

A Midsummer Night's Dream

4.1

Enter Titania, Queen of Fairies, and Bottom the clown with the ass-head, and fairies: Peaseblossom, Cobweb, Mote, and Mustardseed

TITANIA *(to Bottom)*

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

BOTTOM Where's Peaseblossom? 5

PEASEBLOSSOM Ready.

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

COBWEB Ready.

BOTTOM Monsieur Cobweb, good monsieur, get you your 10
weapons in your hand and kill me a red-hipped humble-
bee on the top of a thistle; and, good monsieur, bring
me the honeybag. Do not fret yourself too much in the
action, monsieur; and, good monsieur, have a care the
honeybag break not. I would be loath to have you 15
overflowen with a honeybag, signor.

[Exit Cobweb]

Where's Monsieur Mustardseed?

MUSTARDSEED Ready.

BOTTOM Give me your neaf, Monsieur Mustardseed. Pray
you, leave your courtesy, good monsieur. 20

MUSTARDSEED What's your will?

BOTTOM Nothing, good monsieur, but to help Cavalieri
Peaseblossom to scratch. I must to the barber's,
monsieur, for methinks I am marvellous hairy about
the face; and I am such a tender ass, if my hair do but 25
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.

[Rural music]

TITANIA

Or say, sweet love, what thou desir'st to eat. 30

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.

TITANIA

I have a venturous fairy that shall seek
The squirrel's hoard, and fetch thee off new nuts. 35

BOTTOM I had rather have a handful or two of dried peas.
But I pray you, let none of your people stir me. I have
an exposition of sleep come upon me.

TITANIA

Sleep thou, and I will wind thee in my arms.
Fairies, be gone, and be all ways away. 40

Exeunt Fairies

So doth the woodbine the sweet honeysuckle
Gently entwist; the female ivy so
Enrings the barky fingers of the elm.
O how I love thee, how I dote on thee!

They sleep.

Enter Robin Goodfellow [and Oberon, meeting]

OBERON

Welcome, good Robin. Seest thou this sweet sight? 45
Her dotage now I do begin to pity,
For meeting her of late behind the wood,
Seeking sweet favours for this hateful fool,
I did upbraid her and fall out with her,
For she his hairy temples then had rounded 50
With coronet of fresh and fragrant flowers,
And that same dew which sometime on the buds
Was wont to swell like round and orient pearls
Stood now within the pretty flow'rets' eyes,
Like tears that did their own disgrace bewail. 55
When I had at my pleasure taunted her,
And she in mild terms begged 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 fairyland. 60
And now I have the boy, I will undo
This hateful imperfection of her eyes.

And, gentle puck, take this transformeÁd scalp
From off the head of this Athenian swain,
That he, awaking when the other do,
May all to Athens back again repair,
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.

65

He drops the juice on Titania's eyelids

Be as thou wast wont to be,
See as thou wast wont to see.
Dian's bud o'er Cupid's flower
Hath such force and blesseÁd power.
Now, my Titania, wake you, my sweet queen.

70

TITANIA (*awaking*)

My Oberon, what visions have I seen!
Methought I was enamoured of an ass.

75

OBERON

There lies your love.

TITANIA How came these things to pass?

O, how mine eyes do loathe his visage now!

OBERON

Silence a while.±±Robin, take off this head.±±
Titania, music call, and strike more dead
Than common sleep of all these five the sense.

80

TITANIA

Music, ho±±music such as charmeth sleep.

[Still music]

ROBIN (*taking the ass-head off Bottom*)

Now when thou wak'st with thine own fool's eyes
peep.

OBERON

Sound music.

[The music changes]

Come, my queen, take hands with me,
And rock the ground whereon these sleepers be.

85

Oberon and Titania dance

Now thou and I are new in amity,
And will tomorrow midnight solemnly
Dance in Duke Theseus' house, triumphantly,
And bless it to all fair prosperity.

There shall the pairs of faithful lovers be 90
Wedded with Theseus, all in jollity.

ROBIN

Fairy King, attend and mark.
I do hear the morning lark.

OBERON

Then, my queen, in silence sad
Trip we after night's shade. 95
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
That I sleeping here was found 100
With these mortals on the ground.

*Exeunt Oberon, Titania, and
Robin. The sleepers lie still
Wind horns within. Enter Theseus with Egeus,
Hippolyta, and all his train*

THESEUS

Go, one of you, find out the forester,
For now our observation is performed;
And since we have the vanguard of the day,
My love shall hear the music of my hounds. 105
Uncouple in the western valley; let them go.
Dispatch, I say, and find the forester.

Exit one

We will, fair Queen, up to the mountain's top,
And mark the musical confusion
Of hounds and echo in conjunction. 110

HIPPOLYTA

I was with Hercules and Cadmus once
When in a wood of Crete they bayed the bear
With hounds of Sparta. Never did I hear
Such gallant chiding; for besides the groves,
The skies, the fountains, every region near 115
Seemed 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 flewed, so sanded; and their heads are hung

With ears that sweep away the morning dew, 120
Crook-kneed, and dewlapped like Thessalian bulls,
Slow in pursuit, but matched in mouth like bells,
Each under each. A cry more tuneable
Was never holla'd to nor cheered with horn
In Crete, in Sparta, nor in Thessaly. 125
Judge when you hear. But soft: what nymphs are
these?

EGEUS

My lord, this is my daughter here asleep,
And this Lysander; this Demetrius is;
This Helena, old Nedar's Helena.
I wonder of their being here together. 130

THESEUS

No doubt they rose up early to observe
The rite of May, and, hearing our intent,
Came here in grace of our solemnity.
But speak, Egeus: is not this the day
That Hermia should give answer of her choice? 135

EGEUS It is, my lord.

THESEUS

Go bid the huntsmen wake them with their horns.
[Exit one]
Shout within: wind horns. The lovers all start up
Good morrow, friends. Saint Valentine is past.
Begin these wood-birds but to couple now?

LYSANDER

Pardon, my lord.
The lovers kneel

THESEUS I pray you all stand up. 140

The lovers stand
(To Demetrius and Lysander) 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 amazeÁdly, 145
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 150
Was to be gone from Athens where we might,
Without the peril of the Athenian law±±

EGEUS (*to Theseus*)

Enough, enough, my lord, you have enough.
I beg the law, the law upon his head.±±
They would have stol'n away, they would, Demetrius, 155
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 (*to Theseus*)

My lord, fair Helen told me of their stealth,
Of this their purpose hither to this wood, 160
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,
Melted as the snow, seems to me now 165
As the remembrance of an idle gaud
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
Is only Helena. To her, my lord, 170
Was I betrothed ere I see Hermia.
But like in 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,
And will for evermore be true to it. 175

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
These couples shall eternally be knit.±± 180
And, for the morning now is something worn,
Our purposed hunting shall be set aside.
Away with us to Athens. Three and three,
We'll hold a feast in great solemnity.

Come, Hippolyta. 185

*Exit Duke Theseus with Hippolyta, Egeus,
and all his train*

DEMETRIUS

These things seem small and undistinguishable,
Like far-off mountains turneÁd into clouds.

HERMIA

Methinks I see these things with parted eye,
When everything seems double.

HELENA

So methinks,

And I have found Demetrius like a jewel, 190
Mine own and not mine own.

DEMETRIUS

It seems to me

That yet we sleep, we dream. Do not you think
The Duke was here and bid us follow him?

HERMIA

Yea, and my father.

HELENA

And Hippolyta.

LYSANDER

And he did bid us follow to the temple. 195

DEMETRIUS

Why then, we are awake. Let's follow him,
And by the way let us recount our dreams.

Exeunt the lovers

Bottom wakes

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

My next is `most fair Pyramus'. Heigh-ho. Peter Quince?
Flute the bellows-mender? Snout the tinker? 200

Starveling? God's my life! Stolen 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 t'expound this dream.
Methought I was±±there is no man can tell what. 205

Methought I was, and methought I had±±but man is
but a patched fool if he will offer to say 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 210
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 make it
the more gracious, I shall sing it at her death. 215

Exit