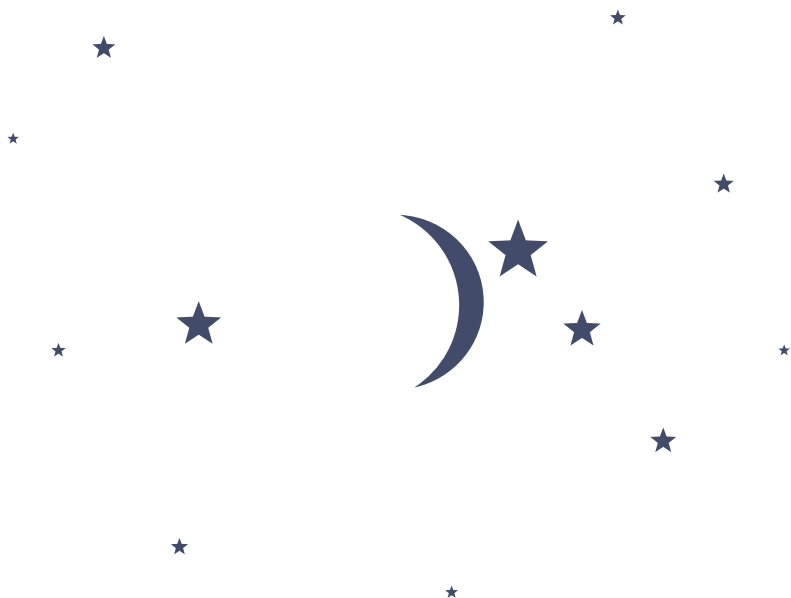


A Midsummer Night's Dream

)



“The course of true love never did run smooth”

ACT I, SCENE 1, LINE 134

WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE



A Midsummer Night's Dream

ACTS ONE AND TWO

from the comedy in five acts

A READING AND ACTING TEXT

A Midsummer Night's Dream was first printed in quarto in 1600, and again in the First Folio of 1623.

This text follows the Standard Ebooks edition (standardebooks.org), based on a Project Gutenberg transcription and scans from the HathiTrust Digital Library, and dedicated to the public domain under CC0 1.0. Spelling and punctuation are those of that edition; stage directions are set in brackets.

Shared verse lines are set in step: a speech that completes a line begun by another starts where the first part ends. Lines are numbered in fives within each scene; in prose every printed line counts.

Speakers' names are coloured by household — court, lovers, mechanicals, fairies — as in the list of characters; the running head of each right-hand page names who speaks there.

Set in PT Serif and PT Sans (ParaType, SIL Open Font License). Ornaments drawn for this edition.

Typeset as a portfolio sample in Adobe InDesign.

DRAMATIS PERSONAE

THE COURT OF ATHENS

THESEUS	<i>Duke of Athens</i>
EGEUS	<i>father to Hermia</i>
PHILOSTRATE	<i>master of the revels to Theseus</i>
HIPPOLYTA	<i>queen of the Amazons, betrothed to Theseus</i>

THE LOVERS

LYSANDER	<i>in love with Hermia</i>
DEMETRIUS	<i>in love with Hermia</i>
HERMIA	<i>daughter to Egeus, in love with Lysander</i>
HELENA	<i>in love with Demetrius</i>

THE MECHANICALS

QUINCE	<i>a carpenter</i>
SNUG	<i>a joiner</i>
BOTTOM	<i>a weaver</i>
FLUTE	<i>a bellows-mender</i>
SNOUT	<i>a tinker</i>
STARVELING	<i>a tailor</i>

THE FAIRIES

OSBERON	<i>king of the fairies</i>
TITANIA	<i>queen of the fairies</i>
PUCK	<i>or Robin Goodfellow</i>
PEASEBLOSSOM	<i>fairy</i>
COBWEB	<i>fairy</i>
MOTH	<i>fairy</i>
MUSTARDSEED	<i>fairy</i>

Other fairies attending their king and queen. Attendants on Theseus and Hippolyta

Scene: Athens, and a wood near it

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DEMETRIUS



ACT I

SCENE I

Athens. The palace of Theseus.

[Enter THESEUS, HIPPOLYTA, PHILOSTRATE, and Attendants.]

- 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! she lingers my desires,
Like to a step-dame or a dowager 5
Long withering out a young man's revenue.
- 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 10
Of our solemnities.
- THESEUS** Go, Philostrate,
Stir up the Athenian youth to merriments;
Awake the pert and nimble spirit of mirth:
Turn melancholy forth to funerals;
The pale companion is not for our pomp. 15
- [Exit PHILOSTRATE.]*
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.

[Enter EGEUS, HERMIA, LYSANDER, and DEMETRIUS.]

EGEUS	Happy be Theseus, our renowned duke!	20
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: Thou hast by moonlight at her window sung With feigning voice verses of feigning love, And stolen the impression of her fantasy With bracelets of thy hair, rings, gauds, conceits, Knacks, trifles, nosegays, sweetmeats, messengers Of strong prevailment in unhardened youth: 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, according to our law Immediately provided in that case.	25 30 35 40 45
THESEUS	What say you, Hermia? be advised, fair maid: To you your father should be as a god; One that composed your beauties, yea, and one To whom you are but as a form in wax By him imprinted and within his power To leave the figure or disfigure it. Demetrius is a worthy gentleman.	50
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.	55
HERMIA	I would my father look'd but with my eyes.	
THESEUS	Rather your eyes must with his judgment look.	
HERMIA	I do entreat your grace to pardon me. I know not by what power I am made bold, Nor how it may concern my modesty, In such a presence here to plead my thoughts; But I beseech your grace that I may know The worst that may befall me in this case, If I refuse to wed Demetrius.	60
THESEUS	Either to die the death or to abjure Forever the society of men. Therefore, fair Hermia, question your desires; Know of your youth, examine well your blood, Whether, if you yield not to your father's choice, You can endure the livery of a nun, For aye to be in shady cloister mew'd, To live a barren sister all your life, Chanting faint hymns to the cold fruitless moon. Thrice-blessed they that master so their blood, To undergo such maiden pilgrimage; But earthlier happy is the rose distill'd, Than that which withering on the virgin thorn Grows, lives and dies in single blessedness.	65 70 75
HERMIA	So will I grow, so live, so die, my lord, Ere I will yield my virgin patent up Unto his lordship, whose unwished yoke My soul consents not to give sovereignty.	80
THESEUS	Take time to pause; and, by the next new moon— The sealing-day betwixt my love and me, For everlasting bond of fellowship— Upon that day either prepare to die For disobedience to your father's will, Or else to wed Demetrius, as he would;	85

	Or on Diana's altar to protest For aye austerity and single life.	90
DEMETRIUS	Relent, sweet Hermia: and, Lysander, yield Thy crazed title to my certain right.	
LYSANDER	You have her father's love, Demetrius; Let me have Hermia's: do you marry him.	
EGEUS	Scornful Lysander! true, he hath my love, And what is mine my love shall render him. And she is mine, and all my right of her I do estate unto Demetrius.	95
LYSANDER	I am, my lord, as well derived as he, As well possess'd; my love is more than his; My fortunes every way as fairly rank'd, If not with vantage, as Demetrius'; And, which is more than all these boasts can be, I am beloved of beauteous Hermia: Why should not I then prosecute my right? Demetrius, I'll avouch it to his head, 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.	100 105 110
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 schooling for you both. For you, fair Hermia, look you arm yourself To fit your fancies to your father's will; Or else the law of Athens yields you up— Which by no means we may extenuate— To death, or to a vow of single life. Come, my Hippolyta: what cheer, my love? Demetrius and Egeus, go along: I must employ you in some business	115 120

Against our nuptial and confer with you 125
Of something nearly that concerns yourselves.

EGEUS With duty and desire we follow you.

[Exeunt all but LYSANDER and HERMIA.]

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

HERMIA Belike for want of rain, which I could well 130
Beteem them from the tempest of mine eyes.

LYSANDER Ay me! for aught that ever I could read,
Could ever hear by tale or history,
The course of true love never did run smooth;
But, either it was different in blood— 135

HERMIA O cross! too high to be enthrall'd to low.

LYSANDER Or else misgraffed in respect of years—

HERMIA O spite! too old to be engaged to young.

LYSANDER Or else it stood upon the choice of friends—

HERMIA O hell! to choose love by another's eyes. 140

LYSANDER Or, if there were a sympathy in choice,
War, death, or sickness did lay siege to it,
Making it momentary as a sound,
Swift as a shadow, short as any dream;
Brief as the lightning in the collied night, 145
That, in a spleen, unfolds both heaven and earth,
And ere a man hath power to say, "Behold!"
The jaws of darkness do devour it up:
So quick bright things come to confusion.

HERMIA If then true lovers have ever cross'd, 150
It stands as an edict in destiny:
Then let us teach our trial patience,
Because it is a customary cross,
As due to love as thoughts and dreams and sighs,
Wishes and tears, poor fancy's followers. 155

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. 160
 There, gentle Hermia, may I marry thee;
 And to that place the sharp Athenian law
 Cannot pursue us. If thou lovest me, then,
 Steal forth thy father's house tomorrow night;
 And in the wood, a league without the town, 165
 Where I did meet thee once with Helena,
 To do observance to a morn of May,
 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, 170
 By the simplicity of Venus' doves,
 By that which knitteth souls and prospers loves,
 And by that fire which burn'd the Carthage queen,
 When the false Trojan under sail was seen,
 By all the vows that ever men have broke, 175
 In number more than ever women spoke,
 In that same place thou hast appointed me,
 Tomorrow truly will I meet with thee.

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

[Enter HELENA.]

HERMIA God speed fair Helena! whither away? 180

HELENA Call you me fair? that fair again unsay.
 Demetrius loves your fair: O happy fair!
 Your eyes are lode-stars; and your tongue's sweet air
 More tuneable than lark to shepherd's ear,
 When wheat is green, when hawthorn buds appear. 185
 Sickness is catching: O, were favour so,
 Yours would I catch, fair Hermia, ere I go;
 My ear should catch your voice, my eye your eye,
 My tongue should catch your tongue's sweet melody.
 Were the world mine, Demetrius being bated, 190

The rest I'd give to be to you translated.
 O, teach me how you look, and with what art
 You sway the motion of Demetrius' heart.

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

HELENA O that your frowns would teach my smiles such skill! 195

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. 200

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.
 Before the time I did Lysander see,
 Seem'd Athens as a paradise to me: 205
 O, then, what graces in my love do dwell,
 That he hath turn'd a heaven into hell!

LYSANDER Helen, to you our minds we will unfold:
 Tomorrow night, when Phoebe doth behold
 Her silver visage in the watery glass, 210
 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, 215
 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; 220
 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: 225
 As you on him, Demetrius dote on you! *[Exit.]*

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: 230
 And as he errs, doting on Hermia's eyes,
 So I, admiring of his qualities:
 Things base and vile, holding no quantity,
 Love can transpose to form and dignity:
 Love looks not with the eyes, but with the mind; 235
 And therefore is wing'd Cupid painted blind:
 Nor hath Love's mind of any judgment taste;
 Wings and no eyes figure unheedy haste:
 And therefore is Love said to be a child,
 Because in choice he is so oft beguiled. 240
 As waggish boys in game themselves forswear,
 So the boy Love is perjured everywhere:
 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, 245
 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 tomorrow night
 Pursue her; and for this intelligence
 If I have thanks, it is a dear expense: 250
 But herein mean I to enrich my pain,
 To have his sight thither and back again. *[Exit.]*

SCENE II

Athens. 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, ac-

ording to the scrip.

QUINCE Here is the scroll of every man's name, which is thought fit, through all Athens, to play in our interlude before the duke and duchess, on his wedding-day at night. 5

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*. 10

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. 15

QUINCE You, Nick Bottom, are set down for Pyramus.

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

QUINCE A lover, that kills himself most gallant for love.

BOTTOM That will ask some tears in the true performing of it: if I do it, let the audience look to their eyes; I will move storms, I will condole in some measure. To the rest: yet my chief humour is for a tyrant: I could play Ercles rarely, or a part to tear a cat in, to make all split. 20

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. 25 30

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

QUINCE Francis Flute, the bellows-mender.

FLUTE Here, Peter Quince. 35

- QUINCE** Flute, you must take Thisby on you.
- FLUTE** What is Thisby? a wandering knight?
- QUINCE** It is the lady that Pyramus must love.
- FLUTE** Nay, faith, let not me play a woman; I have a beard coming. 40
- QUINCE** That's all one: you shall play it in a mask, and you may speak as small as you will.
- BOTTOM** An I may hide my face, let me play Thisby too, I'll speak in a monstrous little voice, "Thisne, Thisne;" "Ah Pyramus, my lover dear! thy Thisbe dear, and lady dear!" 45
- 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 Thisbe's mother. Tom 50
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. 55
- 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 60
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. 65

BOTTOM I grant you, friends, if you should fright the ladies out of their wits, they would have no more discretion but to hang us: but I will aggravate my voice so that I will roar you as gently as any sucking dove; I will roar you an 'twere any nightingale. 70

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? 75

QUINCE Why, what you will.

BOTTOM I will discharge it in either your straw-colour beard, your orange-tawny beard, your purple-in-grain beard, or your French-crown-colour beard, your perfect yellow. 80

QUINCE Some of your French crowns have no hair at all, and then you will play barefaced. But, masters, here are your parts: and I am to entreat you, request you and desire you, to con them by tomorrow night; and meet me in the palace wood, a mile without the town, by moonlight; there will we rehearse, for if we meet in the city, we shall be dogged with company, and our devices known. In the meantime I will draw a bill of properties, such as our play wants. I pray you fail me not. 85

BOTTOM We will meet; and there we may rehearse most obscenely and courageously. Take pains; be perfect: adieu. 90

QUINCE At the duke's oak we meet.

BOTTOM Enough; hold, or cut bow-strings. [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,
Thorough bush, thorough brier,
Over park, over pale,
Thorough flood, thorough fire, 5
I do wander everywhere,
Swifter than the moon's sphere;
And I serve the fairy queen,
To dew her orbs upon the green.
The cowslips tall her pensioners be: 10
In their gold coats spots you see;
Those be rubies, fairy favours,
In those freckles live their savours:
I must go seek some dewdrops here
And hang a pearl in every cowslip's ear. 15
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 tonight:
Take heed the queen come not within his sight;
For Oberon is passing fell and wrath, 20
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; 25
 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 30
 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; 35
 Skim milk, and sometimes labour in the quern
 And bootless make the breathless housewife churn;
 And sometime make the drink to bear no barm;
 Mislead night-wanderers, laughing at their harm?
 Those that Hobgoblin call you and sweet Puck, 40
 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.
 I jest to Oberon and make him smile 45
 When I a fat and bean-fed horse beguile,
 Neighing in likeness of a filly foal:
 And sometime lurk I in a gossip's bowl,
 In very likeness of a roasted crab,
 And when she drinks, against her lips I bob 50
 And on her wither'd dewlap pour the ale.
 The wisest aunt, telling the saddest tale,
 Sometime for three-foot stool mistaketh me;
 Then slip I from her bum, down topples she,
 And "tailor" cries, and falls into a cough; 55
 And then the whole choir hold their hips and laugh,
 And waxen in their mirth and neeze and swear
 A merrier hour was never wasted there.
 But, room, fairy! here comes Oberon.

FAIRY And here my mistress. Would that he were gone! 60

[Enter, from one side, OBERON, with his train; from the other, TITANIA, with hers.]

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: but I know 65
When thou hast stolen away from fairy land,
And in the shape of Corin sat all day,
Playing on pipes of corn and versing love
To amorous Phillida. Why art thou here,
Come from the farthest steppe of India? 70
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, 75
Glance at my credit with Hippolyta,
Knowing I know thy love to Theseus?
Didst thou not lead him through the glimmering night
From Perigenia, whom he ravished?
And make him with fair Aegle break his faith, 80
With Ariadne and Antiopa?

TITANIA These are the forgeries of jealousy:
And never, since the middle summer's spring,
Met we on hill, in dale, forest or mead,
By paved fountain or by rushy brook, 85
Or in the beached margent of the sea,
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 90
Contagious fogs; which falling in the land
Hath every pelting river made so proud
That they have overborne their continents:
The ox hath therefore stretch'd his yoke in vain,

The ploughman lost his sweat, and the green corn 95
 Hath rotted ere his youth attain'd a beard;
 The fold stands empty in the drowned field,
 And crows are fatted with the murrion flock;
 The nine men's morris is fill'd up with mud,
 And the quaint mazes in the wanton green 100
 For lack of tread are undistinguishable:
 The human mortals want their winter here;
 No night is now with hymn or carol blest:
 Therefore the moon, the governess of floods,
 Pale in her anger, washes all the air, 105
 That rheumatic diseases do abound:
 And thorough this distemperature we see
 The seasons alter: hoary-headed frosts
 Fall in the fresh lap of the crimson rose,
 And on old Hiems' thin and icy crown 110
 An odorous chaplet of sweet summer buds
 Is, as in mockery, set: the spring, the summer,
 The childing autumn, angry winter, change
 Their wonted liveries, and the mazed world,
 By their increase, now knows not which is which: 115
 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? 120
 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.
 His mother was a votaress of my order:
 And, in the spiced Indian air, by night, 125
 Full often hath she gossip'd by my side,
 And sat with me on Neptune's yellow sands,
 Marking the embarked traders on the flood,
 When we have laugh'd to see the sails conceive
 And grow big-bellied with the wanton wind; 130
 Which she, with pretty and with swimming gait

Following—her womb then rich with my young squire—
Would imitate, and sail upon the land,
To fetch me trifles, and return again,
As from a voyage, rich with merchandise.
But she, being mortal, of that boy did die;
And for her sake do I rear up her boy,
And for her sake I will not part with him.

OBERON How long within this wood intend you stay?

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

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

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

[Exit TITANIA with her train.]

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 throned by the west,
 And loosed his love-shaft smartly from his bow, 160
 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. 165

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 shew'd thee once: 170
 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. 175

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, 180
 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, 185
 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 following him.]

DEMETRIUS I love thee not, therefore pursue me not.
 Where is Lysander and fair Hermia? 190
 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 with Hermia.
 Hence, get thee gone, and follow me no more. 195

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? 200
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: 205
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— 210
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, 215
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. 220
- HELENA** Your virtue is my privilege: for that
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: 225
Then how can it be said I am alone,
When all the world is here to look on me?
- 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. 230
Run when you will, the story shall be changed:
Apollo flies, and Daphne holds the chase;
The dove pursues the griffin; the mild hind
Makes speed to catch the tiger; bootless speed,
When cowardice pursues and valour flies. 235

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! 240
Your wrongs do set a scandal on my sex:
We cannot fight for love, as men may do;
We should be woo'd 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.] 245

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

[Reenter 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, 250
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,
Lull'd in these flowers with dances and delight; 255
And there the snake throws her enamell'd skin,
Weed wide enough to wrap a fairy in:
And with the juice of this I'll streak her eyes,
And make her full of hateful fantasies.
Take thou some of it, and seek through this grove: 260
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. 265
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 II

Another part of the wood.

[*Enter TITANIA, with her train.*]

TITANIA

Come, now a roundel and a fairy song;
Then, for the third part of a minute, hence;
Some to kill cankers in the musk-rose buds,
Some war with rere-mice for their leathern wings,
To make my small elves coats, and some keep back
The clamorous owl that nightly hoots and wonders
At our quaint spirits. Sing me now asleep;
Then to your offices and let me rest.

5

[*The FAIRIES sing.*]

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

10

*Philomel, with melody
Sing in our sweet lullaby;
Lulla, lulla, lullaby; lulla, lulla, lullaby:*

15

*Never harm,
Nor spell nor charm,
Come our lovely lady nigh;
So, good night, with lullaby.
Weaving spiders come not here;
Hence, you long-legg'd spinners, hence!
Beetles black, approach not near;
Worm nor snail, do no offence.
Philomel, with melody, etc.*

20

A FAIRY

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

25

[*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:
Be it ounce, or cat, or bear, 30
Pard, or boar with bristled hair,
In thy eye that shall appear
When thou wakest, it is thy dear:
Wake when some vile thing is near. *[Exit.]*

[Enter LYSANDER and HERMIA.]

LYSANDER Fair love, you faint with wandering in the wood; 35
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. 40

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! 45
Love takes the meaning in love's conference.
I mean, that my heart unto yours is knit
So that but one heart we can make of it;
Two bosoms interchained with an oath;
So then two bosoms and a single troth. 50
Then by your side no bedroom 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. 55
But, gentle friend, for love and courtesy
Lie further off; in human modesty,
Such separation as may well be said

Becomes a virtuous bachelor and a maid,
 So far be distant; and, good night, sweet friend: 60
 Thy love ne'er alter till thy sweet life end!

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

HERMIA With half that wish the wisher's eyes be press'd! 65
[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? 70
 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. 75
 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 80
 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. 85

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; 90
 For she hath blessed and attractive eyes.
 How came her eyes so bright? Not with salt tears:
 If so, my eyes are oftener wash'd than hers.
 No, no, I am as ugly as a bear;
 For beasts that meet me run away for fear: 95
 Therefore no marvel though Demetrius
 Do, as a monster, fly my presence thus.
 What wicked and dissembling glass of mine
 Made me compare with Hermia's spheny eyne?
 But who is here? Lysander! on the ground! 100
 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. 105
 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. 110

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?
 The will of man is by his reason sway'd; 115
 And reason says you are the worthier maid.
 Things growing are not ripe until their season:
 So I, being young, till now ripe not to reason;
 And touching now the point of human skill,
 Reason becomes the marshal to my will, 120
 And leads me to your eyes, where I o'erlook
 Love's stories written in love's richest book.

HELENA Wherefore was I to this keen mockery born?
 When at your hands did I deserve this scorn?
 Is't not enough, is't not enough, young man, 125
 That I did never, no, nor never can,

Deserve a sweet look from Demetrius' eye,
 But you must flout my insufficiency?
 Good troth, you do me wrong, good sooth, you do,
 In such disdainful manner me to woo. 130
 But fare you well: perforce I must confess
 I thought you lord of more true gentleness.
 O, that a lady, of one man refused,
 Should of another therefore be abused! [Exit.]

LYSANDER She sees not Hermia. Hermia, sleep thou there: 135
 And never mayst thou come Lysander near!
 For as a surfeit of the sweetest things
 The deepest loathing to the stomach brings,
 Or as the heresies that men do leave
 Are hated most of those they did deceive, 140
 So thou, my surfeit and my heresy,
 Of all be hated, but the most of me!
 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 145
 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. 150
 Lysander! what, removed? Lysander! lord!
 What, out of hearing? gone? no sound, no word?
 Alack, where are you? speak, and if you hear;
 Speak, of all loves! I swoon almost with fear.
 No? then I well perceive you are not nigh: 155
 Either death or you I'll find immediately. [Exit.]

