Enter Theseus, Hippolita, [Philostrate,] with others.

THESEUS
Now fair Hippolita, our nuptial hour
Draws on apace. Four happy days bring in
Another moon; but oh, me thinks, how slow
This old moon wanes! She lingers my desires,
Like to a stepdame, or a dowager
Long withering out a young man's revenue.

HIPPOLITA
Four days will quickly steep themselves in nights,
Four nights 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
Go Philostrate,
Stir up the Athenian youth to merriments,
Awake the pert and nimble spirit of mirth,
Turn melancholy forth to funerals;
The pale companion is not for our pomp.

Hippolita, I wooed 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 reveling.

Enter Egeus and his daughter Hermia, Lysander, and Demetrius.

EGEUS
Happy be Theseus, our renownèd Duke.

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

EGEUS
Full of vexation come I, with complaint
Against my child, my daughter Hermia.

Stand forth Demetrius.
My noble lord,
This man hath my consent to marry her.

Stand forth Lysander:

And, my gracious duke,
This man hath bewitched the bosom of my child.
Thou, thou, Lysander, thou hast given her rhymes,
And interchanged love tokens with my child;
Thou hast by moonlight at her window sung,
With feigning voice verses of feigning love,
And stolen the impression of her fantasy
With bracelets of thy hair, rings, gauds, conceits,
Knackes, trifles, nose-gays, sweetmeats (messengers
Of strong prevailment in unhardened youth).
With cunning hast thou filched my daughter's heart,
Turned her obedience, which is due to me,
To stubborn harshness. And, my gracious duke,
Be it so she will not here, before your grace,
Consent to marry with Demetrius,
I beg the ancient privilege of Athens:
As she is mine, I may dispose of her,
Which shall be either to this gentleman
Or to her death, according to our law
Immediately provided in that case.

THESEUS
What say you Hermia? Be advised fair maid.

To you your father should be as a god,
One that composed your beauties, yea, and one
To whom you are but as a form in wax
By him imprinted and within his power,
To leave the figure or disfigure it.
Demetrius is a worthy gentleman.

HERMIA
So is Lysander.

THESEUS
In himself he is.
But in this kind, wanting your father's voice.
The other must be held the worthier.

HERMIA
I would my father looked but with my eyes.

THESEUS
Rather, your eyes must with his judgment look.

HERMIA
I do entreat your grace to pardon me.
I know not by what power I am made bold,
Nor how it may concern my modesty
In such a presence here to plead my thoughts,
But I beseech your grace that I may know
The worst that may befall me in this case,
If I refuse to wed Demetrius.

THESEUS
Either to die the death, or to abjure
Forever the society of men.
Therefore, fair Hermia, question your desires,
Know of your youth, examine well your blood,
Whether (if you yield not to your father's choice)
You can endure the livery of a nun,
For aye to be in shady cloister mewed,
To live a barren sister all your life,
Chanting faint hymns to the cold fruitless moon.
Thrice blessèd they that master so their blood
To undergo such maiden pilgrimage;
But earthlier happy is the rose distilled,
Than that which, withering on the virgin thorn,
Grows, lives, and dies in single blessedness.

HERMIA
So will I grow, so live, so die my lord,
Ere I will yield my virgin patent up
Unto his lordship, whose unwished yoke
My soul consents not to give sovereignty.

THESEUS
Take time to pause, and by the next new moon --
The sealing day betwixt my love and me
For everlasting bond of fellowship --
Upon that day either prepare to die
For disobedience to your father's will,
Or else to wed Demetrius, as he would,
Or on Diana's altar to protest
For aye austerity and single life.

DEMETRIUS
Relent, sweet Hermia, and Lysander yield
Thy crazèd title to my certain right.

LYSANDER
You have her father's love, Demetrius.
Let me have Hermia's. Do you marry him.

EGEUS
Scornful Lysander! True, he hath my love,
And what is mine my love shall render him.
And she is mine, and all my right of her
I do estate unto Demetrius.

LYSANDER
I am, my lord, as well derived as he,
As well possessed. My love is more than his,
My fortune's every way as fairly ranked
(If not with vantage) as Demetrius';
And (which is more then all these boasts can be),
I am beloved of beauteous Hermia.
Why should not I, then, prosecute my right?

Demetrius, I'll avouch it to his head,
Made love to Nedar's daughter, Helena,
And won her soul, and she (sweet lady) dotes,
Devoutly dotes, dotes in idolatry,
Upon this spotted and inconstant man.

THESEUS
I must confess that I have heard so much,
And with Demetrius thought to have spoke thereof;
But, being overfull of self-affairs,
My mind did lose it. But, Demetrius come.
And come, Egeus. You shall go with me.

I have some private schooling for you both.
For you, fair Hermia, look you arm yourself
To fit your fancies to your father's will,
Or else the law of Athens yields you up
(Which by no means we may extenuate),
To death, or to a vow of single life.
Come my Hippolita. What cheer, my love?
Demetrius and Egeus go along:
I must employ you in some business
Against our nuptial, and confer with you

Of something nearly that concerns yourselves.

EGEUS
With duty and desire we follow you.
Exeunt [Theseus, Hippolita, Egeus, and Demetrius]. Lysander and Hermia
[remain].

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
Betem them from the tempest of mine eyes.

LYSANDER
For ought that ever I could read,
Could ever hear by tale or history,
The course of true love never did run smooth.
But either it was different in blood --

HERMIA
O cross! Too high to be enthralled to love.

LYSANDER
Or else misgraftèd, in respect of years --

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

LYSANDER
Or else it stood upon the choice of merit --

HERMIA
O hell! To choose love by another's eye.

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

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

LYSANDER
A good persuasion. Therefore, hear me Hermia.
I have a widow aunt, a dowager
Of great revenue, and she hath no child.
From Athens is her house removèd 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
Cannot pursue us. If thou lovest me, then
Steal forth thy father's house tomorrow night,
And in the wood, a league without the town
(Where I did meet thee once with Helena,
To do observance for a morn of May),
There will I stay for thee.

HERMIA

My good Lysander,

I swear to thee by Cupid's strongest bow,
By his best arrow with the golden head,
By the simplicity of Venus' doves,
By that which knitteth souls and prospers love,
And by that fire which burned the Carthage queen

When the false Trojan under sail was seen,
By all the vows that ever men have broke
(In number more then ever women spoke),
In that same place thou hast appointed me
Tomorrow truly will I meet with thee.

LYSANDER

Keep promise love. Look, here comes Helena.

Enter Helena.

HERMIA

God speed fair Helena! Whither away?

HELENA

Call you me fair? That fair again unsay.
Demetrius loves you fair. O happy fair!

Your eyes are loadstars, and your tongue's sweet air
More tuneable than lark to shepherd's ear
When wheat is green, when hawthorn buds appear.
Sickness is catching. O, were favor so,
Your words I catch, fair Hermia, ere I go.

My ear should catch your voice, my eye your eye,
My tongue should catch your tongue's sweet melody.
Were the world mine, Demetrius being bated,
The rest I'll give to be to you translated.
O, teach me how you look, and with what art
you sway the motion of Demetrius' heart.

HERMIA

I frown upon him, yet he loves me still.

HELENA

O, that your frowns would teach my smiles such skill.

HERMIA

I give him curses, yet he gives me love.
O, that my prayers could such affection move.

HERMIA
The more I hate, the more he follows me.

HELENA
The more I love, the more he hateth me.

HERMIA
His folly, Helena, is none of mine.

HELENA
None but your beauty. Would that fault were mine!

HERMIA
Take comfort. He no more shall see my face; Lysander and my self will fly this place. Before the time I did Lysander see, Seemed Athens like a paradise to me.

O then, what graces in my love do dwell,

That he hath turned a heaven into hell.

LYSANDER
Helen, to you our minds we will unfold. Tomorrow night, when Phoebe doth behold Her silver visage in the watery glass, Decking with liquid pearl the bladed grass (A time that lovers flights doth still conceal), Through Athens' gates, have we devised to steal --

HERMIA
And in the wood, where often you and I Upon faint primrose beds were wont to lye, Emptying our bosoms of their counsel swelled, There my Lysander and myself shall meet, And thence from Athens turn away our eyes To seek new friends and strange companions. Farewell sweet playfellow. Pray thou for us, And good luck grant thee thy Demetrius.

Keep word, Lysander. We must starve our sight From lovers' food, till morrow deep midnight.

Exit Hermia.

LYSANDER
I will, my Hermia. Helena, adieu. As you on him, Demetrius dotes on you.

Exit Lysander.

HELENA
How happy some o're other some can be! Through Athens I am thought as fair as she.
But what of that? Demetrius thinks not so;
He will not know what all but he doth know;
And, as he errs, doting on Hermia's eyes,
So I, admiring of his qualities.
Things base and vile, holding no quantity,
Love can transpose to form and dignity.
Love looks not with the eyes, but with the mind,
And therefore is wingèd Cupid painted blind.
Nor hath love's mind of any judgment taste:
Wings and no eyes figure unheedy haste.
And, therefore, is Love said to be a child,
Because in choice he is often beguiled.
As waggish boys in game themselves forswear,
So the boy Love is perjured everywhere.
For ere Demetrius looked on Hermia's eyne,
He hailed down oaths that he was only mine.
And when this hail some heat from Hermia felt,
So he dissolved, and showers of oaths did melt.
I will go tell him of fair Hermia's flight!
Then, to the wood will he tomorrow night
Pursue her; and for his intelligence
If I have thanks, it is a dear expense.
But herein mean I to enrich my pain,
To have his sight thither and back again.

Exit.

[1.2]

Enter Quince the carpenter, Snug the joiner, Bottom the weaver, Flute the bellows mender, Snout the tinker; and Starveling the tailor.

QUINCE
Is all our company here?

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

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

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

QUINCE
Marry, our play is "The Most Lamentable Comedy, and Most Cruel Death 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 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 humor 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 cheeks
   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 tyrants vein. A lover is more condoling.

QUINCE
   Francis Flute the bellows mender.

FLUTE
   Here, Peter Quince.

QUINCE
   You must take Thisby on you.

FLUTE
   What is Thisby? A wandering knight?

QUINCE
   It is the lady that Pyramus must love.

FLUTE
   Nay, faith, let not me play a woman! I have a beard coming.

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.

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 there is a play fitted.

SNUG
Have you the lion's part written? Pray you, if 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 duchesse and the ladies that they would shriek, and that were enough to hang us all.

ALL
That would hang us, every mother's son.

BOTTOM
I grant you, friends, if that you should fright the ladies out of their wits, they would have no more discretion but to hang us. But I will aggravate my voice so that I will roar you as gently as any sucking dove. I will roar and '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-color beard, your orange tawny beard, your purple-in-graine beard, or your French-crown colored 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 we will rehearse.

For if we meet in the city, we shall be dogged with company and our devices known. In the mean time, 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 more obscenity and courageously. Take pains, be perfect. Adieu.

QUINCE
At the duke's oak we meet.

BOTTOM
Enough! Hold or cut bow-strings.

Exeunt.

[2.1]

Enter a Fairy at one door, and Robin Goodfellow [Puck] at another.

PUCK
How now spirit! Whither wander you?

FAIRY
Over hill, over dale, through bush, through brier,
Over park, over pale, through flood, through fire,
I do wander everywhere, swifter then 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 favors;
In those freckles live their savors.
I must go seek some dewdrops 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 stolen from an Indian king;
She never had so sweet a changeling.
And jealous Oberon would have the child
Knight of his train, to trace the forests wild.
But she perforce withholds the loved boy,
Crowns him with flowers, and makes him all her joy.
And now they never meet in grove, or green,
By fountain clear, or spangled starlight sheen,
But they do square, that all their elves for fear
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 spirit
Called Robin Goodfellow. Are you not he.
That frights the maidens of the villagery,
Skim milk, and sometimes labor 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 speakest 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 silly 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 laugh,
And waken in their mirth, and sneeze, 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] the King of Fairies at one door with his train, and [Titania] the Queen at another with hers.

OBERON
    Ill met by moonlight,
    Proud Titania.

TITANIA
    What, jealous Oberon? Fairy 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 wast stolen 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 buskined 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 Hippolita,
    Knowing I know thy love to Theseus?
    Didst thou not lead him through the glimmering night
    From Peregia, whom he ravished?
    And make him with fair Eagles break his faith?

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 in the beached margent of the sea,
    To dance our ringlets to the whistling wind,
    But with thy brawls thou hast disturbed our sport.
Therefore the winds, piping to us in vain,
As in revenge, have sucked up from the sea
Contagious fogs, which, falling in the land,
Hath every petty river made so proud
That they have overborne their continents.
The ox hath therefore stretched his yoke in vain,
The plowman lost his sweat, and the green corn
Hath rotted ere his youth attained a beard;
The fold stands empty in the drowned field,
And crows are fatted with the murrion flock;
The nine-men's morris is filled 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 through this distemperature we see
The seasons alter; hoar-headed frosts
Fall in the fresh lap of the crimson rose,

And on old Hyems' chin and icy crown
An odorous chaplet of sweet summer buds
Is as in mockery set. The spring, the summer,
The childing autumn, angry winter change
Their wonted liveries; and the 'mazed world,
By their increase, now knows not which is which.

And this same progeny of evils
Comes from our debate, from our dissention;
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 votress of my order,

And in the spicèd Indian air, by night
Full often hath she gossiped by my side,
And sat with me on Neptune's yellow sands,
Marking the embarkèd traders on the flood,
When we have laughed 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 I do 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.

_Exeunt [Titania and her train. Oberon and Puck remain]._

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 armed; a certain aim he took

At a fair vestal, thronèd by the west,  
And loosed his love shaft smartly from his bow,  
As it should pierce a hundred thousand hearts.  
But I might see young Cupid's fiery shaft  
Quenched in the chaste beams of the watery moon,
540  And the imperial votress passed on,
     In maiden meditation, fancy free.
     Yet marked I where the bolt of Cupid fell.
     It fell upon a little western flower,
     Before milk-white, now purple with love's wound,
545  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.
550  Fetch me this herb, and be thou here again
     Ere the leviathan can swim a league.

PUCK
     I'll put a girdle about the earth in forty minutes.

     [Exit Puck]

OBERON
     Having once this juice,
555  I'll watch Titania when she is asleep,
     And drop the liquor of it in her eyes.
     The next thing when she waking looks upon --
     Be it on lion, bear, or wolf, or bull,
     On meddling monkey, or on busy ape --
560  She shall pursue it with the soul of love.
     And ere I take this charm off from 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,
565  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 stay, the other stayeth me.
570  Thou toldest me they were stolen into this wood,
     And here am I, and wood within this wood
     Because I cannot meet my Hermia.
     Hence, get thee gone, and follow me no more!

HELENA
     You draw me, you hard-hearted adamant.
575  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 thee 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,
Then to be used as you do 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 changed:
Apollo flies and Daphne holds the chase;
The dove pursues the griffin; the mild hind
Makes speed to catch the tiger, bootless speed,
When cowardice pursues, and valor 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
   Aye, in the temple, in the town and 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 wooed, and were not made to woo.
   I follow thee, and make a heaven of hell,
   To die upon the hand I love so well.

   Exit [Demetrius, pursued by Helena].

OBERON
   Fare thee well, nymph. Ere he do leave this grove,
   Thou shalt fly him and he shall seek thy love.
   Hast thou the flower there? Welcome wanderer.

Enter Puck.

PUCK
   Aye, 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,
   Lulled in these flowers with dances and delight.
   And there the snake throws her enameled 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 then she upon her love;
   And look thou meet me ere the first cock crow.

PUCK
   Fear not, my lord; your servant shall do so.
[2.2]

Enter Queen of Fairies, with her train.

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

Fairies sing.

1 FAIRY
You spottèd snakes with double tonguè,
Thorny hedgehogs be not seen;
Newts and blind worms do no wrong,
Come not near our fairy queen.

Philomela, with melody,

Sing in your sweet lullaby.
Lulla, lulla, lullaby; lulla, lulla, lullaby.
Never harm, nor spell, nor charm,
Come our lovely lady nigh.
So good night, with lullaby.

2 FAIRY.

Weaving spiders, come not here.
Hence, you long leg'd spinners, hence!
Beetles black, approach not near.
Worm nor Snail, do no offence.
Philomele with melody, etc.

1 FAIRY

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

She sleeps.

Enter Oberon.

OBERON
What thou seest when thou dost wake
Do it for thy true love take;
Love and languish for his sake.
Be it ounce, or cat, or bear,
Pard, or boar with bristled hair,
In thy eye that shall appear,
When thou wak'st, it is thy dear.

Wake when some vile thing is near.

Enter Lysander and Hermia.

LYSANDER
Fair love, you faint with wandering in the woods,
And, to speak troth, I have forgot our way.
We'll rest us, Hermia, if you think it good,
And tarry for the comfort of the day.

HERMIA
Be it so, Lysander. Find you out a bed,
For I upon this bank will rest my head.

LYSANDER
One turf shall serve as pillow for us both,
One heart, one bed, two bosoms, and one troth.

HERMIA
Nay, good Lysander. For my sake, my dear,
Lie further off yet; do not lie so near.

LYSANDER
O, take the sense, sweet, of my innocence.
Love takes the meaning in love's conference.
I mean that my heart unto yours is knit,
So that but one heart can you make of it.
Two bosoms interchanged with an oath,
So then two bosoms and a single troth.
Then by your side no bed-room me deny,
For lying so, Hermia, I do not lie.

HERMIA
Lysander riddles very prettily.
Now much beshrew my manners and my pride,
If Hermia meant to say Lysander lied.
But, gentle friend, for love and courtesy
Lie further off, in human modesty,

Such separation, as may well be said,
Becomes a virtuous bachelor and a maid.
So far be distant, and good night sweet friend.
Thy love ne're alter till thy sweet life end.

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

HERMIA
With half that wish the wisher's eyes be pressed.

*Enter Puck. They sleep.*

PUCK
Through the Forest have I gone,
But Athenian find I none
On whose eyes I might approve
This flower's force in stirring love.
Night and silence. Who is here?
Weeds of Athens he doth wear.

This is he, my master said,
Despisèd the Athenian maid;
And here the maiden, sleeping sound
On the dank and dirty ground.
Pretty soul, she durst not lie

Near this lack-love, this kill-courtesy.

*[Puck anoints Lysander's eyelids with the juice of love-in-idleness.]*

Churl, upon thy eyes I throw
All the power this charm doth owe:
When thou wak'st, let love forbid
Sleep his seat on thy eyelid.

So awake when I am gone,
For I must now to Oberon.

*Exit [Puck].*

*Enter Demetrius and Helena running.*

HELENA
Stay, though thou kill me, sweet Demetrius!

DEMETRIUS
I charge thee, hence and do not haunt me thus!

HELENA
O, wilt thou darkling leave me? Do not so.

DEMETRIUS
Stay on thy peril! I alone will go.

*Exit Demetrius.*

HELENA
Oh, I am out of breath in this fond chase.
The more my prayer, the lesser is my grace.

Happy is Hermia, wheresoe'r she lies,
For she hath blessed and attractive eyes.  
How came her eyes so bright? Not with salt tears.  
If so, my eyes are oftener washed than hers.  
No, no! I am as ugly as a bear,  

For beasts that meet me run away for fear.  
Therefore, no marvel though Demetrius  
Do, as a monster, fly my presence thus.  
What wicked and dissembling glass of mine  
Made me compare with Hermia's sphery eyne?  

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

LYSANDER  
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 now I love.  
Who will not change a raven for a dove?  

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

HELENA  
Wherefore was I to this keen mockery born?  
When at your hands did I deserve this scorn?  

Is't not enough, is't not enough, young man,  
That I did never, no, nor never can  
Deserve a sweet look from Demetrius' eye,  
But you must flout my insufficiency?  
Good troth, you do me wrong! Good-sooth, you do,
In such disdainful manner me to woo.
But, fare you well. Perforce, I must confess,
I thought you lord of more true gentleness.
Oh, that a lady of one man refus'd Should of another therefore be abused.

Exit [Helena].

LYSANDER
She sees not Hermia. Hermia, sleep thou there,
And never mayst thou come Lysander near.
For, as a surfeit of the sweetest things
The deepest loathing to the stomach brings,
Or, as the heresies that men do leave
Are hated most of those that did deceive,
So thou, my surfeit, and my heresy,
Of all be hated, but the most of me.
And all my powers address your love and might
To honor Helen, and to be her knight.

Exit [Lysander: Hermia awakens].

HERMIA
Help me Lysander, help me! Do thy best
To pluck this crawling serpent from my breast.

Aye me, tor pity. What a dream was here?
Lysander, look how I do quake with fear!
Methought a serpent eat my heart away,
And you sat smiling at his cruel prey.
Lysander? What, removed? Lysander? Lord!
What, out of hearing? Gone? No sound, no word?
Alack! Where are you? Speak, and if you hear!
Speak, of all loves! I sound almost with fear.

No? Then I well perceive you are not nigh.
Either death or you I'll find immediately.

Exit [Hermia].

[3.1]

Enter the Clowns [Quince, Snug, Bottom, Flute, Snout, and Starveling].

BOTTOM
Are we all met?

QUINCE
Pat, pat. And here's a marvelous convenient place for our rehearsal. This
green plot shall be our stage, this hawthorn brake our tiring house, and we
will do it in action, as we will do it before the duke.

BOTTOM
Peter Quince?
What sayest thou bully Bottom?

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

SNOUT
By'r lakin, a parlous fear.

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

BOTTOM
Not a whit. I have a device to make all well. Write me a prologue, and let the prologue seem to say, we will do no harm with our swords, and that Pyramus is not killed indeed. And, for the more better assurance, tell them, that I Pyramus am not Pyramus, but Bottom the weaver. This will put them out of fear.

QUINCE
Well, we will have such a prologue, and it shall be written in eight and six.

BOTTOM
No, make it two more. Let it be written in eight and eight.

SNOUT
Will not the ladies be afeard of the lion?

STARVELING
I fear it, I promise you.

BOTTOM
Masters, you ought to consider with yourselves, to bring in (God shield us) a lion among ladies is a most dreadful thing. For there is not a more fearful wild fowl than your Lyon living, and we ought to look to it.

SNOUT
Therefore, another prologue must tell he is not a lion.

BOTTOM
Nay, you must name his name, and half his face must be seen through the lion's neck, and he himself must speak through, saying thus, or to the same defect: "Ladies," or "faire ladies, I would wish you," or "I would request you," or "I would entreat you, not to fear, not to tremble, my life for yours. If you think I come hither as a lion, it were pity of my life. No, I am no such thing. I am a man as other men are." And there, indeed, let him name his name, and tell him plainly he is Snug the joiner.

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

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

BOTTOM
A calendar, a calendar! Look in the almanac. Find out moonshine, find out moonshine!

865 Enter Puck.

QUINCE
Yes, it doth shine that night.

BOTTOM
Why, then may you leave a casement of the great chamber window where we play open, and the moon may shine in at the casement.

870 QUINCE
Ay, or else one must come in with a bush of thorns and a lantern, and say he comes to disfigure, or to present the person of moonshine. Then there is another thing. We must have a wall in the great chamber, for Pyramus and Thisby, says the story, did talk through the chink of a wall.

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

BOTTOM
Some man or other must present wall, and let him have some plaster, or some loam, or some rough cast about him, to signify wall; or let him hold his fingers thus, and through that cranny shall Pyramus and Thisby whisper.

875 QUINCE
If that may be, then all is well. Come, sit down every mother's son, and rehearse your parts. Pyramus, you begin. When you have spoken your speech, enter into that brake, and so every one according to his cue.

Enter Robin [Puck].

PUCK
890 What hempen homespuns have we swaggering here,
So near the cradle of the fairy queen?
What, a play toward? I'll be an auditor,
An actor too, perhaps, if I see cause.

QUINCE
Speak Pyramus. Thisby, stand forth.

895 BOTTOM
Thisby, the flowers of odious savors sweet --

QUINCE
Odors, odors.

BOTTOM
Odors savors sweet; So hath thy breath, my dearest Thisby dear.
But hark, a voice! Stay thou but here a while,

900 And by and by I will to thee appear.
Exit. Pyr[amus].

PUCK
A stranger Pyramus, then e're played here.

FLUTE
Must I speak now?

QUINCE
Ay, marry must you. For you must understand he goes but to see a noise that he heard, and is to come again.

FLUTE
Most radiant Pyramus, most lily-white of hue, Of color like the red rose on triumphant brier.
Most brisky juvenile, and eke most lovely Jew,
As true as truest horse, that yet would never tire.
I'll meet thee Pyramus, at Ninny's tomb.

QUINCE
Ninus' tomb man. 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 yet would never tire.

[Enter Puck and Bottom with the ass' head.]

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

QUINCE
Oh monstrous! Oh strange! We are haunted! Pray masters, fly masters!
Help!

The clowns all exit.

PUCK
I'll follow you, I'll lead you about a round, Through bog, through bush, through brake, through brier,
Sometime a horse I'll be, sometime a hound,
A hog, a headless bear, sometime a fire;
And neigh, and bark, and grunt, and roar, and burn,
Like horse, hound, hog, bear, fire, at every turn.

Exit [Puck].

Enter Pyramus with the ass' head.

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

Enter Snout.

SNOUT
O Bottom, thou art changed! What doe I see on thee?
BOTTOM
What do you see? You see an ass-head of your own, do you?

Enter Quince.

QUINCE
Bless thee Bottom, bless thee! Thou art translated.

Exit [Quince].

BOTTOM
I see their knavery. This is to make an ass of me, to fright me if they could.
But I will not stir from this place, do what they can. I will walk up and down
here, and I will sing that they shall hear I am not afraid.

[Bottom sings.]
The ouzel cock, so black of hew,
With orange-tawny bill.
The thrrostle, with his note so true,
The wren with little quill.

TITANIA
What Angel wakes me from my flowery bed?

BOTTOM
The finch, the sparrow, and the lark,
The plainsong cuckoo gray,
Whose note full many a man doth mark,
And dares not answer nay.
For indeed, who would set his wit to so foolish a bird? Who would give a
bird the lie, though he cry cuckoo, never so?

TITANIA
I pray thee, gentle mortal, sing again.

Mine ear is much enamored of thy note;
On the first view to say -- to swear -- I love thee!
So is mine eye enthrallèd to thy shape.
And thy fair virtue's force perforce doth move me.

BOTTOM
Methinks, mistress, you should have little reason for that. And yet, to say the
truth, reason and love keep little company together, nowadays. The more the
pity, that some honest neighbors will not make them friends. Nay, I can
gleek, upon occasion.

TITANIA
Thou art as wise as thou art beautiful.

BOTTOM
Not so, neither; but if I had wit enough to get out of this wood, I have
enough to serve mine own turn.

TITANIA
Out of this wood, do not desire to go.
Thou shalt remain here, whether thou wilt or no.
I am a spirit of no common rate.
The summer still doth tend upon my state,
And I do love thee. Therefore go with me.
I'll give thee fairies to attend on thee,
And they shall fetch thee jewels from the deep,
And sing, while thou on pressèd flowers dost sleep.
And I will purge thy mortal grossness so
That thou shalt like an airy spirit go.

*Enter Peaseblossom, Cobweb, Moth, Mustardseed, and four fairies.*

FAIRIES
Ready; and I, and I, and I. Where shall we go?

TITANIA
Be kind and courteous to this gentleman.
Hop in his walks, and gambol in his eyes;
Feed him with apricots, and dewberries,
With purple grapes, green figs, and mulberries.
The honeybags steal from the humble bees,
And for night-tapers crop their waxen thighs,
And light them at the fiery-glowworm's eyes,
To have my love to bed, and to arise;
And pluck the wings from painted butterflies
To fan the moonbeams from his sleeping eyes.
Nod to him elves, and do him courtesies.

1 FAIRY
Hail, mortal, hail.

2 FAIRY
Hail.

3 FAIRY
Hail.

BOTTOM
I cry your worship's mercy heartily! I beseech your worship's name?

COBWEB
Cobweb.

BOTTOM
I shall desire you of more acquaintance, good Master Cobweb. If I cut my finger, I shall make bold with you. Your name, honest gentleman?

PEASEBLOSSOM
Peaseblossom.

BOTTOM
I pray you, commend me to mistress Squash, your mother, and to master Peascod, your father. Good master Peaseblossom, I shall desire of you more acquaintance too. Your name, I beseech you sir?

MUSTARDSEED
Mustardseed.

BOTTOM
Good master Mustardseede, I know your patience well. That same cowardly giant-like ox beef hath devoured many a gentleman of your house. I promise you, your kindred hath made my eyes water ere now. I desire you more acquaintance, good Master Mustardseed.

TITANIA
Come wait upon him; lead him to my bower. The moon, methinks, looks with a watery eye,
And when she weeps, weeps every little flower,
Lamenting some enforced chastity.

Tie up my lover's tongue, bring him silently.

Exit [all].

[3.2]
Enter King of Fairies [Oberon] solus.

OBERON
I wonder if Titania be awaked;
Then what it was that next came in her eye,
Which she must dote on in extremity.

Enter Puck.

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

PUCK
My mistress with a monster is in love!
Near to her close and consecrated bower,
While she was in her dull and sleeping hour,
A crew of patches, rude mechanicals
That work for bread upon Athenian stalls,
Were met together to rehearse a play
Intended for great Theseus' nuptial day.
The shallowest thick-skin of that barren sort,
Who Pyramus presented, in their sport,
Forsook his scene, and entered in a brake.
When I did him at this advantage take,
An ass' nole I fixed on his head.
Anon his Thisby must be answered,
And forth my mimic comes. When they him spy,
As wild geese that the creeping fowler eye,
Or russet-pated coughs, many in sort
Rising and cawing at the gun's report,
Sever themselves, and madly sweep the sky,
So, at his sight, away his fellows fly,
And, at our stamp, here o'er and o'er one falls;
He "murder," cries, and help from Athens calls.
Their sense thus weak, lost with their fears thus strong,
Made senseless things begin to do them wrong.
For briers and thorns at their apparel snatch,
Some sleeves, some hats, from yielders all things catch.
I led them on in this distracted fear
And left sweet Pyramus translated there.
When, in that moment (so it came to pass),
Titania waked, and straightway loved an ass.

OBERON
This falls out better then I could devise!
But hast thou yet latched the Athenian's eyes,
With the love juice, as I bid thee do?

PUCK
I took him sleeping. That is finished too.
And the Athenian woman by his side,
That when he waked, of force she must be eyed.

Enter Demetrius and Hermia.

OBERON
Stand close. This is the same Athenian.

PUCK
This is the woman, but not this the man.

DEMETRIUS
O why rebuke you him that loves you so?
Lay breath so bitter on your bitter foe.

HERMIA
Now I but chide, but I should use thee worse.
For thou, I fear, hast given me cause to curse.
If thou hast slain Lysander in his sleep,
Being o'er shoes in blood, plunge in the deep and kill me too.
The sun was not so true unto the day
As he to me. Would he have stolen away
From sleeping Hermia? I'll believe as soon
This whole earth may be bored, and that the moon
May through the center creep, and so displease
Her brother's noontide with the antipodes.
It cannot be but thou hast murdered him!
So should a murderer look -- so dead, so grim.

DEMETRIUS
So should the murderer look, and so should I,
Pierced through the heart with your stern cruelty.
Yet you, the murderer, looks as bright, as clear,
As yonder Venus in her glimmering sphere.

HERMIA
What's this to my Lysander? Where is he?
Ah, good Demetrius, wilt thou give him me?

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

HERMIA
Out dog! Out cur! Thou drivest me past the bounds
Of maiden's patience. Hast thou slain him then?

Henceforth be never numbered among men.
Oh, once tell true, even for my sake.
Durst thou a look upon him, being awake?
And hast thou killed him sleeping? O brave touch!
Could not a worm, an adder, do so much?

An adder did it; for with doubler tongue
Than thine, thou serpent, never adder stung.

DEMETRIUS
You spend your passion on a misprised mood.
I am not guilty of Lysander's blood.
Nor is he dead, for ought that I can tell.

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: see me no more,
Whether he be dead or no.

Exit [Hermia].

DEMETRIUS
There is no following her in this fierce vein.
Here, therefore, for a while I will remain.
So sorrow's heaviness doth heavier grow,
For debt that bankrout sleep doth sorrow owe,
Which now in some slight measure it will pay,
If for his tender here I make some stay.

[Demetrius] lies down.
OBERON
    What hast thou done? Thou hast mistaken quite
    And laid the love juice on some true love's sight.
    Of thy misprision must perforce ensue
    Some true love turned, and not a false turned true.

1115 PUCK
    Then fate o'er rules, that one man holding troth,
    A million fail, confounding oath on oath.

OBERON
    About the wood, go swifter then the wind,
    And Helena of Athens look thou find.
    All fancy sick she is and pale of cheer,
    With sighs of love that costs the fresh blood dear.
    By some illusion see thou bring her here.
    I'll charm his eyes against she doth appear.

PUCK
    I go, I go, look how I go,
    Swifter then arrow from the Tartar's bow.

    Exit [Puck].

1125 OBERON
    Flower of this purple dye,
    Hit with Cupid's archery,
    Sink in apple of his eye,
    When his love he doth espy,
    Let her shine as gloriously
    As the Venus of the sky.
    When thou wak'st if she be by,
    Beg of her for remedy.

    Enter Puck.

PUCK
    Captain of our fairy band,
    Helena is here at hand,
    And the youth, mistook by me,
    Pleading for a lover's fee.
    Shall we their fond pageant see?
    Lord, what fools these mortals be!

1140 OBERON
    Stand aside. The noise they make
    Will cause Demetrius to awake.

PUCK
    Then will two at once woo one;
    That must needs be sport alone.
And those things do best please me
That befall preposterously.

Enter Lysander and Helena.

LYSANDER
Why should you think that I should woo in scorn?
Scorn and derision never comes in tears.
Look, when I vow I weep; and vows so born,
In their nativity all truth appears.
How can these things in me seem scorn to you?
Bearing the badge of faith to prove them true?

HELENA
You do advance your cunning more and more.
When truth kills truth, Oh devilish holy fray!
These vows are Hermia's. Will you give her o'er?
Weigh oath with oath, and you will nothing weigh.
Your vows to her and me, put in two scales,
Will even weigh, and both as light as tales.

LYSANDER
I had no judgment when to her I swore.

HELENA
Nor none in my mind, now you give her o'er.

LYSANDER
Demetrius loves her, and he loves not you.

[Demetrius] awakens.

DEMETRIUS
O Helen! Goddess, nymph, perfect, divine!
To what, my love, shall I compare thine eyne?
Crystal is muddy. O, how ripe in show
Thy lips, those kissing cherries, tempting grow!
That pure congealed white, high Taurus' snow,
Fanned 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.

HELENA
O spite! O hell! I see you are all bent
To set against me for your merriment.
If you were civil and knew courtesy
You would not do me thus much injury.
Can you not hate me, as I know you do,
But you must join in souls to mock me too?
If you are men, as men you are in show,
You would not use a gentle lady so --
To vow, and swear, and super-praise my parts,
When I am sure you hate me with your hearts.
You both are rivals, and love Hermia,
And now both rivals to mock Helena.
A trim exploit, a manly enterprise,
To conjure tears up in a poor maid's eyes
With your derision. None of noble sort
Would so offend a virgin, and extort
A poor soul's patience, all to make you sport.

LYSANDER
You are unkind Demetrius. Be not so!
For you love Hermia, this you know I know.
And here, with all good will, with all my heart,
In Hermia's love I yield you up my part;
And yours of Helena to me bequeath,
Whom I do love, and will do to my death.

HELENA
Never did mockers waste more idle breath.

DEMETRIUS
Lysander, keep thy Hermia; I will none.

If e'er I loved her, all that love is gone
My heart to her but as guest-wise sojourned,
And now to Helen it is home returned,
There to remain.

LYSANDER
It is not so.

DEMETRIUS
Disparage not the faith thou dost not know,
Lest, to thy peril, thou abide it dear.
Look where thy love comes. Yonder is thy dear.

Enter Hermia.

HERMIA
Dark night, that from the eye his function takes,
The ear more quick of apprehension makes.
Wherein it doth impair the seeing sense,
It pays the hearing double recompense.
Thou art not by mine eye, Lysander, found;
Mine ear, I thank it, brought me to that sound.
But why unkindly diest thou leave me so?

LYSANDER
Why should he stay whom love doth press to go?

HERMIA
What love could press Lysander from my side?

LYSANDER
Lysander's love, that would not let him bide.
Fair Helena, who more engilds the night
Then all yon fiery oes and eyes of light.
Why seek'st thou me? Could not this make thee know,
The hate I bare thee made me leave thee so?

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,
Have you conspired, have you with these contrived
To bait me with this foul derision?

Is all the counsel that we two have shared,
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 schooldays friendship, childhood innocent?

We, Hermia, like two artificial gods,
Have with our needles created both one flower,
Both on one sampler, sitting on one cushion,
Both warbling of one song, both in one key;
As if our hands, our sides, voices, and minds

Had been incorporate. So we grew together,
Like to a double cherry, seeming parted,
But yet a union in partition,
Two lovely berries molded on one stem.
So, with two seeming bodies, but one heart;

Two of the first, like coats in heraldry,
Due but to one, and crowned with one crest.
And will you rent our ancient love asunder,
To join with men in scorning your poor friend?
It is not friendly, 'tis not maidenly.

Our sex, as well as I, may chide you for it,
Though I alone do feel the injury.

HERMIA
I am amazed at your passionate words!
I scorn you not. It seems that you scorn me.

HELENA
Have you not set Lysander, as in scorn,
To follow me and praise my eyes and face?
And made your other love, Demetrius
(Who even but now did spurn me with his foot),
To call me goddess, nymph, divine, and rare,
Precious, celestial? Wherefore speaks he this

To her he hates? And wherefore doth Lysander
Deny your love, so rich within his soul,
And tender me, forsooth, affection,
But by your setting on, by your consent?
What though I be not so in grace as you,

So hung upon with love, so fortunate?
But miserable most, to love unloved?
This you should pity rather then despise.

HERMIA
I understand not what you mean by this.

HELENA
Ay, do. Persevere, counterfeit sad looks,

Make mouths upon me when I turn my back,
Wink each at other, hold the sweet jest up.
This sport, well carried, shall be chronicled.
If you have any pity, grace, or manners,

You would not make me such an argument.

But, fare ye well. 'Tis partly mine 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
Sweet, do not scorn her so.

DEMETRIUS
If she cannot entreat, I can compel.

LYSANDER
Thou canst compel no more than she entreat.
Thy threats have no more strength then her weak praise.
Helen, I love thee, by my life I do!

I swear, by that which I will lose for thee,
To prove him false, that says I love thee not.

DEMETRIUS
I say I love thee more then he can do.

LYSANDER
If thou say so, withdraw and prove it too.
DEMENTRIUS
Quick, come!

1285 HERMIA
Lysander, whereto tends all this?

LYSANDER
Away, you Ethiope!

DEMENTRIUS
No, no, sir, seem to break loose,
Take on as you would follow,
But yet come not. You are a tame man, go!

1290 LYSANDER
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?

LYSANDER
Thy love? Out, tawny Tartar, out!

1295 Out, loathèd medicine! O hated poison, hence!

HERMIA
Do you not jest?

HELENA
Yes, sooth, and so do you!

LYSANDER
Demetrius, I will keep my word with thee.

DEMENTRIUS
I would I had your bond, for I perceive
A weak bond holds you. 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 then hate?
Hate me? Wherefore? O me, what news my Love?

1305 Am not I Hermia? Are not you Lysander?
I am as fair now, as I was e're while.
Since night you loved me, yet since night you left me.
Why, then, you left me -- O the gods forbid --
In earnest, shall I say?

LYSANDER
Ay, by my life!
And never did desire to see thee more.
Therefore be out of hope, of question, of doubt;
Be certain, nothing truer. 'Tis no jest
That I do hate thee, and love Helena.

HERMIA
O me! You juggler, you canker blossom,
You thief of love! What, have you come by night
And stolen my love's heart from him?

HELENA
Fine, 't faith.
Have you no modesty, no maiden shame,

HERMIA
No touch of bashfulness? What, will you tear
Impatient answers from my gentle tongue?
Fie, fie, you counterfeit, you puppet you!

HERMIA
Puppet? Why so? Ay, that way goes the game.
Now I perceive that she hath made compare

HELENA
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!

HERMIA
I pray you, though you mock me, gentlemen,
Let her not hurt me. I was never curst.

HELENA
I have no gift at all in shrewishness.
I am a right maid for my cowardice;
Let her not strike me. You perhaps may think
Because she is something lower then myself,
That I can match her.

HERMIA
Lower? Harke again!

HELENA
Good Hermia, do not be so bitter with me.
I evermore did love you, Hermia,
Did ever keep your counsels, never wronged you,
Save that, in love unto Demetrius,

HERMIA
I told him of your stealth unto this wood.
He followed you, for love I followed him.
But he hath chid me hence, and threatened me
To strike me, spurn me, nay, to kill me too!
And now, so you will let me quiet go,
To Athens will I bear my folly back,
And follow you no further. Let me go.
You see how simple, and how fond I am.

HERMIA
Why, get you gone! Who is't that hinders you?

HELENA
A foolish heart that I leave here behind.

HERMIA
What, with Lysander?

HELENA
With Demetrius.

LYSANDER
Be not afraid. She shall not harm thee, Helena.

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

HELENA
O, when she's angry, she is keen and shrewd.
She was a vixen when she went to school,
And though she be but little, she is fierce.

HERMIA
"Little" again? Nothing but "low" and "little?"
Why will you suffer her to flout me thus?
Let me come to her!

LYSANDER
Get you gone, you dwarf,
You minimus, of hind'ring knotgrass made!
You bead, you acorn.

DEMETRIUS
You are too officious,
In her behalf that scorns your services.
Let her alone. Speak not of Helena,
Take not her part. For if thou dost intend
Never so little show of love to her,
Thou shalt abide it.

LYSANDER
Now she holds me not.

Now follow if thou dar'st, to try whose right,
Of thine or mine, is most in Helena.

DEMETRIUS
Follow? Nay, I'll go with thee, cheek by jowl.

Exit Lysander and Demetrius.
HERMIA
    You, mistress, all this coil is long of you.
    Nay, go not back.

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

    Enter Oberon and Puck [from the background. Exit Helena and Hermia].

OBERON
    This is thy negligence. Still thou mistak'st,
    Or else committ'st thy knaveries willingly.

PUCK
    Believe me, king of shadows, I mistook.
    Did not you tell me I should know the man
    By the Athenian garments he hath on?
    And so far blameless proves my enterprise,
    That I have 'nointed an Athenian's eyes,
    And so far am I glad it so did sort,
    As this their jangling I esteem a sport.

    Oberon
    Thou seest these lovers seek a place to fight.
    Hie therefore, Robin, overcast the night,
    The starry welkin cover thou anon
    With drooping fog as black as Acheron,
    And lead these testy rivals so astray
    As one come not within another's way.
    Like to Lysander sometime frame thy tongue,
    Then stir Demetrius up with bitter wrong;
    And sometime rail thou like Demetrius.
    And from each other look thou lead them thus,
    Till o're their brows, death-counterfeiting, sleep
    With leaden legs, and batty wings doth creep.
    Then crush this herb into Lysander's eye,
    Whose liquor hath this virtuous property,
    To take from thence all error with his might,
    And make his eyeballs roll with wonted sight.
    When they next wake, all this derision
    Shall seem a dream and fruitless vision,
    And back to Athens shall the lovers wend
    With league whose date till death shall never end.
    While I in this affaire do thee employ,
    I'll to my queen and beg her Indian boy;
And then I will her charmèd eye release
From monster's view, and all things shall be peace.

PUCK
My fairy lord, this must be done with haste,
For night-swift dragons cut the clouds full fast,
And yonder shines Aurora's harbinger,
At whose approach ghosts wandering here and there
Troop home to churchyards. Damnèd spirits all,
That in crossways and floods have burial,
Already to their wormy beds are gone
For fear least day should look their shames upon;
They willfully themselves exile from light
And must for aye consort with black-browed night.

OBERON
But we are spirits of another sort.
I with the Morning's love have oft made sport,
And, like a forester, the groves may tread
Even till the eastern gate, all fiery red,
Opening on Neptune with fair blessed beams,
Turns into yellow gold his salt-green streams.
But, notwithstanding, haste! Make no delay.

We may effect this business yet ere day.

PUCK
Up and down, up and down,
I will lead them up and down.
I am feared in field and town.
Goblin, lead them up and down.
Here comes one.

Enter Lysander.

LYSANDER
Where art thou, proud Demetrius? Speak thou now.

Enter Demetrius.

DEMETRIUS
Lysander, speak again!
Thou runaway, thou coward, art thou fled?
Speak! In some bush? Where dost thou hide thy head?
PUCK
    Thou coward, art thou bragging to the stars,
    Telling the bushes that thou look'st for wars,
    And wilt not come? Come recreant, come thou child!
    I'll whip thee with a rod. He is defiled
    That draws a sword on thee.

DEMETRIUS
    Yea, art thou there?

PUCK
    Follow my voice, we'll try no manhood here.

Exit [Puck].

LYSANDER
    He goes before me, and still dares me on.
    When I come where he calls, then he's gone.
    The villain is much lighter heeled than I.
    I followed fast, but faster he did fly,
    Shifting places.
    That fallen am I in dark uneven way,
    And here will rest me. Come thou gentle day.

[Lysander lies down]
    For if but once thou show me thy gray light,
    I'll find Demetrius, and revenge this spite.

Lysander sleeps.

Enter [Puck] and Demetrius.

PUCK
    Ho, ho, ho! Coward, why com'st thou not?

DEMETRIUS
    Abide me, if thou dar'st. For well I wot,
    Thou runn'st before me, shifting every place,
    And dar'st not stand nor look me in the face.
    Where art thou?

PUCK
    Come hither! I am here.

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

[Demetrius sleeps.] Enter Helena.
HELENA
    O weary night, O long and tedious night,
    Abate thy hours, shine comforts from the east,
    That I may back to Athens by daylight
    From these that my poor company detest;
    And sleep, that sometime shuts up sorrow's eye,
    Steal me awhile from mine own company.

[Helena] sleeps.

PUCK
    Yet but three? Come one more.
    Two of both kinds makes up four.
    Here she comes, curst and sad.
    Cupid is a knavish lad

Enter Hermia.

Thus to make poor females mad.

HERMIA
    Never so weary, never so in woe,
    Bedabbled with the dew, and torn with briars,
    I can no further crawl, no further go;
    My legs can keep no pace with my desires.

Here will I rest me till the break of day.
    Heavens shield Lysander if they mean a fray.

PUCK
    On the ground sleep sound,
    I'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,
    That every man should take his own,
    In your waking shall be shown.
    Jack shall have Jill,
    Naught shall go ill.

The man shall have his mare again,
    And all shall be well.

They sleep all the act. [Exit Puck].

[4.1]

Enter queen of fairies [Titania], and clown [Bottom], and fairies and the king [Oberon] behind them.

TITANIA
    Come, sit thee down upon this flowery bed,
    While I thy amiable cheeks do coy,
And stick musk-roses in thy sleek smooth head,
And kiss thy fair large ears, my gentle joy.

BOTTOM
Where's Peaseblossom?

PEASEBLOSSOM
Ready.

BOTTOM
Scratch my head, Peaseblossom. Where's Mounsieur Cobweb?

COBWEB
Ready.

BOTTOM
Mounsieur Cobweb, good mounsier, get your weapons in your hand and kill me a red-hipped humblebee on the top of a thistle; and, good mounsier, bring me the honey bag. Do not fret yourself too much in the action,
mounsier; and, good mounsier, have a care the honey bag break not. I would be loath to have you overflowen with a honey bag signor. Where's Mounsieur Mustardseed?

MUSTARDSEED
Ready.

BOTTOM
Give me your neaf, Mounsieur Mustardseed. Pray you, leave your courtesy good mounsier.

MUSTARDSEED
What's your will?

BOTTOM
Nothing, good mounsier, but to help Cavalery Cobweb to scratch. I must to the barber's, mounsier, for methinks I am marvelous hairy about the face.

TITANIA
What, wilt thou hear some music, my sweet love?

BOTTOM
I have a reasonable good ear in music. Let us have the tongs and the bones.

Music tongs. Rural music.

TITANIA
Or say, sweet Love, what thou desirest to eat.

BOTTOM
Truly, a peck of provender. I could munch your good dry oats. Methinks I have a great desire to a bottle of hay. Good hay, sweet hay, hath no fellow.

TITANIA
I have a venturous fairy That shall seek the squirrel's hoard
And fetch thee new nuts.
I had rather have a handful or two of dried peas. But, I pray you, let none of your people stir me. I have an exposition of sleep come upon me.

Sleep thou, and I will wind thee in my arms.
Fairies, be gone, and be always away.

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!

[Titania and Bottom sleep.] Enter Robin Goodfellow [Puck] and Oberon.

Welcome good Robin.
Seest thou this sweet sight?
Her dotage now I do begin to pity.
For, meeting her of late behind the wood,
Seeking sweet savors for this hateful fool,
I did upbraid her, and fall out with her.
For she his hairy temples then had rounded,
With coronet of fresh and fragrant flowers.
And that same dew, which sometime on the buds
Was wont to swell like round and orient pearls,
Stood now within the pretty floweret's eyes,
Like tears that did their own disgrace bewail.
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, and her fairy sent
To bear him to my bower in fairyland.
And now I have the boy, I will undo
This hateful imperfection of her eyes.
And, gentle Puck, take this transformed scalp,
From off the head of this Athenian swain,
That he, awaking when the other do,
May all to Athens back again repair,
And think no more of this night's accidents,
But as the fierce vexation of a dream.
But first I will release the fairy queen.

Be thou as thou wast wont to be;
See as thou wast wont to see.
Diane's bud, or Cupid's flower,
Hath such force and blessed power.
Now, my 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 a while. Robin take off his head.
Titania, music call, and strike more dead
Than common sleep of all these five the sense.

TITANIA
Music, ho music! Such as charmeth sleep.

Music still.

PUCK
When thou wak'st, with thine own fool's eyes peep.

OBERON
Sound music! Come, my queen, take hands with me
And rock the ground whereon these sleepers be.

Now thou and I are new in amity,
And will tomorrow midnight solemnly
Dance in Duke Theseus' house triumphantly,
And bless it to all fair posterity.
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.

OBERON
Then, my queen, in silence sad,
Trip we after the night's shade.

We the globe can compass soon,
Swifter then the wandering moon.

TITANIA
Come, my lord, and in our flight,
Tell me how it came this night
That I sleeping here was found

Sleepers lie still.

With these mortals on the ground.
Wind horns.

Enter Theseus, Egeus, Hippolita and all his train.

THESEUS
   Go, one of you, find out the forester,
   For now our observation is performed;
   And since we have the vaward of the day,
   My love shall hear the music of my hounds.
   Uncouple in the western valley; let them go.
   Dispatch, I say, and find the forester.

   We will, faire queen, up to the mountain's top,
   And mark the musical confusion
   Of hounds and echo in conjunction.

HIPPOLYTA
   I was with Hercules and Cadmus once
   When in a wood of Crete they bayed the bear
   With hounds of Sparta. Never did I hear
   Such gallant chiding; for, besides the groves,
   The skies, the fountains, every region near
   Seemed all one mutual cry. I never heard
   So musical a discord, such sweet thunder.

THESEUS
   My hounds are bred out of the Spartan kind,
   So flewed, so sanded, and their heads are hung
   With ears that sweep away the morning dew;
   Crook-kneed, and dewlapped, like Thessalian bulls,
   Slow in pursuit, but matched in mouth like bells,
   Each under each. A cry more tuneable
   Was never hallowed to nor cheered with horn
   In Crete, in Sparta, nor in Thessaly.
   Judge when you hear. But soft! What nymphs are these?

EGEUS
   My Lord, this is my daughter here asleep,
   And this Lysander, this Demetrius is,
   This Helena, old Nedar's Helena.
   I wonder of this being here together.

THESEUS
   No doubt they rose up early to observe
   The right of May, and hearing our intent,
   Came here in grace of our solemnity.
   But speak, Egeus. Is not this the day
   That Hermia should give answer of her choice?
EGEUS
   It is, my lord.
THESEUS
   Go, bid the huntsmen wake them with their
   horns.
   *Horns and they wake. Shout within; they all start up.*
THESEUS
   Good morrow friends. Saint Valentine is past;
   Begin these wood birds but to couple now?
LYSANDER
   Pardon, my lord.
THESEUS
   I pray you all stand up.
   I know you two are rival enemies.
   How comes this gentle concord in the world,
   That hatred is so far from jealousy
   *To sleep by hate, and fear no enmity?*
LYSANDER
   My lord, I shall reply amazedly,
   Half asleep, half waking. But as yet, I swear,
   *I cannot truly say how I came here.*
   *But as I think, for truly would I speak,*
   *And now I do bethink me, so it is,*
   *I came with Hermia hither. Our intent*
   *Was to be gone from Athens, where we might be*
   *Without the peril of the Athenian law.*
EGEUS
   Enough, enough, my lord! You have enough.
   *I beg the law, the law, upon his head.*
   *They would have stolen away, they would, Demetrius,*
   *Thereby to have defeated you and me --*
   *You of your wife, and me of my consent,*
   *Of my consent that she should be your wife.*
DEMETRIUS
   My lord, fair Helen told me of their stealth,
   Of this their purpose hither, to this wood,
   And I in fury hither followed them,
   Fair Helena, in fancy, followed me.
   *But, my good lord, I wot not by what power,*
   *But by some power it is, my love*
   *To Hermia, melted as the snow,*
   *Seems to me now as the remembrance of an idle gaud,*
   *Which in my childhood I did dote upon.*
And all the faith, the virtue of my heart,
The object and the pleasure of mine eye,
Is only Helena. To her, my lord,
Was I betrothèd ere I see Hermia.
But, like a sickness, did I loath this food;
But, as in health, come to my natural taste.

Now do I wish it, love it, long for it,
And will for evermore be true to it.

**THESEUS**

Fair lovers, you are fortunately met;
Of this discourse we shall hear more anon.
Egeus, I will overbear your will;
For in the temple, by and by, with us,
These couples shall eternally be knit.
And, for the morning now is something worn,
Our purposed hunting shall be set aside.
Away, with us to Athens. Three and three,

We'll hold a feast in great solemnity.
Come, Hippolita.

*Exit duke [Theseus, Hippolita, Egeus] and lords.*

**DEMETRIUS**

These things seem small and undistinguishable,
Like far off mountains turned into clouds.

**HERMIA**

Methinks I see these things with parted eye,
When every thing seems double.

**HELENA**

So methinks.
And I have found Demetrius, like a jewel,
Mine own, and not mine own.

**DEMETRIUS**

It seems to me,
That yet we sleep, we dream. Do not you think
The duke was here, and bid us follow him?

**HERMIA**

Yea, and my father.

**HELENA**

And Hippolita.

**LYSANDER**

And he bid us follow to the temple.

**DEMETRIUS**

Why then, we are awake! Let's follow him,
And by the way let us recount our dreams.

Bottom wakes. Exit lovers.

Bottom

When my cue comes, call me, and I will answer. My next is, "most fair Pyramus." Hey ho. Peter Quince? Flute the bellows mender? Snout the tinker? Starveling? God's my life! Stolen hence, and left me asleep? I have had a most rare vision. I had a dream, past the wit of man, to say, what dream it was. Man is but an ass, if he go about to expound this dream.

Methought I was -- there is no man can tell what. Methought I was, and methought I had -- but man is but a patched fool, if he will 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. I will get Peter Quince to write a ballet of this dream. It shall be called "Bottom's Dream," because it hath no bottom. And I will sing it in the latter end of a play, before the duke. Peradventure, to make it the more gracious, I shall sing it at her death.

Exit [Bottom].

[4.2]

Enter Quince, Flute [as] Thisby, Snout, and Starveling.

Quince

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 marred. It goes not forward, doth it?

Quince

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

Flute

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

Quince

Yea, and the best person too, and he is a very paramour for a sweet voice.

Flute

You must say "paragon." A paramour is (God bless us), a thing of naught.

Enter Snug the Joiner.

Snug

Masters, the duke is coming from the temple, and there is two or three lords and ladies more married. 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. He could not have 'scaped sixpence a day. And the duke had not given him sixpence a day for playing Pyramus, I'll be hanged. He would have deserved it. Sixpence a day in Pyramus, or nothing.

Enter Bottom.

BOTTOM
Where are these lads? Where are these hearts?

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

BOTTOM
Masters, I am to discourse wonders, but ask me not what. For if I tell you, I am no true Athenian. I will tell you every thing as it fell out.

QUINCE
Let us hear, sweet Bottom.

BOTTOM
Not a word of me. All that I will tell you is, that the duke hath dined. Get your apparel together, good strings to your beards, new ribbons to your pumps, meet presently at the palace, every man look o're his part; for the short and the long is, our play is preferred! In any case, let Thisby have clean linen, and let not him that plays the lion pare his nails, for they shall hang out for the lion's claws. And, most dear actors, eat no onions, nor garlic, for we are to utter sweet breath; and I do not doubt but to hear them say, it is a sweet comedy. No more words. Away! go away!

Exeunt.

[5.1]

Enter Theseus, Hippolita, Egeus and his lords.

HIPPOLITA
'Tis strange, my Theseus, that these lovers speak of.

THESEUS
More strange then true. I never may believe
These antique fables, nor these fairy toys.
Lovers and madmen have such seething brains,
Such shaping fantasies, that apprehend more
Than cool reason ever comprehends.
The lunatic, the lover, and the poet
Are of imagination all compact.
One sees more devils then vast hell can hold:
That is the madman. The lover, all as frantic,
Sees Helen's beauty in a brow of Egypt.
The poet's eye, in a fine frenzy rolling, doth glance
From heaven to earth, from earth to heaven,
And as imagination bodies forth the forms of things
Unknown, the poet's pen turns them to shapes,
And gives to airy nothing a local habitation
And a name. Such tricks hath strong imagination,
That if it would but apprehend some joy,
It comprehends some bringer of that joy.
Or, in the night, imagining some fear,
How easy is a bush supposed a bear?

HIPPOLITA
But all the story of the night told over,
And all their minds transfigured so together,
More witnesseth than fancy's images
And grows to something of great constancy;
But howsoever, strange and admirable.

Enter lovers Lysander; Demetrius, Hermia, and Helena.

THESEUS
Here come the lovers, full of joy and mirth.
Joy, gentle friends, joy and fresh days
Of love accompany your hearts.

LYSANDE R
More then to us wait in your royal walks,
your board, your bed.

THESEUS
Come now, what masks, what dances shall we have,
To wear away this long age of three hours,
Between our after-supper and bed-time?

Where is our usual manager of mirth?
What revels are in hand? Is there no play
To ease the anguish of a torturing hour?
Call Egeus.

EGEUS
Here mighty Theseus.

THESEUS
Say, what abridgement have you for this
evening?
What mask? What music? How shall we beguile
The lazy time if not with some delight?

EGEUS
There is a brief how many sports are rife.

Make choice of which your highness will see first.

THESEUS
"The Battle with the Centaurs," to be sung
By an Athenian eunuch to the harp.
THESEUS
We'll none of that. That have I told my love
In glory of my kinsman Hercules.

"The Riot of the Tipsy Bacchanals
Tearing the Thracian Singer in their Rage."
That is an old device, and it was played
When I from Thebes came last a conqueror.

"The Thrice Three Muses Mourning for the Death
of Learning, late Deceased in Beggary."
That is some satire keen and critical,
Not sorting with a nuptial ceremony.

"A Tedium Brief Scene of Young Pyramus,
And his love Thisby; very tragical mirth."
Merry and tragical? Tedium and brief? That
Is hot ice and wondrous strange snow. How shall we
Find the concord of this discord?

EGEUS
A play there is, my lord, some ten words long,
Which is as brief as I have known a play;
But by ten words, my lord, it is too long,
Which makes it tedious. For in all the play

There is not one word apt, one player fitted.
And tragical, my noble lord, it is, for Pyramus
Therein doth kill himself. Which, when I saw

Rehearsed, I must confess, made mine eyes water,
But more merry tears the passion of loud laughter
Never shed.

THESEUS
What are they that do play it?

EGEUS
Hard-handed men, that work in Athens here,
Which never labored in their minds till now;
And now have toiled their unbreathed memories
With this same play, against your nuptial.

THESEUS
And we will hear it.

EGEUS
No, my noble lord, it is not for you. I have heard
It over, and it is nothing, nothing in the world;
Unless you can find sport in their intents,
Extremely stretched and conned with cruel pain,
To do you service.

THESEUS
I will hear that play. For never any thing
Can be amiss when simpleness and duty tender it.
Go, bring them in, and take your places ladies.

HIPPOLITA
I love not to see wretchedness o'ercharged,
And duty in his service perishing.

THESEUS
Why, gentle sweet, you shall see no such thing.

HIPPOLITA
He says they can do nothing in this kind.

THESEUS
The kinder we, to give them thanks for nothing.
Our sport shall be to take what they mistake,
And what poor duty cannot do, noble respect
Takes it in might, not merit.

Where I have come, great clerks have purposed
To greet me with premeditated welcomes;
Where I have seen them shiver and look pale,
Make periods in the midst of sentences,
Throttle their practiced accent in their fears,

And, in conclusion, dambly have broke off,
Not paying me a welcome. Trust me, sweet,
Out of this silence yet I picked a welcome;
And in the modesty of fearful duty
I read as much as from the rat'ling tongue

Of saucy and audacious eloquence.
Love, therefore, and tongue-tied simplicity
In least speak most, to my capacity.

EGEUS
So please your grace, the prologue is addressed.

THESEUS
Let him approach.

Flourish [of trumpets]. Enter the Prologue Quince.

PROLOGUE
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
This fellow doth not stand upon points.

LYSANDER
He hath rid his prologue like a rough colt; he knows not the stop. A good moral, my lord. It is not enough to speak, but to speak true.

HIPPOLITA
Indeed, he hath played on his prologue like a child on a recorder: a sound, but not in government.

THESEUS
His speech was like a tangled chain: nothing impaired, but all disordered. Who is next?

_Tawyer with a trumpet before them. sounds._

_Enter Pyramus and Thisby, Wall, Moonshine, and Lion._

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 roughcast, doth present
Wall, that vile wall, which did these lovers sunder;
And through wall's chink, poor souls, they are content
To whisper. At the which, let no man wonder.
This man, with lantern, dog, and bush of thorn,

Presenteth moonshine. For, if you will know,
By moonshine did these lovers think no scorn
To meet at Ninus' tomb, there, there to woo.
This grizzly beast, which lion hight by name,
The trusty Thisby, coming first by night,

Did scare away, or rather did affright;
And, as she fled, her mantle she did fall,
Which lion vile with bloody mouth did stain.
Anon comes Pyramus, sweet youth and tall,
And finds his Thisby's mantle slain;

Whereat, with blade, with bloody blameful blade,
He bravely broached his boiling bloody breast.
And Thisby, tarrying in mulberry shade,
His dagger drew, and died. For all the rest,
Let lion, moonshine, wall, and lovers twain

At large discourse, while here they do remain.

 Exit all but Wall.
I wonder if the lion be to speak?

DEMETRIUS  
No wonder, my lord. One lion may when many asses do.

    Exit Lion, Thisby, and Moonshine.

WALL  
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 Thisby,  
Did whisper often, very secretly.  
This loam, this rough-cast, and this stone doth show  
That I am that same Wall, the truth is so.  
And this the cranny is, right and sinister,

Through which the fearful lovers are to whisper.

THESEUS  
Would you desire lime and hair to speak better?

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

Pyramus draws near the wall. Silence!

    Enter Pyramus.

PYRAMUS  
O grim-looked 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, thou sweet and lovely wall,  
That stands 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,  
Curst be thy stones for thus deceiving me!

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

PYRAMUS  
No, in truth, sir, he should not. "Deceiving me" Is Thisby's cue. She is to enter, and I am to spy her through the wall. You shall see it will fall

    Enter Thisby.

Pat as I told you. Yonder she comes.
THISBY
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.

PYRAMUS
I see a voice! Now will I to the chink
To spy and I can 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,
And like Limander am I trusty still.

THISBY
And I like Helen, till the Fates me kill.

PYRAMUS
Not Shafalus to Procrus was so true.

THISBY
As Shafalus to Procrus, I to you.

PYRAMUS
O, kiss me through the hole of this vile wall.

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

PYRAMUS
Wilt thou at Ninnies tomb meet me straight way?

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

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

Exit Clown [Wall].

THESEUS
Now is the moral down between the two neighbors.

DEMETRIUS
No remedy, my lord, when walls are so willful to hear without warning.

HIPPOLITA
This is the silliest stuff that e're I heard.

THESEUS
The best in this kind are but shadows, and the worst are no worse, if
imagination amend them.

HIPPOLITA
It must be your imagination then, and not theirs.

**THESEUS**
If we imagine no worse of them then they of themselves, they may pass for excellent men. Here come two noble beasts, in a man and a lion.

*Enter Lion and Moonshine.*

**LION**
You Ladies, you whose gentle hearts do fear
The smallest monstrous mouse that creeps on floor,
May now, perchance, both quake and tremble here,
When Lion rough in wildest rage doth roar.
Then know that I, one Snug the Joiner am
A lion fell, nor else no lion's dam.
For, if I should as lion come in strife
Into this place,'twere pity of my life!

**THESEUS**
A very gentle beast, and of good conscience.

**DEMETRIUS**
The very best at a beast, my lord, that e're I saw.

**LYSANDER**
This lion is a very fox for his valor.

**THESEUS**
True, and a goose for his discretion.

**DEMETRIUS**
Not so, my lord, for his valor cannot carry his discretion, and the fox carries the goose.

**THESEUS**
His discretion, I am sure cannot carry his valor, for the goose carries not the fox. It is well. Leave it to his discretion, and let us hearken to the moon.

**MOON**
This lantern doth the horned moon present --

**DEMETRIUS**
He should have worn the horns on his head.

**THESEUS**
He is no crescent, and his horns are invisible within the circumference.

**MOON**
This lantern doth the horned moon present.

**THESEUS**
Myself the man in the moon doth seem to be.

**THESEUS**
This is the greatest error of all the rest! The man should be put into the lantern. How is it else the man in the moon?

**DEMETRIUS**
He dares not come there for the candle. For you see, it is already in snuff.

HIPPOLITA
I am weary of this moon; would he would change.

THESEUS
It appears, by his small light of discretion, that he is in the wane; but yet, in courtesy, in all reason, we must stay the time.

LYSANDER
Proceed, moon.

MOON
All that 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.

DEMETRIUS
Why all these should be in the lantern, for they are in the moon. But silence, here comes Thisby.

Enter Thisby.

THISBY
This is old Ninnies tomb: where is my love?

LION
Oh.

[The Lion roars, {and} Thisby runs off.]

DEMETRIUS
Well roared, lion.

THESEUS
Well run, Thisby.

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

[Lion mauls Thisby's mantle and runs off.]

THESEUS
Well moused, Lion.

DEMETRIUS
And then came Pyramus.

LYSANDER
And so the lion vanished.

Enter Pyramus.

PYRAMUS
Sweet moon, I thank thee for thy sunny beams.

I thank thee, moon, for shining now so bright,
For by thy gracious, golden, glittering beams
I trust to taste of truest Thisby's 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 you Furies fell!
O Fates, come, come! Cut thread and thrum,
Quail, crush, conclude, and quell.

THESEUS
This passion, and the death of a dear friend,
Would go near to make a man look sad.

HIPPOLITA
Beshrew my heart, but I pity the man.

PYRAMUS
O, wherefore, Nature, did'st thou lions frame?
Since lion vile hath here deflowered my dear;
Which is -- no, no -- which was the fairest dame
That lived, that loved, that liked, that looked with cheer.
Come tears, confound. Out sword, and wound
The pap of Pyramus:
Aye, that left pap, where heart doth hop;
Thus die I, thus, thus, thus.

Now am I dead, now am I fled: my soul is in the sky.

Tongue, lose thy light. Moon, take thy flight,

Exit Moon.

Now die, die, die, die, die.

DEMETRIUS
No die, but an ace for him. For he is but one.

LYSANDER
Less than an ace man, for he is dead. He is nothing.

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

HIPPOLITA
How chance moonshine is gone before? Thisby comes back, and finds her lover.

Enter Thisby.

THESEUS
She will find him by starlight. Here she comes, and her passion ends the play.

HIPPOLITA
Methinks she should not use a long one for such a Pyramus; I hope she will be brief.

DEMETRIUS
A moth will turn the balance, which Pyramus which Thisby is the better.

LYSANDER
  She hath spied him already, with those sweet eyes.

DEMETRIUS
  And thus she means, videlicet:

THISBY
  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,
  These yellow cowslip cheeks
  Are gone, are gone. Lovers, make moan.
  His eyes were green as leeks.
  O sisters three, come, come to me,
  With hands as pale as milk,
  Lay them in gore, since you have shore
  With shears, his thread of silk.
  Tongue, not a word. Come, trusty sword,
  Come, blade, my breast imbrue.
  And, farewell friends. Thus Thisby ends.
  Adieu, adieu, adieu

THESEUS
  Moonshine and Lion are left to bury the dead.

DEMETRIUS
  Ay, and Wall too.

BOTTOM
  No, I assure you, the wall is down, that parted their fathers. Will it please you to see the epilogue, or to hear a Bergomask dance between two of our company?

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. Marry, if he that writ it had played Pyramus, and hung himself in Thisby's garter, it would have been a fine tragedy; and so it is truly, and very notably discharged. But come, your Burgomaske, let your epilogue alone.

  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 over-watched.
  This palpable gross play hath well beguiled
  The heavy gate of night. Sweet friends, to bed.
  A fortnight hold we this solemnity
  In nightly revels and new jollity.
Enter Puck.

PUCK

    Now the hungry lion's roars,
    And the wolf beholds the moon,
    Whilst the heavy plowman snores,
    All with weary task fordone.
    Now the wasted brands do glow,
    Whil'st 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,
    Every one lets forth his sprite,

    In the churchway 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; not a mouse
    Shall disturb this hallowed house.

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

Enter king [Oberon] and queen[Titania] of fairies with their train.

OBERON

    Through the house give glimmering light,
    By the dead and drowsy fire.
    Every elf and fairy sprite
    Hop as light as bird from brier;
    And this ditty after me sing and dance it trippingly.

TITANIA

    First rehearse this song by rote,
    To each word a warbling note.
    Hand in hand with fairy grace
    Will we sing and bless this place.

The Song.

OBERON

    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.
And the blots of Nature's hand
Shall not in their issue stand.

Never mole, harelip, nor scar,
Nor mark prodigious, such as are
Despised in nativity
Shall upon their children be.
With this field dew consecrate

Every fairy take his gait,
And each several chamber bless
Through this palace with sweet peace.
Ever shall in safety rest,
And the owner of it blest.

Trip away, make no stay;
Meet me all by break of day.

[Exit all but Puck.]

Epilogue

PUCK
If we shadows have offended,
Think but this, and all is mended:
That you have but slumbered here,

While these visions did appear.
And this weak and idle theme,
No more yielding but a dream.
Gentles, do not reprehend.
If you pardon, we will mend.

And, as I am an honest Puck,
If we have unearnèd luck
Now to 'scape the serpent's tongue,
We will make amends ere long.
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.