



## A Midsummer Night's Dream

### SCENE II. The Same. A Room in a Cottage

*Enter Quince, Snug, Bottom, Flute, Snout and Starveling.*

QUINCE.

Is all our company here?

BOTTOM.

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

QUINCE.

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

BOTTOM.

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

QUINCE.

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

BOTTOM.

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

QUINCE.

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

BOTTOM.

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

QUINCE.

You, Nick Bottom, are set down for Pyramus.

BOTTOM.

What is Pyramus—a lover, or a tyrant?

QUINCE.

A lover, that kills himself most gallantly 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 Eracles 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. This is Ercles' vein, a tyrant's vein; a lover is more condoling.

QUINCE.  
Francis Flute, the bellows-mender.

FLUTE.  
Here, Peter Quince.

QUINCE.  
Flute, you must take Thisbe on you.

FLUTE.  
What is Thisbe? A wandering knight?

QUINCE.  
It is the lady that Pyramus must love.

FLUTE.  
Nay, faith, let 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 Thisbe too. I'll speak in a monstrous little voice; 'Thisne, Thisne!'—  
'Ah, Pyramus, my lover dear! thy Thisbe dear! and lady dear!'

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

BOTTOM.  
Well, proceed.

QUINCE.  
Robin Starveling, the tailor.

STARVELING.  
Here, Peter Quince.

QUINCE.  
Robin Starveling, you must play Thisbe's mother.  
Tom Snout, the tinker.



SNOUT

Here, Peter Quince.

QUINCE.

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

Snug, the joiner, you, the lion's part. And, I hope here is a play fitted.

SNUG

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

QUINCE.

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

BOTTOM.

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

QUINCE.

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

ALL

That would hang us every mother's son.

BOTTOM.

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.

QUINCE.

You can play no part but Pyramus, for Pyramus is a sweet-faced man; a proper man as one shall see in a summer's day; a most lovely gentleman-like man. Therefore you must needs play Pyramus.

BOTTOM.

Well, I will undertake it. What beard were I best to play it in?

QUINCE.

Why, what you will.

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.

QUINCE.

Some of your French crowns have no hair at all, and then you will play bare-faced. 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 dogg'd with company, and our devices known. In the meantime I will draw a bill of properties, such as our play wants. I pray you fail me not.



BOTTOM.

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

QUINCE.

At the Duke's oak we meet.

BOTTOM.

Enough. Hold, or cut bow-strings.

[*Exeunt.*]

## ACT II

### SCENE I. A wood near Athens

*Enter a Fairy at one door, and Puck at another.*

PUCK.

How now, spirit! Whither wander you?

FAIRY

Over hill, over dale,  
Thorough bush, thorough brier,  
Over park, over pale,  
Thorough flood, thorough fire,  
I do wander everywhere,  
Swifter than the moon's sphere;  
And I serve the Fairy Queen,  
To dew her orbs upon the green.  
The cowslips tall her pensioners be,  
In their gold coats spots you see;  
Those be rubies, fairy favours,  
In those freckles live their savours.  
I must go seek some dew-drops here,  
And hang a pearl in every cowslip's ear.  
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,  
Because that she, as her attendant, hath  
A lovely boy, stol'n from an Indian king;  
She never had so sweet a changeling.  
And jealous Oberon would have the child  
Knight of his train, to trace the forests wild:



But she perforce withholds the lovèd boy,  
Crowns him with flowers, and makes him all her joy.  
And now they never meet in grove or green,  
By fountain clear, or spangled starlight sheen,  
But they do square; that all their elves for fear  
Creep into acorn cups, and hide them there.

FAIRY

Either I mistake your shape and making quite,  
Or else you are that shrewd and knavish sprite  
Call'd Robin Goodfellow. Are not you he  
That frights the maidens of the villagery,  
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,  
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,  
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,  
And on her withered 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;  
And then the whole quire hold their hips and loffe  
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!

*Enter Oberon at one door, with his Train, and Titania at another, 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  
When thou hast stol'n away from fairyland,  
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 steep of India,  
But that, forsooth, the bouncing Amazon,  
Your buskin'd mistress and your warrior love,  
To Theseus must be wedded; and you come  
To give their bed joy and prosperity?

OBERON.

How canst thou thus, for shame, Titania,  
Glance at my credit with Hippolyta,  
Knowing I know thy love to Theseus?  
Didst not thou lead him through the glimmering night  
From Perigenia, whom he ravished?  
And make him with fair Aegles break his faith,  
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 pavèd fountain, or by rushy brook,  
Or on the beachèd 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  
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  
Hath rotted ere his youth attain'd a beard.  
The fold stands empty in the drownèd 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,  
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,  
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  
An odorous chaplet of sweet summer buds  
Is, as in mockery, set. The spring, the summer,  
The chiding autumn, angry winter, change  
Their wonted liveries; and the mazed world,  
By their increase, now knows not which is which.  
And this same progeny of evils comes  
From our debate, from our dissension;  
We are their parents and original.

OBERON.

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

TITANIA.

Set your heart at rest;  
The fairyland buys not the child of me.  
His mother was a vot'ress of my order,  
And in the spiced Indian air, by night,  
Full often hath she gossip'd by my side;  
And sat with me on Neptune's yellow sands,  
Marking th' embarkèd traders on the flood,  
When we have laugh'd to see the sails conceive,  
And grow big-bellied with the wanton wind;  
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.]*

OBERON.

Well, go thy way. Thou shalt not from this grove  
Till I torment thee for this injury.—  
My gentle Puck, come hither. Thou rememb'rest  
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, thronèd by the west,  
And loos'd his love-shaft smartly from his bow  
As it should pierce a hundred thousand hearts.  
But I might see young Cupid's fiery shaft  
Quench'd in the chaste beams of the watery moon;  
And the imperial votress passed on,  
In maiden meditation, fancy-free.  
Yet mark'd I where the bolt of Cupid fell:  
It fell upon a little western flower,  
Before milk-white, now purple with love's wound,  
And maidens call it love-in-idleness.





Fetch me that flower, the herb I showed thee once:  
The juice of it on sleeping eyelids laid  
Will make or man or woman madly dote  
Upon the next live creature that it sees.  
Fetch me this herb, and be thou here again  
Ere the leviathan can swim a league.

PUCK.

I'll put a girdle round about the earth  
In forty minutes.

[Exit Puck.]

OBERON.

Having once this juice,  
I'll watch Titania when she is asleep,  
And drop the liquor of it in her eyes:  
The next thing then she waking looks upon  
(Be it on lion, bear, or wolf, or bull,  
On meddling monkey, or on busy ape)  
She shall pursue it with the soul of love.  
And ere I take this charm from off her sight  
(As I can take it with another herb)  
I'll make her render up her page to me.  
But who comes here? I am invisible;  
And I will overhear their conference.

*Enter Demetrius, Helena following him.*

DEMETRIUS.

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

HELENA.

You draw me, you hard-hearted adamant,  
But yet you draw not iron, for my heart  
Is true as steel. Leave you your power to draw,  
And I shall have no power to follow you.

DEMETRIUS.

Do I entice you? Do I speak you fair?



Or rather do I not in plainest truth  
Tell you I do not, nor I cannot love you?

HELENA.

And even for that do I love you the more.  
I am your spaniel; and, Demetrius,  
The more you beat me, I will fawn on you.  
Use me but as your spaniel, spurn me, strike me,  
Neglect me, lose me; only give me leave,  
Unworthy as I am, to follow you.  
What worser place can I beg in your love,  
(And yet a place of high respect with me)  
Than to be used as you use your dog?

DEMETRIUS.

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

HELENA.

And I am sick when I look not on you.

DEMETRIUS.

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

HELENA.

Your virtue is my privilege: for that  
It is not night when I do see your face,  
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.  
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.  
Run when you will, the story shall be chang'd;  
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!

DEMETRIUS.

I will not stay thy questions. Let me go,  
Or if thou follow me, do not believe  
But I shall do thee mischief in the wood.

HELENA.

Ay, in the temple, in the town, the field,  
You do me mischief. Fie, Demetrius!  
Your wrongs do set a scandal on my sex.  
We cannot fight for love as men may do.  
We should be 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 Helena.]

OBERON.

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

*Enter Puck.*

Hast thou the flower there? Welcome, wanderer.

PUCK.

Ay, there it is.

OBERON.

I pray thee give it me.  
I know a bank where the wild thyme blows,  
Where oxlips and the nodding violet grows,  
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;  
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:  
A sweet Athenian lady is in love  
With a disdainful youth. Anoint his eyes;  
But do it when the next thing he espies



May be the lady. Thou shalt know the man  
By the Athenian garments he hath on.  
Effect it with some care, that he may prove  
More fond on her than she upon her love:  
And look thou meet me ere the first cock crow.

PUCK.

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

[*Exeunt.*]