

Lest to thy peril thou aby it dear.

Look! where thy love comes: yonder is thy dear.

Enter HERMIA.

Her. 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. 180
Thou art not by mine eye, Lysander, found;
Mine ear, I thank it, brought me to thy sound.
But why unkindly didst thou leave me so?

Lys. Why should he stay, whom love doth press to go?

Her. What love could press Lysander from my side?

Lys. Lysander's love, that would not let him bide,

Fair Helena, who more engilds the night
Than all yon fiery oes and eyes of light. 183

Why seek'st thou me? could not this make thee know,

The hate I bear thee made me leave thee so?

Her. You speak not as you think: it cannot be.

Hel. Lo! she is one of this confederacy. 192
Now I perceive they have conjoin'd all three
To fashion this false sport in spite of me.

Injurious Hermia! most ungrateful maid!
Have you conspir'd, have you with these contriv'd 196

To bait me with this foul derision?

Is all the counsel that we two have shar'd,
The sister-vows, the hours that we have spent,

When we have chid the hasty-footed time 200
For parting us, O! is it all forgot?

All school-days' friendship, childhood innocence?

We, Hermia, like two artificial gods, 203
Have with our needls 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, 209

But yet an union in partition;
Two lovely berries moulded on one stem;

So, with two seeming bodies, but one heart;
Two of the first, like coats in heraldry, 213

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: 217
Our sex, as well as I, may chide you for it,
Though I alone do feel the injury.

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

Hel. Have you not set Lysander, as in scorn,
To follow me and praise my eyes and face,

And made your other love, Demetrius,— 224
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, 229
And tender me, forsooth, affection,
But by your setting on, by your consent?

What though I be not so in grace as you, 232
So hung upon with love, so fortunate,
But miserable most to love unlov'd?

This you should pity rather than despise.

Her. I understand not what you mean by this. 236

Hel. 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. 240

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. 244

Lys. Stay, gentle Helena! hear my excuse:
My love, my life, my soul, fair Helena!

Hel. O excellent!

Her. Sweet, do not scorn her so.

Dem. If she cannot entreat, I can compel.

Lys. Thou canst compel no more than she entreat: 249

Thy threats have no more strength than her weak prayers.

Helen. I love thee; by my life, I do:
I swear by that which I will lose for thee, 252

To prove him false that says I love thee not.

Dem. I say I love thee more than he can do.

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

Dem. Quick, come!

Her. Lysander, whereto tends all this?

Lys. Away, you Ethiop!

Dem. No, no, he'll . . . 257
Seem to break loose; take on, as you would follow,

But yet come not: you are a tame man, go!

Lys. [To HERMIA.] Hang off, thou cat, thou burr! vile thing, let loose, 260

Or I will shake thee from me like a serpent.

Her. Why are you grown so rude? what change is this,

Sweet love,—

Lys. Thy love! out, tawny Tartar, out!

Out, loathed medicine! hated poison, hence!

Her. Do you not jest?

Hel. Yes, sooth; and so do you.

Lys. Demetrius, I will keep my word with thee.

Dem. I would I had your bond, for I perceive
A weak bond holds you: I'll not trust your word. 268

Lys. What! should I hurt her, strike her, kill her dead?

Although I hate her, I'll not harm her so.

Her. What! can you do me greater harm than hate?

Hate me! wherefore? O me! what news, my love? 272

Am not I Hermia? Are not you Lysander?

I am as fair now as I was erewhile.

Since night you lov'd me; yet, since night you left me:

Why, then you left me,—O, the gods forbid!—
In earnest, shall I say?

Lys. Ay, by my life; 277
And never did desire to see thee more.

Therefore be out of hope, of question, doubt;
Be certain, nothing truer: 'tis no jest, 280

That I do hate thee and love Helena.

Her. O me! you juggler! you canker-blossom!
You thief of love! what! have you come by night

And stol'n my love's heart from him?

Hel. Fine, I' faith!
Have you no modesty, no maiden shame, 285

No touch of bashfulness? What! will you tear
Impatient answers from my gentle tongue?

Fie, fie! you counterfeit, you puppet you! 288

Her. Puppet! why, so: ay, that way goes the game.

Now I perceive that she hath made compare
Between our statures: she hath urg'd her height;

And with her personage, her tall personage, 292
Her height, forsooth, she hath prevail'd with him.

And are you grown so high in his esteem,
Because I am so dwarfish and so low?

How low am I, thou painted maypole? speak;
How low am I? I am not yet so low 297

But that my nails can reach unto thine eyes.

Hel. I pray you, though you mock me, gentlemen,

Let her not hurt me: I was never curst; 300
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 than myself, 304

Than I can match her.

Her. Lower! hark, again.

Hel. Good Hermia, do not be so bitter with me.

I evermore did love you, Hermia,
Did ever keep your counsels, never wrong'd 308

you;

Save that, in love unto Demetrius,
I told him of your stealth unto this wood.

He follow'd you; for love I follow'd him;
But he hath chid me hence, and threaten'd 312

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. 316

You see how simple and how fond I am.

Her. Why, get you gone. Who is't that hinders you?

Hel. A foolish heart, that I leave here behind.

Her. What! with Lysander?

Hel. With Demetrius.

Lys. Be not afraid: she shall not harm thee, Helena. 321

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

Hel. O! when she's angry, she is keen and shrewd.

She was a vixen when she went to school: 324

And though she be but little, she is fierce.

Her. 'Little' again! nothing but 'low' and 'little'!

Why will you suffer her to flout me thus?
Let me come to her.

Lys. Get you gone, you dwarf; 328
You minimus, of hindering knot-grass made;
You bead, you acorn!

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

Let her alone; speak not of Helena; 332
Take not her part, for, if thou dost intend
Never so little show of love to her,

Thou shalt abate it.

Lys. Now she holds me not;
Now follow, if thou dar'st, to try whose right,
Or thine or mine, is most in Helena. 337

Dem. Follow! nay, I'll go with thee, cheek by jole.

[*Exeunt LYSANDER and DEMETRIUS.*

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

Nay, go not back.

Hel. I will not trust you, I, 340
Nor longer stay in your curst company.

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

Her. I am amaz'd, and know not what to say. [*Exit.*

Obe. This is thy negligence: still thou mistak'st, 345

Or else commit'st thy knaveries wilfully.

Puck. Believe me, king of shadows, I mistook.

Did not you tell me I should know the man
By the Athenian garments he had on? 349

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, 352
As this their jangling I esteem a sport.

Obe. Thou see'st these lovers seek a place to fight:

Hie therefore, Robin, overcast the night;
The starry welkin cover thou anon 356

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; 361
And sometime rail thou like Demetrius;
And from each other look thou lead them thus,

Till o'er 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, 367

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, 372
With league whose date till death shall never end.

Whiles I in this affair do thee employ,
I'll to my queen and beg her Indian boy;

And then I will her charmed eye release 376
From monster's view, and all things shall be peace.

Puck. My fairy lord, this must be done with haste,
For night's swift dragons cut the clouds full fast,
And yonder shines Aurora's harbinger; 380
At whose approach, ghosts, wandering here and there,
Troop home to churchyards: damned spirits all,
That in cross-ways and floods have burial,
Already to their wormy beds are gone; 384
For fear lest day should look their shames upon,
They wilfully themselves exile from light,
And must for aye consort with black-brow'd night.

Obe. But we are spirits of another sort. 388
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, 391
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.

[*Exit OBERON.*]
Puck. Up and down, up and down; 396
I will lead them up and down:
I am fear'd in field and town;
Goblin, lead them up and down. 400
Here comes one.

Re-enter LYSANDER.

Lys. Where art thou, proud Demetrius? speak thou now.
Puck. Here, villain! drawn and ready. Where art thou?
Lys. I will be with thee straight.
Puck. Follow me, then,
To plainer ground.

[*Exit LYSANDER as following the voice.*]

Re-enter DEMETRIUS.

Dem. Lysander! speak again. 404
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 defil'd 409
That draws a sword on thee.

Dem. Yea, art thou there?
Puck. Follow my voice: we'll try no manhood here. [*Exeunt.*]

Re-enter LYSANDER.

Lys. He goes before me and still dares me on:
When I come where he calls, then he is gone.
The villain is much lighter-heel'd than I:
I follow'd fast, but faster he did fly; 416
That fallen am I in dark uneven way,
And here will rest me. [*Lies down.*] Come, thou gentle day!

For if but once thou show me thy grey light,
I'll find Demetrius and revenge this spite. 420
[*Sleeps.*]

Re-enter PUCK and DEMETRIUS.

Puck. Ho! ho! ho! Coward, why com'st thou not?
Dem. 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. 424
Where art thou now?
Puck. Come hither: I am here.
Dem. Nay then, thou mock'st me. Thou shalt buy this dear,
If ever I thy face by daylight see: 427
Now, go thy way. Faintness constraineth me
To measure out my length on this cold bed:
By day's approach look to be visited.
[*Lies down and sleeps.*]

Re-enter HELENA.

Hel. O weary night! O long and tedious night,
Abate thy hours! shine, comforts, from the east! 432
That I may back to Athens by daylight,
From these that my poor company detest:
And sleep, that sometimes shuts up sorrow's eye,
Steal me awhile from mine own company. 436
[*Lies down and sleeps.*]
Puck. Yet but three? Come one more;
Two of both kinds make up four.
Here she comes, curst and sad:
Cupid is a knavish lad, 440
Thus to make poor females mad.

Re-enter HERMIA.

Her. Never so weary, never so in woe,
Bedabbled with the dew and torn with briers,
I can no further crawl, no further go; 444
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!
[*Lies down and sleeps.*]

Puck. On the ground
Sleep sound:
I'll apply
To your eye,
Gentle lover, remedy. 452
[*Squeezing the juice on LYSANDER'S eyes.*]
When thou wak'st,
Thou tak'st
True delight
In the sight 456
Of thy former lady's eye:
And the country proverb known,
That every man should take his own,
In your waking shall be shown: 460
Jack shall have Jill;
Nought shall go ill;
The man shall have his mare again,
And all shall be well. [*Exit.*]

ACT IV

SCENE I.—A Wood. LYSANDER, DEMETRIUS,
HELENA and HERMIA lying asleep.

Enter TITANIA and BOTTOM, Fairies attending;
OBERON behind unseen.

Tita. 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. 4
Bot. Where's Pease-blossom?
Peas. Ready.

Bot. Scratch my head, Pease-blossom. Where's Mounsieur Cobweb?

Cob. Ready.

Bot. Mounsieur Cobweb, good mounsieur, get your weapons in your hand, and kill me a red-hipped humble-bee on the top of a thistle; and, good mounsieur, bring me the honey-bag. Do not fret yourself too much in the action, mounsieur; and, good mounsieur, have a care the honey-bag break not; I would be loath to have you overflown with a honey-bag, signior. Where's Mounsieur Mustard-seed?

Must. Ready.
Bot. Give me your neaf, Mounsieur Mustard-seed. Pray you, leave your curtsy, good mounsieur.

Must. What's your will? 23
Bot. Nothing, good mounsieur, but to help Cavalery Cobweb to scratch. I must to the barber's, mounsieur, for methinks I am marvelous hairy about the face; and I am such a tender ass, if my hair do but tickle me, I must scratch. 29

Tita. What, wilt thou hear some music, my sweet love?

Bot. I have a reasonable good ear in music: let us have the tongs and the bones. 33

Tita. Or say, sweet love, what thou desir'st to eat.

Bot. 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. 39

Tita. I have a venturous fairy that shall seek The squirrel's hoard, and fetch thee thence new nuts.

Bot. I had rather have a handful or two of dried pease. But, I pray you, let none of your people stir me: I have an exposition of sleep come upon me. 45

Tita. Sleep thou, and I will wind thee in my arms.

Fairies, be gone, and be all ways away.

[*Exeunt Fairies.*]
So doth the woodbine the sweet honeysuckle
Gently entwine; the female ivy so 49
Enrings the barksy fingers of the elm.
O! how I love thee; how I dote on thee!

[*They sleep.*]

Enter PUCK.

Obe. [*Advancing.*] Welcome, good Robin.
See'st thou this sweet sight? 52
Her doteage now I do begin to pity:

For, meeting her of late behind the wood,
Seeking sweet favours for this hateful fool,
I did upbraid her and fall out with her; 56
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, 60

Stood now within the pretty flowerets' eyes
Like tears that did their own disgrace bewail.
When I had at my pleasure taunted her,
And she in mild terms begg'd my patience, 64
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 fairy land.
And now I have the boy, I will undo 68
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, 72
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. 76
[*Touching her eyes with an herb.*]

Be as thou wast wont to be;
See as thou wast wont to see:

Dian's bud o'er Cupid's flower
Hath such force and blessed power. 80

Now, my Titania; wake you, my sweet queen.

Tita. My Oberon! what visions have I seen!
Methought I was enamour'd of an ass.

Obe. There lies your love.
Tita. How came these things to pass?
O! how mine eyes do loathe his visage now. 85

Obe. Silence, awhile. Robin, take off this head.

Titania, music call; and strike more dead
Than common sleep of all these five the sense.

Tita. Music, ho! music! such as charmeth sleep. [*Music.*]

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

Obe. Sound, music! [*Still, music.*] Come, my queen, take hands with me,
And rock the ground whereon these sleepers be.

Now thou and I are new in amity, 93
And will to-morrow midnight solemnly
Dance in Duke Theseus' house triumphantly,
And bless it to all fair prosperity. 96

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. 100

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

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

Tita. Come, my lord; and in our flight 105
Tell me how it came this night
That I sleeping here was found
With these mortals on the ground. 108

[*Exeunt. Horns winded within.*]

Enter THESEUS, HIPPOLYTA, EGEUS, and Train.

The. Go, one of you, find out the forester;
For now our observation is perform'd;
And since we have the vaward of the day, 111
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, fair queen, up to the mountain's top,
And mark the musical confusion 116
Of hounds and echo in conjunction.

Hip. I was with Hercules and Cadmus once,
When in a wood of Crete they bay'd the bear
With hounds of Sparta: never did I hear 120
Such gallant chiding; for, besides the groves,
The skies, the fountains, every region near
Seem'd all one mutual cry. I never heard
So musical a discord, such sweet thunder. 124

The. My hounds are bred out of the Spartan
kind,

So flew'd, so sanded; and their heads are hung
With ears that sweep away the morning dew;
Crook-knee'd, and dew-lapp'd like Thessalian
bulls; 128

Slow in pursuit, but match'd in mouth like
bells,

Each under each. A cry more tuneable
Was never holla'd to, nor cheer'd with horn,
In Crete, in Sparta, nor in Thessaly: 132

Judge, when you hear. But, soft! what nymphs
are these?

Ege. My lord, this is my daughter here asleep;
And this, Lysander; this Demetrius is;
This Helena, old Nedar's Helena: 136

I wonder of their being here together.

The. No doubt they rose up early to observe
The rite of May, and, hearing our intent,
Came here in grace of our solemnity. 140

But speak, Egeus, is not this the day
That Hermia should give answer of her choice?

Ege. It is, my lord.

The. Go, bid the huntsmen wake them with
their horns. 144

[Horns and shout within. LYSANDER, DEMETRIUS, HERMIA, and HELENA, wake and start up.]

Good morrow, friends. Saint Valentine is past:
Begin these wood-birds but to couple now?

Lys. Pardon, my lord. [He and the rest kneel.
The. I pray you all, stand up.]

I know you two are rival enemies: 148

How comes this gentle concord in the world,
That hatred is so far from jealousy,

To sleep by hate, and fear no enmity?

Lys. My lord, I shall reply amazedly, 152

Half sleep, 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,— 156

I came with Hermia hither: our intent
Was to be gone from Athens, where we might,
Without the peril of the Athenian law—

Ege. Enough, enough, my lord; you have
enough: 160

I beg the law, the law, upon his head.
They would have stol'n away; they would,
Demetrius,

Thereby to have defeated you and me;

You of your wife, and me of my consent, 164

Of my consent that she should be your wife.
Dem. My lord, fair Helen told me of their
stealth,

Of this their purpose hither, to this wood;
And I in fury hither follow'd them, 168

Fair Helena in fancy following me.
But, my good lord, I wot not by what power,—

But by some power it is,—my love to Hermia,
Melted as doth the snow, seems to me now 172

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, 176

Is only Helena. To her, my lord,
Was I betroth'd ere I saw Hermia:

But, like in sickness, did I loathe this food;
But, as in health, come to my natural taste, 181

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

The. Fair lovers, you are fortunately met:
Of this discourse we more will hear anon. 184

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 purpos'd hunting shall be set aside. 189

Away with us, to Athens: three and three,
We'll hold a feast in great solemnity.

Come, Hippolyta. 192

[Exeunt THESEUS, HIPPOLYTA, EGEUS,
and Train.]

Dem. These things seem small and un-
distinguishable,

Like far-off mountains turned into clouds.
Her. Methinks I see these things with parted
eye,

When everything seems double.
Hel. So methinks:

And I have found Demetrius, like a jewel, 197

Mine own, and not mine own.
Dem. Are you sure

That we are awake? It seems to me
That yet we sleep, we dream. Do you not think

The duke was here, and bid us follow him? 201

Her. Yea; and my father.
Hel. And Hippolyta.

Lys. And he did bid us follow to the temple.
Dem. Why then, we are awake. Let's fol-
low him; 204

And by the way let us recount our dreams.
[Exeunt.]

Bot. [Awaking.] When my cue comes, call
me, and I will answer: my next is, 'Most fair

Pyramus.' Heigh-ho! Peter Quince! Flute, the
bellows-mender! Snout, the tinker! Starveling!

God's my life! stolen hence, and left me asleep!
I have had a most rare vision. I have had a
dream, past the wit of man to say what dream

it was: man is but an ass, if he go about to ex-
pound 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

SCENE I.—Athens. An Apartment in the
Palace of THESEUS.

Enter THESEUS, HIPPOLYTA, PHILOSTRATE,
Lords, and Attendants.

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

The. More strange than true. I never may
believe

These antique fables, nor these fairy toys.
Lovers and madmen have such seething brains,

Such shaping fantasies, that apprehend 5
More than cool reason ever comprehends.
The lunatic, the lover, and the poet,

Are of imagination all compact: 8
One sees more devils than 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, 12

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. 17

Such tricks hath strong imagination,
That, if it would but apprehend some joy,

It comprehends some bringer of that joy; 20
Or in the night, imagining some fear,

How easy is a bush suppos'd a bear!

Hip. But all the story of the night told over,
And all their minds transfigur'd so together, 24

More witnesseth than fancy's images,
And grows to something of great constancy,

But, howsoever, strange and admirable.
The. Here come the lovers, full of joy and
mirth. 28

Enter LYSANDER, DEMETRIUS, HERMIA, and
HELENA.

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

Lys. More than to us
Wait in your royal walks, your board, your
bed!

The. Come now; what masques, what dances
shall we have, 32

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, 36

To ease the anguish of a torturing hour?
Call Philostrate.

Philo. Here, mighty Theseus.

The. Say, what abridgment have you for
this evening?

What masque? what music? How shall we be-
guile 40

The lazy time, if not with some delight?

Philo. There is a brief how many sports are
ripe;

Make choice of which your highness will see
first. [Gives a paper.]

The. The battle with the Centaurs, to be
sung 44

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 ballad 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. 226
[Exit.]

SCENE II.—Athens. A Room in QUINCE'S
House.

Enter QUINCE, FLUTE, SNOOT, and STARVELING.

Quin. Have you sent to Bottom's house? is
he come home yet?

Star. He cannot be heard of. Out of doubt
he is transported. 4

Flu. If he come not, then the play is marred:
it goes not forward, doth it?

Quin. It is not possible: you have not a man
in all Athens able to discharge Pyramus but
he. 9

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

Quin. Yea, and the best person too; and he
is a very paramour for a sweet voice. 13

Flu. You must say, 'paragon': a paramour
is, God bless us! a thing of naught.

Enter SNUG.

Snu. 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. 19

Flu. O sweet bully Bottom! Thus hath he lost
sixpence a day during his life; he could not have
'scaped sixpence a day: an the duke had not
given him sixpence a day for playing Pyramus,
I'll be hanged; he would have deserved it: six-
pence a day in Pyramus, or nothing. 25

Enter BOTTOM.

Bot. Where are these lads? where are these
hearts?

Quin. Bottom! O most courageous day! O
most happy hour!

Bot. 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 everything, right as it
fell out. 33

Quin. Let us hear, sweet Bottom.

Bot. Not a word of me. All that I will tell
you is, that the duke hath dined. Get your ap-
parel together, good strings to your beards, new
ribbons to your pumps; meet presently at the
palace; every man look o'er 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.]

By an Athenian eunuch to the harp.

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 play'd
When I from Thebes came last a conqueror.

The thrice three Muses mourning for the death
Of Learning, late deceas'd in beggary.

That is some satire keen and critical,
Not sorting with a nuptial ceremony.

A tedious brief scene of young Pyramus
And his love Thisbe: very tragical mirth.

Merry and tragical! tedious and brief!
That is, hot ice and wonderous strange snow.

How shall we find the concord of this discord?

Philost. 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 rehears'd, I must confess,
Made mine eyes water; but more merry tears

The passion of loud laughter never shed.

The. What are they that do play it?

Philost. Hard-handed men, that work in
Athens here,

Which never labour'd in their minds till now,
And now have toil'd their unbreath'd memories

With this same play, against your nuptial.

The. And we will hear it.

Philost. 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 stretch'd and conn'd with cruel pain,
To do you service.

The. I will hear that play;
For never anything can be amiss,

When simpleness and duty tender it.

Go, bring them in: and take your places, ladies.

[Exit PHILOSTRATE.]

Hip. I love not to see wretchedness o'er-
charg'd,

And duty in his service perishing.

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

Hip. He says they can do nothing in this
kind.

The. 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 practis'd accent in their fears,
And, in conclusion, dumbly have broke off,

Not paying me a welcome. Trust me, sweet,
Out of this silence yet I pick'd a welcome;

And in the modesty of fearful duty

I read as much as from the rattling tongue
Of saucy and audacious eloquence.

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

Re-enter PHILOSTRATE.

Philost. So please your Grace, the Prologue
is address'd.

The. Let him approach.

[Flourish of trumpets.]

Enter QUINCE for the Prologue.

Pro. If we offend, it is with our good will.
That you should think, we come not to of-
fend,

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 re-
pent you,

The actors are at hand; and, by their show,
You shall know all that you are like to know.

The. This fellow doth not stand upon points.
Lys. 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.

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

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

Enter PYRAMUS and THISBE, WALL, MOON-
SHINE, and LION, as in dumb show.

Pro. 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 Thisbe is, certain.

This man, with lime and rough-cast, doth pre-
sent

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 lanthorn, 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 grisly beast, which Lion hight by name,
The trusty Thisbe, 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 trusty Thisbe's mantle slain:
Whereat, with blade, with bloody blameful

blade,

He bravely broach'd his boiling bloody breast;
And Thisbe, 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.

[Exeunt PROLOGUE, PYRAMUS, THISBE,
LION, and MOONSHINE.]

The. I wonder, if the lion be to speak.

Dem. No wonder, my lord: one lion may,
when many asses do.

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 Thisbe,
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.

The. Would you desire lime and hair to speak
better?

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

The. Pyramus draws near the wall: silence!

Re-enter PYRAMUS.

Pyr. O grim-look'd night! O night with hue so
black!

O night, which ever art when day is not!

O night! O night! alack, alack, alack!

I fear my Thisbe's promise is forgot.

And thou, O wall! O sweet, O lovely wall! 176
That stand'st between her father's ground and
mine;

Thou wall, O wall! O sweet, and lovely wall!

Show me thy chink to blink through with
mine eyne.

[WALL holds up his fingers.]

Thanks, courteous wall: Jove shield thee well
for this!

But what see I? No Thisbe do I see.

O wicked wall! through whom I see no bliss;

Curs'd be thy stones for thus deceiving me!

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

Pyr. No, in truth, sir, he should not. 'De-
ceiving me,' is Thisbe's cue: she is to enter now,
and I am to spy her through the wall. You
shall see, it will fall pat as I told you. Yonder
she comes.

Re-enter THISBE.

This. O wall! full often hast thou heard my
moans,

For parting my fair Pyramus and me: 192
My cherry lips have often kiss'd thy stones,

Thy stones with lime and hair knit up in thee.

Pyr. I see a voice: now will I to the chink,
To spy an I can hear my Thisbe's face. 196
Thisbe!

This. My love! thou art my love, I think.

Pyr. Think what thou wilt, I am thy lover's
grace;

And, like Limander, am I trusty still. 200

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

Pyr. Not Shafalus to Procrus was so true.

This. As Shafalus to Procrus, I to you.

Pyr. O! kiss me through the hole of this vile
wall.

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

Pyr. Wilt thou at Ninny's tomb meet me
straightway?

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

[Exeunt PYRAMUS and THISBE.]

Wall. Thus have I, Wall, my part discharged
so;

And, being done, thus Wall away doth go. [Exit.]

The. Now is the mural down between the two
neighbours.

Dem. No remedy, my lord, when walls are so
wilful to hear without warning.

Hip. This is the silliest stuff that ever I heard.

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

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

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

Re-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 228
A lion-fell, nor else no lion's dam:

For, if I should as lion come in strife
Into this place, 'twere pity on my life.

The. A very gentle beast, and of a good con-
science.

Dem. The very best at a beast, my lord, that
e'er I saw.

Lys. This lion is a very fox for his valour.

The. True; and a goose for his discretion. 237

Dem. Not so, my lord; for his valour cannot
carry his discretion, and the fox carries the
goose.

The. His discretion, I am sure, cannot carry
his valour, for the goose carries not the fox. It
is well: leave it to his discretion, and let us
listen to the moon.

Moon. This lanthorn doth the horned moon
present;

Dem. He should have worn the horns on his
head.

The. He is no crescent, and his horns are in-
visible within the circumference.

Moon. This lanthorn doth the horned moon
present;

Myself the man i' the moon do seem to be.

The. This is the greatest error of all the rest.

The man should be put into the lanthorn: how
is it else the man i' the moon?

Dem. He dares not come there for the candle; for, you see, it is already in snuff. 256

Hip. I am awear of this moon: would he would change!

The. 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. 261

Lys. Proceed, Moon.

Moon. All that I have to say, is, to tell you that the lanthorn is the moon; I, the man in the moon; this thorn-bush, my thorn-bush; and this dog, my dog.

Dem. Why, all these should be in the lanthorn; for all these are in the moon. But, silence! here comes Thisbe. 269

Re-enter THISBE.

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

Lion. [Roaring.] Oh—. [THISBE runs off.]

Dem. Well roared, Lion. 272

The. Well run, Thisbe.

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

[The LION tears THISBE's mantle, and exit.]

The. Well moused, Lion. 276

Dem. And then came Pyramus.

Lys. And so the lion vanished.

Re-enter PYRAMUS.

Pyr. Sweet moon, I thank thee for thy sunny beams; 279

I thank thee, moon, for shining now so bright,

For, by thy gracious, golden, glittering streams,

I trust to taste of truest Thisby's sight.

But stay, O spite!

But mark, poor knight, 284

What dreadful dole is here!

Eyes, do you see?

How can it be?

O dainty duck! O dear! 288

Thy mantle good,

What! stain'd with blood!

Approach, ye Furies fell!

O Fates, come, come, 292

Cut thread and thrum;

Quail, crush, conclude, and quell!

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

Hip. Beshrew my heart, but I pity the man.

Pyr. O! wherefore, Nature, didst thou lions frame?

Since lion vile hath here deflower'd my dear?

Which is—no, no—which was the fairest dame

That liv'd, that lov'd, that lik'd, that look'd

with cheer. 301

Come tears, confound;

Out, sword, and wound

The pap of Pyramus: 304

Ay, that left pap,

Where heart doth hop:

Thus die I, thus, thus, thus.

[Stabs himself.]

Now am I dead, 308

Now am I fled;

My soul is in the sky:

Tongue, lose thy light!

Moon, take thy flight! 312

[Exit MOONSHINE.]

Now die, die, die, die, die. [Dies.]

Dem. No die, but an ace, for him; for he is but one.

Lys. Less than an ace, man, for he is dead; he is nothing. 317

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

Hip. How chance Moonshine is gone before

Thisbe comes back and finds her lover? 321

The. She will find him by starlight. Here

she comes; and her passion ends the play.

Re-enter THISBE.

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

Dem. Amote will turn the balance, which Pyramus, which Thisbe, is the better: he for a man,

God warrant us; she for a woman, God bless us.

Lys. She hath spied him already with those sweet eyes.

Dem. And thus she moans, videlicet:—

This. Asleep, my love? 332

What, dead, my dove?

O Pyramus, arise!

Speak, speak! Quite dumb?

Dead, dead! A tomb 336

Must cover thy sweet eyes.

These lily lips,

This cherry nose,

These yellow cowslip cheeks, 340

Are gone, are gone:

Lovers, make moan!

His eyes were green as leeks.

O, Sisters Three, 344

Come, come to me,

With hands as pale as milk;

Lay them in gore,

Since you have shore 348

With shears his thread of silk.

Tongue, not a word:

Come, trusty sword:

Come, blade, my breast imbrue: 352

[Stabs herself.]

And farewell, friends;

Thus Thisbe ends:

Adieu, adieu, adieu. [Dies.]

The. Moonshine and Lion are left to bury the dead. 357

Dem. Ay, and Wall too.

Bot. 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? 362

The. 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 hanged himself in Thisbe's garter, it would have been a fine tragedy: and

so it is, truly, and very notably discharged.

But come, your Bergomask: let your epilogue alone. [A dance.]

The iron tongue of midnight hath told twelve; Lovers, to bed; 'tis almost fairy time. 373

I fear we shall out-sleep the coming morn,

As much as we this night have overwatch'd.

This palpable-gross play hath well beguill'd 376

The heavy gait of night. Sweet friends, to bed.

A fortnight hold we this solemnity,

In nightly revels, and new jollity. [Exeunt.]

SCENE II

Enter PUCK.

Puck. Now the hungry lion roars,

And the wolf behowls the moon;

Whilst the heavy ploughman snores,

All with weary task fordone. 4

Now the wasted brands do glow,

Whilst the screech-owl, screeching loud,

Puts the wretch that lies in woe

In remembrance of a shroud. 8

Now it is the time of night

That the graves, all gaping wide,

Every one lets forth his sprite,

In the church-way paths to glide: 12

And we fairies, that do run

By the triple Hecate's team,

From the presence of the sun,

Following darkness like a dream, 16

Now are frolic; not a mouse

Shall disturb this hallow'd house:

I am sent with broom before,

To sweep the dust behind the door. 20

Enter OBERON and TITANIA, with their Train.

Obe. Through the house give glimmering light

By the dead and drowsy fire;

Every elf and fairy sprite

Hop as light as bird from brier; 24

And this ditty after me

Sing and dance it trippingly.

Tita. First, rehearse your song by rote,

To each word a warbling note: 28

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

[Song and dance.]

Obe. Now, until the break of day,

Through this house each fairy stray. 32

To the best bride-bed will we,

Which by us shall blessed be;

And the issue there create

Ever shall be fortunate. 36

So shall all the couples three

Ever true in loving be;

And the blots of Nature's hand

Shall not in their issue stand: 40

Never mole, hare-lip, nor scar,

Nor mark prodigious, such as are

Despised in nativity,

Shall upon their children be. 44

With this field-dew consecrate,

Every fairy take his gait,

And each several chamber bless,

Through this palace, with sweet peace; 48

Ever shall in safety rest,

And the owner of it blest.

Trip away;

Make no stay; 52

Meet me all by break of day.

[Exeunt OBERON, TITANIA, and Train.]

Puck. If we shadows have offended,

Think but this, and all is mended,

That you have but slumber'd here 56

While these visions did appear.

And this weak and idle theme,

No more yielding but a dream,

Gentles, do not reprehend: 60

If you pardon, we will mend.

And, as I'm an honest Puck,

If we have unearned luck

Now to 'scape the serpent's tongue, 64

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, 68

And Robin shall restore amends. [Exit.]