

VII.  
MIDSUMMER-NIGHT'S DREAM.

PERSONS REPRESENTED.

THESEUS, Duke of Athens.  
EGEUS, Father to Hermia.  
LYSANDER, } in love with Hermia.  
DEMETRIUS, }  
PHILOSTRATE, Master of the revels to Theseus.  
QUINCE, the Carpenter.  
SNUG, the Joiner.  
BOTTOM, the Weaver.  
FLUTE, the Bellows-mender.  
SNOUT, the Tinker.  
STARVELING, the 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, a Fairy.  
PRAS-BLOSSOM,  
COBWEB, } Fairies.  
MOTH,  
MUSTARD-SEED, }  
PYRAMUS,  
THISBE, } Characters in the Interlude, performed by the Clowns.  
WALL,  
MOONSHINE,  
LION, }  
Other Fairies attending their King and Queen.  
Attendants on Theseus and Hippolyta.

SCENE — Athens, and a Wood not far from it.

ACT I.

SCENE I. Athens. A Room in the Palace of Theseus.

Enter THESEUS, HIPPOLYTA, PHILOSTRATE, and Attendants.

Theseus.

Now, fair Hippolyta, our nuptial hour  
Draws on apace; four happy days bring in  
Another moon: but, oh, 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 nights;  
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.

The. Go, Philostrate,  
Stir up the Athenian youth to merriments;  
Awake the pert and nimble spirit of mirth;  
Turn melancholy forth to funerals,  
The pale companion is not for our pomp. —

[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!  
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 hath bewitch'd the bosom of my child:

Thou, thou, Lysander, thou hast given her rhymes,  
And interchang'd love-tokens with my child:  
Thou hast by moon-light at her window sung,  
With feigning voice, verses of feigning love;  
And stol'n the impression of her fantasy  
With bracelets of thy hair, rings, gawds,<sup>1)</sup> conceits,  
Knacks, trifles, nosegays, sweet-meats; 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 it so she will not here before your grace  
Consent to marry with Demetrius,  
I beg the ancient privilege of Athens:  
As she is mine, I may dispose of her:  
Which shall be either to this gentleman,  
Or to her death; according to our law,  
Immediately provided in that case.

The. What say you, Hermia? be advis'd, fair maid:  
To you your father should be as a god;  
One that compos'd 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.<sup>2)</sup>  
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 be 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.

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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,<sup>3)</sup> 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<sup>4)</sup> 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 deriv'd 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 belov'd 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<sup>5)</sup> 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.

[Exit THESEUS, HIPPOLYTA, EGEUS, DEMETRIUS, and TRAIN.]

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  
Betwixt<sup>6)</sup> them from the tempest of mine eyes.

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

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

Lys. Or else misgraffed, in respect of years:  
Her. O spite! too old to be engag'd to young!  
Lys. Or else it stood upon the choice of friends:  
Her. O hell! to choose love by another's eye!  
Lys. Or, if there were a sympathy in choice,  
War, death, or sickness did lay siege to it;  
Making it momentary as a sound,<sup>7)</sup>  
Swift as a shadow, short as any dream;  
Brief as the lightning in the collied night,<sup>8)</sup>  
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.<sup>9)</sup>

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 lov'st 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,<sup>10)</sup>  
When the false Trojan under sail was seen;  
By all the vows that ever men have broke,  
In number more than ever women 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:<sup>11)</sup> O happy fair!

Your eyes are lode-stars;<sup>12)</sup> 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!<sup>13)</sup>  
Your's 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'll give to be to you translated.<sup>14)</sup>  
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,<sup>15)</sup>

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"How can it be?  
 "O dainty duck! O dear!  
 "Thy mantle good,  
 "What, stain'd with blood?  
 "Approach, ye furies fell!  
 "O fates! come, come;  
 "Cut thread and thrum; <sup>17)</sup>  
 "Quail, crush, conclude, and quell!" <sup>18)</sup>  
*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 deflour'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. <sup>19)</sup>  
 "Come, tears, confound;  
 "Out, sword, and wound  
 "The pap of Pyramus:  
 "Ay, that left pap,  
 "Where heart doth hop:—  
 "Thus die I, thus, thus, thus.  
 "Now am I dead,  
 "Now am I fled:  
 "My soul is in the sky:  
 "Tongue, lose thy light!  
 "Moon, take thy flight!  
 "Now die, die, die, die, die."  
 [*Dies.* — *Exit* Moonshine.]

*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.

*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?

*The.* She will find him by star-light. — Here she  
 comes; and her passion ends the play.

*Enter* THISBE.

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

*Dem.* A mote will turn the balance, which Pyra-  
 mus, which Thisbe, is the better.

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

*Dem.* And thus she moans, *videlicet.* — —

*This.* "Asleep, my love?"

"What, dead, my dove?"

"O Pyramus, arise,

"Speak, speak. Quite dumb?"

"Dead, dead? A tomb

"Must cover thy sweet eyes.

"These lily brows, <sup>20)</sup>

"This cherry nose,

"These yellow cowslip cheeks,

"Are gone, are gone:

"Lovers, make moan!

"His eyes were green as leeks.

"O sisters three,

"Come, come, to me,

"With hands as pale as milk;

"Lay them in gore,

"Since you have shore

"With shears his thread of silk.

"Tongue not a word: —

"Come, trusty sword;

"Come, blade, my breast imbrue:

"And farewell, friends; —

"Thus Thisbe ends:

"Adieu, adieu, adieu."  
 [*Dies.*]

*The.* Moonshine and lion are left to bury the dead.

*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, <sup>21)</sup> between  
 two of our company?

*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 play'd Pyramus, and hanged  
 himself in Thisbe's garter, it would have been a fine  
 tragedy: and so it is, truly; and very notably dis-  
 charged. But come, your Bergomask: let your epi-  
 logue alone.  
 [*Here a dance of Clowns.*]

The iron tongue of midnight hath told twelve:—  
 Lovers, to bed; 'tis almost fairy time.  
 I fear we shall out-sleep the coming morn,  
 As much as we this night have overwatch'd.  
 This palpable-gross play hath well beguil'd  
 The heavy gait <sup>22)</sup> 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. <sup>23)</sup>  
 Now the wasted brands do glow,  
 Whilst the scritch-owl, scritch-ing loud,  
 Puts the wretch, that lies in woe,  
 In remembrance of a shroud.  
 Now it is the time of night,  
 That the graves, all gaping wide,  
 Every one let's forth his sprite,  
 In the church-way paths to glide:  
 And we fairies, that do run  
 By the triple Hecat's team,  
 From the presence of the sun,  
 Following darkness like a dream,  
 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. <sup>24)</sup>

*Enter* OBERON and TITANIA, with their Train.

*Obe.* Through this house give glimmering light,  
 By the dead and drowsy fire:  
 Every elf, and fairy sprite,  
 Hop as light as bird from brier;  
 And this ditty, after me,  
 Sing, and dance it trippingly.  
*Tita.* First, rehearse this song by rote:  
 To each word a warbling note,  
 Hand in hand, with fairy grace,  
 Will we sing, and bless this place.

Song, and Dance.

*Obe.* Now, until the break of day,  
 Through this house each fairy stray.  
 To the best bride-bed will we,  
 Which by us shall blessed be;  
 And the issue, there create,  
 Ever shall be fortunate.  
 So shall all the couples three  
 Ever true in loving be;  
 And the blots of nature's hand  
 Shall not in their issue stand;  
 Never mole, hare-lip, nor scar,  
 Nor mark prodigious, <sup>25)</sup> such as are

Despised in nativity,  
 Shall upon their children be. —  
 With this field-dew consecrate,  
 Every fairy take his gait; <sup>26)</sup>  
 And each several chamber bless,  
 Through this palace with sweet peace:  
 E'er shall it in safety rest, <sup>27)</sup>  
 And the owner of it blest.

Trip away;

Make no stay;

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,  
 While these visions did appear.  
 And this weak and idle theme,  
 No more yielding but a dream,  
 Gentles, do not reprehend;  
 If you pardon we will mend.  
 And, as I'm an honest Puck,  
 If we have unearned luck, <sup>28)</sup>  
 Now to 'scape the serpent's tongue, <sup>29)</sup>  
 We will make amends, ere long;  
 Else the Puck a liar call.  
 So, good night unto you all.  
 Give me your hands, <sup>30)</sup> if we be friends,  
 And Robin shall restore amends. [*Exit.*]