

# A Midsummer Night's Dream

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## ADDITIONAL PASSAGES

An unusual quantity and kind of mislineation in the first edition has persuaded most scholars that the text at the beginning of 5.1 was revised, with new material written in the margins. We here offer a reconstruction of the passage as originally drafted, which can be compared with 5.1.1-86 of the edited text.

### 5.1

*Enter Theseus, Hippolyta, and Philostrate*

HIPPOLYTA

'Tis strange, my Theseus, that these lovers speak of.

THESEUS

More strange than true. I never may believe  
These antique fables, nor these fairy toys.  
Lovers and mad men have such seething brains.  
One sees more devils than vast hell can hold: 5  
That is the madman. The lover, all as frantic,  
Sees Helen's beauty in a brow of Egypt.  
Such tricks hath strong imagination  
That if it would but apprehend some joy  
It comprehends some bringer of that joy; 10  
Or in the night, imagining some fear,  
How easy is a bush supposed a bear!

HIPPOLYTA

But all the story of the night told over,  
And all their minds transfigured so together,  
More witnesseth than fancy's images, 15  
And grows to something of great constancy;  
But howsoever, strange and admirable.

*Enter the lovers: Lysander, Demetrius, Hermia, and*

*Helena*

**THESEUS**

Here come the lovers, full of joy and mirth.  
Come now, what masques, what dances shall we  
have  
To ease the anguish of a torturing hour? 20  
Call Philostrate.

**PHILOSTRATE** Here mighty Theseus.

**THESEUS**

Say, what abridgement have you for this evening?  
What masque, what music? How shall we beguile  
The lazy time if not with some delight?

**PHILOSTRATE**

There is a brief how many sports are ripe. 25  
Make choice of which your highness will see first.

**THESEUS**

`The battle with the centaurs to be sung  
By an Athenian eunuch to the harp.'  
We'll none of that. That have I told my love  
In glory of my kinsman Hercules. 30  
`The riot of the tipsy Bacchanals  
Tearing the Thracian singer in their rage.'  
That is an old device, and it was played  
When I from Thebes came last a conquerer.  
`The thrice-three Muses mourning for the death 35  
Of learning, late deceased in beggary.'  
That is some satire, keen and critical,  
Not sorting with a nuptial ceremony.  
`A tedious brief scene of young Pyramus  
And his love Thisby.' `Tedious' and `brief'? 40

**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  
There is not one word apt, one player fitted. 45

**THESEUS** What are they that do play it?

**PHILOSTRATE**

Hard-handed men that work in Athens here,  
Which never laboured in their minds till now,  
And now have toiled their unbreathed memories

With this same play against your nuptial. 50

**THESEUS**

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

*Exit Philostrate*

**HIPPOLYTA**

I love not to see wretchedness o'ercharged

And duty in his service perishing.