

imperfect sketch. From beginning to end of the play his absolute self-possession never for a moment fails him. He lords it over his fellow actors, as though he, and not Quince, were poet and stage-manager in one; he accepts the amorous attentions of a queen with calm serenity as no more than he might naturally have expected; nor does he ever, either before or after his transformation, betray the slightest suspicion of the fact that he is after all only an ass. It has often been thought that in the rehearsal scenes Shakespeare was drawing upon the humours of such rustic actors as might have ventured a Whitsun pastoral at Stratford upon Avon; yet one fears that the foibles of the green-room are much the same in the humblest and the loftiest walks of the profession, and who shall say that the poet is not poking good-humoured fun at some of his fellows of the Lord Chamberlain's company?

Finally, with the interlude, we come back to the central idea once more. For in the ill-starred loves of Pyramus and Thisbe, their assignation, their elopement, and their terrible end, we have but a burlesque presentment of the same theme that has occupied us throughout. It is all a matter of how the poet chooses to put it. Precisely the same situation that in *Romeo and Juliet* will ask our tears shall here move unextinguishable laughter. And so the serious interest of the play dissolves in mirth, and while the musicians break into the exquisite poetry of the epithalamium, the playwright stands and watches us with the smile of wise tolerance on his lips.

## A MIDSUMMER-NIGHT'S DREAM





# DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

THESEUS, Duke of Athens.  
 EGEUS, father to Hermia.  
 LYSANDER, } in love with Hermia.  
 DEMETRIUS, }  
 PHILOSTRATE, Master of the Revels to Theseus.  
 QUINCE, a carpenter.  
 SNUG, a joiner.  
 BOTTOM, a weaver.  
 FLUTE, a bellows-mender.  
 SNOUT, a tinker.  
 STARVELING, a tailor.

HIPPOLYTA, Queen of the Amazons, betrothed to Theseus.  
 HERMIA, daughter to Egeus, in love with Lysander.  
 HELENA, in love with Demetrius.

OBERON, King of the fairies.  
 TITANIA, Queen of the fairies.  
 PUCK, or Robin Goodfellow.  
 PEASEBLOSSOM, }  
 COBWEB, } fairies.  
 MOTH, }  
 MUSTARDSEED, }

Other fairies attending their King and Queen. Attendants on Theseus  
 and Hippolyta.

PLACE: Athens and a wood near it.

TIME: 1st day—Act i.  
 2nd day—Act ii.—Act iv., Sc. i.  
 3rd day—Act iv. Sc. i. to end.

# A MIDSUMMER-NIGHT'S DREAM.

## ACT I.

SCENE I. Athens. The palace of THESEUS.

Enter THESEUS, HIPPOLYTA, PHILOSTRATE, and  
 Attendants.

*The.* Now, fair Hippolyta, our nuptial hour  
 Draws on apace; four happy days bring in  
 Another moon: but, O, methinks, how slow  
 This old moon wanes! she lingers my desires,  
 Like to a step-dame or a dowager  
 Long withering out a young man's revenue.

*Hip.* Four days will quickly steep themselves in night;  
 Four nights will quickly dream away the time;  
 And then the moon, like to a silver bow  
 New-bent in heaven, shall behold the night  
 Of our solemnities. 10

*The.* Go, Philostrate,  
 Stir up the Athenian youth to merriment;  
 Awake the pert and nimble spirit of mirth:  
 Turn melancholy forth to funerals;  
 The pale companion is not for our pomp. [*Exit Philostrate.*]  
 Hippolyta, I woo'd thee with my sword,  
 And won thy love, doing thee injuries;  
 But I will wed thee in another key,  
 With pomp, with triumph and with revelling.

Enter EGEUS, HERMIA, LYSANDER, and DEMETRIUS.

*Ege.* Happy be Theseus, our renowned duke! 20

*The.* Thanks, good Egeus: what's the news with thee?

*Ege.* Full of vexation come I, with complaint  
 Against my child, my daughter Hermia.  
 Stand forth, Demetrius. My noble lord,  
 This man hath my consent to marry her.  
 Stand forth, Lysander; and, my gracious duke,  
 This man hath bewitch'd the bosom of my child:



Thou, thou, Lysander, thou hast given her rhymes  
 And interchanged love-tokens with my child:  
 Thou hast by moonlight at her window sung  
 With feigning voice verses of feigning love,  
 And stolen the impression of her fantasy  
 With bracelets of thy hair, rings, gawds, conceits,  
 Knacks, trifles, nosegays, sweetmeats, messengers  
 Of strong prevailment in unhardened youth:  
 With cunning hast thou filch'd my daughter's heart,  
 Turn'd her obedience, which is due to me,  
 To stubborn harshness: and, my gracious duke,  
 Be't 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.

*The.* 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.

*Her.* So is Lysander.

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

*Her.* I would my father look'd but with my eyes.

*The.* Rather your eyes must with his judgment look.

*Her.* 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.

*The.* Either to die the death or to abjure  
 For ever the society of men.  
 Therefore, fair Hermia, question your desires;  
 Know of your youth, examine well your blood,  
 Whether, if you yield not to your father's choice,  
 You can endure the livery of a nun,  
 For aye to be in shady cloister mew'd,

To live a barren sister all your life,  
 Chanting faint hymns to the cold fruitless moon.  
 Thrice-blessed they that master so their blood,  
 To undergo such maiden pilgrimage;  
 But earthlier happy is the rose distill'd,  
 Than that which withering on the virgin thorn  
 Grows, lives and dies in single blessedness.

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

*The.* 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.

*Dem.* Relent, sweet Hermia: and, Lysander, yield  
 Thy crazed title to my certain right.

*Lys.* You have her father's love, Demetrius;  
 Let me have Hermia's: do you marry him.

*Ege.* 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.

*Lys.* I am, my lord, as well derived as he,  
 As well possess'd; my love is more than his;  
 My fortunes every way as fairly rank'd,  
 If not with vantage, as Demetrius';  
 And, which is more than all these boasts can be,  
 I am beloved of beauteous Hermia:  
 Why should not I then prosecute my right?  
 Demetrius, I'll avouch it to his head,  
 Made love to Nedar's daughter, Helena,  
 And won her soul; and she, sweet lady, dotes,  
 Devoutly dotes, dotes in idolatry,  
 Upon this spotted and inconstant man.

*The.* I must confess that I have heard so much,  
 And with Demetrius thought to have spoke thereof;  
 But, being over-full of self-affairs,  
 My mind did lose it. But, Demetrius, come;  
 And come, Egeus; you shall go with me,  
 I have some private schooling for you both.



For you, fair Hermia, look you arm yourself  
 To fit your fancies to your father's will;  
 Or else the law of Athens yields you up—  
 Which by no means we may extenuate—  
 To death, or to a vow of single life.  
 Come, my Hippolyta: what cheer, my love?  
 Demetrius and Egeus, go along:  
 I must employ you in some business  
 Against our nuptial and confer with you  
 Of something nearly that concerns yourselves.

*Ege.* With duty and desire we follow you.

[*Exeunt all but Lysander and Hermia.*]

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

*Her.* Belike for want of rain, which I could well  
 Beteem them from the tempest of my eyes.

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

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

*Lys.* Or else misgraffed in respect of years,—

*Her.* O spite! too old to be engaged to young.

*Lys.* Or else it stood upon the choice of friends,—

*Her.* O hell! to choose love by another's eyes.

*Lys.* 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.

*Her.* If then true lovers have been ever cross'd,  
 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.

*Lys.* A good persuasion: therefore, hear me, Hermia.  
 I have a widow aunt, a dowager  
 Of great revenue, and she hath no child:  
 From Athens is her house remote seven leagues;  
 And she respects me as her only son.

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 to-morrow night;  
 And in the wood, a league without the town,  
 Where I did meet thee once with Helena,  
 To do observance to a morn of May,  
 There will I stay for thee.

*Her.* 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 loves,  
 And by that fire which burn'd the Carthage queen,  
 When the false Trojan under sail was seen,  
 By all the vows that ever men have broke,  
 In number more than ever woman spoke,  
 In that same place thou hast appointed me,  
 To-morrow truly will I meet with thee.

*Lys.* Keep promise, love. Look, here comes Helena.

*Enter HELENA.*

*Her.* God speed fair Helena! whither away?

*Hel.* Call you me fair? that fair again unsay.  
 Demetrius loves your fair: O happy fair!  
 Your eyes are lode-stars; and your tongue's sweet air  
 More tuneable than lark to shepherd's ear,  
 When wheat is green, when hawthorn buds appear.  
 Sickness is catching: O, were favour so,  
 Yours would I catch, fair Hermia, ere I go;  
 My ear should catch your voice, my eye your eye,  
 My tongue should catch your tongue's sweet melody.  
 Were the world mine, Demetrius being bated,  
 The rest I'd give to be to you translated.  
 O, teach me how you look, and with what art  
 You sway the motion of Demetrius' heart.

*Her.* I frown upon him, yet he loves me still.

*Hel.* O that your frowns would teach my smiles such skill!

*Her.* I give him curses, yet he gives me love.

*Hel.* O that my prayers could such affection move!

*Her.* The more I hate, the more he follows me.

*Hel.* The more I love, the more he hateth me.

*Her.* His folly, Helena, is no fault of mine.

*Hel.* None, but your beauty: would that fault were mine!

*Her.* Take comfort: he no more shall see my face;



Lysander and myself will fly this place.  
 Before the time I did Lysander see,  
 Seem'd Athens as a paradise to me:  
 O, then, what graces in my love do dwell,  
 That he hath turn'd a heaven unto a hell!

*Lys.* Helen, to you our minds we will unfold:  
 To-morrow 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.

*Her.* And in the wood, where often you and I  
 Upon faint primrose-beds were wont to lie,  
 Emptying our bosoms of their counsel sweet,  
 There my Lysander and myself shall meet;  
 And thence from Athens turn away our eyes,  
 To seek new friends and stranger companies.  
 Farewell, sweet playfellow; pray thou for us;  
 And good luck grant thee thy Demetrius!  
 Keep word, Lysander: we must starve our sight  
 From lovers' food till morrow deep midnight.

*Lys.* I will, my Hermia.

Helena, adieu:

As you on him, Demetrius dote on you!

*Hel.* How happy some o'er other some can be!  
 Through Athens I am thought as fair as she.  
 But what of that? Demetrius thinks not so;  
 He will not know what all but he do know:  
 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 wing'd Cupid painted blind:  
 Nor hath Love's mind of any judgement taste;  
 Wings and no eyes figure unheedy haste:  
 And therefore is Love said to be a child,  
 Because in choice he is so oft beguiled.  
 As waggish boys in game themselves forswear,  
 So the boy Love is perjured everywhere:  
 For ere Demetrius look'd on Hermia's eyne,  
 He hail'd down oaths that he was only mine;  
 And when this hail some heat from Hermia felt,  
 So he dissolved, and showers of oaths did melt.  
 I will go tell him of fair Hermia's flight:

210

220

230

240

[Exit Herm.]

[Exit.]

Then to the wood will he to-morrow night  
 Pursue her; and for this 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.

250  
[Exit.]

## SCENE II. Athens. QUINCE'S house.

*Enter QUINCE, SNUG, BOTTOM, FLUTE, SNOUT, and  
 STARVELING.*

*Quin.* Is all our company here?

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

*Quin.* 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.

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

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

*Bot.* 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.

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

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

*Quin.* You, Nick Bottom, are set down for Pyramus.

*Bot.* What is Pyramus? a lover, or a tyrant?

*Quin.* A lover, that kills himself most gallant for love.

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

23

The raging rocks  
 And shivering shocks  
 Shall break the locks  
 Of prison gates;  
 And Phibbus' car  
 Shall shine from far  
 And make and mar  
 The foolish Fates.

30

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



*Quin.* Francis Flute, the bellows-mender.

*Flu.* Here, Peter Quince.

*Quin.* Flute, you must take Thisby on you.

*Flu.* What is Thisby? a wandering knight?

*Quin.* It is the lady that Pyramus must love.

*Flu.* Nay, faith, let not me play a woman; I have a beard coming. 40

*Quin.* That's all one: you shall play it in a mask, and you may speak as small as you will.

*Bot.* An I may hide my face, let me play Thisby too, I'll speak in a monstrous little voice, 'Thisne, Thisne'; 'Ah Pyramus, my lover dear! thy Thisby dear, and lady dear!'

*Quin.* No, no; you must play Pyramus: and, Flute, you Thisby.

*Bot.* Well, proceed.

*Quin.* Robin Starveling, the tailor.

*Star.* Here, Peter Quince. 50

*Quin.* Robin Starveling, you must play Thisby's mother. Tom Snout, the tinker.

*Snout.* Here, Peter Quince.

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

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

*Quin.* You may do it extempore, for it is nothing but roaring. 60

*Bot.* 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".

*Quin.* An you should do it too terribly, you would fright the duchess and the ladies, that they would shriek; and that were enough to hang us all.

*All.* That would hang us, every mother's son.

*Bot.* 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 you as 't were any nightingale. 72

*Quin.* 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.

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

*Quin.* Why, what you will.

*Bot.* I will discharge it in either your straw-colour beard, your orange-tawny beard, your purple-in-grain beard, or your French-crown-colour beard, your perfect yellow. 82

*Quin.* Some of your French crowns have no hair at all, and then you will play barefaced. But, masters, here are your parts: and I am to entreat you, request you and desire you, to con them by to-morrow night; and meet me in the palace wood, a mile without the town, by moonlight; there will we rehearse, for if we meet in the city, we shall be dogged with company, and our devices known. In the meantime I will draw a bill of properties, such as our play wants. I pray you, fail me not. 91

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

*Quin.* At the duke's oak we meet.

*Bot.* Enough; hold or cut bow-strings.

[*Exeunt.*]

## ACT II.

### SCENE I. A wood near Athens.

*Enter, from opposite sides, a Fairy, and PUCK.*

*Puck.* How now, spirit! whither wander you?

*Fai.* Over hill, over dale,  
Thorough bush, thorough brier,  
Over park, over pale,

Thorough flood, thorough fire,

I do wander every where,

Swifter than the moon's sphere;

And I serve the fairy queen,

To dew her orbs upon the green.

The cowslips tall her pensioners be:

In their gold coats spots you see;

Those be rubies, fairy favours,

In those freckles live their savours:

I must go seek some 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 to-night:  
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.

*Fai.* Either I mistake your shape and making quite,  
 Or else you are that shrewd and knavish sprite  
 Call'd Robin Goodfellow: are not you he  
 That frights the maidens of the villagery;  
 Skim milk, and sometimes labour in the quern  
 And bootless make the breathless housewife churn;  
 And sometime make the drink to bear no barm;  
 Mislead night-wanderers, laughing at their harm?  
 Those that Hobgoblin call you and sweet Puck,  
 You do their work, and they shall have good luck:  
 Are not you he?

*Puck.* Thou speak'st aright;  
 I am that merry wanderer of the night.  
 I jest to Oberon and make him smile  
 When I a fat and bean-fed horse beguile,  
 Neighing in likeness of a filly foal:  
 And sometime lurk I in a gossip's bowl,  
 In very likeness of a roasted crab,  
 And when she drinks, against her lips I bob  
 And on her wither'd dewlap pour the ale.  
 The wisest aunt, telling the saddest tale,  
 Sometime for three-foot stool mistaketh me;  
 Then slip I from her, then down topples she,  
 And "tailor" cries, and falls into a cough;  
 And then the whole quire hold their hips and laugh,  
 And waxen in their mirth, and neeze, and swear  
 A merrier hour was never wasted there.  
 But, room, fairy! here comes Oberon.

*Fai.* And here my mistress. Would that he were gone!

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

*Obe.* Ill met by moonlight, proud Titania.

*Tita.* What, jealous Oberon! Fairies, skip hence:  
 I have forsworn his bed and company.

*Obe.* Tarry, rash wanton: am not I thy lord?

*Tita.* Then I must be thy lady: but I know  
 When thou hast stolen away from fairy land,  
 And in the shape of Corin sat all day,  
 Playing on pipes of corn and versing love  
 To amorous Phillida. Why art thou here,  
 Come from the farthest steppe of India?  
 But that, forsooth, the bouncing Amazon,  
 Your buskin'd mistress and your warrior love,  
 To Theseus must be wedded, and you come  
 To give their bed joy and prosperity.

*Obe.* How canst thou thus for shame, Titania,  
 Glance at my credit with Hippolyta,  
 Knowing I know thy love to Theseus?  
 Didst thou not lead him through the glimmering night  
 From Perigenia, whom he ravished?  
 And make him with fair Aegles break his faith,  
 With Ariadne and Antiopa?

*Tita.* These are the forgeries of jealousy:  
 And never, since the middle summer's spring,  
 Met we on hill, in dale, forest or mead,  
 By paved fountain or by rushy brook,  
 Or in the beached margent of the sea,  
 To dance our ringlets to the whistling wind,  
 But with thy brawls thou hast disturb'd our sport.  
 Therefore the winds, piping to us in vain,  
 As in revenge, have suck'd up from the sea  
 Contagious fogs; which falling in the land  
 Hath every pelted river made so proud  
 That they have overborne their continents:  
 The ox hath therefore stretch'd his yoke in vain,  
 The ploughman lost his sweat, and the green corn  
 Hath rotted ere his youth attain'd a beard;  
 The fold stands empty in the drowned field,  
 And crows are fattened with the murrion flock;  
 The nine men's morris is fill'd up with mud,  
 And the quaint mazes in the wanton green  
 For lack of tread are undistinguishable:  
 The human mortals want their winter here.  
 No night is now with hymn or carol blest;  
 Therefore the moon, the governess of floods,  
 Pale in her anger, washes all the air,  
 That rheumatic diseases do abound:



And thorough this distemperature we see  
 The seasons alter: hoary-headed frosts  
 Fall in the fresh lap of the crimson rose,  
 And on old Hiems' thin and icy crown  
 An odorous chaplet of sweet summer buds 110  
 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 dissension;  
 We are their parents and original.

*Obe.* Do you amend it then; it lies in you:  
 Why should Titania cross her Oberon?  
 I do but beg a little changeling boy, 120  
 To be my henchman.

*Tita.* Set your heart at rest:  
 The fairy land buys not the child of me.  
 His mother was a votaress of my order:  
 And, in the spiced Indian air, by night,  
 Full often hath she gossip'd by my side,  
 And sat with me on Neptune's yellow sands,  
 Marking the embarked traders on the flood,  
 When we have laugh'd to see the sails conceive  
 And grow big-bellied with the wanton wind;  
 Which she, with pretty and with swimming gait 130  
 Following,—her womb then rich with my young squire,—  
 Would imitate, and sail upon the land,  
 To fetch me trifles, and return again,  
 As from a voyage, rich with merchandise.  
 But she, being mortal, of that boy did die;  
 And for her sake do I rear up her boy,  
 And for her sake I will not part with him.

*Obe.* How long within this wood intend you stay?

*Tita.* Perchance till after Theseus' wedding-day.  
 If you will patiently dance in our round 140  
 And see our moonlight revels, go with us;  
 If not, shun me, and I will spare your haunts.

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

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

[Exit Titania with her train.]

*Obe.* Well, go thy way: thou shalt not from this grove  
 Till I torment thee for this injury.  
 My gentle Puck, come hither. Thou rememberest

Since once I sat upon a promontory,  
 And heard a mermaid on a dolphin's back 150  
 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.

*Obe.* That very time I saw, but thou couldst not,  
 Flying between the cold moon and the earth,  
 Cupid all arm'd: a certain aim he took  
 At a fair vestal throned by the west,  
 And loos'd his love-shaft smartly from his bow,  
 As it should pierce a hundred thousand hearts; 160  
 But I might see young Cupid's fiery shaft  
 Quench'd in the chaste beams of the watery moon,  
 And the imperial votaress passed on,  
 In maiden meditation, fancy-free.

Yet mark'd I where the bolt of Cupid fell:  
 It fell upon a little western flower,  
 Before milk-white, now purple with love's wound,  
 And maidens call it love-in-idleness.  
 Fetch me that flower; the herb I show'd thee once: 170  
 The juice of it on sleeping eyelids laid  
 Will make or man or woman madly dote  
 Upon the next live creature that it sees.  
 Fetch me this herb; and be thou here again  
 Ere the leviathan can swim a league.

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

[Exit.]

*Obe.* Having once this juice,  
 I'll watch Titania when she is asleep,  
 And drop the liquor of it in her eyes.  
 The next thing then she waking looks upon,  
 Be it on lion, bear, or wolf, or bull, 180  
 On meddling monkey, or on busy ape,  
 She shall pursue it with the soul of love:  
 And ere I take this charm from off her sight,  
 As I can take it with another herb,  
 I'll make her render up her page to me.  
 But who comes here? I am invisible;  
 And I will overhear their conference.

Enter DEMETRIUS, HELENA following him.

*Dem.* I love thee not, therefore pursue me not.  
 Where is Lysander and fair Hermia?



The one I'll slay, the other slayeth me. 190  
 Thou told'st me they were stolen unto this wood;  
 And here am I, and wode within this wood,  
 Because I cannot meet my Hermia.  
 Hence, get thee gone, and follow me no more.

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

*Dem.* Do I entice you? do I speak you fair?  
 Or, rather, do I not in plainest truth 200  
 Tell you, I do not, nor I cannot love you?

*Hel.* And even for that do I love you the more.  
 I am your spaniel; and, Demetrius,  
 The more you beat me, I will fawn on you:  
 Use me but as your spaniel, spurn me, strike me,  
 Neglect me, lose me; only give me leave,  
 Unworthy as I am, to follow you.  
 What worser place can I beg in your love,—  
 And yet a place of high respect with me,—  
 Than to be used as you use your dog? 210

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

*Hel.* And I am sick when I look not on you.

*Dem.* 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.

*Hel.* Your virtue is my privilege for that; 220  
 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

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

*Hel.* The wildest hath not such a heart as you. 230  
 Run when you will, the story shall be changed:  
 Apollo flies, and Daphne holds the chase;  
 The dove pursues the griffin; the mild hind  
 Makes speed to catch the tiger; bootless speed,  
 When cowardice pursues and valour flies.

*Dem.* 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.

*Hel.* Ay, in the temple, in the town, the field,  
 You do me mischief. Fie, Demetrius!  
 Your wrongs do set a scandal on my sex: 240  
 We cannot fight for love, as men may do;  
 We should be woo'd and were not made to woo. [*Exit Dem.*  
 I'll follow thee and make a heaven of hell,  
 To die upon the hand I love so well. [*Exit.*

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

*Re-enter PUCK.*

Hast thou the flower there? Welcome, wanderer.

*Puck.* Ay, there it is.

*Obe.* I pray thee, give it me.  
 I know a bank where the wild thyme blows,  
 Where oxlips and the nodding violet grows, 250  
 Quite over-canopied with luscious woodbine,  
 With sweet musk-roses and with eglantine:  
 There sleeps Titania sometime of the night,  
 Lull'd in these flowers with dances and delight;  
 And there the snake throws her enamell'd skin,  
 Weed wide enough to wrap a fairy in:  
 And with the juice of this I'll streak her eyes,  
 And make her full of hateful fantasies.  
 Take thou some of it, and seek through this grove: 260  
 A sweet Athenian lady is in love  
 With a disdainful youth; anoint his eyes:  
 But do it when the next thing he espies  
 May be the lady: thou shalt know the man  
 By the Athenian garments he hath on.  
 Effect it with some care that he may prove  
 More fond on her than she upon her love:  
 And look thou meet me ere the first cock crow.

*Puck.* Fear not, my lord, your servant shall do so. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE II. *Another part of the wood.*

*Enter TITANIA, with her train.*

*Tita.* Come, now a roundel and a fairy song;  
 Then, for the third part of a minute, hence;