**

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:**

If 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:**

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 to-morrow night;  
and 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.

*Exit all.*

## 2.1.1

**SETTING:** *A wood near Athens.*

**PUCK:**

How now, spirit! whither wander you?

**FAIRY:**

Over hill, over dale,  
Thorough bush, thorough brier,  
Over park, over pale,  
Thorough flood, thorough fire,  
I do wander everywhere,  
Swifter than the moon's sphere;  
And I serve the fairy queen,  
To dew her orbs upon the green.  
Farewell, thou lob of spirits; I'll be gone:  
Our queen and all our 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:  
And now they never meet in grove or green,  
By fountain clear, or spangled starlight sheen,  
But, they do square, that all their elves for fear  
Creep into acorn-cups and hide them there.

**FAIRY:**

Either I mistake your shape and making quite,  
Or else you are that shrewd and knavish sprite  
Call'd Robin Goodfellow: are not you he  
That frights the maidens of the villagery?  
Those that Hobgoblin call you and sweet Puck,  
You do their work, and they shall have good luck:  
Are not you he?

**PUCK:**

Thou speak'st 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!

**2.1.2**

*Enter, from one side, OBERON; from the other, TITANIA, with fairies.*

**OBERON:**

I'll 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,  
But that, forsooth, the bouncing Amazon,  
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?

**TITANIA:**

These are the forgeries of jealousy:  
And never, since the middle summer's spring,  
Met we on hill, in dale, forest or mead,  
To dance our ringlets to the whistling wind,  
But with thy brawls thou hast disturb'd our sport.  
Therefore the winds, piping to us in vain,  
As in revenge, have suck'd up from the sea  
Contagious fogs; which falling in the land  
Have every pelting river made so proud  
That they have overborne their continents:  
And thorough this distemperature we see  
The seasons alter: the spring, the summer,  
The chiding autumn, angry winter, change  
Their wonted liveries, and the mazed world,  
By their increase, now knows not which is which:  
And this same progeny of evils comes  
From our debate, from our dissension;  
We are their parents and original.

**OBERON:**

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

**TITANIA:**

Set your heart at rest:  
The fairy land buys not the child of me.

**OBERON:**

Give me that boy!

**TITANIA:**

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

*Exit TITANIA and fairies.*

**2.1.3****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  
Since once I sat upon a promontory,  
And heard a mermaid on a dolphin's back  
Uttering such dulcet and harmonious breath  
That the rude sea grew civil at her song  
And certain stars shot madly from their spheres,  
To hear the sea-maid's music.

**PUCK:**

I remember.

**OBERON:**

That very time I saw, but thou couldst not,  
Flying between the cold moon and the earth,  
Cupid all arm'd: a certain aim he took  
At a fair vestal thronéd by the west,  
And loosed his love-shaft smartly from his bow,  
As it should pierce a hundred thousand hearts;  
But I might see young Cupid's fiery shaft  
Quench'd in the chaste beams of the watery moon,  
And the imperial votaress passed on,  
In maiden meditation, fancy-free.  
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 show'd thee once:  
 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; 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.*)

**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.

**2.1.4**

*Enter DEMETRIUS, 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 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.  
I am your spaniel; and, Demetrius,  
The more you beat 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.  
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:**

You do impeach your modesty too much,  
To leave the city and commit yourself  
Into the hands of one that loves you not;  
To trust the opportunity of night  
And the ill counsel of a desert place  
With the rich worth of your virginity.

**HELENA:**

Your virtue is my privilege: for that  
It is not night when I do see your face.

**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:  
Or, if thou follow me, do not believe  
But I shall do thee mischief in the wood.

**HELENA:**

Ay, in the temple, in the town, the field,  
You do me mischief. Fie, Demetrius!  
Your wrongs do set a scandal on my sex:  
We cannot fight for love, as men may do;  
We should be wooed, and were not made to woo.

*Exit DEMETRIUS.*

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

**2.1.5****OBERON:**

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

*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.  
There sleeps Titania sometime of the night,  
Lull'd in these flowers with dances and delight;  
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.

*Exit PUCK and OBERON.*

**2.2.1**

*Enter TITANIA and fairies.*

**TITANIA:**

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

**FAIRIES:** (*Singing.*)

Lulla, lulla, lullaby, lulla, lulla, lullaby:  
Never harm,  
Nor spell nor charm,  
Come our lovely lady nigh;  
So, good night, with lullaby.

**FAIRY:**

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

*Exit Fairies. TITANIA sleeps. Enter OBERON. He 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:  
Be it ounce, or cat, or bear,  
Pard, or boar with bristled hair,  
In thy eye what shall appear  
When thou wakest, it is thy dear:  
Wake when some vile thing is near. (*Exit.*)

**2.2.2**

*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 bosoms and one troth.

**HERMIA:**

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

**LYSANDER:**

O, take the sense, sweet, of my innocence!  
Love takes the meaning in love's conference.  
Then by your side no bed-room me deny;  
For lying so, Hermia, I do not lie.

**HERMIA:**

Lysander riddles very prettily:  
Now much beshrew my manners and my pride,  
If Hermia meant to say Lysander lied.  
But, gentle friend, for love and courtesy  
Lie further off; in human modesty.

**LYSANDER:**

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

**HERMIA:**

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

*They sleep.*

**PUCK:** (*Enters.*)

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,  
Despiséd 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.*)

**2.2.3**

*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 blesséd 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:** (*Awaking.*)

And run through fire I will for thy sweet sake.

**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?  
Good troth, you do me wrong, good sooth, you do,  
In such disdainful manner me to woo.  
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 breast!  
 Ay me, for pity! what a dream was here!  
 Lysander, look how I do quake with fear:  
 Methought a serpent eat my heart away,  
 And you sat smiling at his cruel prey.  
 Lysander! what, removed? Lysander! lord!  
 What, out of hearing? gone? no sound, no word?  
 No? then I well perceive you are not nigh  
 Either death or you I'll find immediately. (*Exit.*)

### 3.1.1

**SETTING:** *The wood. TITANIA lying asleep.*

*Enter QUINCE, SNUG, BOTTOM, FLUTE, SNOUT, and STARVELING.*

**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.  
 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.

**PUCK:** (*Enters, unseen by others.*)

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:**

Odors, odors.

**BOTTOM:**

--odors savors 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 colour like the red rose on triumphant brier,  
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.

*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!

**PUCK:**

I'll follow you, I'll lead you about around,  
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.

**BOTTOM:**

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

**SNOUT:**

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

**QUINCE:**

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

*Exit all but BOTTOM. Enter Puck leading Oberon, who watch the following scene.*

**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,

**TITANIA:** (*Awaking.*)

What angel wakes me from my flowery bed?

**BOTTOM:** (*Sings.*)

The throstle with his note so true,  
The wren with little quill,--

**TITANIA:**

I pray thee, gentle mortal, sing again:  
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.  
I am a spirit of no common rate;  
The summer still doth tend upon my state;  
And I do love thee: therefore, go with me;  
Peaseblossom! Cobweb! Moth! and Mustardseed!

*Enter PEASEBLOSSOM, COBWEB, MOTH, and MUSTARDSEED.*

**PEASEBLOSSOM:**

Ready.

**COBWEB:**

And I.

**MOTH:**

And I.

**MUSTARDSEED:**

And I.

**ALL:**

Where shall we go?

**TITANIA:**

Be kind and courteous to this gentleman;  
Hop in his walks and gambol in his eyes;  
Feed him with apricocks and dewberries,  
With purple grapes, green figs, and mulberries;  
The honey-bags steal from the humble-bees,  
Nod to him, elves, and do him courtesies.

**PEASEBLOSSOM:**

Hail, mortal!

**COBWEB:**

Hail!

**MOTH:**

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 Master Cobweb. Your name, honest gentleman?

**PEASEBLOSSOM:**

Peaseblossom.

**BOTTOM:**

Good Master Peaseblossom, I shall desire you of more acquaintance too. Your name, I beseech you, sir?

**MUSTARDSEED:**

Mustardseed.

**BOTTOM:**

Good Master Mustardseed.

**TITANIA:**

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

## 3.2.1

*OBERON and PUCK come forward.*

**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.

**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 given me cause to curse  
If thou hast slain Lysander in his sleep.  
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 murder'd him;  
So should a murderer look, so dead, so grim.

**DEMETRIUS:**

So should the murder'd look, and so should I,  
Pierced through the heart with your stern cruelty:

**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 number'd 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:**

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? 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:** *(Anoints DEMETRIUS' eyes.)*

Flower of this purple dye,  
Hit with Cupid's archery,  
Sink in apple of his eye.  
When his love he doth espy,  
Let her shine as gloriously  
As the Venus of the sky.  
When thou wakest, if she be by,  
Beg of her for remedy.

**PUCK:** *(Enters.)*

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.

## 3.2.2

Enter *LYSANDER* and *HELENA*.

**LYSANDER:**

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

**HELENA:**

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:**

*(Awaking.)* O Helena, goddess, nymph, perfect, divine!

**HELENA:**

O spite! O hell! I see you all are bent  
To set against me for your merriment:  
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 e'er I loved her, all that love is gone.

**HERMIA:** (*Enters.*)

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

**LYSANDER:**

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

**HERMIA:**

What love could press Lysander from my side?

**LYSANDER:**

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

**HERMIA:**

You speak not as you think: it cannot be.

**HELENA:**

Lo, she is one of this confederacy!  
Now I perceive they have conjoin'd all three  
To fashion this false sport, in spite of me.  
Injurious Hermia! most ungrateful maid!  
Have you conspired, have you with these contrived  
To bait me with this foul derision?

**HERMIA:**

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?

**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;  
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:**

If she cannot entreat, I can compel.

**LYSANDER:**

Thou canst compel no more than she entreat:  
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:**

Hang off, thou cat, thou burr! vile thing, let loose,  
Or I will shake thee from me like a serpent!  
Demetrius, I will keep my word with thee.

**DEMETRIUS:**

I would I had your bond, 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?  
Am not I Hermia? are not you Lysander?  
Since night you loved me; yet since night you left  
me. 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:**

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 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:**

Let her not strike 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, 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:**

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:**

Let her alone: speak not of Helena.

**LYSANDER:**

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.

*Exit LYSANDER and DEMETRIUS.*

**HERMIA:**

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.*)

**HERMIA:**

I am amaz'd, and know not what to say. (*Exit.*)

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