

CHARACTERS

THESEUS The Duke of Athens
EGEUS, Hermia's father and a member of Theseus' court
PHILOSTRATE, Master of Ceremonies for Theseus' court
LYSANDER, a young man in Athens
DEMETRIUS, a young man in Athens
HERMIA, a young woman in Athens
HELENA, a young woman in Athens
PETER QUINCE, a carpenter and playwright
NICK BOTTOM/PYRAMUS, a weaver who is a take charge fellow and a clown on stage
SNUG/LION, a joiner who is slow of wit
FLUTE/THISBY, a bellows-mender
SNOUT/WALL, a tinker
STARVELING/MOONSHINE, a tailor
OBERON, King of the Fairies
TITANIA, Queen of the Fairies
FAIRY, leader of the fairies
PEASEBLOSSOM, fairy in Titania's court
COBWEB, fairy in Titania's court
MOTH, fairy in Titania's court
MUSTARDSEED, fairy in Titania's court
PUCK (Robin Goodfellow), a prankster of a spirit

ACT 1, SCENE 1: THE PALACE OF THESEUS

(Egeus and Hermia enter, and approach Duke Theseus followed by Lysander and Demetrius)

EGEUS (*bowing*) Happy be Theseus, our Duke!
THESEUS Thanks, good Egeus, What's the news with thee?
EGEUS (*angrily*) 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 my child's heart.
THESEUS What say you, Hermia? be advised fair maid,
Demetrius is a worthy gentleman.
HERMIA (*kneeling*) 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 take the order
Of a nun!
HERMIA (*fearfully*) My lord I pray you...
THESEUS (*interrupting*) Take time to pause; and, by the next new moon,
Upon that day either prepare to die
For disobedience to your father's will,
Or else to wed Demetrius, as he would.
DEMETRIUS Relent, sweet Hermia: and, Lysander, yield.
LYSANDER You have her father's love, Demetrius;
Let me have Hermia's: (*laughing points to Egeus*) do you marry him.
EGEUS Scornful Lysander! true, he hath my love.

THESEUS (*worried*) I must confess that I have heard so much,
My mind did lose it. But, Demetrius, come;
And come, Egeus; you shall go with me,
I have some private schooling for you both.

(Theseus, Egeus, and Demetrius exit leaving Lysander and Hermia alone)

LYSANDER How now, my love! why is your cheek so pale?

HERMIA O spite! too young to die, too old to be engaged.

LYSANDER The course of true love never did run smooth.

Therefore, hear me, Hermia and be of good cheer,

Steal forth thy father's house to-morrow night;

And into the woods, a league without the town,

I know a place the sharp Athenian law

Cannot pursue us.

HERMIA To-morrow truly will I meet with thee.

LYSANDER Keep promise, love. Look, here comes Helena.

(Helena enters)

HERMIA God speed fair Helena! Whither away?

HELENA (*sniffing*) Call you me fair, that so unfair to me.

Demetrius loves your fair: O happy fair! (*sobs*)

HERMIA I frown upon him, yet he loves me still.

HELENA Oh, that your frowns would teach my smiles such skill!

HERMIA Take comfort: he no more shall see my face;

Lysander and myself will fly this place.

LYSANDER Helen, to you our minds we will unfold:

To-morrow night through Athens' gates have we devised to steal.

HERMIA Farewell, sweet playfellow: pray thou for us;

And good luck grant thee thy Demetrius!

(Hermia and Lysander exit)

HELENA (*sadly to herself*) Through Athens I am thought as fair as she.

But what of that? Demetrius thinks not so.

(excitedly) I will go tell him of fair Hermia's flight.

Then to the wood will he to-morrow night

To pursue her and I will follow!

(Helena exits)

ACT 1, SCENE 2: Quince's house

(Quince, Bottom, Snug, Flute, Snout, Starveling enter)

QUINCE Is all our company here?

BOTTOM You were best to call them man by man.

QUINCE (*looking at a list*) Here is the scroll of every man's name, which is thought fit to play before our Duke.

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

QUINCE (*reading with pride*) Marry, our play is, The Most Lamentable Comedy and Most Cruel Death of Pyramus and Thisby. (*bows*)

BOTTOM A very good piece of work! Spread yourselves.

(Bottom, Snug, Flute, Snout, and Starveling sit)

QUINCE Answer as I call you. Nick Bottom, the weaver!
BOTTOM (*standing at attention*) Ready! Name what part I am for!
QUINCE You, Nick Bottom, are set for Pyramus.
BOTTOM (*eagerly*) What is Pyramus? A lover or a tyrant?
QUINCE A lover who kills himself most gallant for love!
BOTTOM (*waves his imaginary sword*) That will ask some tears in the true performing of it. If I do it, let the audience look to their eyes. (*all applaud*) Now name the rest of the players.
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! (*rubs chin*) I have a beard coming
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.
SNUG Have you the lion's part written? Pray you, give it me, for I am slow of study.
QUINCE It is nothing but roaring.
QUINCE (*passes out scripts*) Masters, here are your parts. And tomorrow night, meet me in the palace wood, a mile without the town, by moonlight. There we shall rehearse.
BOTTOM Enough! Hold, or cut bowstrings!

(*All exit*)

ACT 2, SCENE 1: A WOOD NEAR ATHENS.
(*Enter, from opposite sides, Fairy, and Puck*)

PUCK Whither wander you?
FAIRY (*dancing*) Over hill, over dale,
Thorough bush, thorough brier,
Over park, over pale,
Thorough flood, thorough fire,
And I serve the Fairy Queen,
To dew her orbs upon the green.
PUCK The king doth keep his revels here to-night,
Take heed the queen come not within his sight;
FAIRY And here is my mistress. Would that he were gone!
(*Enter, from one side: Oberon, from the other side: Titania and her fairies*)
OBERON Ill-met by moonlight proud Titania!
TITANIA What, jealous Oberon! Fairies, skip hence.
OBERON Why should Titania cross her Oberon?
I do but beg a little changeling boy,
To be my henchman.
TITANIA His mother was a servant of my order.
(*sadly*) But she, being mortal, of that boy did die;
And for her sake I will not part with him.
OBERON (*harshly*) Give me that boy!

TITANIA Not for thy fairy kingdom! Fairies away!

(All exit except for Oberon and Puck)

OBERON (yelling after them) Thou shalt not from this grove,
Till I torment thee for this injury!

(notices Puck) My gentle Puck, come hither. Thou rememberest
A little western flower touched by Cupid bow?

Fetch me that flower, (concocting a plan)

The juice of it on sleeping eyelids laid

Will make or man or woman madly dote

Upon the next live creature that it sees.

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

(Puck exits)

OBERON Having once this juice,

I'll watch Titania when she is asleep,

And drop the liquor of it in her eyes.

The next thing then she waking looks upon,

Be it on donkey, bear, or wolf, or bull,

She shall pursue it with the soul of love!

But who comes here? I am invisible.

(Demetrius and Helena enter)

DEMETRIUS I love thee not, therefore pursue me not.

Hence, get thee gone, and follow me no more.

HELENA You draw me, you hard-hearted Demetrius.

DEMETRIUS Helena do I not in plainest truth

Tell you, I do not, nor I cannot love you?

HELENA And even for that do I love you the more!

DEMETRIUS I'll run from thee and hide me in the brakes,

And leave thee to the mercy of wild beasts.

(Helena grabs Demetrius's ankle)

Let me go!

(Demetrius exits)

HELENA I'll follow thee and die upon the hand I love so well.

(Helena exits, enter Puck)

OBERON Welcome, wanderer. Hast thou the flower there?

PUCK (handing over the flower) Ay, there it is.

OBERON I pray thee, give it me.

I know a bank where the wild thyme blows,

There sleeps Titania sometime of the night,

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!

PUCK Fear not my lord. Your servant shall do so!

(Puck and Oberon exit)

ACT 2, SCENE 2: ANOTHER PART OF THE WOOD

(Titania enters with fairies)

TITANIA Come, now a roundel. Now sing me asleep.

FAIRY Sing in our sweet lullaby.

(Fairies sings, Titania falls asleep, while Oberon sneaks in and squeezes flower juice in Titania's eyes)

OBERON What thou seest when thou dost wake,

Do it for thy true love take.

Wake when some vile thing is near.

(enter Lysander and Hermia)

LYSANDER Fair love, you faint with wandering in the wood;

And to speak troth, I have forgot our way.

We'll rest us, Hermia, if you think it good?

HERMIA *(laying down)* Be it so, Lysander: find you out a bed,

For I upon this bank will rest my head.

LYSANDER *(laying down)* Here is my bed: sleep give thee all his rest!

PUCK *(entering)* Through the forest have I gone

But Athenian found I none.

Night and silence. Who is here?

This is he, my master said,

Despised the Athenian maid.

And here the maiden, sleeping sound,

On the dank and dirty ground.

Churl, upon thy eyes I throw *(squeezes flower juice in Lysanders eyes)*

All the power this charm doth owe.

So awake when I am gone;

For I must now to Oberon.

(Puck exits as Demetrius and Helena enter running)

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

(Demetrius exits)

HELENA *(looking around)* But who is here? Lysander! on the ground!

Dead? Or asleep? I see no blood, no wound. *(Helena shakes Lysander's shoulder)*

Lysander if you live, good sir, awake.

LYSANDER *(falling instantly in love)* Transparent Helena! Goddess divine!

(Jealous of Demetrius) Where is Demetrius? O, how fit a word

Is that vile name to perish on my sword!

HELENA Do not say so, Lysander; say not so.

Lysander be content. Love you not your Hermia?

LYSANDER Not Hermia but Helena I love.

HELENA Wherefore was I to this keen mockery born?

When at your hands did I deserve this scorn?

(Helena exits running after Demetrius)

LYSANDER *(to sleeping Hermia)* Hermia, sleep thou there:

And never mayst thou come Lysander near!

(Lysander exits, running after Helena)

HERMIA (*awaking from a nightmare*) Help me, Lysander, help me! do help me!
What, out of hearing? gone? no sound, no word?
Either death or you I'll find immediately.

(Hermia exit)

ACT 3, SCENE 1: THE WOOD, TITANIA LYING ASLEEP

(enter Quince, Bottom, Starveling, Snout, & Snug, Titania is still sleeps on stage)

QUINCE And here's a marvelous place for our rehearsal.

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?

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

BOTTOM I have a device to make all well. Write me a prologue; and let the prologue seem to say, we will do no harms with our swords!

SNOUT Will not the ladies be afeared of the lion?

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

QUINCE If that may be, then all is well. Come, sit down, Pyramus, you begin, when you have spoken your speech, enter into that brake.

PUCK (*Entering*) What home-spun actors have we swaggering here,
So, near the cradle of the Fairy Queen?

QUINCE Speak, Pyramus! Thisby, stand forth.

BOTTOM My dearest Thisby? But hark, a voice! Stay thou but here awhile, and by and by I will to thee appear.

(Bottom exits)

PUCK (*laughing*) A stranger Pyramus than e'er played here.

(Puck exits)

FLUTE Must I speak now?

QUINCE Ay, marry, must you.

FLUTE I'll meet thee, Pyramus, at Ninny's tomb!

QUINCE Ninus's tomb, man. Pyramus, enter now!

(Bottom enters transformed into a donkey followed by Puck silently laughing)

QUINCE O monstrous! O strange! We are haunted! Fly, masters! Fly!

(Bottom brays like a donkey)

BOTTOM I see their knavery, to fright me, if they could. I will walk up and down here, and I will sing, that they shall hear I am not afraid.

(Bottom makes up a song about not being afraid, Titania wakes-up and looks at Bottom)

TITANIA: What angel wakes me from my flowery bed?

I do love thee: therefore, go with me.

I'll give thee fairies to attend on thee.

Peaseblossom! Cobweb! Moth! and Mustardseed!

(Peaseblossom, Cobweb, Moth, and Mustardseed enter)

PEASEBLOSSOM Ready!

COBWEB And I!

MOTH And I!

MUSTARDSEED And I!

ALL FAIRIES Where shall we go?

TITANIA Be kind and courteous to this gentleman.

Nod to him, elves, and do him courtesies.

PEASEBLOSSOM (*bowing*) Hail, mortal!
COBWEB (*bowing*) Hail!
MOTH (*bowing*) Hail!
MUSTARDSEED (*bowing*) Hail!
TITANIA Come wait upon him. Lead him to my bower.
(*Titania, Fairies, and Bottom exit*)

ACT 3, SCENE 2: ANOTHER PART OF THE WOOD

OBERON (*entering*) I wonder if Titania be awaked.
Here comes my messenger.
How now, mad spirit!

(*Puck enters*)

PUCK My mistress with a monster is in love!
OBERON This falls out better than I could devise.
But hast thou latched the Athenian's eyes
with the love juice, as I did bid thee do?
PUCK I took him sleeping.

(*Hermia & Demetrius enter*)

OBERON Stand close. This is the same Athenian.
PUCK This is the woman, but not this the man.
HERMIA Hast thou slain Lysander in his sleep?
DEMETRIUS I am not guilty of Lysander's blood;
Nor is he dead, for aught that I can tell.
HERMIA And from thy hated presence part I so:
A privilege never to see me more.

(*Hermia exits*)

DEMETRIUS (*yawning*) There is no following her in this fierce vein.
(*Demetrius lays down and falls asleep.*)

OBERON What hast thou done? thou hast mistaken quite
And laid the love-juice on some true-love's sight.
About the wood go swifter than the wind,
And Helena of Athens look thou find.
I'll charm his eyes against she do appear.
PUCK (*existing*) I go, I go; look how I go,
Swifter than arrow from the Tartar's bow.
OBERON (*puts the flower's juice on Demetrius' eyes*) When his love he doth espy,
Let her shine as gloriously
As the Venus of the sky!
PUCK (*entering*) Captain of our fairy band,
Helena is here at hand.
OBERON (*interrupting*) Stand aside!

(*Lysander & Helena enter*)

LYSANDER Why should you think that I should woo in scorn?
DEMETRIUS (*Awaking*) O Helena, goddess, nymph, perfect, divine!
HELENA O spite! Oh no! I see you all are bent
To set against me for your merriment:

You both are rivals, and love Hermia;
And now both rivals, to mock Helena.

LYSANDER You are unkind, Demetrius; be not so.

DEMETRIUS Lysander, keep thy Hermia; I will none,
If e'er I loved her, all that love is gone.

HERMIA (entering) Lysander, why unkindly didst thou leave me so?

LYSANDER The hate I bear thee made me leave thee so!

HERMIA (*gasping*) You speak not as you think: it cannot be.

HELENA Now I perceive they have conjoin'd all three
To fashion this false sport, in spite of me.

HERMIA I understand not what you mean by this.

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

And made your other love, Demetrius,
To call me goddess, nymph, Precious, celestial?

LYSANDER Helena, I love thee! By my life I do!

DEMETRIUS I say I love thee more than he can do!

HERMIA (*to Helena*) You thief of love! what, have you come by night
And stolen my love's heart from him?

HELENA Fie, fie! you counterfeit, you puppet, you!

HERMIA Puppet! How low am I? I am not yet so low
(*running toward Helena*) But that my nails can reach unto thine eyes.

HELENA (*hiding behind Lysander and Demetrius*) I pray you, though you mock me, gentlemen,
Let her not hurt me, Though she be but little, she is fierce!

HERMIA (*trying to get at Helena*) Little again! Nothing but low and little!

LYSANDER Get you gone, you dwarf, you bead, you acorn!

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

(*Helena runs off stage with Lysander & Demetrius following*)

HERMIA I am amazed and know not what to say.

(*Hermia exits after them*)

PUCK Believe me, king of shadows, I mistook.

OBERON Hie, therefore, Robin, overcast the night.

See'st that these lovers seek a place to sleep:

Then crush this herb into Lysander's eye;

So when they wake, all this derision

Shall seem a dream and fruitless vision.

I'll to my queen and charmed eye release

From monster's view, and all things shall be peace.

(*Oberon exits*)

PUCK (*using magic*) Up and down, up and down,

I will lead them up and down.

Here comes one.

LYSANDER (entering) Where art thou, proud Demetrius? speak thou now.

(*Puck throws sleeping dust on Lysander. He falls asleep. Demetrius enters.*)

DEMETRIUS Where art thou now?

(*Puck throws sleeping dust on Demetrius. He falls asleep. Helena enters.*)

HELENA O weary night, O long and tedious night!

(Puck throws sleeping dust on Helena. She starts to fall asleep.)

PUCK Yet but three? Come one more;
Two of both kinds make up four.

HERMIA *(entering)* Never so weary, never so in woe,
I can no further crawl, no further go.

(Puck throws sleeping dust on Hermia, Hermia sleeps, Squeezing the flower in Lysander's eye)

PUCK I'll apply
To your eye,
Gentle lover, remedy.

(Puck exits)

ACT 4, SCENE 1: THE SAME WOOD WHERE LYSANDER, DEMETRIUS, HELENA, AND HERMIA SLEEP

(Titania, Bottom, and Fairies enter)

TITANIA Come, sit thee down upon this flowery bed,
My gentle joy, now sleep. My sweet love sleep!
(Bottom falls asleep and snores like a donkey)
Fairies, begone!

(Fairies exit)

O, how I love thee! how I dote on thee!

(Titania falls to sleep. Oberon and Puck enter.)

OBERON See'st thou this sweet sight?
Her dotage now I do begin to pity.
For this I will release the fairy queen.
(putting the flowers juice on her eyes) Now, my Titania; wake you, my sweet queen.

TITANIA *(confused)* My Oberon! what visions have I seen!

OBERON *(chuckling)* There lies your love!

TITANIA O, how mine eyes do loathe his visage now!

OBERON Robin, take off this head.

(Puck removes the donkey ears and tail)

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

(Oberon, Titania, and Puck exit Theseus and Egeus enter)

EGEUS My lord, this is my daughter here asleep;
And this, Lysander; this Demetrius is;
And this Helena!

THESEUS *(speaking loudly to wake up the lovers)* Good morrow, friends. I pray you all, stand up.
How came you four to be asleep within this wood?

LYSANDER *(waking)* I cannot truly say how I came here;
I came with Hermia hither, our intent...

EGEUS *(interrupting)* Enough, enough, my lord; you have enough:
They have tried to creep away last night!

DEMETRIUS My lord, fair Helen told me of their stealth,
And I in fury hither follow'd them.

But, my good lord, I wot not by what power,
My love to Hermia has melted as the snow!

THESEUS Fair lovers, you are fortunately met:
Away with us to Athens; three and three,
We'll hold a wedding feast in great solemnity.

(All exit except Bottom who is still asleep)

BOTTOM *(awaking)* When my cue comes, call me, and I will answer! Peter Quince! Flute! Snout! Where are you? *(to the audience)* I have had a most rare vision. Methought I was *(reaches for donkey tail)*, methought I had *(reaches for the donkey ears)* 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 before the duke!

(Bottom exits)

ACT 5, SCENE 1: THE PALACE OF THESEUS.

(Theseus and Egeus enter)

THESEUS Here come the lovers, full of joy and mirth.

(enter Hermia, Helena, Demetrius and Lysander)

Come now; what masques or play shall we have?
Philostrate!

(Philostrate enters)

PHILOSTRATE Here, mighty Theseus. *(hands Theseus a scroll)*
Make choice of which your highness will see first.

THESEUS *(looking over scroll)* A tedious brief scene of young Pyramus and Thisbe!
What are they that do play it?

PHILOSTRATE Hard-handed men that here in Athens work.

THESEUS And we will hear it!

PHILOSTRATE No, my noble lord;
It is not for you: I have heard it over,
And it is nothing, nothing in the world.

THESEUS Go, bring them in and take your places, all.

*(Theseus, Egeus, Hermia, Helena, Demetrius and Lysander sit as
Quince, Bottom, Flute, Starveling, and Snug enter)*

PHILOSTRATE So please your grace, the Prologue is address'd.

QUINCE Gentles, perchance you wonder at this show!

This man is Pyramus, if you would know;

This beauteous lady Thisby is certain.

This man presents a wall and this man moonshine.

This man, a grisly beast, presenteth lion!

WALL In this same interlude it doth befall

That I, one Snout by name, present a wall;

That had in it a crannied hole or chink, *(holds arm out with "peace fingers")*

Through which the lovers, Pyramus and Thisby,

Did whisper often very secretly.

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

O night, whichever art when day is not!

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

I fear my Thisby's promise is forgot!

And thou, O wall, O sweet, O lovely wall,

That stand'st between her father's ground and mine!

Show me thy chink, to blink through with mine eyne! (*Wall reaches out hand with "peace figures"*)
But what see I? No Thisby do I see.

THISBY (*entering in a high voice*) O wall, full often hast thou heard my moans,
For parting my fair Pyramus and me!

PYRAMUS (*mixing up lines*) 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 Wilt thou at Ninny's tomb meet me straightway?

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

(Pyramus and Thisby exit, Lion & Moon enter)

LION You, ladies, you, whose gentle hearts do fear
The smallest monstrous mouse that creeps on floor,
Then know that I, one Snug the joiner, am a lion. (*Lion bows and crouches down*)

MOON This lanthorn doth the moon present;
Myself the man in the moon do seem to be.

(Thisby enters)

THISBY This is old Ninny's tomb. (*looks around*) Where is my love?

(Lion jumps out at her roaring - Thisby screams and runs off stage dropping her scarf, Pyramus enters)

PYRAMUS Sweet Moon, I thank thee for thy sunny beams!

(seeing the scarf) What dreadful dole is here!

(picking up the scarf) What, stain'd with blood!

Approach, ye Furies fell!

O Fates, come, come,

Quail, crush, conclude, and quell!

Thus die I, thus, thus, thus

(stabs himself each time he says "thus" and falls to the ground)

(as a ghost) Now am I dead,

Now am I fled;

My soul is in the sky:

Tongue, lose thy light;

Moon take thy flight!

(Moonshines exits)

Now die, die, die, die, die.

(Pyramus collapses on ground, Thisby enters)

THISBY Asleep, my love?

What, dead, my dove?

(shaking his shoulder) O Pyramus, arise!

(picks up Pyramus's sword) Come, trusty sword;

Come, blade, my breast imbrue!

And, farewell, friends;

Thus Thisby ends:

Adieu, adieu, adieu.

(stabs herself and falls to the ground)

BOTTOM (*rising*) Will it please you to see the epilogue?

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

(all exit as Puck enters)

PUCK (*addressing the audience*) If we shadows have offended,
Think but this, and all is mended,
That you have but slumber'd here
While these visions did appear.
So, good night unto you all.
Give me your hands, if we be friends,
And Robin shall restore amends.

(*Puck exits*)