

A MIDSUMMER NIGHT'S DREAM

By William Shakespeare
Adapted by Dale Ahlquist

Cast of Characters

7 Males; 8 Females; 4 Either

<u>THESEUS:</u>	Duke of Athens, engaged to Hippolyta.
<u>HIPPOLYTA:</u>	Queen of the Amazons, engaged to Theseus.
<u>EGEUS:</u>	Hermia's father.
<u>HERMIA:</u>	A young woman in love with Lysander.
<u>HELENA:</u>	Hermia's friend from childhood, in love with Demetrius.
<u>LYSANDER:</u>	The youth in love with Hermia.
<u>DEMETRIUS:</u>	The man chosen by Egeus for his daughter, Hermia.
<u>PUCK:</u>	A sprite, Oberon's servant.
<u>PEASEBLOSSOM:</u>	One of Titania's fairies.
<u>OBERON:</u>	King of the Fairies.
<u>TITANIA:</u>	Queen of the Fairies.
<u>COBWEB:</u>	One of Titania's fairies.
<u>MOTH:</u>	One of Titania's fairies.
<u>MUSTARDSEED:</u>	One of Titania's fairies.

MECHANICALS - WORKERS FROM ATHENS and THE PLAYERS:

<u>QUINCE/PROLOGUE/LION:</u> (in this adaptation only)	The director of "the play".
<u>BOTTOM/PYRAMUS:</u>	A weaver who plays Pyramus in "the play".
<u>FLUTE/THISBE:</u>	A bellows-mender who plays Thisbe in "the play".
<u>SNOUT/WALL:</u>	A tinker who plays the Wall in "the play".
<u>STARVELING/MOON:</u>	A tailor who plays the Moon in "the play".

Scene Breakdown

ACT I

Scene 1 — Athens. The palace of Theseus.

Scene 2 — Athens. Quince's house.

ACT II

Scene 1 — A wood near Athens.

Scene 2 — Another part of the wood.

ACT III

Scene 1 — The wood.

Scene 2 — Another part of the wood.

ACT IV

Scene 1 — The same.

Scene 2 — Athens. Quince's house.

ACT V

Scene 1 — Athens. The palace of Theseus.

Approximate Length

110 minutes

Time

Ancient Times

Place

Athens and the surrounding woods

ACT I
Scene 1

Setting: Athens. The palace of Theseus.

At Rise: Enter THESEUS, HIPPOLYTA, and ATTENDANTS

THESEUS

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!

HIPPOLYTA

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.

THESEUS

Hippolyta, I wooed thee with my sword
And won thy love doing thee injuries,
But I will wed thee in another key,
With pomp, with triumph and with reveling.

(Enter EGEUS and his daughter HERMIA, LYSANDER, and
DEMETRIUS)

EGEUS

Happy be Theseus, our renowned duke!

THESEUS

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

EGEUS

Full of vexation come I, with complaint
Against my child, my daughter Hermia.—
Stand forth, Demetrius.—My noble lord,
This man hath my consent to marry her.—
Stand forth, Lysander.—And my gracious duke,
This man hath bewitch'd the bosom of my child.—
Thou, thou, Lysander, thou hast given her rhymes
And interchanged love tokens with my child.
With cunning hast thou filched my daughter's heart,
Turned her obedience (which is due to me)

To stubborn harshness.—And, my gracious duke,
Be it so she will not here before your Grace
Consent to marry with Demetrius,
I beg the ancient privilege of Athens:
As she is mine, I may dispose of her,
Which shall be either to this gentleman
Or to her death, according to our law
Immediately provided in that case.

THESEUS

What say you, Hermia? Be advised, fair maid.
To you, your father should be as a god.
Demetrius is a worthy gentleman.

HERMIA

So is Lysander.

THESEUS

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

HERMIA

I would my father looked but with my eyes.

THESEUS

Rather your eyes must with his judgment look.

HERMIA

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

THESEUS

Either to die the death, or to abjure
Forever the society of men.

HERMIA

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

THESEUS

Take time to pause, and by the next new moon
(The sealing day betwixt my love and me),
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
Thy crazèd title to my certain right.

LYSANDER

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

EGEUS

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

LYSANDER

(To THESEUS)

I am, my lord, as well derived as he,
As well possessed. My love is more than his;
My fortunes every way as fairly ranked,
(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,
Upon this spotted and inconstant man.

THESEUS

I must confess that I have heard so much.—
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.—
To death or to a vow of single life.
Come, my Hippolyta. What cheer, my love?—
Demetrius and Egeus, go along.

(Exit all but LYSANDER and HERMIA)

LYSANDER

How now, my love? Why is your cheek so pale?
How chance the roses there do fade so fast?

HERMIA

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

LYSANDER

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.

HERMIA

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

LYSANDER

A good persuasion. Therefore, hear me, Hermia:
I have a widow aunt, a dowager,
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 tomorrow night,
And in the wood a league without the town
There will I stay for thee.

HERMIA

My good Lysander,
I swear to thee by Cupid's strongest bow,
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.

LYSANDER

Keep promise, love. Look, here comes Helena.

(Enter HELENA)

HERMIA

Godspeed, fair Helena. Whither away?

HELENA

Call you me "fair"? That "fair" again unsay.
Demetrius loves your fair. O happy fair!
Your eyes are lodestars and your tongue's sweet air
More tunable than lark to shepherd's ear.
O, teach me how you look and with what art
You sway the motion of Demetrius' heart!

HERMIA

I frown upon him, yet he loves me still.

HELENA

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

HERMIA

I give him curses, yet he gives me love.

HELENA

O that my prayers could such affection move!

HERMIA

The more I hate, the more he follows me.

HELENA

The more I love, the more he hateth me.

HERMIA

His folly, Helena, is no fault of mine.

HELENA

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

HERMIA

Take comfort: he no more shall see my face.
Lysander and myself will fly this place.
Before the time I did Lysander see
Seemed Athens as a paradise to me.
O, then, what graces in my love do dwell
That he hath turned a heaven unto a hell!

LYSANDER

Tomorrow night
(A time that lovers' flights doth still conceal),
Through Athens' gates have we devised to steal.

HERMIA

And in the wood where often you and I
Upon faint primrose beds were wont to lie,
Emptying our bosoms of their counsel sweet,
There my Lysander and myself shall meet.
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.

LYSANDER

I will, my Hermia.
(Exit HERMIA)
Helena, adieu.
As you on him, Demetrius dote on you!

(Exit LYSANDER)

HELENA

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.
Love looks not with the eyes, but with the mind;
And therefore is winged Cupid painted blind.
Nor hath Love's mind of any judgment taste.
Wings, and no eyes, figure unheedy haste:
And therefore is Love said to be a child
Because in choice he is so oft beguiled.
For, ere Demetrius looked on Hermia's eyne,
He hailed down oaths that he was only mine;
And when this hail some heat from Hermia felt,
So he dissolved, and showers of oaths did melt.
I will go tell him of fair Hermia's flight.
Then to the wood will he tomorrow night
Pursue her. And, for 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.
(Exit HELENA)

Scene 2

Setting: Athens. Quince's House.

At Rise: Enter QUINCE the carpenter, and BOTTOM the weaver, and FLUTE the bellows-mender, and SNOOT the tinker, and STARVELING the tailor.

QUINCE

Is all our company here?

BOTTOM

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

QUINCE

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

BOTTOM

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

QUINCE

Marry, our play is "The most lamentable comedy and most cruel death of Pyramus and Thisbe."

BOTTOM

A very good piece of work, I assure you, and a merry. Now, good Peter Quince, call forth your actors by the scroll. Masters, spread yourselves.

QUINCE

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

BOTTOM

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

QUINCE

You, Nick Bottom, are set down for Pyramus.

BOTTOM

What is Pyramus—a lover or a tyrant?

QUINCE

A lover that kills himself most gallant for love.

BOTTOM

That will ask some tears in the true performing of it. If I do it, let the audience look to their eyes. I will move storms; I will condole in some measure. To the rest.—Yet my chief humor is for a tyrant. I could play Ercles rarely, or a part to tear a cat in, to make all split.

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

This was lofty! Now name the rest of the players.

QUINCE

Francis Flute, the bellows-mender.

FLUTE

Here, Peter Quince.

QUINCE

Flute, you must take Thisbe on you.

FLUTE

What is Thisby? a wandering knight?

QUINCE

It is the lady that Pyramus must love.

FLUTE

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

QUINCE

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

BOTTOM

An I may hide my face, let me play Thisbe too, I'll speak in a monstrous little voice: "Thisne, Thisne!"— "Ah Pyramus, my lover dear! Thy Thisbe dear and lady dear!"

QUINCE

No, no, you must play Pyramus—and, Flute, you Thisbe.

BOTTOM

Well, proceed.

QUINCE

Robin Starveling, the tailor.

STARVELING

Here, Peter Quince.

QUINCE

Robin Starveling, you must play Thisbe's mother.—Tom Snout, the tinker.

SNOUT

Here, Peter Quince.

QUINCE

You, Pyramus' father.—Myself, Thisbe's father, and the lion's part.

BOTTOM

Let me play the lion too. I will roar that I will do any man's heart good to hear me. I will roar that I will make the Duke say "Let him roar again. Let him roar again!"

QUINCE

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.

BOTTOM

I grant you, friends, if 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 an 'twere any nightingale.

QUINCE

You can play no part but Pyramus, for Pyramus is a sweet-faced man, a proper man as one shall see in a summer's day, a most lovely gentlemanlike man. Therefore you must needs play Pyramus.

BOTTOM

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

QUINCE

Why, what you will.

BOTTOM

I will discharge it in either your straw-color beard, your orange-tawny beard, your purple-in-grain beard, or your French-crown-color beard, your perfit yellow.

QUINCE

Some of your French crowns have no hair at all, and then you will play barefaced. But, masters, here are your parts

(Giving out the parts)

and I am to entreat you, request you, and desire you, to con them by tomorrow night and meet me in the palace wood, a mile without the town, by moonlight. There will we rehearse, for if we meet in the city, we shall be dogged with company and our devices known. I pray you, fail me not.

BOTTOM

We will meet, and there we may rehearse most obscenely and courageously. Take pains. Be perfit. Adieu.

QUINCE

At the Duke's Oak we meet.

(They exit)

ACT II
Scene 1

Setting: A wood near Athens.

At Rise: Enter a FAIRY at one door and PUCK at another.

PUCK

How now, spirit? Whither wander you?

Fairy

Over hill, over dale,
Thorough bush, thorough brier,
Over park, over pale,
Thorough flood, thorough fire;
I do wander everywhere,
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 favors;
In those freckles live their savors.
I must go seek some dewdrops here
And hang a pearl in every cowslip's ear.
Farewell, thou lob of spirits. I'll be gone.
Our queen and all our elves come here anon.

PUCK

The King doth keep his revels here tonight.
Take heed the Queen come not within his sight,
For Oberon is passing fell and wrath
Because that she, as her attendant, hath
A lovely boy stolen from an Indian king;
She never had so sweet a changeling.
And jealous Oberon would have the child
Knight of his train, to trace the forests wild.
But she perforce withholds the lovèd boy,
Crowns him with flowers, and makes him all her joy.
And now they never meet in grove or green,
By fountain clear, or spangled starlight sheen,
But they do square, that all their elves for fear
Creep into acorn cups and hide them there.

FAIRY

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

PUCK

Thou speakest aright.
I am that merry wanderer of the night.
I jest to Oberon and make him smile
When I a fat and bean-fed horse beguile,
Neighing in likeness of a 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 withered dewlap pour the ale.
The wisest aunt, telling the saddest tale,
Sometime for three-foot stool mistaketh me;
Then slip I from her bum, down topples she,
And “Tailor!” cries, and falls into a cough,
And then the whole choir hold their hips and loffe
And waxen in their mirth and neeze and swear
A merrier hour was never wasted there.
But room, fairy. Here comes Oberon.

FAIRY

And here my mistress. Would that he were gone!

(Enter OBERON the King of Fairies at one door, with his train, and
TITANIA the Queen at another, with hers)

OBERON

Ill met by moonlight, proud Titania.

TITANIA

What, jealous Oberon? Fairies, skip hence.
I have forsworn his bed and company.

OBERON

Tarry, rash wanton. Am not I thy lord?

TITANIA

Then I must be thy lady. Why art thou here,
Come from the farthest steep of India,
But that, forsooth, the bouncing Amazon,
Your buskined mistress and your warrior love,
To Theseus must be wedded, and you come
To give their bed joy and prosperity?

OBERON

How canst thou thus for shame, Titania,
Glance at my credit with Hippolyta,
Knowing I know thy love to Theseus?

TITANIA

These are the forgeries of jealousy;
And never, since the middle summer's spring,
Met we on hill, in dale, forest or mead,
By pavèd fountain or by rushy brook,
Or in the beachèd 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 sucked up from the sea
Contagious fogs, which, falling in the land,
Hath every pelting river made so proud
That they have overborne their continents.
The spring, the summer,
The childing autumn, angry winter, change
Their wonted liveries, and the mazèd 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.

OBERON

Do you amend it then. It lies in you.
Why should Titania cross her Oberon?
I do but beg a little changeling boy
To be my henchman.

TITANIA

Set your heart at rest:
The Fairyland buys not the child of me.

His mother was a vot'ress of my order,
And, in the spicèd Indian air by night
Full often hath she gossiped by my side
And sat with me on Neptune's yellow sands,
Marking th' embarked traders on the flood,
When we have laughed to see the sails conceive
And grow big-bellied with the wanton wind;
Which she, with pretty and with swimming gait,
Following (her womb then rich with my young squire),
Would imitate, and sail upon the land
To fetch me trifles and return again.
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.

OBERON

How long within this wood intend you stay?

TITANIA

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

OBERON

Give me that boy and I will go with thee.

TITANIA

Not for thy fairy kingdom. Fairies, away.
We shall chide downright if I longer stay.
(Exit TITANIA and her fairies)

OBERON

Well, go thy way. Thou shalt not from this grove
Till I torment thee for this injury.—
My gentle Puck, come hither. Thou rememb'rest
Since once I sat upon a promontory
And heard a mermaid on a dolphin's back.

PUCK

I remember.

OBERON

That very time I saw (but thou couldst not),
Flying between the cold moon and the earth,
Cupid all armed. A certain aim he took

At a fair vestal thronèd by the west.
Yet marked I where the bolt of Cupid fell.
It fell upon a little western flower.
Fetch me that flower; the herb I showed thee once.
The juice of it on sleeping eyelids laid
Will make or man or woman madly dote
Upon the next live creature that it sees.
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 PUCK)

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 lion, bear, or wolf, or bull),
She shall pursue it with the soul of love.
And ere I take this charm from off her sight,
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)

DEMETRIUS

I love thee not; therefore pursue me not.
Where is Lysander and fair Hermia?
The one I'll stay; the other stayeth me.
Thou told'st me they were stolen unto this wood.
Hence, get thee gone, and follow me no more.

HELENA

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.

DEMETRIUS

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

HELENA

And even for that do I love 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.

DEMETRIUS

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

HELENA

And I am sick when I look not on you.

DEMETRIUS

You do impeach your modesty too much
To leave the city and commit yourself
Into the hands of one that loves you not.

HELENA

It is not night when I do see your face,
Therefore I think I am not in the night.
Nor doth this wood lack worlds of company,
For you, in my respect, are all the world.
Then, how can it be said I am alone
When all the world is here to look on me?

DEMETRIUS

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

HELENA

The wildest hath not such a heart as you.

DEMETRIUS

Let me go,
Or if thou follow me, do not believe
But I shall do thee mischief in the wood.

HELENA

Fie, Demetrius!
Your wrongs do set a scandal on my sex.
We cannot fight for love as men may do.
We should be wooed and were not made to woo.

(Exit DEMETRIUS)

I'll follow thee and make a heaven of hell
To die upon the hand I love so well.

(Exit HELENA)

OBERON

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

(Enter PUCK)

Hast thou the flower there? Welcome, wanderer.

PUCK

Ay, there it is.

OBERON

I pray thee give it me.

(PUCK gives him the flower)

I know a bank where the wild thyme blows,
Where oxlips and the nodding violet grows,
There sleeps Titania sometime of the night,
Lull'd in these flowers with dances and delight.
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.
(He gives PUCK part of the flower)

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.
And look thou meet me ere the first cock crow.

PUCK

Fear not, my lord. Your servant shall do so.

(They exit)