

A MIDSUMMER NIGHT'S DREAM

1. **Introductory Note** [lights on, curtain closed, enter lovers in front of curtain, then Narrators →]

So, ladies and gentlemen, four young people are in love. So far so good. But **not** with each other. Very sad. [couples do panto left & right] Ds wants Hr, but she loves Ls. And Ls loves her. Ecstasy and happiness! — No love for Ds? Oh, Helena loves Ds. — And does Ds love Helena? No, he doesn't. — Misery!

This play shows you how to turn unhappiness into happiness. Would you be possibly interested in love and love's labour? — I thought so. Right now. What we need is a flower. This one. One single drop from it on a sleeper's eye will make him or her love **madly** whoever he or she sees first after waking up. — But first, a **few** of the difficulties that always arise with drama groups. See for yourselves.

[enter Bt, Sg from left; Quc, Ft, Sv from right]

2. Act I, Sc 2 Athens. QUINCE's house. (Qc Bt Ft Sg)

Qc Is all our company here?

Bt You were best to call them, man by man.

Qc 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.

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

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

Bt Now, good Peter Quince, call forth your actors.

Qc Nick Bottom, the weaver.

Bt Ready. Name what part I am for.

Qc You, Nick Bottom, are set down for Pyramus.

Bt What is Pyramus? A lover, or a tyrant?

Qc A lover, that kills himself for love.

Bt That will ask some tears in the true performing of it, if I do it, I will move storms, "The raging rocks / And shivering shocks / Shall break the locks..."

Qc Francis Flute, the bellows-mender.

Ft Here, Peter Quince.

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

Ft What is Thisby? a wandering knight?

Qc It is the lady that Pyramus must love.

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

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

Bt An I may hide my face, let me play Thisby too, I'll speak in a monstrous little voice. 'Ah, Pyramus, lover dear!

Qc No, no; you must play Pyramus, and, Flute, you Thisby.

Bt [grumbling] Well, proceed.

Qc Snug, the joiner; you, the lion's part.

Sg Have you the lion's part written? Give it me, for I am slow of study.

Qc It is nothing but roaring.

Bt Let me play the lion too,

Qc You can play no part but **Pyramus**.

Bt Well, I will undertake it.

Qc But, masters, here are your parts, and I request you to meet me in the palace wood, by moonlight; **there** will

we rehearse. [lights out]

3. Act II, Sc 1. A wood near Athens. (Ob Ta Pc)

Explanatory Note,

The main thing in life is love. And the same goes for the craftsmen's play. And for Shakespeare's as well.

However, where there is love, there is charm. Love works through charm. And in the world of fairies all is done by charm. — Charming!

Ob → Ill met by moonlight, proud Titania.

Ta ← What, jealous Oberon! [turning →]

I have forsworn his bed and company.

Ob Tarry, rash wanton, am not I thy lord?

Ta Then I must be thy lady.

Ob I do but beg a little changeling boy.

Ta Set your heart at rest, I will not part with him.

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

Ta Not for thy fairy kingdom. Fairies, away!

We shall chide downright, if I longer stay. →

Ob My gentle Puck, come hither. [**Puck** peeping from behind the curtain, then 'flying' in, all three close together and to the left of Ob, K kneeling]

I saw Cupid all arm'd, a certain aim he took

And loosed his love-shaft smartly from his bow,

It fell upon a flower,

The juice of it on sleeping eye-lids 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.

Pc → I'll put a girdle round about the earth in forty minutes. ←

Ob I'll watch Titania when she is asleep, [looking →]

And drop the liquor of it in her eyes.

I'll make her render up her page to me.

[turning ←] But who comes here? — I am invisible; ↗

4. (Ds HI)

Ds → I love thee not, therefore pursue me not.

For I am sick when I do look on thee.

HI → And I am sick when I look not on you.

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

And leave thee to the mercy of wild beasts. →

HI [*alone, addressing audience, sweetly*] I'll follow thee and make a heaven of hell,

To die upon the hand I love so well. →

5. (Ob Pc)

Ob → Fare thee well, nymph, ere he do leave this grove,

Thou shalt fly **him** and **he** shall seek **thy** love. [to Pc]

Hast thou the flower there? Welcome, wanderer.

Pc → [**Puck** flying in, all kneeling left of Ob, holding flower up to him] Ay, there it is [together].

Ob I pray thee, give it me. —

I know where sleeps Titania sometime of the night,

And with the juice of this I'll streak her eyes,

Take thou some of it, and seek through this grove,

A sweet Athenian lady is in love

With a **disdainful** youth, anoint his eyes; ←

Pc Fear not, my lord, your servant shall do so. →

6. Act II, Sc 2. (Ta Ob)

Ta ← Come, sing me now asleep;

and let me rest. [dozes off; pause → sofa]

Ob → What thou seest when thou dost wake,
Do it for thy true-love take,

When thou wakest, it is thy dear,
Wake when some **vile** thing is near. →

7. (Ls Hr)

- Ls** → We'll rest us, Hermia, if you think it good.
Hr Be it so, Lysander, find you out a bed;
 For I upon this bank will rest my head.
Ls **One** turf shall serve as pillow for us both;
One heart, **one** bed, **two** bosoms and **one** troth.
Hr ↓ Lie further off; in human modesty,
 So far be distant; and, good night, sweet friend,
 Thy love ne'er alter till thy sweet life end! *[both lie down
 and doze off; middle of stage]*

8. (Pc)

- Pc** ← 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
 All the power this charm doth owe.
 When thou wakest, let love forbid
 Sleep his seat on thy eyelid,
 So awake when I am gone;
 For I must now to Oberon. ←

9. (Hl Ds Ls Hr)

- Hl** ← Stay, though thou kill me, sweet Demetrius.
Ds ← I charge thee, hence, and do not haunt me thus.
Hl O, wilt thou darkling leave me? Do not so.
Ds Stay, on thy peril, I **alone** will go. ←
Hl O, I am out of breath in this fond chase!
 The more my prayer, the lesser is my grace.
 But who is here? Lysander! On the ground!
Lysander if you live, good sir, **awake**.
Ls *[waking]* And run through fire I will for thy sweet sake.
 Transparent Helena! Nature shows art,
 That through thy bosom makes me see thy heart.
Hl O, that a lady, of **one** man **refused**.
 Should of **another** therefore be **abused**! ←
Ls *[coldly]* Hermia, sleep thou there,
 And, all my powers, address your love and might
 To honour **Helen** and to be **her** knight! ←
Hr *[Awaking]* Ay me, for pity! Lysander! **what**, removed?
 No sound, no word? Alack, where are you? ←

10. Act III, Scene 1 (Pc Qc Bt Ta)

- Pc** *[after → Bt rehearsing, Qc & actors upstage right; →
 I'll lead you about a round,
 Sometime a horse I'll be, sometime a hound. [Pc put-
 ting head on him] [Bt turning and walking toward Qc]*
Qc ← Bless thee, Bottom! bless thee! thou art translated.
 →
Bt This is to make an **ass** of me. ↓ I will sing, that they
 shall hear I am **not** afraid.
 The ousel cock so black of hue,
 With orange-tawny bill...
Ta *[Awaking]* I pray thee, gentle mortal, sing again,
 On the first view to say, to swear, I **love thee**.
Bt Methinks, mistress, you should have little reason for
 that.
Ta Thou art as wise as thou art beautiful.

- Bt** Not so, neither, but if I had wit enough to get out
 of this wood — ↓.
Ta *[bewitching Bt]*
 Out of this wood do not desire to go,
 Thou shalt remain here, whether thou wilt or no.
 To have my love to bed and to arise;
 Tie up my love's tongue, bring him silently. *[leading Bt
 out]* →

11. Act III, Sc 2. Another part of the wood (Ob Pc)

- Ob** ← How now, mad spirit!
 What night-rule now about this haunted grove?
Pc → *[delighted]* My mistress with a monster is in love.
 Titania waked and straightway loved an **ass**.
Ob But hast thou yet latch'd the Athenian's eyes
 With the love-juice, as I did bid thee do?
Pc *[pleased with himself]*
 And the Athenian woman by his side,
 That, when he waked, of force she must be eyed.
Ob ↗ *[looking ←]* Stand close, this is the same Athenian.
Pc *[surprised, points]* This is the woman, but not this the
 man. ↗ *[watching with Ob]*

12. (Hr Ds)

- Hr** → I pray thee, tell me then Lysander's well.
Ds → An[d] if I could, what should I get therefore?
Hr A privilege **never** to see me more. *[→ in a rage]*
Ds There is no following her in this fierce vein,
 Here therefore for a while I will remain. *[lying down ↓]*

13. (Ob Pc)

- Ob** *[↖ threateningly]*
 What hast thou done? thou hast mistaken quite
 And laid the love-juice on some **true**-love's sight,
Pc *[eager to make amends]* I go, I go; **look** how I **go**,
 Swifter than arrow from the Tartar's bow. ←
Ob *[putting spell on Ds]* Let her shine as gloriously
 As the Venus of the sky. →
Pc Captain of our fairy band,
 Helena is here at hand *[gesture ←]*;
 And the youth, mistook by me,
 Shall we their fond pageant see?
 Lord, what fools these mortals be! *[all laugh; Pc, Ob
 wait front stage ← in front of curtain]*

14. (Ls Hl Ds Hr)

- Ls** → Why should you think that I should woo in scorn?
Hl → You do advance your cunning more and more.
 These vows are Hermia's, will you give her o'er?
Ls I had no judgment when to her I swore.
Ds *[Awaking]* O Helena, goddess, nymph, perfect, divine!
[kneeling]
 To what, my love, shall I compare thine eyne?
Hl *[despairing, releasing from their embrace]* O spite! O
 hell! I see you all are bent
 To set against me for your merriment,
Ls *[mild rebuke]* You are unkind, Demetrius; be not so;
 For you love **Hermia**; **this** you know I know,
Ds *[pointing]*
 Look, where thy love comes; yonder is thy dear.
Hr → *[naive]* What love could press Lysander from my
 side?
Ls Why seek'st thou me? *[pushes her away]*
 The hate I bear thee made me leave thee so.
Hr You speak not as you think, it cannot be.

Hi Wink each at other; hold the sweet jest up,
Ls Helen, I love thee; by my life, I do.
Ds I say I love thee more than **he** can do.
Ls If thou say so, withdraw, and prove it too.
Hr Am not I Hermia? Are not you Lysander?
Ls [contemptuous] Ay, by my life;
 And never did desire to see thee more.
Hi [pleading] Good Hermia, do not be so bitter with me.
Hr [aggro] Why, get you gone.
Ls [spotting an opportunity]
 Be not afraid; she shall not harm thee, Helena.
Ds [spotting one for himself]
 No, sir, she shall not, though you take her part. →
Hi [bitching]
 O, when she's angry, she is keen and shrewd! →
Hr [exploding] Let me **come** to her. [→→]
Ls Get you **gone**, you **dwarf**; → →

[Ls re enters stage and lies down]

15. (Ob Pc Ls)

Ob → [to Pc] Robin, crush this herb into Lysander's eye;
all error shall seem a dream
 And back to Athens shall the lovers wend.
Pc → When thou wakest, / Thou takest
 True delight / In the sight
 Of thy former lady's eye,
 Jack shall have Jill; / Nought shall go ill; [lights out;
 Pc ← Ob → , Ls ←]

16. Act IV, Sc 1 (Ta Bt Ob)

Ta [leading Bt in] Come, sit thee down upon this flowery
 bed,
 While I thy amiable cheeks do coy,
 And kiss thy fair large ears, my gentle joy.
Bt I must to the barber's; for I am hairy about the face;
 and I am such a tender ass.
Ta Or say, sweet love, what thou desirest to eat.
Bt But I have sleep come upon me. [snoring]
Ta Sleep thou, and I will wind thee in my arms.
 O, how I love thee! how I dote on thee!
 [falling asleep in sweet embrace]
Ob ← Welcome, good Robin, [looking ←]
 [applies herb juice] Now, my Titania;
 Wake you, my sweet queen.
Ta [awaking] My Oberon! what visions have I seen!
 Methought I was enamour'd of — an **ass**.
Ob There lies your love. [pointing]
Ta [reacts] How came these things to pass? [→]
Ob Silence awhile. Robin, take off this head.
Pc Now, when thou wakest,
 With thine **own** fool's eyes peep.
Ob Sound, music! Come, my queen, take hands with me,
 And rock the ground whereon these sleepers be. →

17. Bt

Bt [Awaking] ↓ 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. The eye of man hath not heard,
 the ear of man hath not seen, what my dream was. I
 will write a ballad of this dream, it shall be called **BOT-
 TOM'S DREAM**, because it **hath** no bottom.
 [lights out]

18. Act V, 1. Athens. Palace (Qc, Hp St Ts Bt Ds Sv Ft Sg)

[Lovers stand front stage left; Hp, Ts enter from left; then
 Craftsmen enter clumsily from right, Qc first. All bow to
 Queen and Duke]

Qc → If we offend, it is with our good will.
 / All for your delight. We are not here. /
 / That you should here repent you,
 The actors are at hand and by their show /
 You shall know all that you are like to know.
Hp Indeed he hath played on his prologue like a child on a
 recorder; a sound, but not in government.
Qc [Bt → bows] This man is Pyramus, if you would know;
 [Ft ← curtsies] This beauteous lady Thisby is certain.
St ↓ In this same interlude it doth **befall**
 That I, one Snout by name, present a **wall**;
 Through which the fearful lovers are to whisper.
Hp It is the wittiest partition that ever I heard discourse, my
 lord.
Ts Pyramus draws near the wall, silence!
Bt And thou, O wall, O sweet, O lovely wall,
 Show me thy **chink**, to **blink** through with mine eyne!
 But what see I? — No Thisby do I see.
 Cursed be thy stones for thus deceiving me!
Ts The wall, methinks, should curse again.
Bt No, in truth, sir, he should not. 'Deceiving me'
 is **Thisby's** cue. Yonder she comes.
Ft O wall, full often hast thou heard my moans,
 For parting my fair Pyramus and me!
Bt [delighted to audience] I can **hear** my Thisby's **face**.
Thisby!
Ft My love thou art, my love I think.
Bt O kiss me through the hole of this vile wall!
Ft I kiss the wall's hole, not your lips at all.
Bt Wilt thou at Ninny's tomb meet me straightway? ←
Ft 'Tide life, 'tide death, I come without delay. →
Hp This is the silliest stuff that ever I heard.
Ts Here come two noble beasts in, a man and a lion.
Sg → You, ladies, know that I, one Snug the joiner, am a
 lion.
Ts A very gentle beast, of a good conscience.
Hp And let us listen to the moon.
Sv → This lanthorn doth the horned moon present; —
 Myself the man in the moon do seem to be.
Hp I am aweary of this moon, would, he would change!
Sv 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.
Ft → This is old Ninny's tomb. Where is my love? →
Sg ↓ [Roaring] Oh — [Ft & Sg run around Sv then leave;
 Ft loses part of hair]
Hp Well roared, Lion.
Ts Well run, Thisbe.
Hp Well shone, Moon.
Ds And then came Pyramus.
Bt → Sweet Moon, I thank thee for thy **sunny** beams;
 But mark, what is here!
 Come, tears, confound;
 Out, sword, and wound
 The pap of Pyramus;
 Now die, die, die, die, die.

Hp Thisbe comes
back and finds her lover

Ft ← Asleep, my love? — /
What, dead, my dove?
Come, blade, my breast imbrue,
And, farewell, friends;
Thus Thisby ends,
Adieu, adieu, adieu.

Ts Moonshine and Lion are left to bury the dead.

Hp Ay, and Wall too.

Bt [*Starting up*] Will it please you to see the epilogue?

Ts No epilogue, I pray you; for your play needs no excuse.
Lovers, to bed;
Sweet friends, [blinks] to bed.

19. (Pc)

Pc If we shadows have offended,
Think but this, and all is mended,
That you have but slumber'd here
While these visions did appear.
Else the Puck a liar call;
So, good night unto you all.

Enter in the following order,