

Fairies:

- 5. Thistleweed
- 6. Peaseblossom
- 7. Moth
- 8. Cobweb
- 9. Mustardseed

- 11. Hippolyta
- 12. Egeus
- 13. Hermia
- 14. Demetrius
- 15. Lysander
- 16. Helena
- 17. Philostrate

Fairy Court:**William Shakespeare's A Midsummer****Night's Dream** (Adapted for children by

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Human Actors:

- 18. Quince
- 19. Bottom
- 20. Flute
- 21. Starveling
- 22. Snug
- 23. Snout

CHARACTER LIST**Human Court:**

- 10. Theseus
- 1. Puck (aka Robin Goodfellow) 2.
- King Oberon
- 3. Queen Titania
- 4. Changeling

INTRODUCTION

(The changeling is alone on the stage, addressing the audience.)

CHANGELING: Welcome, friends. I've come to introduce you to a dream. You'll see an angry fairy king, four frustrated human lovers, and six abominable actors trying to put on a play.

The fairy king is angry about me. You see, I'm a changeling—a human child adopted by the fairy folk. My mother died when I was born, so the fairy queen, Titania, brought me up. Now I'm her page. I run errands for her and wait on her. King Oberon already has his own messenger, a mischievous elf named Robin Goodfellow—also called Puck. But the king wants me to be his page too. I'd rather serve the king and run through the forest with his goblins, but Queen Titania won't let me. When the fairy king and queen quarrel, you'd better watch out!

Next, our four young lovers. Hermia loves Lysander and he loves her too. But Hermia's father wants her to marry Demetrius. Hermia can't stand Demetrius, but her friend, Helena, loves him. Demetrius used to be in love with Helena, but now he's in love with Hermia.

And then there are our wretched actors:

Peter Quince, the carpenter;

Nick Bottom, the weaver;
Francis Flute, the bellows mender;
Robin Starveling, the tailor;
Tom Snout, the tinker;
And Snug, the joiner.

They've never put on a play before, but they're getting ready to do it now—to celebrate the wedding of the great Theseus, Duke of Athens and Hippolyta, Queen of the Amazons.

When all these unlikely characters meet in a magic forest, the result can only be a preposterously entangled Midsummer Night's Dream.

SCENE 1

In the palace of Theseus, Duke of Athens

(Theseus and Hippolyta stroll in, arm in arm, followed by Philostrate.)

THESEUS: Fair Hippolyta, our nuptial hour draws on.

HIPPOLYTA: Four days will quickly steep themselves in night,
Four nights will quickly dream away the time.

(Theseus turns to Philostrate.)

THESEUS: Go, Philostrate, stir up pomp, triumph and reveling!

(Philostrate bows and struts out self-importantly. Egeus hurries in, dragging Hermia by the wrist, followed by Demetrius and Lysander, who glare at each other. They all bow to Theseus.)

EGEUS: Happy be Theseus, our renowned Duke!

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

EGEUS: Full of vexation come I against my daughter, Hermia.
Demetrius hath my consent to marry her.
But Lysander hath filched my daughter's heart;
turned her obedience to stubborn harshness.
And my gracious duke, if she will not consent to marry Demetrius,
I beg the ancient privilege of Athens; as she is mine, I may dispose of her
either to Demetrius or to her death.

THESEUS: What say you, Hermia?

HERMIA: I beseech your grace that I may know
the worst that may befall me if I refuse to wed Demetrius.

THESEUS: Either to die, or to abjure forever the society of men. DEMETRIUS: Relent,
sweet Hermia; and Lysander, yield to my certain right.

LYSANDER: You have her father's love, Demetrius.
Let me have Hermia's. You marry him!

EGEUS: True, he hath my love, and what is mine, my love shall render him. (Lysander turns
to the Duke.)

LYSANDER: Demetrius spoke love to Helena,
and she, sweet lady, dotes upon him.

THESEUS: I must confess I have heard so much
and thought to have spoken to Demetrius thereof, but my mind did lose it. Fair
Hermia, look you arm yourself to fit your father's will.
Come, Hippolyta. Demetrius and Egeus, come along.
I must employ you in some business.

(They all leave except Hermia and Lysander. Hermia bursts into tears.)

LYSANDER: The course of true love never did run smooth.

(Hermia wipes a tear from her eyes. Lysander suddenly has an idea.)

LYSANDER: I have a widow aunt of great revenue.
Her house is seven leagues from Athens. There may I marry thee!
Steal forth thy father's house tomorrow night
and in the woods, where I did meet thee once with Helena,
there will I stay for thee.

HERMIA: My good Lysander, tomorrow truly will I meet with thee! (Helena comes
mopping in.)

HERMIA: God speed, fair Helena!

HELENA: Call you me fair? Demetrius loves you!

HERMIA: Take comfort; he no more shall see my face.
Lysander and I shall fly this place.

LYSANDER: Tomorrow night through Athens' gates we steal.

HERMIA: And in the wood, Lysander and I shall meet
and from Athens turn away our eyes.
Farewell! Good luck grant thee Demetrius.

(Hermia and Lysander leave.)

HELENA: I'll tell Demetrius of Hermia's flight;
 then to the wood tomorrow night pursue her.
 And for this intelligence if I have thanks, it is a dear expense;
 for herein mean I to enrich my pain:
 to have his sight hither and back again.

SCENE 2
In Peter Quince's cottage.

(Quince comes in carrying a basket full of rolled-up papers, looking very important. He is followed eagerly by Bottom, Flute, Starveling, and Snout. Snug wanders in, lies down, and begins to snore.)

QUINCE: 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. Call forth your actors.

QUINCE: Nick Bottom, the weaver, you are set down for Pyramus, a lover that
 kills himself most gallantly 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.

(Quince ignores Bottom's boasting and goes on.)

QUINCE: Francis Flute, the bellows mender, you must be Thisbe. FLUTE: Nay, faith,
 let me not play a woman. I have a beard coming.

BOTTOM: Let me play Thisbe too. I'll speak in a monstrous little voice: "Ah Pyramus,
 my lover dear..."

(Quince gets exasperated with Bottom's showing off and interrupts.)

QUINCE: No, no. You must play Pyramus. And you, Flute, Thisbe. BOTTOM:
 Well, proceed.

QUINCE: Robin Starveling the tailor, you must play Thisbe's mother. STARVELING:
 Thisbe's mother!!

QUINCE: Snug the joiner, you the lion's part.

(They look around for Snug and see him asleep. They all shout, and he wakes up. Quince repeats.)

QUINCE: Snug the joiner, you the lion's part.

SNUG: Have you the lion's part written? Give it me, for I am slow of study. QUINCE: It is nothing but roaring.

BOTTOM: Let me play the lion too. I will do any man's heart good to hear my roaring. QUINCE: No, you can play no part but Pyramus.

(Bottom starts to stamp out with an enormous frown on his face. Quince catches him and flatters him into changing his mind.)

QUINCE: For Pyramus is a sweet-faced man, and therefore you must play Pyramus. STARVELING: Please, sweet bully Bottom.

ALL TOGETHER: Please!!

BOTTOM: Well, I will undertake it.

QUINCE: Here are your parts. Learn them by tomorrow night
and meet me in the palace wood by moonlight. There will we rehearse.

BOTTOM: There may we rehearse most obscenely and courageously!
Take pains. Be perfect! Adieu!

(They all run off with their scripts.)

SCENE 3 **In the palace wood.**

(Peaseblossom, Moth, Cobweb, and Mustardseed come skipping in, putting sparkly dewdrops on the flowers. Puck zooms in and bumps into them.)

PUCK: How now, spirits. Whither wander you?

PEASEBLOSSOM: Over hill, over dale, through brush, through briar.
Over park, over pale, through flood, through fire.

MOTH: I do wander everywhere, swifter than the moon's sphere.
And I serve the fairy queen, to dew her orbs upon the green.

COBWEB: I must go seek some dewdrops here and hang a pearl in every cowslip's ear.

MUSTARDSEED: Our queen and all our elves come here!

PUCK: The King doth keep his revels here tonight.

Take heed the queen come not within his sight!

MUSTARDSEED: Either I mistake your shape and making quite
or else you are that shrewd and knavish sprite called...

COBWEB: Robin Goodfellow! Are you not he?

PUCK: Thou speakest aright. I am that merry wanderer of the night ...but room, fairy!
Here comes Oberon!

PEASEBLOSSOM: And here, my mistress!!

(They all jump and hide as Oberon and his goblins run in from one side and Titania and her fairies swagger in from the other. Titania holds the changeling by the hand and treats him like a toddler. The changeling shows from his motions that he would rather run around with Oberon and his boisterous goblins.)

OBERON: I'll met thee by moonlight, proud Titania.

TITANIA: What, jealous Oberon. Fairies, skip hence! I have forsworn his company! (Titania starts to leave, dragging the reluctant changeling.)

OBERON: Tarry, rash wanton. Am I not thy lord?

TITANIA: Then must I be thy lady.

OBERON: How long within this wood intend you stay?

TITANIA: Perchance till after Theseus' wedding day.

If you will not 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.

(The changeling's face lights up and he silently pleads with Titania to let him go with Oberon. Titania ignores him.)

TITANIA: Not for thy fairy kingdom! Fairies, away!!

(They sweep off pompously, dragging the disappointed changeling.)

OBERON: Well, go thy way.

(Oberon suddenly has an idea and smiles mischievously.)

OBERON: Puck, fetch me the magic flower I showed thee once.
 The juice of it on sleeping eyelids laid,
 will make man or woman madly fall in love
 with the next live creature that it sees.

(Puck giggles and scampers off. Oberon turns to his goblins.)

OBERON: I'll watch Titania when she is asleep and drop the liquor of it in her eyes. The next thing
 that she waking looks upon,
 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?

(Oberon and his goblins hide as Demetrius comes stamping in, looking for Hermia and Lysander. He's trying to get away from Helena, who is following and trying to cling to him.)

DEMETRIUS: I love thee not, therefore pursue me not. Where is Lysander and Hermia? (Helena tries to put her arms around him, but he shakes her off.)

DEMETRIUS: Get thee gone! Do I not in plain truth tell you I love you not?

HELENA: For that I do love you more. I am your spaniel.
 Spurn me, strike me, neglect me; only give me leave to follow you.

DEMETRIUS: I am sick when I look on thee.

HELENA: And I am sick when I look not on thee.

DEMETRIUS: I'll run from thee and leave thee to the mercy of the wild beasts. HELENA:
 The wildest hath not such heart as you!

(Demetrius runs off with Helena following. Oberon and his goblins come out of hiding.)

OBERON: Farewell, nymph. Ere he leave this grove, he shall seek thy love. (Puck returns with the magic flower.)

PUCK: Here it is!

(Puck hands the bouquet of magic flowers to Oberon.)

OBERON: I know a bank where the wild thyme blows,
 where oxlips and the nodding violet grows,
 quite over-canopied with luscious woodbine,
 with sweet musk-roses and with eglantine.
 There sleeps Titania sometime of the night.

With the juice of this, I'll streak her eyes.

(He laughs mischievously and gives some of the flowers back to Puck.)

OBERON: Take thou some of it and seek through this grove,
a sweet Athenian youth in love with a disdainful youth.
Anoint his eyes. Do it when the next thing he espies may be thy lady.

PUCK: Fear not, your servant shall do so!

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(Puck and Thistleweed run off. Oberon and his goblins hide as Titania comes in yawning and pompously settles herself on the ground. Her fairies are with her.)

TITANIA: Sing me now to sleep.

(The fairies play a soft lullaby. Titania falls asleep.)

MUSTARDSEED: Hence away, now all is well.

(The fairies tiptoe away. Oberon slips in and drops the magic flower juice into Titania's eyes.)

OBERON: What thou seest when thou dost wake, do it for they true love take. Wake when
some vile thing is near!

(Oberon leaves with a smirk of satisfaction. Puck stays to watch. Nick Bottom, Peter Quince, and the others bumble in, ready to rehearse.)

BOTTOM: Is all our company here?

QUINCE: This shall be our stage. Come, sit down and rehearse your parts.

(They sit down. Puck comes out of hiding, but they can't see him anyway. He giggles and winks at the audience to show he has some mischief in mind.)

QUINCE: Speak, Pyramus! Thisbe, stand forth!

BOTTOM: Thisbe, the flowers of odious savours sweet...

QUINCE: Odorous, odorous!!

BOTTOM: Thisbe, the flowers of odorous savours sweet,
so hath thy breath, my dearest Thisbe dear.
But hark! A voice! Stay thou but here a while.
and by and by I will appear to thee.

(Bottom goes behind a bush and Puck follows him.)

FLUTE: May I speak now?

QUINCE: Ay, for he goes but to see a noise that he heard, and is to come again. FLUTE: Most radiant Pyramus, most lily-white of hue...

QUINCE: Pyramus, enter; your cue is past.

(Bottom comes back in, looking somewhat different. Puck has transformed his head into a donkey's head, but of course, Bottom doesn't know it.)

BOTTOM: If I were, fair Thisbe, I were only thine...

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QUINCE: Oh monstrous! We are haunted! Help!!

(Quince and the others run off. Puck chases them to be sure they don't come back. He wants Bottom to be the only one around when Titania wakes up. Bottom doesn't know why his friends are acting that way.)

BOTTOM: Why do they run away?

(Snout comes back in to see if he really saw correctly.)

SNOUT: O Bottom, thou art changed. What do I see on thee?

(Snout scrambles off as Quince comes back in, crossing himself.)

QUINCE: Bless thee Bottom, bless thee. Thou art translated.

BOTTOM: I see their knavery. This is to make an ass of me, to fright me if they could. But I will sing so they shall know I am not afraid.

(Bottom sings and awakens the fairy queen. She falls in love with him, donkey head and all.)

TITANIA: What angel wakes me from my flowery bed?
I pray thee, gentle mortal, sing again. I love thee!!

BOTTOM: Methinks, mistress, you shall have little reason for that.
And yet to say the truth,
reason and love keep little company together nowadays!

TITANIA: Thou art as wise as thou art beautiful!

BOTTOM: Not so neither; but I have wit enough to get out of this wood! (Bottom starts to run away, but Titania casts a spell that glues his feet to the ground.)

TITANIA: Out of this wood do not desire to go.
Thou wilt remain whether thou wilt or no.
I do love thee, therefore go with me. I'll give thee fairies to attend on thee.

(Bottom starts to like the idea of being pampered by fairies. He grins playboyishly and Titania releases the spell.)

TITANIA: Peaseblossom! Cobweb! Moth and Mustardseed!

PEASEBLOSSOM: Ready!

COBWEB: And I!

MOTH: And I!

MUSTARDSEED: Where shall we go?

TITANIA: Be kind and courteous to this gentleman.

Feed him with apricots and dewberries. Nod to him and do him courtesies.

PEASEBLOSSOM: Hail, mortal!

COBWEB: Hail!

MOTH: Hail!

MUSTARDSEED: Hail!

(All the fairies bow to Bottom.)

TITANIA: Come, lead him to my bower.

(Titania lovingly leads Bottom off, followed by the giggling fairies.)

SCENE 4 **In the palace wood.**

(Lysander and Hermia come drooping in, cold and tired.)

LYSANDER: I have forgot our way. We'll rest us, Hermia.

HERMIA: Be it so. Find you out a bed, for upon this bank will rest my head.

(Puck and Thistleweed wander around looking for the Athenian youth [Demetrius] and the fair young lady [Helena]. They find Lysander asleep and they think that he is the one they're looking for.)

THISTLEWEED: Weeds of Athens he doth wear!

PUCK: This is he, my master said,

THISTLEWEED: ...despised the Athenian maid!

PUCK: Upon thine eyes I throw all the power this charm doth owe!

(Puck puts the magic flower juice in Lysander's eyes. Then he and Thistleweed leave. Demetrius comes running in, with tired Helena trying to follow him.)

HELENA: Stay, though thou kill me, sweet Demetrius.

DEMETRIUS: Do not haunt me!

(Demetrius scuttles off, leaving Helena behind again. She takes a step and trips over Lysander, who awakens. The magic flower juice takes effect. Now he's in love with Helen instead of Hermia.)

LYSANDER: Helena, I love thee!

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(He tries to kiss Helena's hand. She thinks he teasing her.)

HELENA: Wherefore I was to this mockery born?

(She pulls her hand away, knocking him down, and stamps off. Lysander runs off following Helena, leaving Hermia asleep. Oberon comes in. Puck and Thistleweed enter from the other side.)

OBERON: Hast thou latched the Athenian's eyes?

PUCK: Ay, my lord.

(Just then, Demetrius enters.)

OBERON: Stand close. This is the same Athenian.

(Puck points to the sleeping Hermia.)

PUCK: This is the woman, but not this the man.

(They watch from behind a bush. Demetrius sees Hermia and wakes her up.)

DEMETRIUS: Hermia!

HERMIA: Demetrius!

(Hermia isn't happy to see Demetrius. She knocks him over.)

DEMETRIUS: Why rebuke you him that loves you so?

HERMIA: If thou hast slain Lysander in his sleep, kill me too!

DEMETRIUS: I am not guilty of Lysander's blood, nor is he dead, for aught I can tell.

HERMIA: From thy hated presence part I so.

See me no more, whether he be dead or no.

(Hermia runs off. Demetrius sits down, discouraged. Puck and Thistleweed cast a spell on him to make him fall asleep. Oberon is furious at Puck for his mistake.)

OBERON: Thou hast mistaken quite, and laid the love-juice on some true love's sight. Go, find Helena of Athens. Bring her here. I'll charm Demetrius' sight.

(Puck and Thistleweed jump up and down gleefully.)

THISTLEWEED: Then will two at once woo one. That must be sport alone.

PUCK: And those things do best please me that fall preposterously.

(Puck scampers out to find Helena. Oberon drops the magic flower juice into Demetrius' eyes. Puck returns with Helena and Lysander behind him. The two humans don't see Puck or Oberon, of course.)

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THISTLEWEED: Captain of our fairy band, Helena is here at hand.

PUCK: And the youth mistook by me. Lord, what fools these mortals be! HELENA: You do advance your cunning more and more!

(Helena still thinks Lysander is teasing her. Lysander is still hopelessly in love with her. She tries to avoid him and trips on Demetrius, who wakes up and falls in love with her too!)

DEMETRIUS: O Helena, goddess, perfect, divine!

(Demetrius scrambles to his feet, falling all over himself. He kneels in front of Helena and tries to kiss her hand. Lysander is trying to kiss the other hand, and Helena thinks that both men are teasing her now. She knocks both of them over as she indignantly turns her back on them.)

HELENA: I see you all are bent set against me for your merriment!

LYSANDER: You are unkind, Demetrius, for you love Hermia.

DEMETRIUS: Lysander, keep thy Hermia. If e'er I loved her, all that love is gone. My heart to Helena is home returned.

(Hermia comes in, still wondering why Lysander left her.)

HERMIA: Lysander, why unkindly didst thou leave me so?

LYSANDER: Why should he stay, whom love doth press to go?

HERMIA: What love could press Lysander from my side?

LYSANDER: Lysander's love for fair Helena!

HERMIA: You speak not as you think; it cannot be!

(Helena jumps to the conclusion that Hermia is in on the plot with Lysander and Demetrius to make fun of her.)

HELENA: Lo, she is one of this confederacy!

Now I perceive all three fashion this false sport of me!
Injurious Hermia! Ungrateful maid!

HERMIA: I am amazed at your words. I scorn you not. It seems that you scorn me!

HELENA: Have you not sent Lysander to follow me and praise my eyes and face? And made
your other love, Demetrius, call me goddess?

(Hermia thinks Lysander really is teasing Helena. She turns to Lysander)

HERMIA: Why are you grown so rude? What change is this, sweet love?

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LYSANDER: Thy love? Out tawny tartar, out!!

(Lysander turns to Helena.)

LYSANDER: Helena, I love thee; by my life I do.

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

(Hermia thinks that Helena has stolen Lysander's love on purpose.)

HERMIA: You juggler! 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!! Ay, that way goes the game!

With her height she hath prevailed with him!
But low am I, thou painted maypole? Not so low
but that my fingernails can reach into thine eyes!!

HELENA: Let her not hurt me! Let her not strike me!!

LYSANDER: Be not afraid; she shall not harm thee, Helena!!

DEMETRIUS: No, she shall not!

HELENA: O, when she is angry, she is keen and shrewd,
and though she be but little, she is fierce!

HERMIA: Little again! Nothing but low and little!

(Hermia turns to Lysander, who is standing between her and Helena.)

HERMIA: Why will you let her flout me thus? Let her come to me!! (Demetrius and Lysander pick up the struggling Hermia and dump her at the edge of the stage.)

LYSANDER: Get thee gone, you dwarf, you bead, you acorn!!
Fear not, Helena; she shall not harm thee!

(Demetrius draws his sword and interrupts Lysander.)

DEMETRIUS: Speak not of Helena; never show love to her!

(Lysander draws his sword.)

LYSANDER: Now follow, if thou darest, to try whose right is most in Helena!

DEMETRIUS: Follow! Nay, I'll go with thee, cheek by jowl!

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(They go off to have a fight for Helena's love. Helena, though, doesn't stay around to see the outcome of it. She's still afraid of Hermia.)

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

(Helena runs off.)

HERMIA: I am amazed and know not what to say!

(Hermia leaves too. Oberon, Puck, and Thistleweed step out from behind a bush. Puck and Thistleweed are doubled over with giggles. Oberon frowns. Puck and Thistleweed straighten up quickly.)

OBERON: This is thy negligence! Thou seest these lovers seek a place to fight. Hie, therefore,
Robin; overcast the night with drooping fog.

(Oberon whispers to Puck and Thistleweed, who nod delightedly and fill the stage with darkness and confusion.)

PUCK: Up and down, up and down,

THISTLEWEED: I will lead them up and down.

PUCK: I am feared in field and town.

THISTLEWEED: Goblin, lead them up and down.

PUCK: Here comes one!

LYSANDER: Where art thou, proud Demetrius?

(Puck makes his voice sound like that of Demetrius.)

PUCK: Here, villain, drawn and ready. Where art thou?

(Lysander chases after Puck, thinking he's Demetrius. Puck leads him off in confusion, while Thistleweed teases Demetrius.)

DEMETRIUS: Lysander, speak again! Art thou fled?

THISTLEWEED: Thou coward, follow my voice!

(Thistleweed leads Demetrius off as Lysander comes dragging back in.)

LYSANDER: He goes before me and still dares me on.
When I come where he calls, then he is gone.

(Puck casts a spell on Lysander to make him fall asleep. Thistleweed comes back in, leading Demetrius.)

THISTLEWEED: Ho, ho, ho coward. Why comest thou not?

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DEMETRIUS: Where art thou?

(Demetrius looks around and finally sits down exhausted. Soon, he too falls asleep. Helena wanders in.)

HELENA: O, weary night, abate thine hours, that I may to Athens back by daylight! (She falls asleep too.)

PUCK: Yet but three? Come one more.

THISTLEWEED: Two of both kinds make up four.

(Soon, Hermia stumbles in too, yawns, and falls asleep. Puck removes the magic from Lysander's eyes so he'll love Hermia again, but he leaves the magic in Demetrius' eyes, so he'll keep on loving Helena.)

PUCK: On the ground, sleep sound. I'll apply to your eye remedy.

(Oberon joins Puck just in time to see Titania and Bottom stroll in, arm in arm, followed by her fairies and the changeling.)

TITANIA: Sleep now, and I will wind thee in my arms.

(Bottom falls asleep and begins to snore. Oberon comes in and, in pantomime, asks for the changeling. Titania impatiently agrees. The changeling gleefully runs to Oberon's side. Titania turns her attention to the snoring Bottom.)

TITANIA: How I love thee!! How I dote on thee!

(She falls asleep beside Bottom.)

OBERON: Now I have the boy. I will undo the hateful imperfection of her eyes. (Oberon takes the spell of Titania.)

OBERON: Now, my Titania, wake you, my sweet queen!

TITANIA: My Oberon! What visions I have seen! Methought I was enamored of an ass! OBERON: There lies your love.

(Titania grimaces when she sees Bottom sleeping, then dissolves into giggles. She has finally learned to laugh at herself.)

OBERON: Gentle Puck, take this transformed scalp
from off the head of the Athenian swain.
Come, my queen, take hands with me.

(They dance, and all the fairies and goblins join in, including the changeling. When the music stops, they all run off together. A hunting horn is heard. Theseus, Hippolyta, and Egeus enter, prepared for hunting. Egeus trips over the sleeping couples.)

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EGEUS: This is my daughter here asleep, and this Lysander!
This Demetrius is, and this Helena!! I wonder of their being here together!

THESEUS: No doubt they rose up early to observe the rite of May.
But, Egeus, is not this the day that Hermia should give answer of her choice?

EGEUS: It is, my lord.

(The two couples wake up. Startled by the presence of the duke, they scramble to their knees and bow.)

THESEUS: I pray you all, stand up.
I know you two are rival enemies. How comes this gentle concord?

LYSANDER: I came with Hermia. Out intent was to be gone from Athens...

EGEUS: Enough, enough! My lord, you have enough!
I beg the law, the law upon his head!!

DEMETRIUS: My lord, fair Helena told me of their purpose to this wood
and I, in fury followed them, Helena following me.
But by some power, my love for Hermia is melted as the snow.
The object of mine eye is only Helena. To her I will forever more be true.

THESEUS: Fair lovers, you are fortunately met.
Egeus, I will overbear your will, for in the temple, by and by with us,
these couples shall eternally be knit.
Away with us to Athens, three and three.

We'll hold a feast in great solemnity.

(Egeus shrugs in resignation, the couples rejoice, and all walk out arm in arm. Bottom snores loudly and then begins to stir.)

BOTTOM: When my cue comes, call me and I will answer.

Quince! Starveling! Flute! Snout! Stolen hence and left me asleep!
I have had a dream!!
Methought I was...methought I had...there is no man can tell what!
The eye of man hath not heard,
the ear of man 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 it.
It shall be called, "Bottom's Dream," for it hath no bottom.

(Bottom scurries off to tell his friends of his adventure.)

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SCENE 5
In Peter Quince's cottage.

(Quince, Starveling, Snout, and Flute are pacing anxiously.)

QUINCE: Have you sent to Bottom's house? Is he come home yet? STARVELING:

He cannot be heard of. Out of doubt, he is transported. FLUTE: If he comes not,
then the play goes not forward, doth it?

QUINCE: It is not possible.

You have not a man in all Athens able to discharge Pyramus but he.

(Snug enters, looking dejected.)

SNUG: Masters, the duke is coming from the temple,
and there are two or three lords and ladies more married.
If our play had gone forward, we had all been made men!

(The would-be actors burst into blubbery tears, but Bottom bursts in, full of bombastic enthusiasm.)

BOTTOM: Where are these hearts?

QUINCE: Bottom, O most happy hour!

BOTTOM: Masters, I am to discourse wonders!

But ask me not what, for if I tell you, I am no true Athenian.

QUINCE: Let us hear, sweet Bottom.

BOTTOM: Not a word of me.

All I will tell you is, get your apparel together, meet in the palace,
and eat no onions or garlic, for we are to utter sweet breath!

(They bumble out eagerly.)

SCENE 6
In the duke's palace.

(Theseus and Hippolyta enter.)

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

(Hermia and Lysander, Helena and Demetrius come in, arm in arm.)

THESEUS: Joy, gentle friends!

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(The newlyweds bow to Theseus. Theseus and Hippolyta take their places.)

THESEUS: Philostrate, master of revels!

PHILOSTRATE: Here, mighty Theseus.

THESEUS: Say, what have you this evening?

PHILOSTRATE: Here is a brief. Make choice.

(Theseus takes the list and reads the first three selections without enthusiasm. The fourth choice arouses his curiosity.)

THESEUS: "The Battle of the Centaurs"

"The Riot of the Topsy Bacchanals"

"The Thrice Three Muses Mourning"

"A Tedious Brief Scene of Young Pyramus, Very Tragical Mirth"

(Theseus breaks into laughter.)

THESEUS: Merry and tragical, tedious and brief? We'll hear that play. Go, bring them
in.

(Peter Quince comes in to introduce the characters.)

QUINCE: Gentles, perchance you wonder at this show,
but wonder on till truth makes all things plain.
This man is Pyramus, if you would know.
This beauteous lady Thisbe is certain.
This man doth present Wall,
this grisly beast, Lion by name.

(The actors withdraw, except for Snout, dressed as a wall.)

SNOUT: 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 often whisper very secretly.

(Bottom enters, dressed as Pyramus.)

BOTTOM: O night! I fear my Thisbe's promise is forgot,
and thou, O wall, O sweet and lovely wall,
that stands between her father's ground and mine,
show me thy chink.

(The Wall makes a circle with his thumb and forefinger and holds it out for Pyramus to peek through.)

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BOTTOM: Thanks, courteous wall!

(The wall bows elaborately and awkwardly.)

BOTTOM: I see a voice! Now will I to the chink!

(Flute enters, dressed as Thisbe.)

FLUTE: My love, thou art my love, I think.

BOTTOM: Wilt thou at Ninny's tomb meet me straightaway?

(Quince prompts from the background.)

QUINCE: Ninus, man, Ninus!!

BOTTOM: Wilt thou at Niney's tomb meet me straightaway?
'Tide life, 'tide death, I come without delay.

(Bottom and Flute exit in different directions.)

SNOUT: Thus have I, Wall, my part discharged so,
and being done, thus Wall away doth go.

(Snout bows and leaves. Theseus and the others applaud him, giggling. Snug, dressed as a lion, stumbles in.)

SNUG: Know that I, one Snug the joiner, am a lion.

(Flute enters, pretending to be a timid Thisbe.)

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

(Snug, the Lion, roars and scares Thisbe, who drops her cloak and runs off. The Lion picks up the cloak, puts it in his mouth and shakes it around a bit, then drops it and goes off. Pyramus enters, picks up the cloak, sees the "blood stains" on it, and thinks Thisbe is dead.)

BOTTOM: O dainty duck! O dear!! Thy mantle good, what, stained with blood? Since lion hath
deflowered my dear, I die thus!

(He stabs himself, greatly exaggerating his death scene.)

BOTTOM: Now I am dead; now am I fled. My soul is in the sky.
Now die, die, die, die, die!!

(Pyramus finally falls. Thisbe enters and finds him.)

FLUTE: Asleep, my love? What dead, my dove!
Come blade, my breast imbrue!
And farewell, friends, thus Thisbe ends. Adieu, adieu, adieu!

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(Thisbe stabs herself with Pyramus' dagger and falls. All applaud. Theseus stands and the others rise with him. He tries hard to keep a straight face as he commends the actors.)

THESEUS: A fine tragedy and notably discharged.

(The clock tower chimes in the background as Theseus hands a bag of coins to Philostrate, who gives it to the actors. The actors gleefully peek into it and fall all over themselves as they bow and stumble off.)

THESEUS: The iron tongue of midnight hath told twelve.
Lovers, to bed. 'Tis almost fairy time.

(All leave and the lights dim. Puck enters.)

PUCK: Now the hungry lion roars and the wolf behowls the moon, and we fairies, that do run from
the presence of the sun, now can frolic;
not a mouse shall disturb this hallowed house.

(Oberon, Titania, and all the fairies and goblins enter, carrying flowers.)

OBERON: Through the house give glimmering light, every elf and fairy sprite. TITANIA: Hand
in hand with fairy grace, will be dance and bless this place.

(The fairies dance and scatter blessings around the palace, then run off up the aisles, giving flowers to people in the audience. Puck remains onstage.)

PUCK: If we shadows have offended, think but this and all is mended, that you have but
slumbered here while these visions did appear.

Give me your hands, if we be friends, and Robin shall restore amends.