

A Midsummer Nights Dreame.

By WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE

Enter Quince the Carpenter, Snug the Joyner, Bottome the Weaver, Flute the bellows-mender & Starveling the Taylor.

Quince. Is all our company heere ?

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

Quince. Here is the scrowle of every mans name, which is thought fit through all *Athens*, to play in our Enterlude before the Duke and Dutches, on his wedding day at night.

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

Quince. Marry our play is the most lamentable Comedy, and most cruell death of *Pyramus* and *Thisbie*.

Bottom. A very good peece of worke I assure you, and a merry. Now good *Peter Quince*, call forth your Actors by the scrowle. Masters spread your selves.

Quince. Answer as I call you. *Nick Bottome* the weaver.

Bottom. Ready; name what part I am for, and proceed.

Quince. You *Nicke Bottome* are set downe for *Pyramus*.

Bottom. What is *Pyramus*, a lover, or a tyrant ?

Quince. A Lover that kills himselfe most gallantly for love.

Bottom. That will aske some teares in the true performing of it: if I do it, let the audience looke to their eies: I will moove stormes; I will condole in some measure. To the rest yet, my chiefe humour is for a tyrant. I could play *Ercles* rarely, or a part teare a Cat in, to make all split the raging Rocks; and shivering shocks shall break the locks of prison gates, and *Phibbus* carre shall shine from farre, and make and marre the foolish Fates. This was lofty. Now name the rest of the Players. This is *Ercles* vaine, a tyrants vaine: a lover is more condoling.

Quince. *Francis Flute* the Bellowes-mender.

Flute. Heere *Peter Quince*.

Quince. You must take *Thisbie* on you.

Flute. What is *Thisbie*, a wandering Knight ?

Quince. It is the Lady that *Pyramus* must love.

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

Quince. That's all one, you shall play it in a Maske, and you may speake as small as you will.

Bottom. And I may hide my face, let me play *Thisbie* too: Ile speake in a monstrous little voyce; *Thisne, Thisne*, ah *Pyramus* my lover deare, thy *Thisbie* deare, and Lady deare.

Quince. No no, you must play *Pyramus*, and Flute, you *Thisby*.

Bottom. Well, proceed

Quince. *Robin Starveling* the Taylor.

Starve. Heere *Peter Quince*.

Quince. *Robin Starveling*, you must play *Thisbies* mother ?
Tom Snowt, the Tinker. *Enter Snout the Tinker.*

Snowt. Heere *Peter Quince*.

Quince. You, *Pyramus* father; my self, *Thisbies* father; *Snugge* the Joyner, you the Lyons part: and I hope there is a play fitted.

Snug. Have you the Lions part written? pray you if be, give it me, for I am slow of studie.

Quince. You may doe it *extemporie*, for it is nothing but roaring.

Bottom. Let mee play the Lyon too, I will roare that I will doe any mans heart good to heare me. I will roare, that I will make the Duke say, Let him roare againe, let him roare againe.

Quince. If you should doe it too terribly, you would fright the Dutchesse and the Ladies, that they would shriek, and that were enough to hang us all.

All. That would hang us every mothers sonne.

Bottom. I graunt you friends, if that you should fright the Ladies out of their Wittes, they would have no more discretion but to hang us: but I will aggravate my voyce so, that I will roare you as gently as any sucking Dove; I will roare and 'twere any Nightingale.

Quince. You can play no part but *Piramus*, for *Piramus* is a sweet-fac'd man, a proper man as one shall see in a summers day; a most lovely Gentleman-like man, therefore you must needs play *Piramus*.

Bottom. Well, I will undertake it.

Quince. But masters here are your parts, and I am to intreat you, request you, and desire you, to con them by too morrow night: and meet me in the palace wood, a mile without the Towne, by Moone-light, there we will rehearse: for if we meete in the Citie, we shalbe dog'd with company, and our devises knowne. In the meane time, I wil draw a bil of properties, such as our play wants. I pray you faile me not.

Exit Flute and Snout

Bottom. We will meete, and there we may rehearse more obscenely and couragiously. Take paines, be perfect, adieu.

Quince. At the Dukes oake we meete.

Exeunt

ACT 2

Enter a Fairie at one doore, and Robin Goodfellow (Pucke) at another.

Puck. How now spirit, whether wander you ?

Fairy. Over hil, over dale, through bush, through briar,
Over parke, over pale, through flood, through fire,
I do wander everie where, swifter than the Moons sphere;
And I serve the Fairy Queene, to dew her orbs upon the green.
Farewell thou Lob of spirits, Ile be gon,
Our Queene and all her Elves come heere anon.

Puck. The King doth keepe his Revels here to night,
Take heed the Queene come not within his sight,
For *Oberon* is passing fell and wrath,
Because that she, as her attendant, hath
A lovely boy stolne from an Indian King,
She never had so sweet a changeling,
And jealous *Oberon* would have the childe
Knight of his traine, to trace the Forrests wilde.
But she (perforce) with-holds the loved boy,
Crownes him with flowers, and makes him all her joy.
And now they never meete in grove, or greene,
By fountaine cleere, or spangled star-light sheene,
But they do square, that all their Elves for feare
Creepe into Acorne cups and hide them there.

Fairy. Either I mistake your shape and making quite,
Or else you are that shrew'd and knavish spirit
Cal'd Robin Good-fellow. Are you not hee,
That frights the maidens of the Villagree,
And sometime make the drinke to beare no barme,
Misleade night-wanderers, laughing at their harme,
Those that Hobgoblin call you, and sweet Pucke,
You do their worke, and they shall have good lucke.
Are not you he ?

Puck. Thou speak'st aright;
I am that merrie wanderer of the night:
I jest to *Oberon*, and make him smile,
When I a fat and beane-fed horse beguile,
Neighing in likenesse of a filly foale,
And sometime lurke I in a Gossips bole,
And on her withered dewlop poure the Ale.
The wisest Aunt telling the saddest tale,
Sometime for three-foot stoole, mistaketh me,
Then flip I from her bum, downe topples she,
And then the whole quire hold their hips, and loffe,
And waxen in their mirth, and neeze, and coffe,
A merrier houre was never wasted there.
But roome Fairy, comes *Oberon* heere.

Fairy. And heere my Mistris:
Would that he were gone.

Enter Oberon, the King of Fairies, at one doore, and Titania, the Queene, at another with two Elves.

- Oberon. Ill met by Moone-light,
Proud Titania.
- Titania. What, jealous *Oberon* ? Fairy skip hence.
I have forsworne his bed and companie.
- Oberon. Tarrie rash Wanton; am not I thy Lord ?
- Titania. Then I must be thy Lady: But I know
When thou wast stolne away from Fairy Land,
And in the shape of *Corin*, and versing love
To amorous *Phillida*. Why art thou heere ?
But that forsooth the bouncing *Amazon*
Your buskin'd Mistresse, and your Warrior love,
To *Theseus* must be Wedded; and you come,
To give their bed joy and prosperitie.
- Oberon. How canst thou thus for shame *Tytania*,
Glance at my credite, with *Hippolita* ?
Knowing I know thy love to *Theseus* ?
- Titania. This is the forgerie of jealousy,
And never since the middle Summers spring
Met we on hil, in dale, forrest, or mead,
To dance our ringlets to the whistling Winde,
But with thy braules thou hast disturb'd our sport.
Therefore the Windes, piping to us in vaine,
As in revenge, have suck'd up from the sea
Contagious fogges: Which falling in the Land,
Hath everie petty River made so proud,
That they have over-borne their Continents.
Therefore the Moone (the governesse of floods)
Pale in her anger, washes all the aire;
And through this distemperature, we see
The seasons alter; hoared headed frosts
Fall in the fresh lap of the crimson Rose,
And on old *Hyems* chinne and Icie crowne,
An odorous Chaplet of sweet Sommer buds
Is as in mockry set. The Spring, the Sommer,
The childing Autumne, angry Winter change
Their wonted Liveries, and the mazed world,
By their increase, now knowes not which is which;
And this same progeny of evils,
Comes from our debate, from our dissention,
We are their parents and originall.
- Oberon. Do you amend it then, it lies in you,
Why should *Titania* crosse her *Oberon* ?
I do but beg a little changeling boy,
To be my Henchman.