

The hate I bear thee made me leave thee so? 190  
 HERMIA: You speak not as you think. It cannot be.  
 HELENA: Lo, she is one of this confederacy!  
 Now I perceive they have conjoin'd all three  
 To fashion this false sport, in spite of me.<sup>5</sup>  
 Injurious Hermia, most ungrateful maid! 195  
 Have you conspir'd, have you with these contriv'd<sup>6</sup>  
 To bait<sup>7</sup> me with this foul derision?  
 Is all the counsel<sup>8</sup> that we two have shar'd,  
 The sisters' vows, the hours that we have spent,  
 When we have chid the hasty-footed time 200  
 For parting us—O, is all forgot?  
 All school-days friendship, childhood innocence?  
 We, Hermia, like two artificial<sup>9</sup> gods,  
 Have with our needles created both one flower,  
 Both on one sampler, sitting on one cushion, 205  
 Both warbling of one song, both in one key,  
 As if our hands, our sides, voices, and minds  
 Had been incorporate. So we grew together,  
 Like to a double cherry, seeming parted,  
 But yet an union in partition; 210  
 Two lovely<sup>1</sup> berries molded on one stem;  
 So, with two seeming bodies, but one heart;  
 Two of the first, like coats in heraldry,  
 Due but to one and crowned with one crest.<sup>2</sup>  
 And will you rent<sup>3</sup> our ancient love asunder, 215  
 To join with men in scorning your poor friend?  
 It is not friendly, 'tis not maidenly.  
 Our sex, as well as I, may chide you for it,  
 Though I alone do feel the injury.  
 HERMIA: I am amazed at your passionate words. 220  
 I scorn you not. It seems that you scorn me.  
 HELENA: Have you not set Lysander, as in scorn,  
 To follow me and praise my eyes and face?  
 And made your other love, Demetrius,  
 Who even but now did spurn me with his foot, 225  
 To call me goddess, nymph, divine and rare,  
 Precious, celestial? Wherefore speaks he this  
 To her he hates? And wherefore doth Lysander  
 Deny your love, so rich within his soul,  
 And tender<sup>4</sup> me, forsooth, affection, 230  
 But by your setting on, by your consent?  
 What though I be not so in grace<sup>5</sup> as you,  
 So hung upon with love, so fortunate,

5. To vex me. 6. Plotted. 7. Torment, as one sets on dogs to bait a bear. 8. Confidential talk.

9. Skilled in art or creation. 1. Loving.

2. That is, we have two separate bodies, just as a coat of arms in heraldry can be represented twice on a shield but surmounted by a single crest. 3. Rend. 4. Offer. 5. Favor.

But miserable most, to love unlov'd?

235 This you should pity rather than despise.

HERMIA: I understand not what you mean by this.

HELENA: Ay, do! Persever, counterfeit sad<sup>6</sup> looks,  
Make mouths upon<sup>7</sup> me when I turn my back,  
Wink each at other, hold the sweet jest up.

240 This sport, well carried,<sup>8</sup> shall be chronicled.

If you have any pity, grace, or manners,  
You would not make me such an argument.<sup>9</sup>  
But fare ye well. 'Tis partly my own fault,  
Which death, or absence, soon shall remedy.

245 LYSANDER: Stay, gentle Helena; hear my excuse,  
My love, my life, my soul, fair Helena!

HELENA: O excellent!

HERMIA: Sweet, do not scorn her so.

DEMETRIUS: If she cannot entreat,<sup>1</sup> I can compel.

LYSANDER: Thou canst compel no more than she entreat.

250 Thy threats have no more strength than her weak prayers.

Helen, I love thee, by my life, I do!

I swear by that which I will lose for thee,

To prove him false that says I love thee not.

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

255 LYSANDER: If thou say so, withdraw, and prove it too.

DEMETRIUS: Quick, come!

HERMIA: Lysander, whereto tends all this?

LYSANDER: Away, you Ethiope!<sup>2</sup> [*He tries to break away from HERMIA.*]

DEMETRIUS: No, no; he'll

Seem to break loose; take on as you would follow,

But yet come not. You are a tame man, go!

260 LYSANDER: Hang off,<sup>3</sup> thou cat, thou burr! Vile thing, let loose,

Or I will shake thee from me like a serpent!

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

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

Out, loathed med'cine!<sup>4</sup> O hated potion, hence!

HERMIA: Do you not jest?

265 HELENA: Yes, sooth,<sup>5</sup> and so do you.

LYSANDER: Demetrius, I will keep my word with thee.

DEMETRIUS: I would I had your bond, for I perceive

A weak bond<sup>6</sup> holds you. I'll not trust your word.

LYSANDER: What, should I hurt her, strike her, kill her dead?

270 Although I hate her, I'll not harm her so.

HERMIA: What, can you do me greater harm than hate?

6. Grave, serious. 7. That is, makes mows, faces, grimaces at. 8. Managed.

9. Subject for a jest. 1. That is, succeed by entreaty.

2. [Referring to Hermia's relatively dark hair and complexion; see also *tawny Tartar* six lines later.]

3. Let go. 4. That is, poison. 5. Truly.

6. That is, Hermia's arm (with a pun on *bond*, oath, in the previous line).



- To strike me, spurn me, nay, to kill me too.  
 And now, so<sup>6</sup> you will let me quiet go,  
 315 To Athens will I bear my folly back  
 And follow you no further. Let me go.  
 You see how simple and how fond<sup>7</sup> I am.  
 HERMIA: Why, get you gone. Who is 't that hinders you?  
 HELENA: A foolish heart, that I leave here behind.  
 HERMIA: What, with Lysander?
- 320 HELENA: With Demetrius.  
 LYSANDER: Be not afraid; she shall not harm thee, Helena.  
 DEMETRIUS: No, sir, she shall not, though you take her part.  
 HELENA: O, when she is angry, she is keen and shrewd!<sup>8</sup>  
 She was a vixen when she went to school;  
 325 And though she be but little, she is fierce.  
 HERMIA: "Little" again! Nothing but "low" and "little"!  
 Why will you suffer her to flout me thus?  
 Let me come to her.  
 LYSANDER: Get you gone, you dwarf!  
 You minimus, of hind'ring knot-grass<sup>9</sup> made!  
 You bead, you acorn!
- 330 DEMETRIUS: You are too officious  
 In her behalf that scorns your services.  
 Let her alone. Speak not of Helena;  
 Take not her part. For, if thou dost intend<sup>1</sup>  
 Never so little show of love to her,  
 Thou shalt aby<sup>2</sup> it.
- 335 LYSANDER: Now she holds me not;  
 Now follow, if thou dar'st, to try whose right,  
 Of thine or mine, is most in Helena. [Exit.]  
 DEMETRIUS: Follow? Nay, I'll go with thee, cheek by jowl.<sup>3</sup> [Exit, following LYSANDER.]
- HERMIA: You, mistress, all this coil is 'long of<sup>4</sup> you.  
 Nay, go not back.<sup>5</sup>
- 340 HELENA: I will not trust you, I,  
 Nor longer stay in your curst company.  
 Your hands than mine are quicker for a fray;  
 My legs are longer, though, to run away. [Exit.]
- HERMIA: I am amaz'd, and know not what to say. [Exit.]
- 345 OBERON: This is thy negligence. Still thou mistak'st,  
 Or else committ'st thy knaveries willfully.  
 PUCK: Believe me, king of shadows, I mistook.  
 Did not you tell me I should know the man  
 By the Athenian garments he had on?  
 350 And so far blameless proves my enterprise

6. If only. 7. Foolish. 8. Shrewish.

9. A weed, an infusion of which was thought to stunt the growth. *Minimus*: diminutive creature.1. Give sign of. 2. Pay for. 3. That is, side by side. 4. On account of. *Coil*: turmoil, dissension.

5. That is, don't retreat (Hermia is again proposing a fight).

- That I have 'nointed an Athenian's eyes;  
 And so far am I glad it so did sort<sup>6</sup>  
 As this their jangling I esteem a sport.
- OBERON: Thou see'st these lovers seek a place to fight.  
 Hie therefore, Robin, overcast the night; 355  
 The starry welkin<sup>7</sup> cover thou anon  
 With drooping fog as black as Acheron,<sup>8</sup>  
 And lead these testy rivals so astray  
 As<sup>9</sup> one come not within another's way.  
 Like to Lysander sometime frame thy tongue, 360  
 Then stir Demetrius up with bitter wrong;<sup>1</sup>  
 And sometime rail thou like Demetrius.  
 And from each other look thou lead them thus,  
 Till o'er their brows death-counterfeiting sleep  
 With leaden legs and batty<sup>2</sup> wings doth creep. 365  
 Then crush this herb<sup>3</sup> into Lysander's eye, [Gives herb.]  
 Whose liquor hath this virtuous<sup>4</sup> property,  
 To take from thence all error with his<sup>5</sup> might  
 And make his eyeballs roll with wonted<sup>6</sup> sight.  
 When they next wake, all this derision<sup>7</sup> 370  
 Shall seem a dream and fruitless vision,  
 And back to Athens shall the lovers wend  
 With league whose date<sup>8</sup> till death shall never end.  
 Whiles I in this affair do thee employ,  
 I'll to my queen and beg her Indian boy; 375  
 And then I will her charmed eye release  
 From monster's view, and all things shall be peace.
- PUCK: My fairy lord, this must be done with haste,  
 For night's swift dragons<sup>9</sup> cut the clouds full fast,  
 And yonder shines Aurora's harbinger,<sup>1</sup> 380  
 At whose approach, ghosts, wand'ring here and there,  
 Troop home to churchyards. Damned spirits all,  
 That in crossways and floods have burial,<sup>2</sup>  
 Already to their wormy beds are gone.  
 For fear lest day should look their shames upon, 385  
 They willfully themselves exile from light  
 And must for aye<sup>3</sup> consort with black-brow'd night.
- OBERON: But we are spirits of another sort.  
 I with the Morning's love<sup>4</sup> have oft made sport,

6. Turn out. 7. Sky. 8. River of Hades (here representing Hades itself). 9. That.

1. Insults. 2. Batlike. 3. That is, the antidote (mentioned in 2.1.184) to love-in-idleness.

4. Efficacious. 5. Its. 6. Accustomed. 7. Laughable business. 8. Term of existence.

9. [Supposed by Shakespeare to be yoked to the car of the goddess of night.]

1. The morning star, precursor of dawn.

2. [Those who had committed suicide were buried at crossways, with a stake driven through them; those drowned, that is, buried in floods or great waters, would be condemned to wander disconsolate for want of burial rites.] 3. Forever.

4. Cephalus, a beautiful youth beloved by Aurora; or perhaps the goddess of the dawn herself.

390 And, like a forester,<sup>5</sup> the groves may tread  
 Even till the eastern gate, all fiery-red,  
 Opening on Neptune with fair blessed beams,  
 Turns into yellow gold his salt green streams.  
 But, notwithstanding, haste; make no delay.  
 395 We may effect this business yet ere day. [Exit.]

PUCK: Up and down, up and down,  
 I will lead them up and down.  
 I am fear'd in field and town.  
 Goblin, lead them up and down.

400 Here comes one.

[Enter LYSANDER.]

LYSANDER: Where art thou, proud Demetrius? Speak thou now.

PUCK: [Mimicking DEMETRIUS.] Here, villain, drawn<sup>6</sup> and ready. Where art thou?

LYSANDER: I will be with thee straight.<sup>7</sup>

PUCK: Follow me, then,  
 To plainer<sup>8</sup> ground.

[LYSANDER wanders about,<sup>9</sup> following the voice. Enter DEMETRIUS.]

DEMETRIUS: Lysander! Speak again!

405 Thou runaway, thou coward, art thou fled?  
 Speak! In some bush? Where dost thou hide thy head?

PUCK: [Mimicking LYSANDER.] Thou coward, art thou bragging to the stars,  
 Telling the bushes that thou look'st for wars,  
 And wilt not come? Come, recreant;<sup>1</sup> come, thou child,  
 410 I'll whip thee with a rod. He is defil'd  
 That draws a sword on thee.

DEMETRIUS: Yea, art thou there?

PUCK: Follow my voice. We'll try<sup>2</sup> no manhood here. [Exeunt.]

[LYSANDER returns.]

LYSANDER: He goes before me and still dares me on.

When I come where he calls, then he is gone.

415 The villain is much lighter-heel'd than I.  
 I followed fast, but faster he did fly,  
 That fallen am I in dark uneven way,  
 And here will rest me. [Lies down.] Come, thou gentle day!  
 For if but once thou show me thy grey light,  
 420 I'll find Demetrius and revenge this spite. [Sleeps.]

[Enter Robin (PUCK) and DEMETRIUS.]

PUCK: Ho, ho, ho! Coward, why com'st thou not?

DEMETRIUS: Abide me, if thou dar'st; for well I wot<sup>3</sup>  
 Thou runn'st before me, shifting every place,

5. Keeper of a royal forest. 6. With drawn sword. 7. Immediately. 8. Smoother.

9. [It is not clearly necessary that Lysander exit at this point; neither exit nor reentrance is indicated in the early texts.] 1. Cowardly wretch. 2. Test. 3. Know.

And dar'st not stand nor look me in the face.  
Where art thou now?

PUCK: Come hither. I am here. 425

DEMETRIUS: Nay, then, thou mock'st me. Thou shalt buy this dear,<sup>4</sup>

If ever I thy face by daylight see.

Now, go thy way. Faintness constraineth me

To measure out my length on this cold bed.

By day's approach look to be visited.

[*Lies down and sleeps.*] 430

[*Enter HELENA.*]

HELENA: O weary night, O long and tedious night,

Abate<sup>5</sup> thy hours! Shine, comforts, from the east,

That I may back to Athens by daylight,

From these that my poor company detest;

And sleep, that sometimes shuts up sorrow's eye,

Steal me awhile from mine own company.

[*Lies down and sleeps.*] 435

PUCK: Yet but three? Come one more;

Two of both kinds makes up four.

Here she comes, curst and sad.

Cupid is a knavish lad,

Thus to make poor females mad.

440

[*Enter HERMIA.*]

HERMIA: Never so weary, never so in woe,

Bedabbled with the dew and torn with briers,

I can no further crawl, no further go;

My legs can keep no pace with my desires.

Here will I rest me till the break of day.

Heavens shield Lysander, if they mean a fray!

[*Lies down and sleeps.*] 445

PUCK: On the ground

Sleep sound.

I'll apply

To your eye,

Gentle lover, remedy.

[*Squeezing the juice on LYSANDER's eyes.*] 450

When thou wak'st,

Thou tak'st

True delight

In the sight

Of thy former lady's eye;

And the country proverb known,

That every man should take his own,

In your waking shall be shown:

Jack shall have Jill;

Nought shall go ill;

The man shall have his mare again, and all

shall be well.

[*Exit. Manent the four lovers.*] 455

460

4. Pay dearly for this. 5. Lessen, shorten.

## ACT IV

*Scene 1*<sup>6</sup>

*Enter* TITANIA, *Queen of Fairies*, and *BOTTOM the Clown*, and FAIRIES: and OBERON, *the King*, *behind them*.

TITANIA: Come, sit thee down upon this flow'ry bed,  
While I thy amiable cheeks do coy,<sup>7</sup>  
And stick musk-roses in thy sleek smooth head,  
And kiss thy fair large ears, my gentle joy.

[*They recline.*]

5 BOTTOM: Where's Peaseblossom?

PEASEBLOSSOM: Ready.

BOTTOM: Scratch my head, Peaseblossom. Where's Mounsieur Cobweb?

COBWEB: Ready.

BOTTOM: Mounsieur Cobweb, good mounsieur, get you your weapons in your  
10 hand, and kill me a red-hipp'd humble-bee on the top of a thistle; and, good  
mounsieur, bring me the honey-bag. Do not fret yourself too much in the  
action, mounsieur; and, good mounsieur, have a care the honey-bag break  
not; I would be loath to have you overflown with a honey-bag, signior. Where's  
Mounsieur Mustardseed? [*Exit* COBWEB.]

15 MUSTARDSEED: Ready.

BOTTOM: Give me your neaf,<sup>8</sup> Mounsieur Mustardseed. Pray you, leave your  
curtsy,<sup>9</sup> good mounsieur.

MUSTARDSEED: What's your will?

BOTTOM: Nothing, good mounsieur, but to help Cavalery Cobweb<sup>1</sup> to scratch. I  
20 must to the barber's, mounsieur; for methinks I am marvailles hairy about the  
face; and I am such a tender ass, if my hair do but tickle me, I must scratch.

TITANIA: What, wilt thou hear some music, my sweet love?

BOTTOM: I have a reasonable good ear in music. Let's have the tongs and the  
bones.<sup>2</sup>

[*Music: tongs, rural music.*]<sup>3</sup>

25 TITANIA: Or say, sweet love, what thou desirest to eat.

BOTTOM: Truly, a peck of provender. I could munch your good dry oats.  
Methinks I have a great desire to a bottle of hay. Good hay, sweet hay, hath  
no fellow.<sup>4</sup>

TITANIA: I have a venturous fairy that shall seek

30 The squirrel's hoard, and fetch thee new nuts.

BOTTOM: I had rather have a handful or two of dried peas. But, I pray you, let

6. Location: scene continues. The four lovers are still asleep on stage. 7. Caress. *Amiable*: lovely.

8. Fist. 9. That is, put on your hat.

1. [Seemingly an error since Cobweb has been sent to bring honey while Peaseblossom has been asked to scratch. *Cavalery*: form of address for a gentleman.]

2. Instruments for rustic music. (The tongs were played like a triangle, whereas the bones were held between the fingers and used as clappers.) 3. [This stage direction is added from the Folio.]

4. Equal. *Bottle*: bundle.



none of your people stir me. I have an exposition<sup>5</sup> of sleep come upon me.

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

Fairies, be gone, and be all ways<sup>6</sup> away.

[*Exeunt* FAIRIES.]

So doth the woodbine the sweet honeysuckle

35

Gently entwist; the female ivy so

Enrings the barky fingers of the elm.

Oh, how I love thee! How I dote on thee!

[*They sleep.*]

[*Enter Robin Goodfellow* (PUCK).]

OBERON: [*Advancing.*] Welcome, good Robin. See'st thou this sweet sight?

Her dotage now I do begin to pity.

40

For, meeting her of late behind the wood,

Seeking sweet favors<sup>7</sup> for this hateful fool,

I did upbraid her and fall out with her.

For she his hairy temples then had rounded

With coronet of fresh and fragrant flowers;

45

And that same dew, which sometime<sup>8</sup> on the buds

Was wont to swell like round and orient pearls,<sup>9</sup>

Stood now within the pretty flouriets<sup>11</sup> eyes

Like tears that did their own disgrace bewail.

When I had at my pleasure taunted her,

50

And she in mild terms begg'd my patience,

I then did ask of her her changeling child;

Which straight she gave me, and her fairy sent

To bear him to my bower in fairy land.

And, now I have the boy, I will undo

55

This hateful imperfection of her eyes.

And, gentle Puck, take this transformed scalp

From off the head of this Athenian swain,

That he, awaking when the other<sup>2</sup> do,

May all to Athens back again repair,

60

And think no more of this night's accidents

But as the fierce vexation of a dream.

But first I will release the Fairy Queen.

[*Squeezes juice in her eyes.*]

Be as thou wast wont to be;

See as thou wast wont to see.

65

Dian's bud<sup>3</sup> o'er Cupid's flower

Hath such force and blessed power.

Now, my Titania, wake you, my sweet queen.

TITANIA: [*Waking.*] My Oberon! What visions have I seen!

Methought I was enamor'd of an ass.

70

OBERON: There lies your love.

5. [Bottom's word for *disposition*.] 6. In all directions. 7. That is, gifts of flowers.

8. Formerly. 9. That is, the most beautiful of all pearls, those coming from the Orient.

1. Flowerets'. 2. Others.

3. [Perhaps the flower of the *agnus castus*, or chaste-tree, supposed to preserve chastity; or perhaps referring simply to the herb by which Oberon can undo the effects of "Cupid's flower," the love-in-idleness of 2.1.166 f.]

TITANIA: How came these things to pass?

O, how mine eyes do loathe his visage now!

OBERON: Silence awhile. Robin, take off this head.

Titania, music call, and strike more dead

75 Than common sleep of all these five<sup>4</sup> the sense.

TITANIA: Music, ho! Music, such as charmeth sleep!

[*Music.*]

PUCK: [*Removing the ass's head.*] Now, when thou wak'st, with thine own fool's eyes  
peep.

OBERON: Sound, music! Come, my queen, take hands with me,

80 And rock the ground whereon these sleepers be.

[*Dance.*]

Now thou and I are new in amity,

And will tomorrow midnight solemnly<sup>5</sup>

Dance in Duke Theseus' house triumphantly

And bless it to all fair prosperity.

85 There shall the pairs of faithful lovers be

Wedded, with Theseus, all in jollity.

PUCK: Fairy King, attend, and mark:

I do hear the morning lark.

OBERON: Then, my queen, in silence sad,<sup>6</sup>

90 Trip we after night's shade.

We the globe can compass soon,

Swifter than the wand'ring moon.

TITANIA: Come, my lord, and in our flight

Tell me how it came this night

95 That I sleeping here was found

With these mortals on the ground.

[*Exeunt.*]

[*Wind horn within. Enter THESEUS and all his train; HIPPOLYTA, EGEUS.*]

THESEUS: Go, one of you, find out the forester,

For now our observation<sup>7</sup> is perform'd;

And since we have the vaward<sup>8</sup> of the day,

100 My love shall hear the music of my hounds.

Uncouple in the western valley; let them go.

Dispatch, I say, and find the forester.

[*Exit an Attendant.*]

We will, fair queen, up to the mountain's top

And mark the musical confusion

105 Of hounds and echo in conjunction.

HIPPOLYTA: I was with Hercules and Cadmus<sup>9</sup> once,

When in a wood of Crete they bay'd<sup>1</sup> the bear

With hounds of Sparta.<sup>2</sup> Never did I hear

4. That is, the four lovers and Bottom. 5. Ceremoniously. 6. Sober.

7. That is, observance to a morn of May (1.1.167). 8. Vanguard, that is, earliest part.

9. Mythical founder of Thebes. (This story about him is unknown.) 1. Brought to bay.

2. [A breed famous in antiquity for its hunting skill.]

- Such gallant chiding; for, besides the groves,  
 The skies, the fountains, every region near 110  
 Seem'd all one mutual cry. I never heard  
 So musical a discord, such sweet thunder.
- THESEUS: My hounds are bred out of the Spartan kind,  
 So flew'd, so sanded;<sup>3</sup> and their heads are hung 115  
 With ears that sweep away the morning dew;  
 Crook-knee'd, and dewlapp'd<sup>4</sup> like Thessalian bulls;  
 Slow in pursuit, but match'd in mouth like bells,  
 Each under each. A cry more tuneable<sup>5</sup>  
 Was never holla'd to, nor cheer'd with horn,  
 In Crete, in Sparta, nor in Thessaly. 120  
 Judge when you hear. [*Sees the sleepers.*] But, soft! What nymphs are these?
- EGEUS: My lord, this' my daughter here asleep;  
 And this, Lysander; this Demetrius is;  
 This Helena, old Nedar's Helena. 125  
 I wonder of their being here together.
- THESEUS: No doubt they rose up early to observe  
 The rite of May, and, hearing our intent,  
 Came here in grace of our solemnity.<sup>6</sup>  
 But speak, Egeus. Is not this the day  
 That Hermia should give answer of her choice? 130
- EGEUS: It is, my lord.
- THESEUS: Go, bid the huntsmen wake them with their horns.

[*Exit an Attendant.*]

[*Shout within. Wind horns. They all start up.*]

- Good morrow, friends. Saint Valentine<sup>7</sup> is past.  
 Begin these wood-birds but to couple now?
- LYSANDER: Pardon, my lord. 135
- THESEUS: I pray you all, stand up.  
 I know you two are rival enemies;  
 How comes this gentle concord in the world,  
 That hatred is so far from jealousy  
 To sleep by hate and fear no enmity?
- LYSANDER: My lord, I shall reply amazedly, 140  
 Half sleep, half waking; but as yet, I swear,  
 I cannot truly say how I came here.  
 But, as I think—for truly would I speak,  
 And now I do bethink me, so it is—  
 I came with Hermia hither. Our intent 145  
 Was to be gone from Athens, where<sup>8</sup> we might,

3. Of sandy color. *So flew'd*: similarly having large hanging chaps or fleshy covering of the jaw.

4. Having pendulous folds of skin under the neck.

5. Well tuned, melodious. *Match'd* . . . *each*: that is, harmoniously matched in their various cries like a set of bells, from treble down to bass. *Cry*: pack of hounds.

6. That is, observance of these same rites of May.

7. [Birds were supposed to choose their mates on St. Valentine's Day.] 8. Wherever, or to where.

Without<sup>9</sup> the peril of the Athenian law—

EGEUS: Enough, enough, my lord; you have enough.

I beg the law, the law, upon his head.

150 They would have stol'n away; they would, Demetrius,  
Thereby to have defeated you and me,  
You of your wife and me of my consent,  
Of my consent that she should be your wife.

DEMETRIUS: My lord, fair Helen told me of their stealth,

155 Of this their purpose hither to this wood,  
And I in fury hither followed them,  
Fair Helena in fancy following me.  
But, my good lord, I wot not by what power—  
But by some power it is—my love to Hermia,  
160 Melted as the snow, seems to me now  
As the remembrance of an idle gaud<sup>1</sup>  
Which in my childhood I did dote upon;  
And all the faith, the virtue of my heart,  
The object and the pleasure of mine eye,  
165 Is only Helena. To her, my lord,  
Was I betroth'd ere I saw Hermia,  
But like a sickness did I loathe this food;  
But, as in health, come to my natural taste,  
Now I do wish it, love it, long for it,  
170 And will for evermore be true to it.

THESEUS: Fair lovers, you are fortunately met.

Of this discourse we more will hear anon.

Egeus, I will overbear your will;

For in the temple, by and by, with us

175 These couples shall eternally be knit.

And, for the morning now is something<sup>2</sup> worn,

Our purpos'd hunting shall be set aside.

Away with us to Athens. Three and three,

We'll hold a feast in great solemnity.

180 Come, Hippolyta. [Exeunt THESEUS, HIPPOLYTA, EGEUS, and train.]

DEMETRIUS: These things seem small and undistinguishable,

Like far-off mountains turned into clouds.

HERMIA: Methinks I see these things with parted<sup>3</sup> eye,

When every thing seems double.

HELENA: So methinks;

185 And I have found Demetrius like a jewel,

Mine own, and not mine own.<sup>4</sup>

DEMETRIUS: Are you sure

That we are awake? It seems to me

That yet we sleep, we dream. Do not you think

The Duke was here, and bid us follow him?

9. Outside of, beyond. 1. Worthless trinket. 2. Somewhat. *For*: since. 3. Improperly focused.

4. That is, like a jewel that one finds by chance and, therefore, possesses but cannot certainly consider one's own property.

HERMIA: Yea, and my father.

HELENA: And Hippolyta.

190

LYSANDER: And he did bid us follow to the temple.

DEMETRIUS: Why, then, we are awake. Let's follow him,

And by the way let us recount our dreams.

[*Exeunt.*]

BOTTOM: [*Awaking.*] When my cue comes, call me, and I will answer. My next is,

"Most fair Pyramus." Heigh-ho! Peter Quince! Flute, the bellows-mender! 195

Snout, the tinker! Starveling! God's my life, stol'n hence, and left me asleep!

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, if he go about<sup>5</sup> to expound this dream.

Methought I was—there is no man can tell what. Methought I was—and

methought I had—but man is but a patch'd fool, if he will offer<sup>6</sup> to say 200

what methought I had. 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 this

dream. It shall be called "Bottom's Dream," because it hath no bottom; and I

will sing it in the latter end of a play, before the Duke. Peradventure, to 205

make it the more gracious, I shall sing it at her<sup>7</sup> death.

[*Exit.*]

## Scene 2<sup>8</sup>

*Enter* QUINCE, FLUTE, SNOUT, *and* STARVELING.

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.<sup>9</sup>

FLUTE: If he come not, then the play is marr'd. It goes not forward, doth it?

QUINCE: It is not possible. You have not a man in all Athens able to discharge<sup>1</sup>

Pyramus but he.

5

FLUTE: No, he hath simply the best wit of any handicraft man in Athens.

QUINCE: Yea, and the best person too; and he is a very paramour for a sweet voice.

FLUTE: You must say "paragon." A paramour is, God bless us, a thing of naught.

[*Enter* SNUG *the Joiner.*]

SNUG: Masters, the Duke is coming from the temple, and there is two or three 10  
lords and ladies more married. If our sport had gone forward, we had all been  
made men.

FLUTE: O sweet bully Bottom! Thus hath he lost sixpence a day<sup>2</sup> during his life;

he could not have scap'd sixpence a day. An the Duke had not given him

sixpence a day for playing Pyramus, I'll be hang'd. He would have deserv'd it. 15

Sixpence a day in Pyramus, or nothing.

[*Enter* BOTTOM.]

BOTTOM: Where are these lads? Where are these hearts?<sup>3</sup>

QUINCE: Bottom! O most courageous day! O most happy hour!

5. Attempt. 6. Venture. *Patch'd*: wearing motley, that is, a dress of various colors. 7. Thisby's (?).

8. Location: Athens. Quince's house (?). 9. Carried off by fairies or, possibly, transformed.

1. Perform. 2. That is, as a royal pension. 3. Good fellows.

BOTTOM: Masters, I am to discourse wonders.<sup>4</sup> But ask me not what; for if I tell  
 20 you, I am no true Athenian. I will tell you everything, right as it fell out.

QUINCE: Let us hear, sweet Bottom.

BOTTOM: Not a word of<sup>5</sup> me. All that I will tell you is, that the Duke hath din'd.  
 Get your apparel together, good strings to your beards, new ribands<sup>6</sup> to your  
 pumps; meet presently<sup>7</sup> at the palace; every man look o'er his part; for the  
 25 short and the long is, our play is preferr'd.<sup>8</sup> In any case, let Thisby have clean  
 linen; and let not him that plays the lion pare his nails, for they shall hang  
 out for the lion's claws. And, most dear actors, eat no onions nor garlic, for  
 we are to utter sweet breath; and I do not doubt but to hear them say, it is a  
 sweet comedy. No more words. Away! Go away! [Exeunt.]

## ACT V

### Scene 1<sup>9</sup>

Enter THESEUS, HIPPOLYTA, and PHILOSTRATE, Lords, and Attendants.

HIPPOLYTA: 'Tis strange, my Theseus, that<sup>1</sup> these lovers speak of.

THESEUS: More strange than true. I never may<sup>2</sup> believe

These antic fables, nor these fairy toys.<sup>3</sup>

Lovers and madmen have such seething brains,  
 5 Such shaping fantasies,<sup>4</sup> that apprehend

More than cool reason ever comprehends.

The lunatic, the lover, and the poet

Are of imagination all compact.<sup>5</sup>

One sees more devils than vast hell can hold;

10 That is the madman. The lover, all as frantic,  
 Sees Helen's beauty in a brow of Egypt.<sup>6</sup>

The poet's eye, in a fine frenzy rolling,  
 Doth glance from heaven to earth, from earth to heaven;

And as imagination bodies forth

15 The forms of things unknown, the poet's pen

Turns them to shapes and gives to airy nothing

A local habitation and a name.

Such tricks hath strong imagination

That, if it would but apprehend some joy,

20 It comprehends some bringer<sup>7</sup> of that joy;

Or in the night, imagining some fear,<sup>8</sup>

How easy is a bush suppos'd a bear!

HIPPOLYTA: But all the story of the night told over,

4. Have wonders to relate. 5. Out of. 6. Ribbons. *Strings*: that is, to attach the beards.

7. Immediately. 8. Selected for consideration. 9. Location: Athens. The palace of Theseus.

1. That which. 2. Can.

3. Trifling stories about fairies. *Antic*: strange, grotesque (with additional punning sense of *antique*, ancient).

4. Imaginations. 5. Formed, composed.

6. That is, face of a gypsy. *Helen's*: that is, of Helen of Troy, pattern of beauty. 7. That is, source.

8. Object of fear.

And all their minds transfigur'd so together,  
 More witnesseth than fancy's images<sup>9</sup> 25  
 And grows to something of great constancy;<sup>1</sup>  
 But, howsoever, strange and admirable.<sup>2</sup>

[Enter lovers: LYSANDER, DEMETRIUS, HERMIA, and HELENA.]

THESEUS: Here come the lovers, full of joy and mirth.  
 Joy, gentle friends! Joy and fresh days of love  
 Accompany your hearts!

LYSANDER: More than to us 30  
 Wait in your royal walks, your board, your bed!

THESEUS: Come now, what masques, what dances shall we have,  
 To wear away this long age of three hours  
 Between our after-supper and bed-time?  
 Where is our usual manager of mirth? 35  
 What revels are in hand? Is there no play,  
 To ease the anguish of a torturing hour?  
 Call Philostrate.

PHILOSTRATE: Here, mighty Theseus.

THESEUS: Say, what abridgement<sup>3</sup> have you for this evening?  
 What masque? What music? How shall we beguile 40  
 The lazy time, if not with some delight?

PHILOSTRATE: There is a brief<sup>4</sup> how many sports are ripe. [Giving a paper.]

THESEUS: [Reads.] "The battle with the Centaurs,<sup>5</sup> to be sung  
 By an Athenian eunuch to the harp." 45  
 We'll none of that. That have I told my love,  
 In glory of my kinsman<sup>6</sup> Hercules.

[Reads.] "The riot of the tipsy Bacchanals,  
 Tearing the Thracian singer in their rage."<sup>7</sup>  
 That is an old device; and it was play'd 50  
 When I from Thebes came last a conqueror.

[Reads.] "The thrice three Muses mourning for the death  
 Of Learning, late deceas'd in beggary."<sup>8</sup>  
 That is some satire, keen and critical,

Not sorting with<sup>9</sup> a nuptial ceremony. 55  
 [Reads.] "A tedious brief scene of young Pyramus  
 And his love Thisby; very tragical mirth."  
 Merry and tragical? Tedious and brief?

9. Testifies to something more substantial than mere imaginings. 1. Certainty.

2. Source of wonder. *Howsoever*: in any case. 3. Pastime (to abridge or shorten the evening).

4. Short written statement, list.

5. [Probably refers to the battle of the Centaurs and the Lapithae, when the Centaurs attempted to carry off Hippodamia, bride of Theseus's friend Pirothous.]

6. [Plutarch's *Life of Theseus* states that Hercules and Theseus were near kinsmen. Theseus is referring to a version of the battle of the Centaurs in which Hercules was said to be present.]

7. [This was the story of the death of Orpheus, as told in *Metamorphoses* 11.]

8. [Possibly an allusion to Spenser's *Tears of the Muses* (1591), though "satires" deploring the neglect of learning and the creative arts were commonplace.] 9. Befitting.

That is, hot ice and wondrous strange<sup>1</sup> snow.

60 How shall we find the concord of this discord?

PHILOSTRATE: A play there is, my lord, some ten words long,

Which is as brief as I have known a play;

But by ten words, my lord, it is too long,

Which makes it tedious. For in all the play

65 There is not one word apt, one player fitted.

And tragical, my noble lord, it is,

For Pyramus therein doth kill himself.

Which, when I saw rehears'd, I must confess,

Made mine eyes water; but more merry tears

70 The passion of loud laughter never shed.

THESEUS: What are they that do play it?

PHILOSTRATE: Hard-handed men that work in Athens here,

Which never labor'd in their minds till now,

And now have toil'd their unbreathed<sup>2</sup> memories

75 With this same play, against<sup>3</sup> your nuptial.

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;

Unless you can find sport in their intents,

80 Extremely stretch'd and conn'd<sup>4</sup> with cruel pain,

To do you service.

THESEUS: I will hear that play;

For never anything can be amiss

When simpleness and duty tender it.

Go, bring them in; and take your places, ladies.

[PHILOSTRATE goes to summon the players.]

85 HIPPOLYTA: I love not to see wretchedness o'ercharg'd<sup>5</sup>

And duty in his service<sup>6</sup> perishing.

THESEUS: Why, gentle sweet, you shall see no such thing.

HIPPOLYTA: He says they can do nothing in this kind.<sup>7</sup>

THESEUS: The kinder we, to give them thanks for nothing.

90 Our sport shall be to take what they mistake;

And what poor duty cannot do, noble respect

Takes it in might, not merit.<sup>8</sup>

Where I have come, great clerks<sup>9</sup> have purposed

To greet me with premeditated welcomes;

95 Where I have seen them shiver and look pale,

Make periods in the midst of sentences,

Throttle their practis'd accent<sup>1</sup> in their fears,

1. [Seemingly an error for some adjective that would contrast with *snow*, just as *hot* contrasts with *ice*.]

2. Unexercised. *Toil'd*: taxed. 3. In preparation for. 4. Memorized. *Stretch'd*: strained.

5. Incompetence overburdened. 6. Its attempt to serve. 7. Kind of thing.

8. Values it for the effort made rather than for the excellence achieved. 9. Learned men.

1. That is, rehearsed speech, or usual way of speaking.



And in conclusion dumbly have broke off,  
 Not paying me a welcome. Trust me, sweet,  
 Out of this silence yet I pick'd a welcome; 100  
 And in the modesty of fearful duty  
 I read as much as from the rattling tongue  
 Of saucy and audacious eloquence.  
 Love, therefore, and tongue-tied simplicity  
 In least speak most, to my capacity.<sup>2</sup> 105

[PHILOSTRATE *returns*.]

PHILOSTRATE: So please your Grace, the Prologue is address'd.<sup>3</sup>

THESEUS: Let him approach.

[*Flourish of trumpets. Enter the Prologue* (QUINCE).]

PROLOGUE: If we offend, it is with our good will.  
 That you should think, we come not to offend,  
 But with good will. To show our simple skill, 110  
 That is the true beginning of our end.  
 Consider, then, we come but in despite.  
 We do not come, as minding<sup>4</sup> to content you,  
 Our true intent is. All for your delight  
 We are not here. That you should here repent you, 115  
 The actors are at hand; and, by their show,  
 You shall know all that you are like to know.

THESEUS: This fellow doth not stand upon points.<sup>5</sup>

LYSANDER: He hath rid his prologue like a rough<sup>6</sup> colt; he knows not the stop.<sup>7</sup>  
 A good moral, my lord: it is not enough to speak, but to speak true. 120

HIPPOLYTA: Indeed he hath play'd on his prologue like a child on a recorder; a  
 sound, but not in government.<sup>8</sup>

THESEUS: His speech was like a tangled chain, nothing<sup>9</sup> impair'd, but all disorder'd.  
 Who is next?

[*Enter* PYRAMUS *and* THISBY, *and* WALL, *and* MOONSHINE, *and* LION.]

PROLOGUE: Gentles, perchance you wonder at this show; 125  
 But wonder on, till truth make all things plain.  
 This man is Pyramus, if you would know;  
 This beauteous lady Thisby is certain.  
 This man, with lime and rough-cast, doth present  
 Wall, that vile Wall which did these lovers sunder; 130  
 And through Wall's chink, poor souls, they are content  
 To whisper. At the which let no man wonder.  
 This man, with lantern, dog, and bush of thorn,

2. In my judgment and understanding. *Least*: that is, saying least.

3. Ready. *Prologue*: speaker of the prologue. 4. Intending.

5. (1) Heed niceties or small points; (2) pay attention to punctuation in his reading. (The humor of Quince's speech is in the blunders of its punctuation.) 6. Unbroken.

7. (1) The stopping of a colt by reining it in; (2) punctuation mark.

8. Control. *Recorder*: a wind instrument like a flute or flageolet. 9. Not at all.

Presenteth Moonshine; for, if you will know,  
 135 By moonshine did these lovers think no scorn<sup>1</sup>  
 To meet at Ninus' tomb, there, there to woo.  
 This grisly beast, which Lion hight<sup>2</sup> by name,  
 The trusty Thisby, coming first by night,  
 Did scare away, or rather did affright;  
 140 And, as she fled, her mantle she did fall,<sup>3</sup>  
 Which Lion vile with bloody mouth did stain.  
 Anon comes Pyramus, sweet youth and tall,<sup>4</sup>  
 And finds his trusty Thisby's mantle slain;  
 Whereat, with blade, with bloody blameful blade,  
 145 He bravely broach'd<sup>5</sup> his boiling bloody breast.  
 And Thisby, tarrying in mulberry shade,  
 His dagger drew, and died. For all the rest,  
 Let Lion, Moonshine, Wall, and lovers twain  
 At large<sup>6</sup> discourse, while here they do remain.

[*Exeunt* LION, THISBY, and MOONSHINE.]

150 THESEUS: I wonder if the lion be to speak.  
 DEMETRIUS: No wonder, my lord. One lion may, when many asses do.  
 WALL: 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,  
 155 That had in it a crannied hole or chink,  
 Through which the lovers, Pyramus and Thisby,  
 Did whisper often very secretly.  
 This loam, this rough-cast, and this stone doth show  
 That I am that same wall; the truth is so.  
 160 And this the cranny is, right and sinister,<sup>7</sup>  
 Through which the fearful lovers are to whisper.  
 THESEUS: Would you desire lime and hair to speak better?  
 DEMETRIUS: It is the wittiest partition<sup>8</sup> that ever I heard discourse, my lord.

[PYRAMUS *comes forward*.]

THESEUS: Pyramus draws near the wall. Silence!  
 165 PYRAMUS: O grim-look'd<sup>9</sup> night! O night with hue so black!  
 O night, which ever 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,  
 170 That stand'st between her father's ground and mine,  
 Thou wall, O wall, O sweet and lovely wall,  
 Show me thy chink, to blink through with mine eyne!

[WALL *holds up his fingers*.]

1. Think it no disgraceful matter. 2. Is called. 3. Let fall. 4. Courageous. 5. Stabbed.

6. In full, at length.

7. That is, the right side of it and the left; or running from right to left, horizontally.

8. (1) Wall; (2) section of a learned treatise or oration. 9. Grim-looking.

Thanks, courteous Wall. Jove shield thee well for this!

But what see I? No Thisby do I see.

O wicked wall, through whom I see no bliss!

175

Curs'd be thy stones for thus deceiving me!

THESEUS: The wall, methinks, being sensible,<sup>1</sup> should curse again.

PYRAMUS: No, in truth, sir, he should not. "Deceiving me" is Thisby's cue: she is to enter now, and I am to spy her through the wall. You shall see, it will fall pat as I told you. Yonder she comes.

180

[Enter THISBY.]

THISBY: O wall, full often hast thou heard my moans,

For parting my fair Pyramus and me.

My cherry lips have often kiss'd thy stones,

Thy stones with lime and hair knit up in thee.

PYRAMUS: I see a voice. Now will I to the chink,

185

To spy an<sup>2</sup> I can hear my Thisby's face.

Thisby!

THISBY: My love! Thou art my love, I think.

PYRAMUS: Think what thou wilt, I am thy lover's grace;<sup>3</sup>

And, like Limander, am I trusty still.

190

THISBY: And I like Helen,<sup>4</sup> till the Fates me kill.

PYRAMUS: Not Shafalus to Procrus<sup>5</sup> was so true.

THISBY: As Shafalus to Procrus, I to you.

PYRAMUS: O, kiss me through the hole of this vile wall!

THISBY: I kiss the wall's hole, not your lips at all.

195

PYRAMUS: Wilt thou at Ninny's tomb meet me straightway?

THISBY: 'Tide life, 'tide<sup>6</sup> death, I come without delay.

[*Exeunt* PYRAMUS and THISBY.]

WALL: Thus have I, Wall, my part discharged so;

And, being done, thus Wall away doth go.

[*Exit.*]

THESEUS: Now is the mural down between the two neighbors.

200

DEMETRIUS: No remedy, my lord, when walls are so willful to hear without warning.<sup>7</sup>

HIPPOLYTA: This is the silliest stuff that ever I heard.

THESEUS: The best in this kind are but shadows;<sup>8</sup> and the worst are no worse, if imagination amend them.

205

HIPPOLYTA: It must be your imagination then, and not theirs.

THESEUS: If we imagine no worse of them than they of themselves, they may pass for excellent men. Here come two noble beasts in, a man and a lion.

[Enter LION and MOONSHINE.]

LION: You, ladies, you, whose gentle hearts do fear

The smallest monstrous mouse that creeps on floor,

210

1. Capable of feeling. 2. If. 3. That is, gracious lover.

4. [Blunders for "Leander" (*Limander*) and "Hero."]

5. [Blunders for "Cephalus" (*Shafalus*) and "Procris," also famous lovers.] 6. Betide, come.

7. That is, without warning the parents. *To hear*: as to hear.

8. Likenesses, representations. *In this kind*: of this sort.

May now perchance both quake and tremble here,  
 When lion rough in widest rage doth roar.  
 Then know that I, as Snug the joiner, am  
 A lion fell,<sup>9</sup> nor else no lion's dam;

215 For, if I should as lion come in strife  
 Into this place, 'twere pity on my life.

THESEUS: A very gentle beast, and of a good conscience.

DEMETRIUS: The very best at a beast, my lord, that e'er I saw.

LYSANDER: This lion is a very fox for his valor.<sup>1</sup>

220 THESEUS: True; and a goose for his discretion.<sup>2</sup>

DEMETRIUS: Not so, my lord; for his valor cannot carry his discretion; and the  
 fox carries the goose.

THESEUS: His discretion, I am sure, cannot carry his valor; for the goose carries  
 not the fox. It is well. Leave it to his discretion, and let us listen to the moon.

225 MOON: This lanthorn<sup>3</sup> doth the horned moon present—

DEMETRIUS: He should have worn the horns on his head.<sup>4</sup>

THESEUS: He is no crescent, and his horns are invisible within the circumference.

MOON: This lanthorn doth the horned moon present;  
 Myself the man i' th' moon do seem to be.

230 THESEUS: This is the greatest error of all the rest. The man should be put into  
 the lanthorn. How is it else the man i' th' moon?

DEMETRIUS: He dares not come there for the<sup>5</sup> candle; for, you see, it is already in  
 snuff.<sup>6</sup>

HIPPOLYTA: I am aweary of this moon. Would he would change!

235 THESEUS: It appears, by his small light of discretion, that he is in the wane; but  
 yet, in courtesy, in all reason, we must stay the time.

LYSANDER: Proceed, Moon.

MOON: 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.

240 DEMETRIUS: Why, all these should be in the lanthorn; for all these are in the  
 moon. But silence! Here comes Thisby.

[Enter THISBY.]

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

LION: [*Roaring.*] Oh— [THISBY runs off, dropping her mantle.]

DEMETRIUS: Well roar'd, Lion.

245 THESEUS: Well run, Thisby.

HIPPOLYTA: Well shone, Moon. Truly, the moon shines with a good grace.

[The LION shakes THISBY's mantle, and exits.]

THESEUS: Well mous'd,<sup>7</sup> Lion.

DEMETRIUS: And then came Pyramus.

9. Fierce lion (with a play on the idea of *lion skin*). 1. That is, his valor consists of craftiness and discretion.

2. That is, as discreet as a goose, meaning more foolish than discreet.

3. [This original spelling, *lanthorn*, may suggest a play on the *horn* of which lanterns were made, and also on a cuckold's horns; but the spelling *lanthorn* is not used consistently for comic effect in this play or elsewhere. At 5.1.133, for example, the word is *lantern* in the original.] 4. [As a sign of cuckoldry.]

5. Because of the. 6. (1) Offended; (2) in need of snuffing. 7. Shaken.

[Enter PYRAMUS.]

LYSANDER: And so the lion vanish'd.

PYRAMUS: Sweet Moon, I thank thee for thy sunny beams; 250  
I thank thee, Moon, for shining now so bright;  
For, by thy gracious, golden, glittering gleams,  
I trust to take of truest Thisby sight.

But stay, O spite!  
But mark, poor knight, 255  
What dreadful dole<sup>8</sup> is here!

Eyes, do you see?  
How can it be?  
O dainty duck! O dear!  
Thy mantle good, 260  
What, stain'd with blood!  
Approach, ye Furies fell!<sup>9</sup>  
O Fates, come, come,  
Cut thread and thrum;<sup>1</sup>  
Quail, crush, conclude, and quell!<sup>2</sup> 265

THESEUS: This passion, and the death of a dear friend, would go near to make a man look sad.<sup>3</sup>

HIPPOLYTA: Beshrew my heart, but I pity the man.

PYRAMUS: O wherefore, Nature, didst thou lions frame?  
Since lion vile hath here deflow'r'd my dear, 270  
Which is—no, no—which was the fairest dame  
That liv'd, that lov'd, that lik'd, that look'd with cheer.<sup>4</sup>

Come, tears, confound,  
Out, sword, and wound  
The pap of Pyramus; 275  
Ay, that left pap,  
Where heart doth hop. [Stabs himself.]  
Thus die I, thus, thus, thus.

Now am I dead,  
Now am I fled; 280  
My soul is in the sky.  
Tongue, lose thy light;  
Moon, take thy flight. [Exit MOONSHINE.]  
Now die, die, die, die, die. [Dies.]

DEMETRIUS: No die, but an ace,<sup>5</sup> for him; for he is but one.<sup>6</sup> 285

8. Grievous event. 9. Fierce. 1. The warp in weaving and the loose end of the warp.

2. Kill, destroy. *Quail*: overpower.

3. That is, if one had other reason to grieve, one might be sad, but not from this absurd portrayal of passion. 4. Countenance.

5. The side of the die featuring the single pip, or spot. (The pun is on *die* as a singular of *dice*; Bottom's performance is not worth a whole *die* but rather one single face of it, one small portion.)

6. (1) An individual person; (2) unique.

LYSANDER: Less than an ace, man; for he is dead, he is nothing.

THESEUS: With the help of a surgeon he might yet recover, and yet prove an ass.<sup>7</sup>

HIPPOLYTA: How chance Moonshine is gone before Thisby comes back and finds her lover?

290 THESEUS: She will find him by starlight. Here she comes; and her passion ends the play.

[Enter THISBY.]

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

DEMETRIUS: A mote will turn the balance, which Pyramus, which<sup>8</sup> Thisby, is the  
295 better: he for a man, God warr'nt us; she for a woman, God bless us.

LYSANDER: She hath spied him already with those sweet eyes.

DEMETRIUS: And thus she means, videlicet:<sup>9</sup>

THISBY: Asleep, my love?

What, dead, my dove?

300 O Pyramus, arise!

Speak, speak. Quite dumb?

Dead, dead? A tomb

Must cover thy sweet eyes.

These lily lips,

305 This cherry nose,

These yellow cowslip cheeks,

Are gone, are gone!

Lovers, make moan.

His eyes were green as leeks.

310 O Sisters Three,<sup>1</sup>

Come, come to me,

With hands as pale as milk;

Lay them in gore,

Since you have shore<sup>2</sup>

315 With shears his thread of silk.

Tongue, not a word.

Come, trusty sword,

Come, blade, my breast imbrue!<sup>3</sup>

[Stabs herself.]

And farewell, friends.

320 Thus Thisby ends.

Adieu, adieu, adieu.

[Dies.]

THESEUS: Moonshine and Lion are left to bury the dead.

DEMETRIUS: Ay, and Wall too.

BOTTOM: [Starting up.] No, I assure you; the wall is down that parted their fathers.

325 Will it please you to see the epilogue, or to hear a Bergomask dance<sup>4</sup> between two of our company?

THESEUS: 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 blam'd. Marry, if

7. [With a pun on *ace*.] 8. Whether . . . or. 9. To wit. *Means*: moans, laments. 1. The Fates.

2. Shorn. 3. Stain with blood.

4. A rustic dance named from Bergamo, a province in the state of Venice.

he that writ it had play'd Pyramus and hang'd himself in Thisby's garter, it would have been a fine tragedy; and so it is, truly, and very notably discharg'd. 330  
But, come, your Bergomask. Let your epilogue alone.

[*A dance.*]

The iron tongue of midnight hath told<sup>5</sup> twelve.

Lovers, to bed; 'tis almost fairy time.

I fear we shall outsleep the coming morn

As much as we this night have overwatch'd.<sup>6</sup> 335

This palpable-gross<sup>7</sup> play hath well beguil'd

The heavy<sup>8</sup> gait of night. Sweet friends, to bed.

A fortnight hold we this solemnity,

In nightly revels and new jollity. [*Exeunt.*]

[*Enter PUCK, carrying a broom.*]

PUCK: Now the hungry lion roars, 340

And the wolf behowls the moon;

Whilst the heavy ploughman snores,

All with weary task fordone.<sup>9</sup>

Now the wasted brands<sup>1</sup> do glow,

Whilst the screech-owl, screeching loud, 345

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 lets forth his sprite,<sup>2</sup> 350

In the churchway paths to glide.

And we fairies, that do run

By the triple Hecate's<sup>3</sup> team

From the presence of the sun,

Following darkness like a dream, 355

Now are frolic.<sup>4</sup> Not a mouse

Shall disturb this hallowed house.

I am sent with broom before,

To sweep the dust behind<sup>5</sup> the door.

[*Enter OBERON and TITANIA, King and Queen of Fairies, with all their train.*]

OBERON: Through the house give glimmering light, 360

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. 365

5. Counted, struck ("toll'd"). 6. Stayed up too late. 7. Palpably gross, obviously crude.

8. Drowsy, dull. 9. Exhausted. 1. Burned-out logs. 2. Every grave lets forth its ghost.

3. [Hecate ruled as Luna or Cynthia in Heaven, as Diana on Earth, and as Proserpina in Hell.] 4. Merry.

5. From behind. (Robin Goodfellow was a household spirit who helped good housemaids and punished lazy ones.)

TITANIA: First, rehearse your 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.*]

370 OBERON: 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<sup>6</sup>  
 375 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;  
 380 Never mole, hare lip, nor scar,  
 Nor mark prodigious,<sup>7</sup> such as are  
 Despised in nativity,  
 Shall upon their children be.  
 With this field-dew consecrate,<sup>8</sup>  
 385 Every fairy take his gait,<sup>9</sup>  
 And each several<sup>1</sup> chamber bless,  
 Through this palace, with sweet peace;  
 And the owner of it blest  
 Ever shall in safety rest.  
 390 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 slumb'ed here<sup>2</sup>  
 395 While these visions did appear.  
 And this weak and idle theme,  
 No more yielding but<sup>3</sup> a dream,  
 Gentles, do not reprehend.  
 If you pardon, we will mend.  
 400 And, as I am an honest Puck,  
 If we have unearned luck  
 Now to scape the serpent's tongue,<sup>4</sup>  
 We will make amends ere long;  
 Else the Puck a liar call.  
 405 So, good night unto you all.  
 Give me your hands,<sup>5</sup> if we be friends,  
 And Robin shall restore amends.

[*Exit.*]

ca. 1594–95

6. Created. 7. Monstrous, unnatural. 8. Consecrated. 9. Go his way. 1. Separate.

2. That is, that it is a "midsummer night's dream." 3. Yielding no more than. 4. That is, hissing.

5. Applaud.