

***A MIDSUMMER NIGHT'S DREAM* By William Shakespeare**

Characters

(in order of appearance)

THESEUS – Duke of Athens (Could double Oberon)

HIPPOLYTA – Queen of the Amazons, betrothed to Theseus (Could double Titania)

EGEUS – father of Hermia, wants her to marry Demetrius (Could double Puck)

HERMIA – daughter of Egeus, in love with Lysander

DEMETRIUS- initially loves Hermia, but later loves Helena

LYSANDER – in love with Hermia at first but later loves Helena and then returns to loving Hermia

HELENA - in love with Demetrius, Hermia's friend

QUINCE - carpenter, leads the troupe and plays Prologue

BOTTOM - weaver, plays Pyramus

FLUTE - bellows-mender, plays Thisbe

STARVELING - tailor, plays Moonshine

SNOUT - tinker, plays Wall

SNUG - joiner, plays Lion

PUCK – servant to Oberon

PEASBLOSSOM - fairy servant to Titania (Could double Egeus, Titania or Theseus)

OBERON - Titania's husband and King of the Fairies TITANIA - Oberon's wife and Queen of the Fairies

SCENE ONE

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

HIPPOLYTA: Four days will quickly steep themselves in night;
Four nights will quickly dream away the time;

THESEUS: Hippolyta, I 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, and his daughter HERMIA, LYSANDER, and DEMETRIUS

EGEUS. Happy be Theseus, our renowned Duke!

THESEUS. Thanks good Egeus. What's the news with thee?

EGEUS. I come with complaint against my daughter
Hermia. My noble lord, this man hath
My consent to marry her. Stand forth Lysander.
And, my gracious Duke, this man hath bewitched
The bosom of my child and turned her obedience
To stubborn harshness! She will not consent
To marry with Demetrius! I beg the ancient
Privilege of Athens: I may dispose of her;
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! I do entreat your Grace
To pardon me. I know not by what power
I am made bold. 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
Forever the society of men.
You can endure the livery of a nun.

HERMIA. So will I grow, so live, so die, my lord.

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!

LYSANDER. I am, my lord, as well deriv'd as he!
Why should not I then prosecute my right?
And Demetrius, I'll avouch it to his head,
Made love to Nedar's daughter, Helena
And won her soul!

THESEUS. I must confess that I have heard so much.
Demetrius and Egeus, you shall go with me.
For you fair Hermia, fit your fancies to
Your father's will! Come, my Hippolyta;
What cheer, my love?
Demetrius and Egeus, go along.

EGEUS. With duty and desire we follow you.

SCENE TWO

- 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
Beteem them from the tempest of my eyes.
- LYSANDER. Ay, me! For aught that I could ever read,
The course of true love never did run smooth;
- HERMIA. O hell! to choose love by another's eyes.
- LYSANDER. Hear me, Hermia.
I have a widow aunt, a dowager
From Athens is her house remote seven leagues-
There gentle Hermia, may I marry thee!
If thou lovest me then,
Steal forth from thy father's house tonight
- HERMIA. My good Lysander,
I swear by Cupid's strongest bow
Truly will I meet with thee.
- LYSANDER. Look, here comes Helena!
- HERMIA. God speed fair Helena! Whither away?
- HELENA. Call you me fair? That fair again unsay!
Demetrius loves your fair: O happy fair!
Sickness is catching, O were favour so,
Yours would I catch, fair Hermia, ere I go.
O, teach me how you look, and with what art
You sway the motion of Demetrius' heart.
- HERMIA. I frown on 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. 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:
Tonight through Athens gates have we
Devised to steal.

HERMIA. And in the wood my Lysander and myself
Will meet! Farewell, sweet playfellow;
And good luck grant thee thy Demetrius!

(HERMIA AND LYSANDER EXIT)

HELENA. How happy some over other some can be!
Through Athens I am thought as fair as she.
But what of that? Demetrius thinks not so!
Yet, ere Demetrius look'd on Hermia's eyne,
He hailed down oaths that he was only mine!
I will go tell him of fair Hermia's flight!
If I have his thanks, it is a dear expense!

SCENE THREE

- QUINCE. Is all our company here?
- BOTTOM. You were best to call them man by man, according to the script. First, good Peter Quince, say what the play treats on; then read the names of the actors.
- 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!
"The raging rocks, and shivering shocks,
Shall break the locks, of prison gates!"
This was lofty!
- 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, let me not play a woman! I have a beard coming!
- BOTTOM. Let me play Thisbe, too! I'll speak in a monstrous little voice: "Thisne, Thisne"- "Ah, Pyramus, my lover 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. You must play the Moon by which the lovers meet. Tom Snout, the Tinker?

SNOUT. Here, Peter Quince!

QUINCE. You, the Wall that did the lovers sunder; myself, the Prologue; Snug the Joiner, you the lion's part.

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

QUINCE. It is nothing but roaring.

BOTTOM. Let me play the lion's part as well. I will roar, that I will make the Duke say: "Let him roar again; let him roar again!"

QUINCE. You would fright the ladies, that they would shriek: and that were enough to hang us all.

SNOUT: That would hang us, every mother's son!

BOTTOM: I grant you, friends. So, I will roar as gently as any sucking dove; I will roar as 'twere a nightingale.

QUINCE. You can play no part but Pyramus! Now masters, here are your parts. Meet me in the palace wood, a mile without the town; there we will 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!

SCENE FOUR

PUCK. How now, spirit! Whither wander you?

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

PUCK. The King doth keep his revels here tonight;
Take heed the Queen come not within his sight!

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

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

PEASEBLOSSOM. And my mistress. Would that he were gone!

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 I not thy Lord?

TITANIA. Then I must be thy Lady; Why art thou here?
Never, since the middle summer's spring,
Met we on hill, in dale, forest or mead,
But with thy brawls thou hast disturbed our sport!

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

TITANIA. Set your heart at rest:
The fairy land buys not the child of me!
His mother was a votress of my order,
And for her sake do I rear up her boy;
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 dance 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!
I shall chide downright if I longer stay.

(TITANIA AND HER FAIRY EXIT.)

OBERON. Well, go thy ways! My gentle Puck, come hither.
Thou remember'st a little western flower
Purple with love's wound?
Fetch me that flower; the juice of it,
On sleeping eyelids laid,
Will make a man or woman madly dote
Upon the next live creature that it sees.
I'll watch Titania when she is asleep,
And drop the liquor of it in her eyes.
When she wak'st, when some vile thing is near
She shall pursue it with the soul of love!

PUCK. I go, I go! See how I go!

SCENE FIVE

LYSANDER. Fair love, you faint with wandering in the wood.
We'll rest us, Hermia, if you think it good.

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.

HERMIA. Nay, good Lysander; lie further off.
Such separation as may well be said
Becomes a virtuous bachelor and maid.

LYSANDER. Amen to that fair prayer say I;
Here is my bed; sleep give thee all his rest.

(THEY SLEEP. PUCK ENTERS)

PUCK. Through the forest I have gone;
But Athenian found I none-
Night and silence- Who is here?
Weeds of Athens he doth wear!
This is he my master said
Despised the Athenian maid;
And here the maiden, sleeping sound!
Churl, upon thy eyes I throw
All the power this charm doth owe!
So awake when I am gone;
For now must I to Oberon.

(PUCK EXITS. DEMETRIUS AND HELENA ENTER)

DEMETRIUS. I love thee not, therefore pursue me not.
Where is Lysander and fair Hermia?
Thou told'st me they were stol'n 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.

DEMETRIUS. I am sick when I do look on thee!

HELENA. And I am sick when I look not on you!

DEMETRIUS. I'll run from thee and hide me in the brakes,
And leave you to the mercy of wild beasts!

(DEMETRIUS RUNS AWAY)

HELENA. O, I am out of breath in this fond chase!
Happy is Hermia, wheresoever she lies.
But who is here? Lysander, on the ground?
Dead, or asleep? Lysander, if you live,
Good sir, awake!

LYSANDER. And run through fire I will for thy sweet sake!
Transparent Helena! Where is Demetrius?
O, how fit a word to perish on my sword!

HELENA. Do not say so, Lysander, say not so.
Hermia loves you; then be content!

LYSANDER. Content with Hermia? No. I do repent
The tedious minutes I with here have spent.

HELENA. Wherefore was I to this keen mockery born?
You do me wrong, good sooth, you do!
O, that a lady, of one man refused,
Should of another therefore be abused.

(HELENA RUNS AWAY.)

LYSANDER. Hermia, sleep thou there,
And never mayst thou come Lysander near!
For all my powers, address their love and might
To honor Helen, and to be her knight!

(LYSANDER EXITS.)

HERMIA. Help me, Lysander, help me!
Pluck this crawling serpent from my breast!
Ay me, what a dream was here!
Lysander, look how I do quake with fear.
Lysander! What, removed? Lysander! Lord!
What, out of hearing? Gone? Alack, where are you?
Speak! No? Then either death or you
I'll find immediately!

SCENE SIX

BOTTOM. Are we all met?

QUINCE. Pat, pat. This green plot shall be our stage.

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.

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

SNOUT. Will not the ladies be afraid of the lion? I fear it, I
Promise you.

STARVELING. To bring in a lion among ladies is a most dreadful
Thing.

BOTTOM. Not a whit; I have a device to make all well. Write me a
Prologue, and let the prologue say we will do no harm
With our swords and to tell the ladies he is not a lion!

QUINCE. Well, it shall be so. Come sit down,
And rehearse your parts. Thisbe, you begin: when you
Have spoken your speech, Pyramus enter; and so every
One according to his cue.

PUCK. What hempen homespuns have we swaggering here?
So near the cradle of the Fairy Queen?
What, a play toward?

QUINCE. Speak, Thisbe; Pyramus, stand forth.

PUCK. A stranger Pyramus than ever played here!

(BOTTOM AND PUCK EXIT)

FLUTE. Must I speak now?

QUINCE. Ay, marry, must you.

FLUTE. *Most radiant Pyramus, most lily-white of hue
I'll meet thee Pyramus at Ninny's tomb.*

QUINCE. *Ninus tomb, man! Pyramus, enter! Your cue is past!*
(BOTTOM ENTERS AS AN ASS, PUCK FOLLOWING)

BOTTOM. *If I were fair, Thisbe, I were only thine.*

QUINCE. O monstrous!

STARVELING. O strange!

SNOUT. We are haunted!

FLUTE. Help!

QUINCE. Fly, masters! Pray, masters!

(THE RUSTICS EXIT. PUCK ENCHANTS TITANIA)

PUCK. What thou seest when thou dost wake,
Do it for thy true love take;
When thou wak'st it is thy dear.
Wake when some vile thing is near.

(PUCK EXITS)

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! I will walk up and
Down here, and I will sing, that they shall hear I am not
Afraid.

(TITANIA WAKES)

TITANIA. What angel wakes me from my flowery bed?
I pray thee, gentle mortal, sing again.
Mine ear is much enamour'd of thy note;
So is mine eye enthralled to thy shape. 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 nowadays.

TITANIA. Thou art as wise as thou art beautiful.

BOTTOM. Not so neither.

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

SCENE SEVEN

LYSANDER. Why should you think I woo in scorn?

Scorn and derision never come in tears.

Look when I vow, I weep!

HELENA. You do advance your cunning more and more.

These vows are Hermia's. Will you give her o'er?

LYSANDER. I had no judgement when to her I swore!

HELENA. Nor none, in my mind, now.

(DEMETRIUS AWAKES)

DEMETRIUS. O Helen, goddess, nymph, perfect, divine!
To what, my love, shall I compare thine eyne?

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

(HERMIA ENTERS)

HERMIA. Lysander! Why unkindly didst thou leave me so?

LYSANDER. Why should he stay whom love doth press to go?
Not Hermia, but Helena I love: Who will not change
A raven for a dove? Hang off, thou cat, thou burr!

HERMIA. You speak not as you think; it cannot be!

HELENA. Lo, she is one of this confederacy!
Now I perceive they have conjoined all three
To fashion this false sport in spite of me.
Injurious Hermia! Most ungrateful maid!

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

HELENA. Fie, fie, you counterfeit!

HERMIA. You juggler! You canker-blossom!
You thief of love!

HELENA. You puppet you!

HERMIA. Puppet! Why, so? How low am I, thou
Painted maypole? Speak: How low am I?
I am not yet so low but that my nails
Can reach unto thine eyes!

HELENA. I pray you, gentlemen, let her not hurt me!
Let her not strike me. You may think,
Because she is something lower than myself,
That I can match her.

HERMIA. Lower? Hark, again!

HELENA: O , when she is 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?
Let me come to her!

HELENA: Your hands than mine are quicker for a fray:
My legs are longer though, to run away.

(HELENA EXITS RUNNING)

LYSANDER: Get you gone, you dwarf;
You minimus of knot-grass made!

DEMETRIUS. Let her alone; speak not of Helena!

(THEY EXIT, CHASING HELENA)

HERMIA. I am amazed, and know not what to say.

SCENE EIGHT

TITANIA. Come sit thee down upon this flowery bed,
While I thy amiable cheeks do coy,
And kiss thy fair large ears, my gentle joy.

BOTTOM. I had rather have a handful or two of good dry oats.
But, 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.

(THEY SLEEP, OBERON ENTERS)

OBERON. Her dotage now I do begin to pity;
When I had at my pleasure taunted her,
And she in mild terms begged my patience,
I then did ask of her her changeling child;
Which straight she gave me. I will undo
This hateful imperfection of her eyes.
Be as thou wast wont to be;
See as thou wast wont to see-
Now Titania, wake you, my sweet queen.

TITANIA. My Oberon! What visions have I seen!
Methought I was enamored of an ass.

OBERON. There lies your love.

TITANIA. How came these things to pass?

OBERON. Silence awhile. Let me take off his head.
Now when thou wak'st,
With thine own fools eyes peep.
Come my queen take hands with me
Trip we after night's shade,
We the globe can compass soon,
Swifter than the wandering moon.

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

(TITANIA AND OBERON EXIT. BOTTOM AWAKES)

BOTTOM. When my cue comes, call me and I will answer.
My next is *'Most fair Pyramus'*. Heigh-ho! God's my life!

They've stolen hence and left me asleep! I have had a
Most rare vision. I have had a dream. Methought I was-
Methought I had- but man is but a patched fool if he
Will offer to say what methought I had. I will get Peter
Quince to write a ballad of the dream: it shall be called
'Bottom's Dream', because it hath no bottom! But where
Are these lads? Where are these hearts?

(BOTTOM EXITS)

SCENE NINE

- QUINCE. If we offend, it is with our good will.
That you should think, we come not to offend,
But with good will. To show our simple skill,
That is the true beginning of our end.
Consider then we come but in despite.
We do not come, as minding to content you,
Our true intent is. All for your delight,
We are not here! That you should here repent you,
The actors are at hand; and by their show,
You shall know all, that you are like to know.
- SNOOT. In this same interlude it doth befall
That I, one Snout by name, present a wall;
And such a wall as I would have you think
That had in it a crannied hole, or chink,
Through which the lovers, Pyramus and Thisbe,
Did whisper often, very secretly.
That I am this wall; the truth is so:
And this cranny is, right and sinister,
Through which the fearful lovers are to whisper.
- BOTTOM. O grim-looking night! O night with hue so black!
O night, which ever art when day is not!
O night, O night, alack, alack, alack!
O wall, O sweet, O lovely wall,
Show me thy chink, to blink through with mine eyne.
Thanks courteous wall: 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!
- FLUTE. O wall, full often hast thou heard my moans
For parting my fair Pyramus and me!
My cherry lips have often kissed thy stones,
Thy stones with lime and hair knit up in thee.
- BOTTOM. I see a voice; now will I to the chink,
To spy and I can hear my Thisbe's face.
Thisbe?
- FLUTE: My love thou art, my love I think!
- BOTTOM. I am thy lover's grace!
O kiss me through the hole of this vile wall!
- FLUTE. I kiss the wall's hole, not your lips at all.

BOTTOM. Wilt thou at Ninny's tomb meet me straight-away?

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

(BOTTOM AND FLUTE EXIT)

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

(SNOUT EXITS)

SNUG. 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.

(SNUG ROARS)

SNUG. Then know that I as Snug the joiner am;
For if I should as lion come in strife
Into this place, 'twere pity on my life.

(ENTER STARVELING)

STARVELING. This lantern doth the horned moon present-
This lantern doth the horned moon present-
Myself the Man in the Moon do seem to be.
All I have to say is, to tell you that the lantern
Is the moon; I the Man in the Moon; this
Thorn-bush my thorn-bush; and this dog my dog.

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

SNUG. O-! Roar!

(SNUG CHASES FLUTE OFF THE STAGE)

BOTTOM. Sweet moon, I thank thee for thy sunny beams;
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! Stained with blood?
Approach ye Furies fell!
Cut thread and thrum:
Quail , crush, conclude, and quell!
Come tears, confound!
Out sword, and wound
That pap of Pyramus;
Ay, that left pap,
Where heart doth hop:
Thus die I, thus, thus, thus!
Now I am dead,
Now I am fled;
Now die, die, die, die, die!

(FLUTE ENTERS)

FLUTE. Asleep my love? What dead my dove?
O Pyramus, arise!
Speak, speak! Quite dumb?
Dead, dead? A tomb
Must cover thy sweet eyes.
These lily lips,
This cherry nose,
Are gone, gone!
Lovers, make moan;
His eyes were green as leeks.
Tongue, not a word:
Come trusty sword,
Come, blade, my breast imbrue!
And farewell, friends;
Thus Thisbe ends:
Adieu, adieu, adieu!

BOTTOM: *[Starting up]* Will it please you to see the Epilogue?

THESEUS: No epilogue, I pray you; for your play needs no excuse.
 Never excuse; for when the players are all dead there need
 none to be blamed. Let your epilogue alone.

[Music and a dance] All exit

PUCK: If we shadows have offended,
 Think but this, and all is mended,
 That you have but slumb'ed here
 While these visions did appear.
 And this weak and idle theme,
 No more yielding but a dream.
 Give me your hands, if we be friends,
 And Robin shall restore amends.

Exit

-The End-