



Benjamin Britten
A Midsummer Night's Dream
Downloadable Libretto

TESTAMENT

A MIDSUMMER NIGHT'S DREAM

Libretto by Benjamin Britten and Peter Pears,
after Shakespeare

CD 1

ACT ONE

1

Introduction

The wood. Deepening twilight

(Enter Fairies, first group with Cobweb and Mustardseed, second group with Peaseblossom and Moth.)

FAIRIES

Over hill, over dale, thorough bush, thorough brier,
Over park, over pale, thorough flood,
thorough fire,

We do wander everywhere,
Swifter than the moone's sphere;
And we serve the Fairy Queen
To dew her orbs upon the green.

FOUR SOLO FAIRIES

Cowslips tall, her pensioners be,
In their gold coats, spots you see,
Those be rubies, fairy favours,
In those freckles live their savours.

ALL FAIRIES

We must go seek some dewdrops here,
And hang a pearl in every cowslip's ear.

(Puck appears suddenly.)

PUCK (calling)

How now, spirits?

(The fairies scatter to the side.)

FAIRIES

Or I mistake your shape and making quite:
Or are you not that shrewd and knavish sprite
Call'd Robin Goodfellow? Are you not he,
That frights the maidens of the villagery,

Skim milk, and sometimes labour in the quern,
And bootless make the breathless huswife churn,
And sometimes make the drink to bear no barm,
Mislead night-wanderers, laughing at their harm?
You do the work and they shall have good luck,
They that Hobgoblin call you, and sweet Puck!

PUCK

But room, fairies, here comes Oberon.

FAIRIES

And here our mistress.

COBWEB

Would that he were gone.

(Enter slowly Oberon and Tytania, with her train from opposite sides.)

2

FAIRIES (whispered)

Oberon is passing fell and wrath,
Because that she, as her attendant, hath
A lovely boy stolen from an Indian King,
And jealous Oberon would have the child.

OBERON

I'll met by moonlight,
Proud Tytania.

TYTANIA

I'll met by moonlight
Jealous Oberon.
Fairies, skip hence,
I have forsworn his bed and company.

(The Fairies hide.)

OBERON, TYTANIA

Therefore the winds have suck'd up from the sea
Contagious fogs.

Therefore the ox hath stretched his yoke in vain,
The fold stands empty in the drowned fields,
The crows are fatted with the murrion flock.

The seasons alter: the spring, the summer,
The childing autumn, the angry winter change

Their wonted liv'ries, and the mazed world,
By their increase, now knows not which is which;
And this same progeny of evils comes
From our debate, from our dissention,
We are their parents and original, we are.

OBERON

Do you amend it then, it lies in you!
I do but beg a little changeling boy,
To be my henchman.

TYTANIA

Set your heart at rest,
The Fairy land buys not the child of me.
His mother was a votress of my Order,
But she being mortal, of that boy did die,
And for her sake I will not part with him.

OBERON

Give me that boy and I will go with thee.

TYTANIA

Not for thy Fairy kingdom. Fairies away!

(Exit Tytania and Fairies.)

3

OBERON

Well, go thy way: thou shalt not from this grove,
Till I torment thee for this injury.
My gentle Puck come hither;
(Puck approaches Oberon.)
thou rememb'rst
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,
(Be it on Lion, Bear or Wolf, or Bull,
On meddling Monkey or busy Ape.)
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.

(He flies off.)

OBERON

Having once this juice,
I'll watch Tytania, when she is asleep,
And drop the liquor of it in her eyes:
And ere I take this charm from off her sight
I'll make her render up her page to me.

(Oberon disappears and the wood is left empty.)

(Enter Lysander and Hermia, separately, and meeting.)

LYSANDER

4

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

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

HERMIA, LYSANDER

O cross! Too high to be enthral'd to low.
Or else misgraffed, in respect of years:
O spite! Too old to be engag'd to young.
Or else it stood upon the choice of friends.
O hell! To choose love by another's eyes.
If then true lovers ever have been cross'd,
It stands as an edict in destiny.

HERMIA

Then let us teach our trial patience.

LYSANDER

A good persuasion; therefore hear me Hermia,
I have a widow aunt, a dowager;
Of great revennew, and she hath no child:
From Athens is her house remote seven leagues,

And she respects me, as her only son:
There, gentle Hermia, may I marry thee,
And to that place, the sharp Athenian Law
(Compelling thee to marry with Demetrius)
Cannot pursue us. If thou lov'st me, then,
There will I go with thee.

HERMIA

My good Lysander, (if thou lov'st me)
I swear to thee, by Cupid's strongest bow,

LYSANDER

I swear to thee,
By his best arrow with the golden head,

HERMIA, LYSANDER

I swear to thee 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,
In number more than ever woman spoke,
I swear, I swear...

(They slowly go out. The Wood is empty.)

(Oberon appears.)

OBERON

[5] (Be it on Lion, Bear or Wolf, or Bull,
on meddling Monkey, or busy Ape).
But who comes here? I am invisible;
I will overhear their conference.

(Enter Demetrius, Helena pursuing him.)

DEMETRIUS

I love thee not, therefore pursue me not,
Where is Lysander, and fair Hermia?
The one I'll slay, the other slayeth me.
Thou told'st me they were stol'n 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 *(panting)*

You draw me, you hard-hearted adamant
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

Even for that do I love you the more;
I am your spaniel, and, Demetrius,
The more you beat me, I will fawn on you.
Use me but as your spaniel; spurn me, strike me,
Neglect me, lose me; only give me leave
(Unworthy as I am) to follow thee.

DEMETRIUS

Tempt not too much the hatred of my sprite,
For I am sick when I do look on thee.

HELENA

And I am sick when I look not on thee.

DEMETRIUS

I'll run from thee, and hide me in the brakes,
And leave thee to the mercy of wild beasts
(He goes out)

HELENA *(running out)*

I'll follow you and make a heav'n of hell
To die upon the hand I love so well.

OBERON

Fare thee well, Nymph! Ere he do leave this grove
Thou shalt fly him, and he shall seek thy love.

(Puck flies in.)

[6] Welcome, wanderer! Hast thou the flower there?
(Puck gives Oberon the flower and lies at his feet.)

I know a bank where the wild thyme blows,
Where Oxlips and the nodding Violet grows,
Quite over-canopied with luscious Woodbine,
With sweet musk-roses and with Eglantine;

There sleeps Tytania, sometime of the night,
Lull'd in these flowers, with dances and delight:
And there the snake throws her enamel'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.

(to Puck)

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.

(They disappear. The wood is left empty)

(The six rustics enter cautiously.)

QUINCE

[7] Is all our company here?

ALL

Ay, Ay.

BOTTOM

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

FLUTE

First, good Peter Quince, say what the play
treats on.

QUINCE

Marry our play is the most lamentable
comedy, and most cruel death of Pyramus
and Thisby.

ALL

Of Pyramus and Thisby.

BOTTOM

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

QUINCE

Answer as I call you. Nick Bottom the weaver.

BOTTOM

Ready; name what part I am for, and proceed.

QUINCE

You Nick Bottom are set down for Pyramus.

BOTTOM

What is Pyramus, a lover or a tyrant?

QUINCE

A lover that kills himself most gallant for love.

BOTTOM

My chief humour is for a tyrant. I could play
Ercles rarely, or a part to tear a cat in,
to make all split the raging rocks and
shivering shocks shall break the locks
of prison-gates, and Phibbus' car shall shine
from far, and make and mar the foolish Fates.
This was lofty. Now name the rest of
the players.

QUINCE

Francis Flute, bellows mender.

BOTTOM

This is Ercles' vein, A tyrant's vein: a lover is
more condoling.

FLUTE

Here, Peter Quince.

QUINCE

Flute, you must take Thisby on you.

FLUTE

What is Thisby, a wand'ring knight?

QUINCE

It is the lady that Pyramus must love,

FLUTE

Nay faith, let not me 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

And 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 Thisby dear, and Lady dear.'

QUINCE

No, no, you must play Pyramus, and, Flute, you
Thisby.

BOTTOM

Well, proceed.

FLUTE (*practising to himself*)

'Ah Pyramus, my lover dear, thy Thisby dear,
and Lady dear...'

QUINCE

Robin Starveling, the Tailor.

STARVELING

Here, Peter Quince.

QUINCE

Robin Starveling, you must play Thisby's
mother. Tom Snout, the Tinker.

SNOUT

Here, Peter Quince.

QUINCE

You, Pyramus' father; myself. Thisby's
father; Snug the joiner, you, the Lion's part:
and I hope here is a play fitted.

SNUG

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

QUINCE

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

BOTTOM

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

FLUTE

And 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.

QUINCE, STARVELING, SNOUT, SNUG
That would hang us ev'ry mother's son.

FLUTE

Ev'ry mother's son.

BOTTOM

But I will aggravate my voice so, that I will
roar you as gently as any sucking dove;
I will roar you and 'twere any nightingale.

QUINCE

You can play no part but Pyramus, for
Pyramus is a sweet-fac'd man, a proper
man, a most lovely gentleman-like man,
therefore you must needs play Pyramus.

BOTTOM

Well, I will undertake it.

(*General satisfaction.*)

QUINCE

But masters here are your parts, and I am to
entreat you, request you and desire you,
to con them by tonight: here will we
rehearse anon .

BOTTOM

We will meet, and here we may rehearse
most obscenely and courageously.
Take pains, be perfect, adieu.

QUINCE

Adieu, at the Duke's oak we meet.

ALL

Adieu.

(*Exeunt. The wood is left empty*)

(*Enter Lysander and Hermia.*)

LYSANDER

8 Fair love, you faint with wand'ring 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.
So far be distant and good night, sweet friend;
Thy love ne'er alter, till thy sweet life end.

LYSANDER, HERMIA

Amen to that fair prayer, say I,
And then end life, when I end loyalty.

(*They go to sleep. Enter Puck.*)

PUCK

9 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?
(*coming upon the sleeping Lysander*)
Weeds of Athens he doth wear:
This is he (my master said)

Despised the Athenian maid:
(*He squeezes the juice on Lysander's eyes.*)
Churl, upon thine eyes I throw
All the power this charm doth owe:
So awake when I am gone:
For I must now to Oberon.
(*Exit Puck.*)

HERMIA (*in her sleep*)

Amen, amen to that fair prayer, say I.

HELENA (*approaching*)

10 Stay, tho' thou kill me, sweet Demetrius.

DEMETRIUS (*running in*)

I charge thee, hence, and do not haunt me thus.

HELENA (*following*)

O wilt thou darkling leave me? do not so.

DEMETRIUS

Stay on thy peril, I alone will go. (*running out*)

HELENA (*sinking exhausted*)

O I am out of breath in this fond chase,
The more my prayer; the lesser is my grace,
Happy is Hermia, wheresoe'er she lies,
For she hath blessed and attractive eyes.
Alas, I am as ugly as a bear;
For beasts that meet me, run away for fear.
(*She sees Lysander.*)

But who is here? Lysander on the ground;
Dead or asleep? I see no blood, no wound,
Lysander, if you live, good sire, awake.

LYSANDER (*awakes*)

And run through fire I will for thy sweet sake.
Transparent Helena, Nature shows her art,
That through thy bosom makes me see thy heart.
Where is Demetrius? Oh 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 (*furious*)
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,
(*running out*)
I thought you Lord of more true gentleness.

LYSANDER
She sees not Hermia: Hermia sleep thou there.
And never mayst thou come Lysander near;
Sleep thou there;
And all my powers address your love and might,
(*running out*)
To honour Helena, and to be her knight.

HERMIA (*wakes up, calling*)
Lysander; help me, what a dream was here,
Lysander look, how I do quake with fear:
Methought a serpent eat my heart away,
And you sat smiling at his cruel prey.
Lysander; what remov'd? Lysander; Lord,
What, out of hearing, gone? No sound, no word?
Alack where are you? Speak and if you hear:
Speak of all loves; Lysander, I swoon almost
with fear.

(*running out*)
Lysander; Lord...
(*Enter Tytania, with Cobweb, Peaseblossom,
Mustardseed, Moth and Fairies.*)

11 TYTANIA
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 reremice, for their leathern wings,
To make my small elves coats, and some
keep back
The clam'rous owl that nightly hoots and
wonders,
At our quaint spirits: sing me now asleep,
Then to your offices, and let me rest.
(*She lies down with the Fairies around her*)

12 SOLO FAIRIES
You spotted snakes with double tongue,
Thorny hedgehogs, be not seen,
Newts and blind-worms do no wrong,
Come not near our Fairy Queen.
Philomel with melody,
Sing in our sweet lullaby,

ALL FAIRIES
Lullaby,
Never harm, nor spell, nor charm,
Come our lovely Lady nigh.
So good night with lullaby.

SOLO FAIRIES
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.

COBWEB (*whispered*)
Hence away, now all is well;
One aloof, stand sentinel.

(*Tytania sleeps. The Fairies, except one
standing sentry, slip out*)
(*Oberon appears.*)

OBERON (*squeezing the juice from the flower
on to Tytania's eyelids*)
13 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 thine eye that shall appear,
When thou wak'st it is thy dear,
Wake when some vile thing is near.
(*He slowly disappears and the lights fade on the
sleeping Tytania.*)

14 ACT TWO
Introduction
The wood Tytania lying asleep.
(*Enter the six rustics*)

15 BOTTOM
Are we all met?

THE OTHERS
Pat pat, pat.

QUINCE
And here's a marvellous convenient place
for our rehearsal.

THE OTHERS
For our rehearsal.

BOTTOM
Peter Quince?

QUINCE
What sayest thou, bully Bottom?

BOTTOM
There are things in this comedy that will
never please. First, Pyramus must draw a
sword to kill himself, which the ladies
cannot abide.

THE OTHERS
By'r lakin, a parlous fear.

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

BOTTOM
Not a whit. not a whit I have a device to
make all well. Write me a Prologue; tell them,
that I, Pyramus, am not Pyramus, but
Bottom the weaver; this will put them
out of fear.

SNUG
Will not the Ladies be afeard of the lion?

THE OTHERS
The Lion.

FLUTE
I fear it, I promise you.

BOTTOM
Therefore another Prologue must tell them
plainly he is not a Lion but Snug the joiner.

QUINCE
But there is two hard things, that's, to bring
the moonlight into the chamber: for you
know, Pyramus and Thisby meet by
moonlight.

STARVELING
Doth the moon shine that night we play our play?

BOTTOM
A Calendar, look in the Almanac,
find out moonshine.

THE OTHERS
Moonshine, moonshine.

BOTTOM
Or else one must come in with a bush of
thorns and a lantern and say he comes to
present the person of Moonshine.

THE OTHERS
Moonshine.

QUINCE

Then there is another thing, we must have a wall in the great chamber.

SNOUT

You can never bring in a wall.

ALL

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 Thisby whisper.

THE OTHERS

Then all is well.

QUINCE

Come, sit down every mother's son, and rehearse your parts, ev'ry man according to his cue. Pyramus, you begin.

(Puck flies in.)

PUCK

What hempen homespuns have we swaggering here,
So near the cradle of our Fairy Queen?

QUINCE

Speak Pyramus: Thisby stand forth.

BOTTOM

Thisby, the flowers of odious savours sweet...

QUINCE

Odours, odourous.

BOTTOM

Odours savours sweet,
So hath thy breath, my dearest Thisby dear.
But Hark, a voice; stay thou but here a while
And by and by I will to thee appear.

(Exit Bottom.)

PUCK

I'll follow you, I'll lead you about a round.
(He follows Bottom.)

FLUTE (comes nervously forward)

Must I speak now?

QUINCE

Ay marry must you. For you must understand he goes but to see a noise 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;
Most brisky juvenal, and eke most lovely Jew,
As true as truest horse, that never yet
would tire,

I'll meet thee, Pyramus, at Ninny's tomb.

QUINCE

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

FLUTE

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

(Enter Puck and Bottom with an ass-head upon his shoulders.)

BOTTOM

If I were fair; Thisby, I were only thine.

(Puck flies off)

THE OTHERS

O monstrous, O strange. We are haunted,
pray masters, fly masters, help.

(Exeunt Flute, Snout, Starveling, Quince and Snug.)

BOTTOM

Why do they run away? This is a knavery to

make me afeard.

(Flute reappears.)

FLUTE

O Bottom, Bottom, thou art chang'd;
what do I see on thee?
(Exit Flute.)

BOTTOM

What do you see? You see an ass-head
of your own, do you? do you?

(The rustics reappear from behind the trees.)

ALL

Bless thee, Bottom, bless thee; thou art
translated.
(They disappear.)

BOTTOM

¹⁶ 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, and I will sing that they shall hear I am
not afraid.

(singing)

The woosell cock, so black of hue
With orange-tawny bill,
The throistle, with his note so true,
The wren, with little quill...

TYTANIA *(awaking)*

What angel wakes me from my flow'ry bed?

BOTTOM

The finch, the sparrow, and the lark,
The plain-song cuckoo grey
Whose note full many a man doth mark
And dares not answer nay.

TYTANIA

I pray thee, gentle mortal, sing again;
Mine ear is much enamour'd of thy note;
So is mine eye enthralled to thy shape,
Thou art as wise, as thou art beautiful.

BOTTOM

Not so neither, but if I had wit enough
to get out of this wood...

TYTANIA

Out of this wood do not desire to go,
Thou shalt remain here, whether thou wilt or no.
I am a spirit of no common rate;
I'll give thee Fairies to attend on thee;
Peaseblossom!

PEASEBLOSSOM *(enters)*

Ready.

TYTANIA

Cobweb!

COBWEB *(enters)*

And I.

TYTANIA

Moth!

MOTH *(enters)*

And I.

TYTANIA

Mustardseed!

MUSTARDSEED *(enters)*

And I.

FOUR SOLO FAIRIES

Where shall we go?

TYTANIA

¹⁷ Be kind and courteous to this gentleman,
Hop in his walks and gambol in his eyes,
Feed him with apricocks and dewberries,
With purple grapes, green figs, and mulberries,
The honey-bags steal from the humble bees,
And for night-tapers crop their waxen thighs,
And light them at the fiery glow-worm's eyes,
To have my love to bed, and to arise:
Nod to him, elves, and do him courtesies.

18 FOUR SOLO FAIRIES (*bow deeply to Bottom*)
Hail, mortal, hail!

BOTTOM
I cry your worships' mercy, your mercy, heartily.

FOUR SOLO FAIRIES
Hail, mortal, hail!

BOTTOM
I cry your worships' mercy,
I beseech your worship's name.

COBWEB
Cobweb, Hail, mortal, hail!

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

PEASEBLOSSOM
Peaseblossom. Hail, mortal, hail.

BOTTOM
I pray you commend me to Mistress Squash,
your mother, and to Master Peascod, your father.
Your name, I beseech you sir?

MUSTARDSEED
Mustardseed. Hail, mortal, hail.

FOUR SOLO FAIRIES
Hail, mortal, hail, hail!

BOTTOM
Your kindred hath made my eyes water ere now,
good master Mustardseed, I desire you more
acquaintance. Your name sir?

MOTH (*comes forward*)
Mo...

TYTANIA (*interrupting*)
Come, sit thee down upon this flowery bed
While I thy amiable cheeks do coy.
And stick musk-roses in thy sleek smooth head.

12

And kiss thy fair large ears, my gentle joy.
(*Tytania and Bottom settle down on the bank.*)

BOTTOM
Where's Peaseblossom?

PEASEBLOSSOM
Ready.
(*He goes to Bottom.*)

BOTTOM
Scratch my head, Peaseblossom.
(*Peaseblossom scratches Bottom's head.*)
Where's Mounsiur Cobweb?

COBWEB
Ready...
(*He goes to Bottom.*)

BOTTOM
Mounsiur Cobweb, get your weapons in
your hand, and kill me a red-hipped humble-bee,
and good Mounsiur, bring me the honey-bag.
(*Cobweb finds a bee, catches it and takes the
honey to Bottom.*)
Where's Mounsiur Mustardseed?

MUSTARDSEED
Ready.

BOTTOM
Give me your neaf. Mounsiur Mustardseed.
(*Mustardseed shakes his hand violently.*)
Pray you leave your courtesy good Mounsiur.

MUSTARDSEED
What's your will?

BOTTOM
Nothing, good Mounsiur; but to help
Cavalery Cobweb to scratch.
(*Mustardseed helps Cobweb to scratch Bottom's
head.*)
I am such a tender ass, if my hair do but tickle
me, I must scratch. Where's Mounsiur Moth?

MOTH (*comes forward*)
I'm he...

TYTANIA (*interrupting*)
What, wilt thou hear some music, my sweet love?

BOTTOM
I have a reas'nable good ear in music.
La la la la...
Let's have the tongs and the bones.
(*The Fairies take their instruments and start to
play.*)

19 Ah! Ah! I have a reas'nable good ear in music.
(*Bottom gets up and begins to dance.*)
La la la la!
(*He yawns.*)
But I pray you let none of your people stir me,
I have an exposition of sleep come upon me.

TYTANIA
Sleep thou, and I will wind thee in my arms.
Fairies begone and be all ways away.
(*The Fairies disappear.*)
So doth the woodbine, the sweet Honeysuckle
Gently entwist; the female ivy so
Enrings the barky fingers of the Elm,
O how I love thee! How I dote on thee!
(*They sleep, and it grows dark.*)
(*Enter Oberon and Puck.*)

20 OBERON
How now, mad spirit.
What night-rule now about this haunted grove?

PUCK
See, see, my Mistress with a monster
is in love.

OBERON
This falls out better than I could devise.
But hast thou yet latch'd the Athenian's eyes
With a love-juice, as I did bid thee do?
(*Enter Hermia and Demetrius.*)

13

Stand close, this is the same Athenian.

PUCK
This is the woman, but not this the man.
(*Oberon and Puck listen.*)

DEMETRIUS
O why rebuke you him that loves you so?

HERMIA
If thou hast slain Lysander in his sleep,
Plunge in the deep, and kill me too:
Ah good Demetrius, wilt thou give him me?

DEMETRIUS
I'd rather give his carcase to my hounds.

HERMIA
Out dog, out cur; oh hast thou slain him then?

DEMETRIUS
I am not guilty of Lysander's blood.

HERMIA
I pray thee tell me then that he is well.

DEMETRIUS
And if I could, what should I get therefore?

HERMIA
A privilege, never to see me more;
And from thy hated presence part I so;
See me no more, whether he be dead or no.
(*Exit.*)

DEMETRIUS
There is no following her in this fierce vein.
Here therefore for a while I will remain.
So sorrow's heaviness doth heavier grow.
(*He lies down.*)

OBERON
What hast thou done? Thou hast mistaken quite
And laid the love-juice on some true-love's sight;
About the wood go swifter than the wind,
And Helena of Athens look thou find.

PUCK

I go, I go, look how I go,
Swifter than arrow from the Tartar's bow.
(*He flies off.*)

CD 2

1 OBERON (*squeezing flower on to Demetrius' eyes*)

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

(*Puck flies in*)

PUCK

Captain of our fairy band,
Helena is here at hand,
And the youth, mistook by me;
Shall we their fond pageant see?
Lord, what fools these mortals be!
(*Enter Helena, Lysander following, Oberon and Puck stand aside.*)

LYSANDER

Why should you think that I should woo in scorn?

HELENA

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 you give her o'er.

LYSANDER

Demetrius loves her. and he loves not you.

(*Demetrius awakes.*)

14

DEMETRIUS

O Helena, goddess, nymph, perfect, divine,
To what, my love, shall I compare thine eyne?
Crystal is muddy. O how ripe in show
Thy lips, these kissing cherries, tempting grow!
That pure congealed white, high Taurus' snow
Fann'd with the eastern wind, turns to a crow
When thou hold'st up thy hand. O let me kiss
This Princess of pure white, this seal of bliss.
O Helen!

HELENA

O spite!

DEMETRIUS

Goddess!

HERMIA

O Hell!

DEMETRIUS

Nymph, perfect, divine!

HELENA

I see you all are bent
To set against me for your merriment.

LYSANDER (*to Demetrius*)

You are unkind Demetrius; be not so,
For you love Hermia, this you know I know.

DEMETRIUS

Look where thy love comes. Yonder is thy dear.

HERMIA (*entering*)

Ah, Lysander, why unkindly didst thou
leave me so?

HELENA

Injurious Hermia, most ungrateful maid,
Have you conspir'd, have you with these
contriv'd

To bait me with this foul derision?

Is all the counsel that we two have shar'd,

The sisters' vows, the hours that we have spent,

When we have chid the hasty-footed time

For parting us; O is all forgot?

All school-days friendship, childhood innocence?

We, Hermia, like to artificial gods,

Have with our needles created one flower.

Both on one sampler; sitting on one cushion,

Both warbling of one song, both in one key;

Two lovely berries, moulded on one stem,

So with two seeming bodies, but one heart.

And will you rend 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 not you: it seems that you scorn me.

HELENA

Ay do, persevere, counterfeit sad looks,
Make mouths upon me when I turn my back,
Wink at each other, hold the sweet jest up:
(*as if going*)

But fare ye well, 'tis partly my own fault,
Which death or absence soon shall remedy.

LYSANDER

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

HELENA

O excellent!

HERMIA (*to Lysander*)

Sweet, do not scorn her so.

DEMETRIUS

If she cannot entreat, I can compel.

LYSANDER

Thou canst compel no more than she entreat.

DEMETRIUS

If say, I love her more than you can do.

LYSANDER

If thou say so, I withdraw and prove it, too.

DEMETRIUS

Quick, come.

HERMIA (*holds Lysander*)

Lysander, whereto tends all this?

LYSANDER

Away, you Ethiope.

DEMETRIUS

No, no, sir, seems to break loose:

You are a tame man, go.

LYSANDER (*shaking off Hermia*)

Hang off, thou cat, thou burr, vile thing, let loose,
Or I will shake thee from me like a serpent.

HERMIA

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

DEMETRIUS

Seems to break loose, take on as you would
follow.

LYSANDER

Thy love? Out tawny Tartar, out.

HERMIA

Sweet love.

DEMETRIUS

You are a tame man, go.

LYSANDER

Out loathed medicine, hated potion, hence.

HERMIA

Do you not jest?

HELENA

Yes, sooth, and so do you.

LYSANDER

Demetrius, I will keep my word with thee.

15

DEMETRIUS

I would I had your bond; I'll not trust your word.

LYSANDER

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

HERMIA

What, can you do me greater harm than hate?
Am I not Hermia? Are not you Lysander?
(to Helena)

O me; you juggler, you canker-blossom.
You thief of love.

DEMETRIUS

Lysander, keep thy Hermia, I will none.
If e'er I lov'd her all that love is gone.

LYSANDER

Ay, by my life; be certain 'tis no jest,
That I do hate thee and love Helena.

HELENA

You both are rivals and love Hermia,
And now are rivals to mock Helena.
(furious)

Fie, fie, you counterfeit, you puppet, you.

HERMIA

² Puppet? why so? ay, that way goes the game.
Now I perceive that she hath made compare
Between our statures; she hath urg'd her height,
And with her personage, her tall personage,
Her height (forsooth) she hath prevail'd with him.
And are you grown so high in his esteem,
Because I am so dwarfish and so low?
How low am I, thou painted maypole? Speak,
How low am I? I am not yet so low
But that my nails can reach unto thine eyes.

HELENA

I pray you though you mock me, gentlemen,
Let her not hurt me; you may perhaps think,
Because she is something lower than myself,

That I can match her.

HERMIA

Lower? Lower? Hark again!

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...

HERMIA

Little again?

HELENA

...she is fierce.

HERMIA

Nothing but low and little?

HELENA

Get you gone, you dwarf.

HERMIA

Hark again!

HELENA

You minimus of hind'ring knot-grass made.

HERMIA *(to Lysander)*

Why will you suffer her to flout me thus?

HELENA

You bead!

HERMIA

Hark again!

HELENA

You acorn!

HERMIA

Let me come to her!

HELENA

You bead!

HERMIA

Why will you suffer her to flout me?

HELENA

Get you gone, you dwarf.

LYSANDER

Be not afraid, she shall not harm thee, Helena.

DEMETRIUS

No, sir; she shall not, though you take her part.

LYSANDER

You are too officious
In her behalf that scorns your services.

DEMETRIUS

Let her alone; speak not of Helena.

LYSANDER

Now follow, if thou dar'st.

DEMETRIUS

Nay; I'll go with thee, cheek by jowl...

LYSANDER, DEMETRIUS

...to try whose right.
Or thine or mine is most in Helena.
(Exeunt Lysander and Demetrius.)

HELENA, HERMIA

You, mistress, all this coil is 'long of you.

HERMIA

Nay, go not back.

HELENA

I will not trust you, I...

HELENA, HERMIA

...Nor longer stay in your curst company.

HERMIA

Nay, go not back.

HELENA

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

(Helena goes out followed by Hermia. Oberon comes forward in a rage, dragging Puck.)

PUCK

Ow! oh! ow!

³ OBERON

This is thy negligence, still thou mistak'st, still,
Or else committ'st thy knav'ries willfully.

PUCK

Believe me, King of shadows, I mistook...
(Oberon shakes him.)
I mistook... Ah!

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.
Till o'er their brows, death-counterfeiting sleep
With leaden legs and batty wings doth creep;
Then crush this herb into Lysander's eye.
When they next wake, all this derision
Shall seem a dream, and fruitless vision.
Haste, Robin, haste, make no delay;
We may effect this business yet, ere day.
(Oberon vanishes. It becomes misty.)

⁴ 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.
Up and down, up and down.
Here comes one.

LYSANDER *(Enters, calling)*

Where art thou, proud Demetrius?
Speak thou now.

PUCK *(imitating Demetrius)*

Here, villain, drawn and ready –
Where art thou?
Follow me then to plainer ground.

DEMETRIUS (*calling*)
 Lysander, speak again.
 Thou runaway, thou coward, art thou fled?
 PUCK (*imitating Lysander*)
 Art bragging to the stars and wilt not come?
 DEMETRIUS
 Yea, art thou there?
 PUCK
 Follow my voice, we'll try no manhood here.
 (*Exeunt*)
 (*Enter Lysander:*)
 LYSANDER
 He goes before me, and still dares me on.
 PUCK (*distant*)
 Lysander!
 LYSANDER
 When I come, where he calls, then he is gone,
 And I am fall'n in dark uneven way.
 And here will rest me. Come, thou gentle day.
 (*He lies down.*)
 For it but once thou show me thy grey light
 I'll find Demetrius, and revenge this spite.
 (*He sleeps. Enter Puck.*)
 PUCK
 Ho, ho, coward, why com'st thou not?
 DEMETRIUS (*calling*)
 Abide me if thou dar'st. Where art thou now?
 PUCK
 Come hither. I am here.
 (*Enter Demetrius.*)
 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

18

To measure out my length on this cold bed.
 (*He lies down.*)
 By day's approach look to be visited.
 (*He sleeps. Enter Helena.*)
 HELENA
 O weary night. O long and tedious night,
 Abate thy hours, shine comforts from the East.
 And sleep that sometimes shuts up sorrow's eye
 Steal me awhile from mine own company.
 (*She sleeps.*)
 PUCK
 Yet but three? Come one more,
 Two of both kinds make up four.
 (*Enter Hermia.*)
 Here she comes, curst and sad,
 Cupid is a knavish lad
 Thus to make poor females mad.
 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.
 Heaven shield Lysander, if they mean a fray.
 (*She sleeps. The Fairies come in very stealthily.*)
 FAIRIES
 On the ground, sleep sound:
 He'll apply to your eye,
 Gentle lover, remedy.
 When thou wak'st, thou tak'st
 True delight in the sight
 Of thy former lady's eye:
 And the country proverb known,
 In your waking shall be shown:
 Jack shall have Jill,
 Nought shall go ill,
 The man shall have his mare again,
 And all shall be well.

(*Exeunt Fairies. Puck squeezes the juice on
 Lysander's eyes and goes out.*)

6 ACT THREE
Introduction
*The wood, early next morning. Tytania with
 Bottom and the four lovers lie asleep.*
(Puck and Oberon appear:)
 OBERON (*observing Tytania*)
 My gentle Robin; see'st thou this sweet sight?
 Her dotage now I do begin to pity.
 And now I have the boy, I will undo
 This hateful imperfection of her eyes.
 Be as thou wast wont to be;
 See as thou wast wont to see.
 Dian's bud, o'er Cupid's flower;
 Hath such force and blessed power.
 Be as thou wast wont to be.
 Now my Tytania, wake you, my sweet queen.
 (*Tytania wakes.*)
 TYTANIA
 My Oberon, what visions have I seen!
 Methought I was enamour'd of an ass.
 OBERON
 There lies your love.
 TYTANIA
 How came these things to pass?
 Oh, how mine eyes do loathe his visage now!
 OBERON
 Silence awhile. Robin, take off this head:
 Tytania, music call, and strike more dead
 Than common sleep, of all these five the sense.
 (*Puck removes the ass's head*)
 TYTANIA
 Music, ho, music, such as charmeth sleep.
 (*Enter some Fairies.*)

19

OBERON
 Sound music.
 Come my Queen, take hands with me
 And rock the ground whereon these sleepers be.
 (*They dance.*)
 Now thou and I are new in amity
 And will this very midnight, solemnly
 Dance in Duke Theseus' house triumphantly,
 And bless it to all fair prosperity.
 There shall the pairs of faithful lovers be
 Wedded, with Theseus, all in jollity.
 PUCK
 Fairy King, attend, and mark,
 I do hear the morning lark.
 (*He disappears. Oberon, Tytania and the Fairies
 disappear, still dancing*)
 (*Distant horns.*)
 7 DEMETRIUS (*waking*)
 Helena!
 LYSANDER (*waking*)
 Hermia!
 HELENA (*waking*)
 Demetrius!
 HERMIA (*waking*)
 Lysander!
 ALL FOUR
 Are we awake?
 HELENA
 And I have found Demetrius like a jewel,
 Mine own and not mine own.
 DEMETRIUS
 And I have found fair Helen like a jewel,
 Mine own and not mine own.
 HERMIA
 And I have found Lysander like a jewel,
 Mine own and not mine own.

LYSANDER

And I have found sweet Hermia like a jewel,
Mine own and not mine own.

ALL FOUR

Why then we are awake; let's go
And by the way let us recount our dreams.
(*The lovers go out.*)

BOTTOM (*slowly waking*)

8 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 dream, past the wit of man to say
what dream it was. Methought I was, there is no
man can tell what. Methought I was, and
methought I had. But man is but an ass, if he can
offer to say what methought I had. The eye of
man hath not heard, the ear of man hath not seen,
man's hand is not able to taste, his tongue to
conceive, nor his heart to report, what my dream
was. My dream! I will get Peter Quince the
carpenter to write a ballad of this dream, and it
shall be called *Bottoms Dream* because it hath no
bottom; and I will sing it in the latter end of the
play, before the Duke. Peradventure, to make it
the more gracious, I shall sing it at her death.
(*Exit. Enter Quince, Flute, Snout and Starveling,*
gloomily)

QUINCE

9 Have you sent to Bottom's house?
Is he come home yet?

STARVELING

He cannot be heard of.
Out of doubt he is transported.

FLUTE

If he come not, then the play is marr'd.
It goes not forward, doth it?

STARVELING

It is not possible: you have not a man in all
Athens, able to discharge Pyramus but he.

SNOUT

No, he hath simply the best wit of any
handicraft man in Athens.

QUINCE

Yes, and the best person too.

(*Enter Snug.*)

SNUG

Masters, the Duke is coming from the Temple.
If our sport had gone forward,
we had all been made men.

FLUTE

O sweet bully Bottom: thus hath he lost
sixpence a day, during his life. And the Duke
had not given him sixpence a day for playing
Pyramus, I'll be hang'd. He would have deserved
it. Sixpence a day, sixpence in Pyramus,
or nothing.

SNOUT

He could not have scaped it.

QUINCE

Sixpence.

STARVELING

He could not have scaped it.

QUINCE, SNOUT, STARVELING

Sixpence or nothing a day.

SNUG

He could not have scaped it.

BOTTOM (*entering*)

Where are these lads?

THE OTHERS

Bottom!

BOTTOM

Where are these hearts?

THE OTHERS

O most courageous day! Bottom!

BOTTOM

Masters, I am to discourse wonders;
but ask me not what.

THE OTHERS

Let us hear, sweet Bottom.

BOTTOM

Not a word of me: all that I will tell you,
is that the Duke hath dined and our play is
preferred.

THE OTHERS

Our play is preferred. Most dear actors get your
apparel together; good strings to your beards,
new ribbons to your pumps; and ev'ry man look
o'er his part. Let Thisby have clean linen; let not
the lion pare his nails; eat no onions, no garlic, no
onions, that all may say: It is a sweet comedy.

BOTTOM

No more words, no more words.

THE OTHERS

It is a sweet comedy.

BOTTOM (*pushes them out*)

To the Palace, go, away.

THE OTHERS

It is a sweet comedy.

BOTTOM

Go, go away, go

(*They all leave excitedly. The lights go down on
the wood and up again in Theseus' palace.*)

(*Enter Theseus and Hippolyta with their court.*)

Orchestral march

THESEUS

10 Now, fair Hippolyta, our nuptial hour
Draws on apace: this happy day brings in
Another moon: But oh, methinks, how slow
This old moon wanes; she lingers my desires
Like to a Step-dame, or a Dowager;
Long withering out a young man's revennew.

HIPPOLYTA

This Day will quickly steep itself in night:
This night will quickly dream away the time:
And then the Moon like to a silver bow
Now bent in Heaven, shall behold the night
Of our solemnities.

THESEUS

Hippolyta, I woo'd thee with my sword
And won thy love, doing thee injuries:
But I wed thee in another key,
With pomp, with triumph, and with revelling.

(*Enter Lysander, Demetrius, Helena and Hermia.
They kneel to Theseus.*)

ALL FOUR

Pardon, my Lord.

THESEUS

I pray you all stand up.
(*They rise.*)

I know you two were rival enemies.
How came this gentle concord in the world?

LYSANDER

My Lord, I shall reply amazedly;
I went with Hermia thither: Our intent
Was to be gone from Athens,
where we might,

Without the peril of the Athenian law.

DEMETRIUS

My Lord, fair Helen told me of their stealth,
And I in fury thither follow'd them;
Fair Helena in fancy following me.

But, my good Lord...

THESEUS

Fair lovers,
Of this discourse we more will hear anon.
Hermia, I will o'erbear your father's will;
For in the Temple, by and by with us,
These couples shall eternally be knit.

THESEUS, HIPPOLYTA

Joy, gentle friends, joy and fresh days of love
Accompany your hearts.

(The lovers embrace.)

THESEUS

Come now, what masques, what dances
shall we have,

To while away this long age of three hours
Between our after-supper, and bed-time?

(Enter Quince with play bill. He hands it to Hippolyta and bows.)

HIPPOLYTA *(reading)*

A tedious brief scene of young Pyramus,
And his love Thisby; very tragical mirth.

DEMETRIUS

Merry and tragical? tedious and brief?

LYSANDER

That is, hot ice, and wondrous strange snow.

THESEUS

What are they that do play it?

HIPPOLYTA

Hard-handed men, that work in Athens here,
Which never labour'd in their minds till now.

THESEUS

I will hear that play.

(Exit Quince.)

For never any thing can be amiss,
When simpleness and duty tender it.
Take your places, Ladies.

(Enter the Rustics.)

RUSTICS

11

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.

THESEUS

These fellows do not stand upon points.

HIPPOLYTA

Their speech was like a tangled chain,
nothing impaired but all disordered.

LYSANDER

They have rid their Prologue like a rough colt.
They know not the stop.

DEMETRIUS

Indeed, they have played on their prologue
like a child on a recorder.

HELENA

A sound, but not in government.

HERMIA

It is not enough to speak, but to speak true.

PROLOGUE *(Quince)*

Gentles... Gentles...

THESEUS

Who is next?

12

PROLOGUE

Gentles, perchance you wonder at this show.
But wonder on, till truth make all things plain.
This man is Pyramus, if you would know;
This beauteous Lady, Thisby is certain.

This man, with lime and rough-cast, doth present
Wall, that vile Wall, which did these lovers sunder:
This man, with lantern, dog and bush of thorn
Presenteth Moonshine. This grisly beast is Lion
hight by name. For all the rest,
Let Lion, Moonshine, Wall and Lovers twain,
At large discourse, while here they do remain.
(Exeunt all but Wall.)

HELENA

I wonder if the Lion be to speak.

DEMETRIUS

No wonder, fair Lady: one Lion may,
When many asses do.

WALL *(Snout)*

13

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:
(He holds up two fingers.)
And this the cranny is, right and sinister,
Through which the fearful Lovers are to whisper.

HERMIA

Would you desire lime and hair to sing better?

LYSANDER

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

THESEUS

Pyramus draws near the Wall, silence.

(Enter Pyramus.)

PYRAMUS *(Bottom)*

14

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 Thisby's promise is forgot.
And thou O wall, O sweet and 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.

Thanks courteous wall. Jove shield thee well
for this.

But what see I? No Thisby do I see.
O wicked wall, through whom I see no bliss,
Curs'd be thy stones for thus deceiving me.

THESEUS

The wall methinks, being sensible,
should curse again.

BOTTOM *(to Theseus)*

No, in truth sir, he should not.
Deceiving me is Thisby's cue; yonder she comes.

(Enter Thisby.)

15

THISBY *(Flute)*

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 hair and lime knit up in thee.

PYRAMUS

I see a voice, now will I to the chink,
To spy and I may hear my Thisby's face.

Thisby?

THISBY

My love thou art, my love, I think.

PYRAMUS

Think what thou wilt. I am thy Lover's grace.

THISBY

My love thou art, my love, I think.

PYRAMUS

Think what thou wilt:
O kiss me through the hole of this vile wall.
O kiss me.
(They kiss.)

THISBY

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

PYRAMUS

Oh, wilt thou at Ninny's tomb meet me
straightway?

(Exit.)

THISBY

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

(Exit.)

WALL

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

(Exit.)

HIPPOLYTA

This is the silliest stuff that ever I heard.

THESEUS

The best in this kind are but shadows, and
the worst are no worse, if imagination amend
them. Here come two noble beasts in,
a man and a Lion.

(Enter Lion and Moonshine.)

LION (Snug)

You ladies, you (whose gentle hearts do fear
The smallest monstrous mouse that creeps
on floor)

Should know that I, one Snug the joiner am
A lion fell, or else no lion's dam.

HERMIA

A very gentle beast, and of a good conscience.

DEMETRIUS

The very best at a beast that e'er I saw.

THESEUS

But let us listen to the Moon.

MOONSHINE (Starveling)

This lanthorn doth the hornèd Moon present.

LYSANDER

He should have worn the horns on his head.

MOONSHINE

I, myself the man i'th' Moon do seem to be.

THESEUS

The man should be put into the lanthorn.
How is it else the man i'th' Moon?

MOONSHINE

This lanthorn doth the horn...

DEMETRIUS

He dares not come there for the candle.

THESEUS

Proceed Moon.

MOONSHINE

All I have to tell you is that this lanthorn is the
Moon; I, the man i' th' Moon; this thornbush,
my thorn-bush; and this dog, my dog,

HIPPOLYTA

I am weary of this Moon; would he would change.

ALL

But silence; here comes Thisby.

(Enter Thisby.)

THISBY

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

LION

Oh! oh! oh! oh!
(Lion chases Thisby out. She drops her mantle.)

DEMETRIUS

Well roar'd, Lion.

THESEUS

Well run, Thisby.

LYSANDER

Well mous'd, Lion.

HERMIA

Well run, Thisby.

HIPPOLYTA

Well shone, Moon.

HELENA

Truly the Moon shines with a good grace.

(Enter Pyramus.)

PYRAMUS

¹⁸ Sweet Moon, I thank thee for thy sunny beams,
I thank thee Moon, for shining now so bright;

But stay; O spite!

but, mark, poor Knight

What dreadful dole is here?

Eyes, do you see?

How can it be!

a dainty duck: O dear!

Thy mantle good;

What, stain'd with blood!

Approach, ye Furies fell:

O Fates! come, come:

Cut thread and thrum,

Quail, crush, conclude, and quell.

HIPPOLYTA

Beshrew my heart, but I pity the man.

PYRAMUS

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.

Come tears, confound: out sword, and wound

The pap of Pyramus:

Thus die I, thus, thus, thus.

(He dies, then raises himself.)

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.

(He dies.)

DEMETRIUS

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

(Enter Thisby.)

THESEUS

Here Thisby comes, and her passion ends
the play.

HIPPOLYTA

I hope she will be brief.

THISBY

¹⁹ Asleep, my love?

What, dead, my dove?

O Pyramus, arise:

Speak, speak. Quite dumb?

Dead, dead? A tomb

Must cover thy fair eyes.

These lily lips, this cherry nose,

These yellow cowslip cheeks,

Are gone, are 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 Thisby ends;

(She stabs herself.)

Adieu, adieu, adieu.

THESEUS

Moonshine and lion are left to bury the dead,

LYSANDER

Ay, and Wall, too.

BOTTOM *(raising himself)*

No, I assure you, the wall is down that
parted their fathers.

(Bottom and Flute get up.)

Will it please you to see the Epilogue,
or to hear a Bergomask dance?

THESEUS

No Epilogue, I pray you; for your play needs
no excuse.

20

Come, your Bergomask:

(The other Rustics come in and arrange themselves for the dance. They dance. Midnight sounds. The rustics stop dancing, bow deeply to the Duke, Hippolyta and the court and leave. The others rise.)

THESEUS

The iron tongue of midnight hath told twelve.
Lovers to bed, 'tis almost fairy time.
I fear we shall out-sleep the coming morn,
As much as we this night have overwatch'd,
Sweet friends, to bed.

ALL *(going)*

Sweet friends, to bed.

*(Enter Cobweb, Mustardseed,
Peaseblossom and Moth.)*

FOUR SOLO FAIRIES

21

Now the hungry lion roars,
And the wolf behowls the Moon:
Whilst the heavy ploughman snores,
All with weary task fordone.
Now the wasted brands do glow.
Whilst the screech-owl, screeching loud,
Puts the wretch that lies in woe,
In remembrance of a shroud.
Now it is the time of night,
That the graves, all gaping wide,
Ev'ry one lets forth his sprite,
In the church-way paths to glide.
And we Fairies, that do run,
By the triple Hecate's team,
From the presence of the Sun,

Following darkness like a dream,
Now are frolic; now not a mouse
Shall disturb this hallow'd house.

(Puck arrives with a broom and chases the Fairies.)

PUCK

I am sent with broom before,
To sweep the dust behind the door.

(Oberon and Tytania and the other Fairies appear.)

OBERON

Through the house give glimmering light.
Ev'ry elf and fairy sprite.
Sing this ditty after me,
Sing and dance it trippingly.

TYTANIA

First rehearse your song by rote,
To each word a warbling note.

BOTH

Hand in hand, with fairy grace,
Will we sing and bless this place.

OBERON, TYTANIA, FAIRIES

Now until the break of day,
Through this house each Fairy stray.
To the best bride-bed will we,
Which by us shall blessed be:
And the issue there create,
Ever shall be fortunate:
So shall all the couples three,
Ever true in loving be.
With this field-dew consecrate,
Ev'ry Fairy take his gait.
And each sev'ral chamber bless,
Through this Palace with sweet peace,
Ever shall in safety rest,
And the owner of it blest.

OBERON

Trip away, make no stay;

Meet me all by break of day.

(Exeunt all but Puck.)

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.

Gentles, do not reprehend.

If you pardon, we will mend.

Else the Puck a liar call.

So good night unto you all.

Give me your hands, if we be friends,

And Robin shall restore amends.

(He claps his hands.)