

A Midsummer Night's Dream

One-Act Version

By Andrea AA Rassler

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CAST LIST
(in order of appearance)

The Mechanicals

QUINCE

SNUG

BOTTOM

FLUTE

SNOUT

STARVELING

PUCK

The Fairies

PEASEBLOSSOM

COBWEB

MOTH

MUSTARDSEED

OBERON

TITANIA

DEMETRIUS

HELENA

LYSANDER

HERMIA

SCENE I. Front of Curtain.

Enter the MECHANICALS: QUINCE, SNUG, BOTTOM, FLUTE, SNOUT, and STARVELING.

QUINCE

Is all our company here?

We must rehearse our entertainment for
The nuptial celebration of Duke Theseus
And Hippolyta, Queen of the Amazons!

BOTTOM

They have hired the best, o Quince!
We shall slay all present at the royal wedding!

QUINCE

Is all our company here, then?

BOTTOM

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

QUINCE

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

BOTTOM

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

QUINCE

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

BOTTOM

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

QUINCE

Answer as I call you. Nick Bottom, the weaver.

BOTTOM

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

QUINCE

You, Nick Bottom, are set down for Pyramus.

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. --

QUINCE

Francis Flute, the bellows-mender.

FLUTE

Here, Peter Quince.

QUINCE

Flute, you must take Thisbe on you.

FLUTE

What is Thisbe? 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 Thisbe too, I'll
speak in a monstrous little voice. 'Thisne,
Thisne;' 'Ah, Pyramus, lover dear! thy Thisbe dear,
and lady dear!'

QUINCE

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

BOTTOM

Well, proceed.

QUINCE

Robin Starveling, the tailor.

STARVELING

Here, Peter Quince.

QUINCE

Robin Starveling, you must play Thisbe's mother.

Tom Snout, the tinker.

SNOOT

Here, Peter Quince.

QUINCE

You, Pyramus' father: myself, Thisbe's father:

Snug, the joiner; you, the lion's part: and, I

hope, here is a play fitted.

SNUG

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

QUINCE

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

BOTTOM

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

QUINCE

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

ALL

That would hang us, every mother's son.

BOTTOM

I grant you, friends, if 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. What beard were I best to play it in?

QUINCE

Why, what you will. 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, 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.

Exeunt

SCENE 2. Curtain opens: A wood near Athens.

Enter, from opposite sides, The FAIRIES, and PUCK

PUCK

How now, spirit! whither wander you?

FAIRIES (director split lines)

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;

We follow here the king and queen

As they travel from afar.

They come to join Theseus and Hippolyta

In holy matrimony—to bless the union!

Our queen and all our elves come here anon.

PUCK

The king and queen are quite at odds:
Take heed the queen come not within his sight;

FAIRIES

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?
He that Hobgoblin call you and sweet Puck,
Are not you he?

PUCK

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

FAIRIES

And here my mistress. Would that he were gone!

*Enter, from one side, OBERON; from the other, TITANIA.
They are clearly peeved with each other.*

OBERON

Ill met by moonlight, proud Titania.
We are almost to the castle.

TITANIA

What, jealous Oberon! Fairies, skip hence:
Whether to the castle or no--
I have forsworn his bed and company.

OBERON

Forswear my bed
and bless as others are wed?

TITANIA

We may bless their unity—
We needs not mimick it.

OBERON

Tarry, rash wanton: am not I thy lord?

TITANIA

Then I must be thy lady:

OBERON

Why should Titania cross her Oberon?
I do but beg a little changeling boy,
To be my henchman.

TITANIA

I will not part with him.

OBERON

How long within this wood intend you stay?

TITANIA

I stay as long as I will to stay.

OBERON

Give me that boy, and you may go where you will.

TITANIA

I will go where I will nonetheless! Fairies, away!
We shall chide downright, if I longer stay.

Exit TITANIA with her train

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 night far gone that Cupid's arrow didst fall--
It fell upon a little western flower?

PUCK

I remember.

OBERON

The maidens call it love-in-idleness.
Fetch me that flower; the herb I shew'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.

Enter DEMETRIUS, HELENA. OBERON observes unseen.

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 wode 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 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!

DEMETRIUS

Enough! So where, then, Helena, are they?
My Hermia and he who she then chose—

HELENA

Forsooth, they have run into these woods;
They plan to wed against her father's will.

DEMETRIUS

I see no Hermia, nor Lysander here—
Have you lured me here with lies?

HELENA

I speak the truth! (turning away) I bring you here
To somehow win your favor back from her.

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!

HELENA

It is not night when I do see your face,
Therefore I think I am not in the night;
Nor doth this wood lack worlds of company,
For you in my respect are all the world!

DEMETRIUS

I'll run from thee and look both west and east,
And leave thee to the mercy of wild beasts.

HELENA

I will but face the wrath of any beast
To gaze upon the face that I do love--

DEMETRIUS

I love Hermia! And will find her forthwith—
Lysander must not have her.

I will not hear thy statements; let me go:

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

Exit DEMETRIUS

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,
There sleeps Titania sometime of the night,
And with the juice of this I'll streak her eyes,
And make her full of hateful fantasies.

Take thou some of it, and seek through this grove:

A sweet Athenian lady is in love
With a disdainful youth: anoint his eyes;
But do it when the next thing he espies
May be the lady: thou shalt know the man
By the Athenian garments he hath on.
Effect it with some care, that he may prove
More fond on her than she upon her love:
And look thou meet me ere the first cock crow.

PUCK

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

Exeunt

SCENE 3. Another part of the wood.

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:
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

We have left that city prison here to wed;
Escaping father, law, and tyranny.

HERMIA

My father pushes Demetrius on me;
I shall not bend when love with you I see.

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

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

--Who is here?

Weeds of Athens he doth wear:

This is he, my master said,

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.

No, no, I am as ugly as a bear;

For beasts that meet me run away for fear:

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.
Transparent Helena! Nature shows art,
That through thy bosom makes me see thy heart.
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

(momentarily confused)
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.
But fare you well: perforce I must confess
I thought you lord of more true gentleness.

Exit

LYSANDER

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

Scene 4. 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. The wedding draws near!

BOTTOM

Peter Quince,--

QUINCE

What sayest thou, bully Bottom?

BOTTOM

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

STARVELING

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

BOTTOM

Not a whit: I have a device to make all well.

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

SNOUT

Will not the ladies be afeard of the lion?

STARVELING

I fear it, I promise you.

BOTTOM

Therefore another prologue must tell he is not a lion.

QUINCE

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

SNOUT

Doth the moon shine that night we play our play?

BOTTOM

A calendar, a calendar! look in the 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 lanthorn, and say he comes to disfigure, or to present, the person of Moonshine. Then, there is another thing: we must have a wall in the great chamber; for Pyramus and Thisbe says the story, did talk through the chink of a wall.

SNOUT

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

BOTTOM

Some man or other must present Wall:
and let him hold his
fingers thus, and through that cranny shall Pyramus
and Thisbe whisper.

QUINCE

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

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. Thisbe, stand forth.

BOTTOM

Thisbe, the flowers of odious savours sweet,--

QUINCE

Odours, odours.

BOTTOM

--odours savours sweet:

So hath thy breath, my dearest Thisbe 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,
I'll meet thee, Pyramus, at Ninny's tomb.

QUINCE

'Ninus' tomb,' man: and that is not yet your cue;
And needs must you speak in louder voice~

FLUTE

Most radiant Pyramus—

QUINCE

And even louder, lest not we hear!

FLUTE

MOST RADIANT PYRAMUS--

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

BOTTOM

If I were fair, Thisbe, 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:
Sometime a horse I'll be, sometime a hound,
A hog, a headless bear, sometime a fire;
And neigh, and bark, and grunt, and roar, and burn,
Like horse, hound, hog, bear, fire, at every turn.

Exit

BOTTOM

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

As SNOUT re-enters and runs through, chased by PUCK--

SNOUT

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

BOTTOM

What do you see? you see an asshead of your own, do you?

Exit SNOUT

As QUINCE re-enters (from the other direction) being chased by PUCK--

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: (loudly) I will walk up and down here, and I will sing, that they shall hear I am not afraid.

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 dares not answer nay;--

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 do love thee: therefore, go with me;

I'll give thee fairies to attend on thee,
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--

PEASEBLOSSOM

Hail, mortal!

COBWEB

Hail!

MOTH

Hail!

MUSTARDSEED

Hail!

TITANIA

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

The moon methinks looks with a watery eye;

And when she weeps, weeps every little flower,

Lamenting some enforced chastity.

Tie up my love's tongue bring him silently.

Exeunt

Scene 5. Another part of the wood.

Enter OBERON

OBERON

I wonder if Titania be awaked;

Then, what it was that next came in her eye,

Which she must dote on in extremity.

Enter PUCK

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

PUCK

My mistress with a monster is in love.
Near to her close and consecrated bower,
While she was in her dull and sleeping hour,
A youth that played fair Pyramus, he said,
Upon his head did I affix a head--
When in that moment, so it came to pass,
Titania waked and straightway loved an ass.

OBERON

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

PUCK

I took him sleeping,--that is finish'd too,--
And the Athenian woman by his side:
That, when he 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 o'er 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 murder'd him;
--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

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.

So sorrow's heaviness doth heavier grow

For debt that bankrupt sleep doth sorrow owe:

Which now in some slight measure it will pay,

If for his tender here I make some stay.

Lies down and sleeps

OBERON

What hast thou done? thou hast mistaken

One Athenian for another!

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

OBERON

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.

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.

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;

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!
To what, my love, shall I compare thine eyne?
Crystal is muddy. O, let me kiss
This princess of pure white, this seal of bliss!

HELENA

O spite! O hell! I see you all are bent
To set against me for your merriment:
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:

DEMETRIUS

Lysander, keep thy Hermia; I will none:
If e'er I loved her, all that love is gone.
My heart to her but as guest-wise sojourn'd,
And now to Helen is it home return'd,
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

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 you 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

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?
And will you rent our ancient love asunder,
To join with men in scorning your poor friend?
It is not friendly, 'tis not maidenly:

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? and wherefore doth Lysander
Deny your love?

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: '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!

HERMIA

Sweet, do not scorn her so.

LYSANDER

Helen, I love thee; by my life, I do:

DEMETRIUS

I say I love thee more than he can do.

HERMIA

Lysander, whereto tends all this?

LYSANDER

Away, you wench!

HERMIA

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

Sweet love,--

LYSANDER

Thy love! out, tawny Tartar, out!

Out, loathed medicine! 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?

Hate me! wherefore?

Am not I Hermia? are not you Lysander?

I am as fair now as I was erewhile.

This by my eye must be some cruel jest--

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

Fine, i'faith!

What, will you tear

Impatient answers from my gentle tongue?

HERMIA

Ah! 'Tis her height, forsooth, she hath prevail'd--
And are you grown so high in his esteem;
Because I am so dwarfish and so low?
How low am I? I am not yet so low
But that my nails can reach unto thine eyes.

HELENA

Let her not hurt me: Let her not strike me.
In love unto Demetrius,
I told him of your stealth unto this wood.
He follow'd you; for love I follow'd him;
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?

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--

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 jole.

Exeunt LYSANDER and DEMETRIUS

HERMIA

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

HELENA

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

Exit

HERMIA

I am amazed, and know not what to say.

Exit

OBERON

This is thy negligence--

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 'nointed 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;
And lead these testy rivals so astray
As one come not within another's way.
And from each other look thou lead them thus,

Till o'er their brows death-counterfeiting sleep
With leaden legs and batty wings doth creep:
Then crush this herb into each man's eye;
When they next wake, all this derision
Shall seem a dream and fruitless vision.
Whiles I in this affair do thee employ,
I'll to my queen and beg her back to joy;
And then I will her charmed eye release
From monster's view, and all things shall be peace.

PUCK

My fairy lord, this must be done with haste,
For night's swift dragons fly apace--

OBERON

Haste; make no delay:
We may effect this business yet ere day.

Exit

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

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

LYSANDER

I will be with thee straight.

PUCK

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

Thou coward, art thou bragging to the stars,
Telling the bushes that thou look'st for wars,
And wilt not come?

DEMETRIUS

Yea, art thou there?

PUCK

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, sleeps

Re-enter PUCK and DEMETRIUS

PUCK

Ho, ho, ho! Coward, why comest thou not?

DEMETRIUS

Abide me, if thou darest;
Thou runn'st before me, shifting every place,
And darest not stand, nor look me in the face.
Where art thou now?

PUCK

Come hither: I am here.

DEMETRIUS

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

Lies down and sleeps

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 females 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 and DEMETRIUS's eyes

When thou wakest,
Thou takest
True delight
In the sight
Of thy former lady's eye:
--and all shall be well.

Exit

Scene 6.

Enter TITANIA and BOTTOM; PEASEBLOSSOM, COBWEB, MOTH, MUSTARDSEED, and other Fairies attending; 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 Peaseblossom?

PEASEBLOSSOM

Ready.

BOTTOM

Scratch my head Peaseblossom. Where's Cobweb?

COBWEB

Ready.

BOTTOM

I must to the barber's, it seems; 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

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

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

Enter PUCK

OBERON

[Advancing] Welcome, good Robin.
See'st thou this sweet sight?
Her dotage now I do begin to pity:

I will undo this hateful imperfection of her eyes:
Be as thou wast wont to be;
See as thou wast wont to see:
Now, my Titania; wake you, my sweet queen.

TITANIA

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

OBERON

There lies your love.

TITANIA

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

OBERON

Silence awhile. Robin, take off this head.
Come, my queen, take hands with me,
And rock the ground whereon these sleepers be.

PUCK

Fairy king, attend, and mark:
I do hear the morning lark.

TITANIA

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

Exeunt

Horns and shout within. LYSANDER, DEMETRIUS, HELENA, and HERMIA wake and start up

LYSANDER

I cannot truly say how I came here;
But, as I think,--for truly would I speak,
And now do I bethink me, so it is,--
I came with Hermia hither: our intent
Was to be gone from Athens, where we might,
Without the peril of the Athenian law.

HERMIA

And does my love return to me once more?
I did but dream what happened here before!

DEMETRIUS

Fair Helena 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.
The object and the pleasure of mine eye,

Is only Helena. I will be true.

HELENA

It all returns to that which I have wished;
What came before will vanish as the mist.

LYSANDER

Are you sure that this is real?
It seems to me that yet we sleep.

DEMETRIUS

All for all we do but try a pinch—

They all pinch each other and react with pain

DEMETRIUS

The pinch has proved that we are all awake!

LYSANDER

And from these woods we all must now escape!

HELENA

Back to the castle—Theseus and Hippolyta to wed!

HERMIA

Let's go! Straight on and quickly move ahead!

Exeunt

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— I will get Peter Quince to write a ballad of this dream: it shall be called Bottom's Dream, because it hath no bottom; and I will sing it in the latter end of a play, before the duke--

Exit

Enter QUINCE, FLUTE, SNOUT, and STARVELING

QUINCE

It is time for the wedding!
Time for the entertainment!
Have you sent to Bottom's house ? Is he come home yet?

STARVELING

He cannot be heard of.

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.

Enter SNUG

SNUG

Masters, the duke is coming from the temple, and there is two or three lords and ladies more married:

FLUTE

O sweet bully Bottom!

QUINCE

O, it is time! It is time! We must to the castle!

Enter BOTTOM

BOTTOM

Where are these lads? where are these hearts?

QUINCE

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

BOTTOM

Get your apparel together,
good strings to your beards, new ribbons to your pumps; meet presently at the palace; every man look o'er his part; for the short and the long is, our play is preferred. 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

Scene 7. The palace of THESEUS.

Enter LYSANDER, DEMETRIUS, HERMIA, HELENA, OBERON and TITANIA.

HERMIA

What a beautiful wedding!

HELENA

Hippolyta a beautiful bride!

HERMIA

Theseus a handsome groom!

TITANIA

And Oberon did oversee with bliss.

OBERON

With Titania did bid them both to kiss.

LYSANDER

Joy, gentle friends! Joy and fresh days of love

Accompany our hearts!

HERMIA

And my father has relented, as he should—

And I may marry who I would!

DEMETRIUS

I hear entertainment shall there be

Our Duke and Duchess have decreed!

HELENA

But where are the Duke and Duchess for the play?

OBERON

The two went off alone--without delay...sooo--

ALL

The play!

THE MECHANICALS burst in. ALL others fade to the side to watch.

.QUINCE

'A tedious brief scene of young Pyramus

And his love Thisbe; very tragical mirth.'

Flourish of trumpets

Enter Pyramus and Thisbe, Wall, Moonshine, and Lion

Prologue (*split the lines amongst the performers*)

This man is Pyramus, if you would know;

This beauteous lady Thisbe is certain.

This man, with lime and rough-cast, doth present Wall,

This man, Presenteth Moonshine;

This grisly beast, which Lion is by name!

The cast announced and ready now are we:

Here to present The Tragic Tale of Pyramus and Thisbe!

Exeunt Prologue, Thisbe, Lion, and Moonshine

HELENA

I wonder if the lion be to speak.

DEMETRIUS

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

Wall

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.
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.

HELENA

Would you desire wall and chink to speak better?

DEMETRIUS

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

Enter Pyramus

LYSANDER

Pyramus draws near the wall: silence!

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 Thisbe's promise is forgot!
And thou, O wall, O sweet, O lovely wall,
That stand'st between her father's ground and mine!
Thou wall, O wall, O sweet and lovely wall,
Show me thy chink, to blink through with mine eyne!

Wall holds up his fingers

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

LYSANDER

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

Pyramus

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

Enter Thisbe

Thisbe

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

Pyramus

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

Thisbe

My love thou art, my love I think.

Pyramus

O kiss me through the hole of this vile wall!

Thisbe

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

Pyramus

Wilt thou at Ninny's tomb meet me straightway?

Thisbe

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

Exeunt Pyramus and Thisbe

Wall

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

Exit

Enter Lion and Moonshine

Lion

You, ladies, you, whose gentle hearts do fear
The smallest monstrous mouse that creeps on floor,
May now perchance both quake and tremble here,
When lion rough in wildest rage doth roar.

Moonshine

Myself the man i' the moon do seem to be.

DEMETRIUS

Here comes Thisbe.

Enter Thisbe

Thisbe

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

Lion

[Roaring] Oh--

Thisbe runs off

DEMETRIUS

Well roared, Lion.

HELENA

Well run, Thisbe.

OBERON

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

The Lion shakes Thisbe's mantle, and exits

Enter Pyramus

Pyramus

Sweet Moon, I thank thee for thy sunny beams;
I thank thee, Moon, for shining now so bright;
For, by thy gracious, golden, glittering gleams,
I trust to take of truest Thisbe sight.

But stay, O spite!

But mark, poor knight,

What dreadful dole is here!

Eyes, do you see?

How can it be?

O dainty duck! O dear!

Thy mantle good,

What, stain'd with blood!

O wherefore, Nature, didst thou lions frame?

Since lion vile hath here deflower'd my dear:

Which is--no, no--which was the fairest dame

That lived, that loved, that liked, that look'd
with cheer.

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;

Moon take thy flight:

Exit Moonshine

Now die, die, die, die, die.

Dies

HERMIA

With the help of a surgeon he might yet recover, and
prove an ass.

HELENA

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

TITANIA

She will find him by starlight. Here she comes--

Re-enter Thisbe

HERMIA

She hath spied him already with those sweet eyes.

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 My lips,

This cherry nose,

These yellow cowslip cheeks,

Are gone, are gone:

Lovers, make moan:

His eyes were green as leeks.

O Sisters Three,

Come, come to me,

With hands as pale as milk;

Lay them in gore,

Since you have shore

With shears his thread of silk.

Tongue, not a word:

Come, trusty sword;

Come, blade, my breast imbrue:

Stabs herself

And, farewell, friends;

Thus Thisbe ends:

Adieu, adieu, adieu.

Dies

HELENA

Moonshine and Lion are left to bury the dead.

DEMETRIUS

Ay, and Wall too.

Exeunt MECHANICALS. Immediately, they re-enter for a curtain call. PUCK also enters, observing. During the curtain call, the actors call out (director may assign who says which):

You see we are not dead! Pyramus and Thisbe's love will live forever! True love never dies! Thundering applause! Thank you! Thank you!

OBERON

(quieting the applause)

So shall all the couples thee

Ever true in loving be;

For all was lost on stage for those who loved,

We saw the woods were chaos this mid-sum'.

So on we'll live and love and, come the morn—

These couples gather here and unto each be sworn!

Exeunt OBERON, TITANIA, and train.

The other couples hug or join hands.

PUCK

If we shadows have offended,

Think but this, and all is mended,

That you have but slumber'd here

While these visions did appear.

And this weak and idle theme,

No more yielding but a dream,

Gentles, do not reprehend:

if you pardon, we will mend:

So, good night unto you all.

Give me your hands, if we be friends,

And Robin shall restore amends.

BLACKOUT.

END OF PLAY.