

A MIDSUMMER NIGHT'S DREAM

KEY FACTS:

- ❖ **Full Title:** *A Midsummer Night's Dream*
- ❖ **Author:** William Shakespeare
- ❖ **When Written:** Early to mid-1590s
- ❖ **Where Written:** England
- ❖ **First Performed:** Probably between 1594 and 1596
- ❖ **When Published:** 1600 (in quarto form)
- ❖ **Literary Period:** The Renaissance (1500–1660)
- ❖ **Genre:** Comic drama / Romantic comedy / Fantasy play
- ❖ **Setting:** The city of Athens and a nearby enchanted forest, in an unspecified ancient time ruled by the mythological Duke **Theseus**

SOURCES:

- ❖ **Plutarch's *Lives of the Noble Grecians and Romans*:**
 - Source for the characters **Theseus** and **Hippolyta**.
- ❖ **Ovid's *Metamorphoses*:**
 - Source of the story of **Pyramus and Thisbe**.
 - The name **Titania** also comes from this work.
- ❖ **Apuleius's *The Golden Ass*:**
 - Source of the story about a **man transformed into an ass** (similar to Bottom's transformation).
- ❖ **Medieval French Romance *Huon of Bordeaux*:**
 - Source of the name **Oberon**, the fairy king.
- ❖ **Greek and Roman Drama:**
 - Common plot of **two lovers struggling against parental opposition** inspired by ancient plays.
 - This theme is also used in Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet*.
- ❖ **Chaucer's *The Knight's Tale*:**
 - Inspired the Athenian setting and the royal couple's marriage.

CHARACTER LIST

Main Characters

- ❖ **Puck (Robin Goodfellow)** – Oberon's mischievous fairy servant who causes and fixes confusion with the magic love potion.
- ❖ **Nick Bottom** – A foolish and overconfident weaver; one of the “rude mechanicals”; plays Pyramus in the play-within-a-play; famously transformed to have a donkey's head.

- ❖ **Helena** - A lovesick young Athenian woman who loves Demetrius, though he initially rejects her; later wins his love through fairy magic.
- ❖ **Hermia** - A strong-willed young Athenian woman in love with Lysander; defies her father Egeus, who wants her to marry Demetrius.
- ❖ **Titania** - The proud and beautiful Queen of the Fairies; quarrels with Oberon and temporarily falls in love with Bottom under a spell.
- ❖ **Oberon** - The powerful King of the Fairies; husband of Titania; causes much of the play's mischief through Puck's enchantments.
- ❖ **Lysander** - A young Athenian man deeply in love with Hermia; his affection temporarily shifts to Helena under Puck's spell.
- ❖ **Demetrius** - A young Athenian man once in love with Helena, now pursuing Hermia; later truly loves Helena due to Oberon's magic.
- ❖ **Theseus** - The Duke of Athens; his upcoming marriage to Hippolyta sets the play's time frame.
- ❖ **Hippolyta** - The Amazon Queen, conquered by Theseus; engaged to him and represents harmony and order at the play's end.

Fairies

- ❖ **Peaseblossom** - One of Titania's gentle fairy attendants.
- ❖ **Cobweb** - Another of Titania's fairy servants.
- ❖ **Mote (Moth)** - A small fairy who serves Titania.
- ❖ **Mustardseed** - One of Titania's fairy attendants; friendly to Bottom when he is enchanted.

The "Rude Mechanicals" (The Craftsmen/Actors)

- ❖ **Peter Quince** - A carpenter and director of the play "Pyramus and Thisbe"; organizes the amateur actors.
- ❖ **Francis Flute** - A bellows-mender who plays Thisbe, the female lover, in the play-within-a-play.
- ❖ **Tom Snout** - A tinker who plays the Wall separating the lovers in the play.
- ❖ **Snug** - A joiner who plays the Lion; worries he will frighten the ladies with his roar.
- ❖ **Robin Starveling** - A tailor who plays Moonshine in the play; shy and simple.

Other Characters

- ❖ **Egeus** - Hermia's strict father; insists she marry Demetrius and appeals to Theseus to enforce Athenian law.
- ❖ **Philostrate** - Master of Revels; responsible for selecting entertainment for Theseus and Hippolyta's wedding.

PLOT SUMMARY

Main Setting and Situation

- ❖ The play takes place in **ancient Athens** and a **magical forest** nearby.
- ❖ **Duke Theseus** and his bride **Hippolyta** are preparing for their **wedding**.
- ❖ **Egeus**, a nobleman, comes to Theseus with his **daughter Hermia** and two men – **Lysander** and **Demetrius**.

Conflict in Athens

- ❖ **Egeus** wants Hermia to **marry Demetrius**, but Hermia **loves Lysander**.
- ❖ Egeus asks **Theseus** to enforce Athenian law: Hermia must **marry the man her father chooses** or face **death**.
- ❖ Lysander argues that **Demetrius once loved Helena**, Hermia's friend, and is not loyal.
- ❖ Theseus insists the **law must be obeyed**, giving Hermia time to decide.
- ❖ **Hermia and Lysander plan to run away** together through the forest to escape the law.
- ❖ They tell **Helena**, but Helena tells **Demetrius**, hoping to win his love again.
- ❖ That night, **all four lovers** (Hermia, Lysander, Demetrius, and Helena) end up in the **forest**.

The Fairies' World

- ❖ In the forest, the **Fairy King Oberon** and **Queen Titania** are quarreling over a **beautiful Indian boy**.
- ❖ Oberon wants the boy for himself, but Titania refuses to give him up.
- ❖ Oberon plans to **punish Titania** by using a **magical flower** called *love-in-idleness*.
- ❖ The flower's juice makes whoever it touches **fall in love with the first living thing they see**.
- ❖ Oberon sends his mischievous servant **Puck (Robin Goodfellow)** to fetch the flower.

Oberon's Plan and Puck's Mistake

- ❖ Oberon sees **Helena chasing Demetrius**, who cruelly rejects her.
- ❖ Feeling sorry for her, he tells **Puck** to put the love potion on **the eyes of the man wearing Athenian clothes** (meaning Demetrius).
- ❖ Oberon also drops the potion on **Titania's eyes** while she sleeps.
- ❖ But Puck mistakes **Lysander for Demetrius** and puts the potion on **Lysander's eyes** instead.
- ❖ When **Helena wakes Lysander**, he immediately **falls in love with her** and follows her through the forest.
- ❖ **Hermia wakes** to find Lysander gone and goes searching for him.

The Workmen's Rehearsal

- ❖ In another part of the forest, a group of **Athenian craftsmen** are rehearsing a play called *Pyramus and Thisbe* for the Duke's wedding.
- ❖ **Nick Bottom**, the weaver, plays **Pyramus** and acts very foolishly.

- ❖ **Puck**, watching them, decides to have some fun – he turns **Bottom's head into that of a donkey (ass)**.
- ❖ The other workmen **run away in fear**.
- ❖ **Titania** wakes from her enchanted sleep, sees **Bottom with a donkey's head**, and **instantly falls in love** with him because of the magic.

The Lovers' Confusion

- ❖ Oberon realizes **Puck has bewitched the wrong man**.
- ❖ He puts the flower on **Demetrius's eyes** too.
- ❖ When **Helena** appears, Demetrius wakes and **falls in love with her**.
- ❖ Now **both Lysander and Demetrius love Helena**, who thinks they are **mocking her**.
- ❖ **Hermia** finds them and becomes **furious and jealous**.
- ❖ The two men almost fight, and the two women quarrel bitterly.
- ❖ **Oberon orders Puck** to fix the mess – he leads the lovers through the forest using his tricks until they **fall asleep**.
- ❖ He then **removes the spell from Lysander**, making him love **Hermia** again.

Resolution of the Fairy Story

- ❖ **Titania**, still under the spell, continues to adore **Bottom** the donkey.
- ❖ **Oberon**, now having the **Indian boy**, finally feels sorry for her.
- ❖ He **reverses the spell**, and Titania wakes in horror at her foolishness.
- ❖ **Puck restores Bottom's normal head**, and the fairies make peace.

Resolution of the Lovers' Story

- ❖ At dawn, **Theseus, Hippolyta, and Egeus** find the four lovers asleep in the forest.
- ❖ They wake and explain what happened.
- ❖ **Demetrius now loves Helena**, and **Lysander loves Hermia**, so **Theseus overrules Egeus and allows them all to marry**.
- ❖ The Duke invites the lovers to **share his wedding day**.

The Wedding and the Play

- ❖ Back in Athens, the weddings of **Theseus & Hippolyta, Lysander & Hermia, and Demetrius & Helena** are celebrated together.
- ❖ As part of the celebration, the **workmen perform their play, *Pyramus and Thisbe***.
- ❖ The play is **terribly acted and full of mistakes**, but everyone finds it **funny and entertaining**.

Conclusion

- ❖ After the weddings, **Oberon, Titania, and Puck** appear with their **fairy attendants**.
- ❖ They bless the marriages and the palace with **happiness and peace**.
- ❖ **Puck ends the play** by addressing the audience directly, asking them to **forgive any offense** and treat the story as a **pleasant dream**.

DETAILED SUMMARY

Act I - Scene I (Athens - The Palace of Theseus)

Introduction - Theseus and Hippolyta's conversation

- ❖ The scene opens in **Theseus's palace in Athens**.
- ❖ **Theseus**, Duke of Athens, and **Hippolyta**, Queen of the Amazons, enter with attendants.
- ❖ They are soon to be **married in four days**, when the moon will appear again.
- ❖ Theseus expresses his **impatience** – he feels that time is moving very slowly until their wedding.
- ❖ He compares the slow-moving moon to an **old woman** delaying a young man's inheritance.
- ❖ **Hippolyta** comforts him by saying that **four days and nights will pass quickly**; soon the new moon, bright like a silver bow, will witness their wedding festivities.
- ❖ Theseus then calls **Philostrate**, the Master of Revels, and commands him to **prepare entertainment and celebrations** for their marriage.
- ❖ He wants the young people of Athens to be filled with **joy and excitement**, not sadness.
- ❖ He says that **melancholy belongs to funerals, not weddings**.
- ❖ When Philostrate leaves, Theseus tells Hippolyta that he **won her in battle** – he fought her and her Amazons, captured her, and thereby won her love.
- ❖ But he promises that he will now **marry her with honor, happiness, and triumph**, not by force.

Egeus's complaint about Hermia

- ❖ **Egeus**, a nobleman of Athens, enters with his daughter **Hermia**, and two young men, **Lysander** and **Demetrius**.
- ❖ He greets Theseus respectfully: "Happy be our noble duke!"
- ❖ Theseus replies kindly and asks what the problem is.
- ❖ Egeus explains that he comes **angrily and unhappily** because his daughter **Hermia disobeys him**.
- ❖ He presents **Demetrius**, saying that this is the man he has chosen for her to marry.
- ❖ But Hermia is **in love with Lysander**, who stands beside her.
- ❖ Egeus accuses Lysander of **charming or "bewitching"** his daughter's heart.
- ❖ He lists the ways Lysander won her affection:
 - Giving her **romantic poems (rhymes)**.
 - Exchanging **love tokens and gifts** with her.
 - Singing love songs **beneath her window by moonlight**.
 - Giving her **bracelets of his hair, rings, small ornaments, flowers, and sweet things** – all intended to win her heart.

- ❖ Egeus says that Lysander's tricks have **stolen Hermia's obedience**, which is supposed to belong to her father.
- ❖ He demands justice from Theseus.
- ❖ According to **the law of Athens**, if a daughter refuses to marry the man her father chooses, the father may **decide her fate** – either **death** or **life as a nun** devoted to the goddess Diana.
- ❖ Egeus therefore asks the Duke to **enforce this law** if Hermia will not agree to marry Demetrius.

Theseus's judgment and advice to Hermia

- ❖ Theseus turns to Hermia and tells her to **listen carefully** and **think wisely**.
- ❖ He explains that a **father's authority is like that of a god**, because a father gives life and form to his child.
- ❖ He says that Hermia is like **a wax figure molded by her father's hand**; he has the right to **preserve or destroy** that form.
- ❖ Theseus calls Demetrius **a worthy gentleman**, suitable for her to marry.
- ❖ Hermia boldly answers that **Lysander is worthy too**.
- ❖ Theseus agrees Lysander is a gentleman, but says that **Demetrius is more worthy** in this matter because **Hermia's father approves of him**.
- ❖ Hermia says she wishes her father could see things **with her eyes**.
- ❖ Theseus replies that she must instead learn to **see through her father's judgment**, not her own.
- ❖ Hermia then humbly asks the Duke to **forgive her boldness** for speaking so freely.
- ❖ She says she doesn't know what gives her the courage to speak in this way before him, but she wants to know what her **worst possible punishment** will be if she refuses to marry Demetrius.
- ❖ Theseus answers that she must either **face death** or **remain unmarried forever** in a convent.
- ❖ He advises her to **think carefully** while she is still young and free.
- ❖ He asks her whether she could really endure a **nun's lonely life**, locked away from the world, never marrying, never having children, and spending her life singing to the **cold, fruitless moon**.
- ❖ He praises those who can master their desires and choose such a life, but says that **it is happier to marry and bear children**, like a rose whose sweetness is shared, than to wither alone on the stem.
- ❖ Hermia declares firmly that she would rather **live and die unmarried** than give herself to a man she does not love.
- ❖ Theseus then gives her **time to reconsider**: until the **next new moon**, which will be his own wedding day.
- ❖ On that day she must either:
 - **Marry Demetrius**, or
 - **Face death**, or
 - **Swear a vow of chastity** to live as a nun.

- ❖ Theseus leaves, telling Hermia to prepare herself and obey her father's will.
- ❖ He exits with **Hippolyta**, **Egeus**, and **Demetrius**, saying he must discuss private business with them concerning the upcoming wedding.

Lysander and Hermia alone - discussing love

- ❖ Now only **Lysander and Hermia** remain on stage.
- ❖ Lysander asks why Hermia looks so pale and sad.
- ❖ She answers that her face has lost its color **from weeping**.
- ❖ Lysander sighs that **true love never runs smoothly**; there are always obstacles.
- ❖ They talk about various reasons why lovers are separated:
 - Sometimes they are **of different social classes or families**.
 - Sometimes they differ in **age or wealth**.
 - Sometimes their **friends or parents interfere**.
 - And sometimes **fate itself** brings sickness, war, or death.
- ❖ They agree that love is **as short-lived as a dream** or as brief as a flash of lightning.
- ❖ Still, Hermia says that if love is always tested, they must **learn patience**, because sorrow and struggle are natural parts of love.

Lysander's secret plan to escape Athens

- ❖ Lysander then reveals his plan to solve their problem:
 - He has a **rich widowed aunt** who lives **seven leagues (about twenty miles) away from Athens**.
 - She has **no children** and loves him as if he were her own son.
 - In her house, beyond the reach of Athenian law, he can **marry Hermia freely**.
- ❖ He asks Hermia to **leave her father's house secretly the next night**.
- ❖ She should meet him **in the forest just outside the city**, where they once met with **Helena** to celebrate May Day.
- ❖ There, they will meet again, flee together, and **marry at his aunt's home**.
- ❖ Hermia swears by all the **symbols of love and fidelity** – Cupid's bow, Venus's doves, and the fire that burned Queen Dido – that she will **meet him faithfully** at the appointed time and place.
- ❖ They agree and part happily, making a firm promise to run away together.

Helena enters - friendship and jealousy

- ❖ **Helena**, Hermia's close friend, enters just as Lysander and Hermia finish speaking.
- ❖ Hermia greets her warmly and wishes her happiness.
- ❖ Helena, however, is **sad and jealous**.
- ❖ She tells Hermia not to call her "fair," because **Demetrius loves Hermia's beauty**, not hers.
- ❖ Helena praises Hermia's looks and voice, saying her eyes are like **shining stars that attract love** and her voice is sweeter than a lark's song in spring.
- ❖ She wishes beauty could be "**catching like a disease**", so she could become as fair as Hermia.

- ❖ She envies Hermia deeply and confesses she still **adores Demetrius**, even though he treats her cruelly.
- ❖ Hermia tells her not to worry because **she and Lysander plan to leave Athens**, so Demetrius will no longer see her.
- ❖ She hopes this will give Helena peace.
- ❖ Helena thanks her but, once Hermia and Lysander leave, she **decides to tell Demetrius** about their plan to run away.
- ❖ She foolishly believes that if she tells him, he will **chase Hermia into the forest**, and Helena will have a chance to **follow him and spend time near him**, even though he does not love her.
- ❖ She says that seeing him, even if he scorns her, will still make her happy.
- ❖ The scene closes with all four lovers' paths set:
 - **Hermia and Lysander** plan to **run away** and marry secretly.
 - **Helena** plans to **betray Hermia's secret** to Demetrius in hopes of winning his affection.
 - **Demetrius**, once told, will pursue Hermia into the forest.
- ❖ This begins the chain of **confusion, magic, and mistaken love** that fills the rest of the play.

Act I, Scene II (Athens - Quince's House)

The scene begins

- ❖ The scene takes place at **Peter Quince's house** in Athens.
- ❖ A group of **Athenian workmen (mechanicals)** gather to discuss a **play they will perform** at Duke Theseus and Queen Hippolyta's wedding.
- ❖ The group includes:
 - **Peter Quince** - a carpenter and the director (organizer) of the play.
 - **Nick Bottom** - a weaver, very confident and talkative.
 - **Francis Flute** - a bellows-mender.
 - **Tom Snout** - a tinker (repairman).
 - **Robin Starveling** - a tailor.
 - **Snug** - a joiner (carpenter).

Quince calls the meeting to order

- ❖ **Quince** asks if everyone is present.
- ❖ **Bottom**, always eager to take charge, tells him to **call the names one by one** to be sure all are there.
- ❖ **Quince** reads from a **list of names** (a "scroll") - it includes the people chosen to act in the play.
- ❖ The play is planned as an **interlude** (a short play) to be performed **at the Duke's wedding feast**.

The play's title and theme

- ❖ Quince announces the title of the play: "**The Most Lamentable Comedy and Most Cruel Death of Pyramus and Thisby.**"
- ❖ This is a **tragic love story** about two lovers who die for love, somewhat like *Romeo and Juliet*.
- ❖ **Bottom** reacts enthusiastically, saying it sounds like a wonderful play – tragic but also entertaining.

Assigning roles to each workman

- ❖ Quince begins assigning the parts:
 - **Nick Bottom** is given the role of **Pyramus**, the male lover.
 - Bottom asks whether Pyramus is a **lover or a tyrant**.
 - Quince says he's a **lover who kills himself for love**.
 - Bottom proudly says he can act the part so well that the audience will cry.
 - He boasts that he can also play a **tyrant** (a loud, dramatic role) if needed, and recites a **mock heroic verse** to show off his "acting."
 - Quince tells him to stick to Pyramus's part – it suits him best.
 - **Francis Flute** is given the role of **Thisby**, the female lover.
 - Flute protests because he has a **beard starting to grow** and doesn't want to play a woman.
 - Quince insists – he can wear a **mask** and use a **high, soft voice**.
 - Bottom interrupts again, saying he could play **Thisby too**, using a tiny squeaky voice to show how well he can act.
 - Quince refuses – Bottom must stay as Pyramus.
 - **Robin Starveling** is assigned to play **Thisby's mother**.
 - **Tom Snout** is assigned to play **Pyramus's father**.
 - **Quince** himself will play **Thisby's father**.
 - **Snug**, the joiner, is given the role of the **Lion**.

Snug's concern about learning lines

- ❖ **Snug** is nervous. He asks Quince whether the **lion's part** has written lines he needs to memorize, because he is "**slow of study**" (not quick at learning words).
- ❖ Quince reassures him that he won't need to remember any lines – the lion only needs to **roar**.

Bottom wants to play every role

- ❖ **Bottom** once again interferes.
- ❖ He says he wants to **play the lion too** because he could roar so well that the Duke would say, "*Let him roar again!*"
- ❖ **Quince and the others panic**, warning him that if he roars too loudly, he will **frighten the ladies** at the court.

- ❖ They say if the women scream, the players could be **executed** for causing such fear (a comic exaggeration).
- ❖ Everyone agrees that they must not **scare the audience**.
- ❖ Bottom promises he can roar **softly**, like “a dove or a nightingale,” so as not to frighten anyone.
- ❖ **Quince** insists again that Bottom can only play **Pyramus**, because Pyramus must be **handsome, romantic, and gentle** – qualities he pretends Bottom has.

Bottom’s question about his “beard”

- ❖ Bottom asks what kind of **beard** he should wear for the role.
- ❖ Quince replies that he can choose any color he likes:
 - **Straw-colored**
 - **Orange-tawny**
 - **Purple**
 - Or **French-crown color (bald/yellow)**.
- ❖ Bottom jokes that some “French crowns” (a pun on baldness and coinage) have **no hair at all**, meaning he could play the part bare-faced.

Arrangements for rehearsal

- ❖ **Quince** then hands out the play scripts (“parts”) to each actor.
- ❖ He **begs everyone** to memorize their lines by **the next night**.
- ❖ They will rehearse in **the forest**, near **the Duke’s oak**, a **mile outside Athens**, under **moonlight**.
- ❖ He chooses that place so they won’t be **disturbed by curious onlookers** in the city.
- ❖ Quince also says he’ll make a **list of props (“properties”)** that the play will need.

The group agrees to meet

- ❖ **Bottom** encourages everyone, saying they will rehearse “**courageously and perfectly**.”
- ❖ **Quince** confirms the meeting spot: “**At the Duke’s oak**.”
- ❖ **Bottom** ends the scene cheerfully with a proverb: “**Enough; hold or cut bow-strings**” – meaning *no excuses, everyone must come, no matter what*.
- ❖ The group exits, excited but comically unprepared.

Act 2, scene 1

- ❖ The scene changes from Athens to a **magical forest near the city**.
- ❖ The world of **fairies** is introduced.
- ❖ A **Fairy** enters, followed by **Puck (Robin Goodfellow)**, a mischievous spirit who serves the fairy king **Oberon**.
- ❖ They come from **opposite directions** and meet accidentally.

The Fairy describes her work

- ❖ The Fairy says she travels **all over the world** – over hills, through bushes, streams, and fires – moving faster than the moon.
- ❖ She serves **Titania**, the **Queen of the Fairies**, and her job is to **spread dew on the flowers**, turning them into shining orbs.
- ❖ She says that **tall cowslips (yellow flowers)** are Titania’s “pensioners” (servants) and the red spots on their petals are like **ruby jewels given by the Queen**.
- ❖ She is gathering **dewdrops** to decorate the flowers when Titania and her fairy group arrive soon.

Puck warns the Fairy about Oberon

- ❖ **Puck** warns her not to let **Titania** come near **Oberon**, because the **King and Queen of the Fairies are fighting**.
- ❖ Oberon plans to hold his **nightly festival** in the forest tonight, but if Titania comes near him, **they will quarrel again**.
- ❖ The cause of their quarrel:
 - Titania has taken a **beautiful boy** as her attendant.
 - The boy was **stolen from an Indian king**.
 - Titania loves and cares for the boy, decorating him with flowers and treating him like her own child.
 - **Oberon is jealous**, because he wants the boy to be part of his fairy followers (his “knights”).
 - Titania **refuses to give him up**.
- ❖ Because of this, **Oberon and Titania constantly fight** whenever they meet, whether in fields, groves, or by moonlight.
- ❖ Their quarrels are so fierce that even the **small fairies hide in acorn shells** in fear.

The Fairy recognizes Puck

- ❖ The Fairy studies Puck’s appearance and realizes who he is.
- ❖ She asks if he is “**that shrewd and mischievous sprite**” called **Robin Goodfellow**.
- ❖ She lists his tricks:
 - Frightening village girls.
 - Spoiling milk and food in the night.
 - Making housewives work hard in vain (churning butter that never thickens).
 - Causing drinks not to ferment.
 - Misleading travelers at night and laughing when they get lost.
- ❖ People call him **Hobgoblin** or **Sweet Puck**, and if they please him, he helps them with good luck.
- ❖ Puck proudly admits that he is indeed that spirit.

Puck describes his playful tricks

- ❖ Puck laughs and describes his pranks:
 - He makes **Oberon laugh** by turning himself into a **horse** and neighing to trick people.

- He hides in a woman's **cup of ale** disguised as a roasted crabapple, then spills the drink on her face.
- He causes **old women** to fall off their stools by pulling them away suddenly.
- Everyone laughs so much they sneeze and swear that it was the funniest time ever.

❖ Suddenly, he hears **Oberon** coming and tells the Fairy to move aside.

Oberon and Titania enter with their fairy followers

- ❖ **Oberon**, the **King of Fairies**, enters from one side with his attendants.
- ❖ **Titania**, the **Queen**, enters from the opposite side with her followers.
- ❖ They meet **angrily**.
- ❖ **Oberon** greets her sarcastically: "Ill met by moonlight, proud Titania."
- ❖ **Titania** coldly replies, "What, jealous Oberon!" and tells her fairies to leave. She says she has sworn to stay away from him.

Their quarrel begins

- ❖ **Oberon** reminds her that he is her **lord and husband**.
- ❖ **Titania** answers sharply that if he is her lord, she must be his lady – and accuses him of **flirting with other women**.
- ❖ She mentions that he disguised himself as a shepherd named **Corin** to court a maiden named **Phillida**.
- ❖ She also mocks him for coming now to Athens because **Theseus**, the Duke, is marrying **Hippolyta**, the Amazon queen – suggesting Oberon used to love Hippolyta.
- ❖ **Oberon** replies angrily, accusing **Titania** of loving **Theseus** instead.
- ❖ He reminds her of how she helped Theseus **abandon other women**, like:
 - **Perigouna**, whom he kidnapped.
 - **Aegle**, whom he betrayed.
 - **Ariadne** and **Antiopa**, whom he deceived.
- ❖ **Titania** denies his accusations and says his words come from **jealousy**.

Titania blames their quarrel for the disasters in nature

- ❖ Titania tells Oberon that because of their constant fights, **the natural world is in chaos**:
 - The **winds** blow violently, drawing up fogs from the sea that flood the land.
 - Rivers overflow their banks and flood the fields.
 - **Crops rot** before they can ripen.
 - **Sheep and cattle die**, and crows feast on the dead animals.
 - The **farm games** ("**nine men's morris**") are flooded and lost under mud.
 - The **grass mazes** that fairies used to dance in are overgrown and unrecognizable.
 - People no longer celebrate **winter holidays with songs and dances**.

- The **moon**, which controls tides and seasons, is angry and pale, spreading disease.
- The **seasons are mixed up** – frost appears with roses, summer flowers bloom in winter.
- The world is confused; nature doesn't know which season it is.
- ❖ She concludes that all these disasters are the result of **their quarrel**.
- ❖ "We," she says, "are the **parents of this confusion**."

Oberon demands the changeling boy

- ❖ **Oberon** tells her to **end the fight** – it's within her power.
- ❖ He says he only wants **the Indian boy** as his attendant.
- ❖ **Titania refuses**, saying not even the whole fairy kingdom could buy the child from her.
- ❖ She explains the boy's story:
 - His **mother** was a **devoted follower** of Titania's order.
 - Titania and the mother were close friends; they often sat together on the beaches of India, watching **ships sail by**.
 - When the woman became pregnant, she used to mimic the sailing ships with her body, pretending to float like them.
 - Sadly, the woman **died in childbirth**.
 - Out of love for her friend, Titania **raises the boy** and refuses to give him away.

The quarrel ends with separation

- ❖ Oberon asks how long Titania plans to stay in the forest.
- ❖ She replies that she will stay until **after Theseus's wedding day**.
- ❖ She invites him to dance with her fairies in the moonlight if he can behave peacefully.
- ❖ Oberon says he will join her **only if she gives him the boy**.
- ❖ She refuses again, saying, "Not for thy fairy kingdom."
- ❖ She exits angrily with her fairies.

Oberon's revenge plan

- ❖ Alone now, **Oberon vows revenge**.
- ❖ He declares that Titania will not leave the forest until he has **punished her**.
- ❖ He calls **Puck** to him and reminds him of something magical he once saw:
 - A **mermaid** singing beautifully on a **dolphin's back**, calming the wild sea.
 - Nearby, **Cupid**, the god of love, shot an arrow toward a "**fair vestal**" (a **pure young woman, the Queen**) sitting in the west (an image of Queen Elizabeth).
 - The arrow missed its target and instead hit a **small white flower**, turning it **purple** with love's wound.
 - This flower is called "**love-in-idleness**" (**wild pansy**).
 - Its juice, when squeezed onto someone's sleeping eyes, causes them to **fall in love with the first living thing they see upon waking**.

- ❖ Oberon orders Puck to **fetch this flower quickly** – faster than a whale can swim a mile.
- ❖ Puck happily agrees, saying he'll **circle the earth in 40 minutes**, and rushes away.

Oberon's plot against Titania

- ❖ Oberon plans to find Titania while she is **sleeping** in her flower bed.
- ❖ He will **squeeze the juice** of the magic flower onto her eyes.
- ❖ When she wakes, she will fall madly in love with **whatever creature she sees first** – be it a **lion, bear, monkey, wolf, or donkey**.
- ❖ She will be so enchanted that she'll **forget about the boy** and give him to Oberon.
- ❖ After he gets the boy, he will **release Titania from the spell** with another herb.
- ❖ Just then, he sees **Demetrius and Helena** entering the forest and hides himself, becoming invisible.

Demetrius and Helena enter

- ❖ **Demetrius and Helena** appear.
- ❖ Demetrius is **angry and impatient**; he tells Helena to **stop following him**.
- ❖ He says he loves **Hermia**, who ran away with Lysander, and has come to **search for her** in the forest.
- ❖ Helena, madly in love with him, **begs him not to reject her**.
- ❖ She says he attracts her like **a magnet draws iron**, but he has no heart to love her back.
- ❖ Demetrius harshly says he **cannot and will not love her**.
- ❖ Helena replies that she loves him even more for saying that.
- ❖ She calls herself his **"spaniel" (dog)** – willing to follow him no matter how cruelly he treats her.
- ❖ She says she will endure being **hit, ignored, or abandoned**, as long as she can follow him.
- ❖ Demetrius warns her not to tempt his anger; he says he feels **sick just looking at her**.
- ❖ Helena answers, "And I am sick when I don't see you."
- ❖ Demetrius tells her it's improper for a lady to follow a man alone into the woods at night.
- ❖ Helena replies that **his presence makes her feel safe**, and that being near him makes the forest feel like the whole world.
- ❖ Demetrius threatens to leave her alone to the wild beasts, but Helena insists even the wildest animal isn't as cruel as he is.
- ❖ She reminds him that in myth, **Apollo chased Daphne**, but here it's the reverse – **she chases him**.
- ❖ Demetrius finally runs away, saying he'll harm her if she continues to follow him.
- ❖ Helena declares she will follow him **even if it means dying in his hands**.

Oberon decides to help Helena

- ❖ Oberon feels **pity for Helena**.

- ❖ He promises that before Demetrius leaves the forest, **he will fall in love with her** instead.

Puck returns with the magic flower

- ❖ **Puck** reappears, holding the flower.
- ❖ Oberon praises him and describes a special **bank (flower bed)** where **Titania** sleeps surrounded by wildflowers and sweet scents.
- ❖ He plans to **anoint her eyelids** with the juice while she sleeps so she will wake and love a foolish creature.
- ❖ Then he gives Puck part of the flower juice and gives him another task:
 - There is an **Athenian lady (Helena)** who loves a **young man (Demetrius)** who scorns her.
 - Puck must find the man **wearing Athenian clothes** and **anoint his eyes**, so he will love the next creature he sees – **Helena**.
- ❖ Oberon tells Puck to do it carefully and meet him again **before the rooster crows** at dawn.
- ❖ Puck promises to obey and rushes off.

Act II, Scene II (Another Part of the Forest near Athens)

Titania enters with her fairies

- ❖ The scene begins in another area of the **Athenian forest**.
- ❖ **Titania**, the Fairy Queen, enters with her **group of fairies**.
- ❖ She is preparing to go to **sleep under the moonlight**.
- ❖ She commands her fairies to perform their nightly tasks before resting.

Titania gives tasks to her fairies

- ❖ Titania tells her fairies to:
 - Sing a **sweet lullaby** to put her to sleep.
 - Then go perform their duties for one-third of a minute (a fairy measure of time).
 - Some must **kill worms and insects** that spoil rosebuds.
 - Others must **chase away bats** to use their wings to make coats for the little elves.
 - Others must **keep the owl quiet**, since its hooting frightens the fairies.
- ❖ She tells them to **sing until she falls asleep**, then leave her alone to rest.

The fairies' lullaby

- ❖ The fairies sing a **magical song** to protect Titania while she sleeps:
 - They ask dangerous creatures like **snakes, hedgehogs, newts, beetles, worms, and snails** to stay away.
 - They invite the nightingale ("Philomel") to sing sweetly.
 - They pray that no **harm, spell, or curse** will come near their queen.
- ❖ The song ends with a blessing: "**Good night, with lullaby.**"

Titania sleeps

- ❖ After the song, one fairy says that everything is safe, and another will **stand guard** while the rest go off.
- ❖ Titania falls asleep peacefully on her bed of flowers.

Oberon enters and enchants Titania

- ❖ **Oberon** enters quietly.
- ❖ Seeing Titania asleep, he squeezes **the magic juice** from the “love-in-idleness” flower onto her eyelids.
- ❖ As he applies the juice, he casts a spell in rhyme:
 - He says that whatever creature Titania sees first when she wakes – whether it’s a **cat, bear, wolf, boar, monkey, or donkey** – she will immediately **fall in love with it**.
 - He leaves her sleeping, saying she will wake when “some vile thing” is near.

Lysander and Hermia enter, lost in the woods

- ❖ **Lysander** and **Hermia** enter the forest.
- ❖ They are tired and **lost** after wandering through the woods trying to find the right place to rest.
- ❖ Lysander suggests they **stop and sleep** until morning.
- ❖ Hermia agrees and asks him to find a place to lie down.
- ❖ Lysander says they should sleep **side by side**, because they are united in heart and love.
- ❖ Hermia refuses politely – she wants to **maintain modesty** and says they should sleep **a little apart**.
- ❖ Lysander tries to convince her, saying their souls are one, but Hermia insists on **virtue and distance**.
- ❖ They finally agree:
 - Hermia lies on one patch of grass.
 - Lysander lies a little farther away.
- ❖ They both say goodnight lovingly and fall asleep.

Puck enters – searching for the Athenian man

- ❖ **Puck** enters, looking for the **Athenian man** Oberon mentioned.
- ❖ He walks through the forest and finds **Lysander** and **Hermia** sleeping on the ground.
- ❖ Puck sees that Lysander is wearing **Athenian clothes** and assumes he must be the man who rejected the young woman (Helena).
- ❖ Believing he’s found the right person, Puck says:
 - “This must be the man my master meant. He wears Athenian clothes, and the woman is lying near him on the ground.”
- ❖ He mistakes the sleeping Hermia for **Helena**.
- ❖ Puck comments that Hermia must be too modest to lie near the man she loves.

- ❖ Thinking this must be the couple Oberon spoke of, Puck **squeezes the magic juice on Lysander's eyes.**
- ❖ He says that when Lysander wakes, he will fall madly in love with **the next creature he sees.**
- ❖ Puck leaves to continue his mission, saying he must return to Oberon before dawn.

Demetrius and Helena enter

- ❖ **Demetrius** and **Helena** enter the forest, running.
- ❖ Demetrius is angry and tells Helena to **stop following him.**
- ❖ Helena begs him to stay, saying that even if he kills her, she will be happy to die by his hand.
- ❖ Demetrius threatens her and leaves her behind, disappearing deeper into the woods.
- ❖ Exhausted and heartbroken, Helena decides to **rest for a while.**

Helena finds Lysander asleep

- ❖ Helena sees **Lysander lying on the ground**, not realizing he is sleeping beside Hermia.
- ❖ She worries he might be **dead**, so she bends down and shakes him gently to wake him.
- ❖ When Lysander wakes and opens his eyes, the first person he sees is **Helena.**
- ❖ Because of the **magic love-juice**, he instantly **falls in love with her.**

Lysander declares his love for Helena

- ❖ Lysander calls Helena a "**transparent jewel**" and praises her beauty.
- ❖ He curses the name "Demetrius" and says he wishes to kill him for being unworthy of her.
- ❖ Helena is **shocked and offended.**
- ❖ She thinks Lysander is **mocking her**, not realizing he is under a spell.
- ❖ She reminds him that he loves Hermia and says he should be content with her.
- ❖ Lysander replies that he no longer loves Hermia and now loves **Helena only.**
- ❖ He says that Hermia is like a **raven**, and Helena is like a **dove** – he is now guided by **reason**, which shows him who is more deserving.
- ❖ Helena becomes upset and tells him to **stop insulting her**, thinking he is playing a cruel joke.
- ❖ She feels deeply hurt, saying he is joining Demetrius in making fun of her.
- ❖ She runs off, heartbroken.

Lysander abandons Hermia

- ❖ Lysander, enchanted and lovesick, decides to **follow Helena.**
- ❖ He looks at the sleeping Hermia and says she will **never see him again.**
- ❖ He compares his love for her to:
 - Eating too many sweets and becoming sick of them.
 - Believing in false teachings and then hating them later.
- ❖ He declares that Hermia is now **hated by him more than anyone else.**
- ❖ He promises to devote his strength and heart to **serve Helena** as her knight.

- ❖ He leaves, chasing Helena through the forest.

Hermia's nightmare

- ❖ **Hermia wakes up suddenly**, frightened by a **nightmare**.
- ❖ She cries out for Lysander, saying she dreamed that a **serpent was eating her heart** while Lysander watched and smiled.
- ❖ She calls his name repeatedly, expecting him to answer.
- ❖ When she gets no response, she becomes terrified and realizes he's **gone**.
- ❖ She searches the darkness, calling out, but there is **no sound or reply**.
- ❖ Panic rises in her voice – she says she will **find him immediately**, even if it leads to her death.
- ❖ Hermia runs off into the forest, alone and afraid.

Act II, Scene II

- ❖ **Titania** is under Oberon's magic spell and will soon wake to love a "vile creature."
- ❖ **Puck mistakenly enchants Lysander instead of Demetrius**.
- ❖ **Lysander now loves Helena**, leaving **Hermia** confused and alone.
- ❖ The forest becomes the stage for **magical confusion and mistaken love**, setting up the comic chaos of the next act.

Act III, Scene I(The Forest - Near Titania's Sleeping Place)

The workmen arrive in the forest to rehearse

- ❖ The scene opens in the **same forest** where Titania is sleeping, under the effect of Oberon's love potion.
- ❖ The group of **Athenian workmen (mechanicals)** – **Peter Quince, Nick Bottom, Francis Flute, Tom Snout, Robin Starveling, and Snug** – enter the scene.
- ❖ They have come to **rehearse their play**, *The Most Lamentable Comedy and Most Cruel Death of Pyramus and Thisby*, which they plan to perform at **Duke Theseus's wedding**.

Choosing the rehearsal spot

- ❖ **Bottom** asks if everyone is present.
- ❖ **Quince** says yes, and he is happy because they have found a **perfect place for rehearsal** – a small green clearing near a **hawthorn bush**, which can act as their **stage**, while the bush can be their **backstage dressing area ("tiring-house")**.
- ❖ They plan to perform exactly as they will before the Duke.

Bottom starts giving opinions (as usual)

- ❖ **Bottom**, always wanting to lead, begins giving suggestions.
- ❖ He warns that there are some **dangerous or frightening parts** in their play that might **scare the ladies in the audience**.
- ❖ He says, for example:
 - Pyramus has to **stab himself with a sword**, which may frighten the women.

- Also, the **lion's roar** might terrify them.

The group debates how to avoid scaring the ladies

- ❖ **Snout** and **Starveling** agree that they must find a way to make it less frightening.
- ❖ **Bottom** suggests writing a **prologue** (an introduction speech) to **explain** that no harm will happen.
 - The prologue will tell the audience that the swords are **not real** and that **Pyramus isn't actually killed**.
 - He even suggests they should make it clear that he himself is **not really Pyramus but Bottom the weaver**.
 - This, he says proudly, will prevent anyone from being scared.
- ❖ **Quince** agrees and says the prologue can be written in **rhyming verse** – “eight and six” (8 and 6 syllables per line).
- ❖ **Bottom**, always overconfident, corrects him and says it should be “**eight and eight**” instead – showing his ignorance but confidence.

The problem of the lion

- ❖ **Snout** worries that the **lion's part** might still frighten the ladies.
- ❖ **Starveling** says he fears that too.
- ❖ **Bottom** gives another idea:
 - The man playing the lion should **show part of his face** through the lion's costume to prove he is human.
 - He should also **speak directly to the audience**, saying something like:
 - “Fair ladies, don't be afraid.
I am not a real lion.
I am a man – Snug the joiner.”
 - This, Bottom insists, will make the play perfectly safe.
- ❖ Everyone agrees this is an excellent idea (though it ruins all suspense!).

The problem of moonlight and the wall

- ❖ **Quince** raises another concern: in the story of *Pyramus and Thisby*, the lovers **meet by moonlight** – how can they show the moon onstage?
- ❖ **Snout** asks whether the **moon will shine** on the night of the Duke's wedding.
- ❖ **Bottom** tells him to **check an almanac (calendar)** to see if it will.
- ❖ **Quince** confirms that the moon will indeed shine that night.
- ❖ Bottom says they can simply **leave a window open** so that the real moonlight shines in.
- ❖ **Quince**, however, has another idea: someone can **act as the Moon** – carrying a **lantern and a thorn bush**, saying, “I am the man in the moon.”
- ❖ Then Quince adds another problem: the lovers **talk through a wall** that separates them – how can they show a wall on stage?
- ❖ **Snout** says it's impossible to bring a real wall into the room.
- ❖ **Bottom** suggests another clever but silly idea:

- Someone can **act as the Wall**.
 - The actor can cover himself with **plaster, mud, or rough-cast** to look like a wall.
 - He can make a **small hole with his fingers** – the “chink” through which Pyramus and Thisby can whisper their love.
- ❖ **Quince** loves the idea and says, “If that may be, then all is well.”

Rehearsal begins

- ❖ **Quince** asks everyone to **sit down and rehearse their lines**.
- ❖ **Pyramus** (Bottom) will speak first, then hide in the bushes after his speech.
- ❖ The others will follow in order according to their cues.
- ❖ **Puck**, invisible and mischievous, enters quietly in the background to **watch them rehearse**.

Puck spies on the workmen

- ❖ **Puck** mocks the workmen in a whisper, calling them “**hempen home-spuns**” (roughly dressed fools).
- ❖ He is amused that they are **rehearsing near Titania’s sleeping spot**.
- ❖ He decides to **play a trick on them** and possibly even join in their play.

Bottom begins his lines

- ❖ **Quince** tells Bottom to start.
- ❖ Bottom begins to recite his speech but **mixes up the words**, saying “odious savours sweet” instead of “odorous savours sweet.”
- ❖ Quince corrects him.
- ❖ Bottom continues with exaggerated acting.
- ❖ Then he pretends to hear a noise and leaves, saying he will return soon.

Puck transforms Bottom

- ❖ While Bottom is offstage (or hidden in the bushes), **Puck uses his fairy magic to give Bottom the head of a donkey (ass)**.
- ❖ Puck laughs and says this will be a “stranger Pyramus than ever played here.”
- ❖ Bottom returns to the group, unaware of his transformation.

The others panic

- ❖ When Bottom reappears with a **donkey’s head**, the others **scream in terror**.
- ❖ **Quince, Flute, Snout, Starveling, and Snug** all believe Bottom has been **cursed or transformed by spirits**.
- ❖ They shout that they are “haunted” and **run away**, screaming for help.
- ❖ **Puck**, invisible, chases them through the forest, **imitating the sounds** of animals (dogs, horses, and fire) to **frighten them even more**.

Bottom is left alone

- ❖ **Bottom**, not realizing what has happened to him, wonders why everyone ran away.
- ❖ He says they are trying to **make him afraid**, but he is **not scared at all**.

- ❖ He thinks they are playing a trick on him.

Bottom sings to prove his courage

- ❖ To show he is brave, **Bottom begins to sing loudly:**
 - He sings about birds – the **blackbird, thrush, wren, and cuckoo.**
- ❖ His singing **wakes Titania**, who is still under Oberon's love spell.

Titania wakes and falls in love with Bottom

- ❖ The first thing **Titania** sees when she opens her eyes is **Bottom's donkey head.**
- ❖ Because of the magic potion, she **instantly falls deeply in love** with him.
- ❖ She calls him an "angel" and begs him to **sing again.**
- ❖ She praises his **voice, looks, and virtue**, saying she is overwhelmed with love for him.
- ❖ **Bottom** is confused but polite.
- ❖ He says that **reason and love rarely go together** – meaning love makes people foolish – and he jokes that honest neighbors should try to make them friends again.
- ❖ Titania calls him **as wise as he is beautiful** (a comic irony because he looks ridiculous).
- ❖ Bottom says if he were wise enough, he'd find his way out of the forest, but he isn't.

Titania offers luxury and service to Bottom

- ❖ Titania tells Bottom he must **stay with her** in the forest – he will not leave.
- ❖ She says she is a **spirit of high rank** and that **summer itself waits on her.**
- ❖ She promises to treat him like a **king:**
 - She will give him **jewels from the deep sea.**
 - Fairies will **sing and dance for him.**
 - They will **bring him food and gifts.**
 - She will **transform his mortal body** to make him more fairy-like.
- ❖ She calls her fairy servants: **Peaseblossom, Cobweb, Moth, and Mustardseed.**

The fairies appear

- ❖ The four little fairies enter and answer "Ready!" one by one.
- ❖ Titania orders them to **serve Bottom faithfully:**
 - They must hop in his path and play in his sight.
 - Feed him with **fruits and honey** – apricots, berries, figs, grapes, and mulberries.
 - Steal **honey from bees** and use **glow-worms for lights.**
 - Fan him with **butterfly wings** while he sleeps.
 - Show him **respect and kindness**, greeting him with courtesy.
- ❖ The fairies respond politely, each greeting Bottom by saying "**Hail, mortal!**"

Bottom's comic interactions with the fairies

- ❖ Bottom greets each fairy in turn, asking for their names:

- **Cobweb** says his name, and Bottom jokes that if he cuts his finger, he'll ask for Cobweb's help.
- **Peaseblossom** introduces himself, and Bottom jokes that he knows Peaseblossom's parents – Mistress Squash and Master Peascod.
- **Mustardseed** gives his name, and Bottom jokes that ox-beef (flavored with mustard) has made him cry many times.
- He politely tells each fairy he wants to be better acquainted with them.
- ❖ The fairies are delighted to serve him.

Titania leads Bottom away

- ❖ Titania lovingly takes Bottom by the hand.
- ❖ She says they will go to her **bower (flower bed or resting place)**.
- ❖ She notices that the **moon looks watery**, as if she is crying.
- ❖ Titania poetically says the moon weeps for **some woman forced to live in chastity**.
- ❖ She tells her fairies to **tie up Bottom's tongue**, meaning to keep him quiet so he can rest peacefully.
- ❖ They all exit together, Titania lovingly leading her new "lover" – **a man with a donkey's head**.

Act III, Scene II (Another Part of the Forest)

Oberon and Puck meet again

- ❖ **Oberon** enters the forest, wondering if **Titania** has woken up and fallen in love with some "wild creature" as planned.
- ❖ **Puck** arrives, proud of his mischief.
- ❖ He tells Oberon everything about the **workmen's rehearsal** and how he turned **Bottom's head into that of a donkey**.
- ❖ Puck laughs as he describes how the others ran away in terror.
- ❖ He adds that **Titania** woke up and **immediately fell in love with Bottom**.
- ❖ **Oberon** is very pleased, calling it a **perfect prank**.

Oberon asks about the Athenian lovers

- ❖ Oberon asks Puck whether he has also found the **Athenian man** (Demetrius) and made him fall in love with the woman who loves him (Helena).
- ❖ **Puck** confidently says yes – he found a man wearing **Athenian clothes** sleeping near a lady and put the potion on his eyes.
- ❖ Oberon believes everything is going according to plan.

Demetrius and Hermia enter

- ❖ Suddenly, **Demetrius** enters with **Hermia**.
- ❖ Oberon and Puck step aside to watch unseen.
- ❖ Demetrius begs Hermia to **love him**, but she angrily refuses.
- ❖ She accuses him of **murdering Lysander**, since she can't find her lover anywhere.

- ❖ Demetrius denies killing Lysander, but Hermia doesn't believe him.
- ❖ She tells him to stop following her and runs away.
- ❖ Demetrius, tired and sad, lies down on the ground to rest and soon **falls asleep**.

Oberon realizes Puck made a mistake

- ❖ Oberon scolds **Puck** when he sees Hermia, not Helena.
- ❖ He realizes that **Puck charmed the wrong man** – Lysander instead of Demetrius.
- ❖ Puck admits his error, saying the lovers were both wearing Athenian clothes.
- ❖ Oberon orders him to **find Helena immediately** and bring her close.
- ❖ Oberon then squeezes **the magic juice** onto Demetrius's eyelids himself, saying that when he wakes and sees Helena, he will fall in love with her.

Helena enters with Lysander

- ❖ **Helena** enters, followed by **Lysander**, who now loves her because of the potion.
- ❖ Lysander keeps declaring his love, but Helena believes he is **mocking her**.
- ❖ She feels insulted and asks why both he and Demetrius are teasing her.
- ❖ She begs him to stop pretending.
- ❖ As they argue, **Demetrius wakes up** and immediately **falls in love with Helena** as well.

Both men love Helena

- ❖ Now **both Lysander and Demetrius** are madly in love with **Helena**.
- ❖ They begin to **argue and boast** to win her favor.
- ❖ Helena becomes even more upset, thinking the two men have **joined together to humiliate her**.
- ❖ She cries that they once both loved Hermia, and now suddenly they both love her – it must be a cruel joke.
- ❖ She feels betrayed by Hermia, whom she suspects of helping in the trick.

Hermia enters - confusion increases

- ❖ **Hermia** arrives, searching for Lysander.
- ❖ She's shocked to see him standing beside Helena, declaring love to her.
- ❖ She asks him why he's left her alone in the dark forest.
- ❖ **Lysander** cruelly replies that he **hates Hermia now** and loves Helena instead.
- ❖ Hermia is heartbroken and cannot understand what's happening.
- ❖ **Helena**, however, believes Hermia is pretending and mocks her for joining the "mockery."
- ❖ The two women begin to **argue bitterly**.

The women quarrel

- ❖ **Helena** accuses Hermia of betrayal and jealousy.
- ❖ **Hermia** denies it and calls Helena **ungrateful**.
- ❖ Helena taunts her for being **short**; Hermia gets furious and calls her a **puppet**.

- ❖ Their friendship breaks completely, and they nearly **fight physically**.
- ❖ The two men step between them – but only to **defend Helena**, which angers Hermia more.

Lysander and Demetrius challenge each other

- ❖ **Lysander and Demetrius** now quarrel fiercely over Helena.
- ❖ Each calls the other a liar and threatens to **fight to the death**.
- ❖ Helena tries to stop them, frightened by how violent they've become.
- ❖ But both ignore her and storm off into the forest to **find a place to duel**.
- ❖ Helena runs away in tears, thinking everyone is against her.
- ❖ **Hermia**, determined not to lose Lysander, runs after them.

Oberon scolds Puck again

- ❖ Once everyone has run off, **Oberon** turns to **Puck**, angry about the chaos.
- ❖ Puck laughs, saying it's all part of the fun – lovers are foolish anyway.
- ❖ But Oberon insists it must be fixed before dawn.
- ❖ He orders Puck to:
 - **Cover the forest in mist and darkness.**
 - **Imitate the voices** of Lysander and Demetrius to **lead them apart** until they are exhausted.
 - When both are asleep, use the **antidote flower juice** on Lysander's eyes to make him **love Hermia again**.
 - Oberon himself will go to Titania and **release her from the spell** once he gets the Indian boy.

Puck's trick in the dark

- ❖ The scene shifts to **deep night**.
- ❖ **Puck** flies through the forest, calling out in the voices of both men:
 - "Here, Demetrius!" then "Here, Lysander!"
- ❖ The two men wander angrily, each thinking the other is calling him to fight.
- ❖ Exhausted and confused, both eventually **fall asleep** without finding each other.
- ❖ **Hermia and Helena** also get tired and lie down nearby, separated and sad.
- ❖ Puck gently squeezes **the antidote juice** on Lysander's eyelids, saying:
 - When he wakes, he will love Hermia again.

All four lovers asleep

- ❖ **Puck** arranges the lovers on the ground so that:
 - **Hermia** lies beside **Lysander**.
 - **Helena** lies beside **Demetrius**.
- ❖ He speaks a final charm over them:
 - When they wake, everything will seem **like a dream**, and the right pairs will be restored.
- ❖ He leaves as dawn approaches, ready to tell Oberon that his command is done.

Act IV, Scene I (The Forest – Near Titania’s Bower)

Titania and Bottom in the forest bower

- ❖ The scene begins with **Titania**, the Fairy Queen, and **Bottom**, who still has the **head of a donkey**.
- ❖ Titania is completely **under Oberon’s spell**, deeply in love with Bottom.
- ❖ Around them are **Peaseblossom, Cobweb, Moth, and Mustardseed**, attending to Bottom’s every need.

Titania’s affection for Bottom

- ❖ **Titania** lovingly insists that Bottom must **stay with her** and **not leave the forest**.
- ❖ She praises him as a **wise and beautiful creature**.
- ❖ She asks her fairies to **feed and serve him** with care and devotion.
- ❖ **Bottom**, enjoying the attention, gives out **funny and polite remarks** to each fairy:
 - He calls **Cobweb** to be ready in case he cuts his finger.
 - He tells **Mustardseed** that mustard always makes him cry when he eats beef.
 - He speaks kindly and humorously to all, showing both pride and foolishness.

Bottom’s strange desires

- ❖ Bottom says he has an **“exceeding desire for hay”** and wishes for a bundle of dry oats – still unaware that he has a donkey’s head.
- ❖ Titania adores him so much that she agrees to fulfill all his odd wishes.
- ❖ She orders her fairies to:
 - Bring him **honey from bees**,
 - Fetch **the wings of butterflies** to fan him,
 - And **lead him to a soft flower bed**.
- ❖ She tells them to **sing him to sleep**.

Titania and Bottom sleep

- ❖ **Bottom** lies down and soon **falls asleep**, his donkey head still on.
- ❖ **Titania** lies down beside him lovingly and also **falls asleep in his arms**.
- ❖ The fairies hum softly as they vanish, leaving the sleeping pair.

Oberon enters – satisfied with his trick

- ❖ **Oberon** enters and looks at the sleeping Titania and Bottom.
- ❖ He smiles, saying that the **plan worked perfectly**.
- ❖ He now has the **Indian boy**, because Titania was too distracted by her new “love” to care.
- ❖ Oberon feels a bit sorry for Titania and decides it’s time to **end the spell**.

Puck arrives – his master’s proud moment

- ❖ **Puck** enters, reporting that Oberon’s plan has been successful:
 - Titania has fallen madly in love with a creature wearing a donkey’s head.
 - The scene has been comical and ridiculous.

- ❖ Oberon laughs, imagining Titania petting and kissing the donkey-faced man, feeding him flowers and praising his breath.
- ❖ He says he almost pities her, but she deserves the lesson for her stubbornness.

Oberon releases Titania from the spell

- ❖ Oberon decides to **break the enchantment**.
- ❖ He touches Titania's eyes with a different herb – the **antidote flower** – and speaks a charm:
 - "Be as thou wast wont to be;
See as thou wast wont to see."
- ❖ The magic is reversed.
- ❖ He tells her that the quarrel between them is now **ended** and that they will again live in **love and harmony**.

Titania wakes and realizes her mistake

- ❖ Titania wakes up and immediately feels **confused**.
- ❖ She asks Oberon what has happened and says she had a **strange dream**.
- ❖ She remembers being **in love with a donkey**, though she can hardly believe it.
- ❖ Oberon gently points to **Bottom** sleeping nearby, proving that it was not a dream.
- ❖ Embarrassed and disgusted, Titania turns away from Bottom.

Reconciliation of the fairy couple

- ❖ Titania and Oberon are **reconciled**.
- ❖ She asks about the **Indian boy**, and Oberon replies that the boy is now safely in his care.
- ❖ Titania agrees to be **loving and faithful** to Oberon again.
- ❖ Oberon invites her to **dance with him** in a fairy circle to bless Theseus and Hippolyta's wedding.
- ❖ Together they dance around the sleeping Bottom, and the forest becomes peaceful again.

Puck removes Bottom's donkey head

- ❖ **Oberon orders Puck** to restore Bottom to his **normal human shape**.
- ❖ He tells Puck to remove the donkey's head so that Bottom will think he has been **dreaming**.
- ❖ Oberon also instructs him to make sure the **four Athenian lovers** are woken up in peace.
- ❖ Puck obeys, removing the donkey head and reciting a short rhyme to undo the transformation.

Theseus, Hippolyta, and Egeus enter

- ❖ Morning has come.

- ❖ **Theseus, Hippolyta, and Egeus** enter the forest with hunting horns, planning to enjoy a **morning hunt** before the wedding.
- ❖ Hippolyta says she has **never heard such beautiful hunting music**, and Theseus replies that the sound of horns and hounds is like **poetry in motion**.
- ❖ They soon notice **the four young lovers sleeping together** on the ground.
- ❖ **Egeus** angrily identifies his daughter **Hermia**, and the others recognize **Lysander, Helena, and Demetrius**.

Theseus wakes the lovers

- ❖ Theseus orders his men to **wake them up** with a hunting horn.
- ❖ The lovers wake in confusion, not sure if they are dreaming or awake.
- ❖ **Theseus** asks how they came to be there.
- ❖ **Lysander** tries to explain but is confused. He admits he brought Hermia into the forest because they planned to **run away and marry**.
- ❖ **Egeus** furiously demands punishment, reminding Theseus that Hermia had **disobeyed his command**.

Demetrius's love has changed

- ❖ **Demetrius**, still under the **love potion**, speaks up.
- ❖ He says that although he once loved Hermia, **that love is gone**.
- ❖ Now his heart **belongs to Helena** completely.
- ❖ He explains that he once admired Hermia's beauty, but now he realizes Helena is **the true love of his life**.
- ❖ **Theseus** is pleased by this new harmony – the quarrels are over.

Theseus overrules Egeus

- ❖ Theseus announces that there will be **no punishment**.
- ❖ He decides that **all three couples** – Theseus and Hippolyta, Lysander and Hermia, Demetrius and Helena – will **be married together** in a **triple wedding ceremony** back at Athens.
- ❖ Egeus is forced to accept Theseus's decision.
- ❖ The Duke orders everyone to **return to Athens** to prepare for the celebration.
- ❖ They leave, joyful but still slightly confused about the night's strange events.

Bottom wakes up alone

- ❖ When everyone has gone, **Bottom wakes up** from his enchanted sleep.
- ❖ He looks around and finds himself **alone in the forest**.
- ❖ He calls out for his friends – Quince, Snug, Flute – but no one answers.
- ❖ He believes they have all run off and **left him sleeping**.
- ❖ He remembers the strange things he dreamed:
 - He thought he was with the Fairy Queen.
 - He thought he had **"an ass's head."**
- ❖ He can't explain it and calls it **"a most rare vision."**

- ❖ He decides that no human words can describe what he saw.
- ❖ He plans to have Quince write a **ballad** about his dream called "**Bottom's Dream**", because, as he says, "*it hath no bottom.*"
- ❖ He happily leaves for Athens to find his friends and prepare for the play.

Act IV, Scene II (Quince's House in Athens)

The workmen worry about Bottom's disappearance

- ❖ The scene shifts from the forest back to **Athens**, inside **Peter Quince's house**.
- ❖ The group of Athenian workmen – **Quince, Flute, Snout, and Starveling** – are gathered together.
- ❖ **Bottom** is missing, and they are **deeply worried**.
- ❖ **Quince** says they are all **heartbroken** because Bottom is the **best actor among them**.
- ❖ He believes that without Bottom, their play **cannot be performed** before the Duke.

Fears about Bottom's fate

- ❖ **Flute** says the Duke's wedding day is near, and they must present their play, but without Bottom, it's impossible.
- ❖ **Snout** wonders if Bottom has been **kidnapped or hurt**.
- ❖ **Starveling** fears he might have been **bewitched or enchanted** in the forest.
- ❖ They all agree that if Bottom doesn't return, they will be **disgraced**, because everyone in Athens expected to see their performance.

Praise for Bottom's talent

- ❖ The men begin to speak fondly about **Bottom's skills**:
 - He could play **any part** in the play – Pyramus, Thisby, or even the Lion.
 - **Flute** says Bottom has the **finest wit** in Athens and the **sweetest voice** ever heard.
 - **Quince** calls him the "**paramour**" (he means *paragon*, but misuses the word), meaning the best of all actors.
 - The others nod in agreement, mourning his absence as if he were dead.

A new problem – the Duke's reward

- ❖ **Quince** remembers that Theseus promised to **reward** the actors whose play pleases him.
- ❖ Without Bottom, they will lose **fame and payment**.
- ❖ They sigh and say their **hopes are ruined**, and their play is finished before it even begins.

Bottom suddenly returns

- ❖ Just as they are despairing, **Bottom enters** the room.
- ❖ The men shout in surprise and happiness, crying out "**O most happy day!**"
- ❖ They crowd around him, asking where he has been.

Bottom's mysterious story

- ❖ **Bottom** says he has had “**a most rare vision**” and an **amazing dream** that cannot be explained.
- ❖ He tells them no man's tongue, ear, or eye could describe what he experienced.
- ❖ He says his dream is **beyond human understanding** – it was so strange that he'll have **Peter Quince write it as a ballad**.
- ❖ He wants to call it “**Bottom's Dream**”, because “it hath no bottom” (a pun on his name and the word “bottomless”).

Bottom calls them to action

- ❖ Bottom tells his friends to **cheer up** – the Duke has already **finished his hunt** and is **returning to the city**.
- ❖ He urges them to **prepare their play immediately**.
- ❖ They must go to the palace, rehearse their lines, and get their costumes ready.
- ❖ He orders them to:
 - Bring the **lion's mane** for Snug,
 - Gather all their **props and scripts**, and
 - Make sure **everyone knows their cues**.
- ❖ He says he will personally make sure **the Duke himself** likes their performance.

Excited ending

- ❖ The workmen, overjoyed that Bottom has returned, **run out together** to prepare for the performance.
- ❖ Their spirits are lifted again – they believe the Duke's wedding will be a **grand success** with their play as the highlight.

Act V, Scene I (Theseus's Palace in Athens)

Theseus and the wedding celebration

- ❖ The scene opens in **Theseus's palace**.
- ❖ The triple wedding of **Theseus and Hippolyta**, **Lysander and Hermia**, and **Demetrius and Helena** has just taken place.
- ❖ The couples are happy and relaxed, preparing for the **evening entertainment**.
- ❖ **Theseus** tells **Philostrate** (the Master of Revels) to bring a **list of performances** available for their amusement.
- ❖ Theseus says that even though it is late, he wants to **enjoy some form of entertainment** before going to bed.

Choosing the evening's play

- ❖ **Philostrate** reads out several options for entertainment, including:
 - A **battle between Hercules and the Centaurs**,
 - A **satire of the Bacchanals**,
 - A **song by shepherds**, and

- A tragic love story performed by Athenian workmen.
- ❖ The last one is titled:
“The Most Lamentable Comedy and Most Cruel Death of Pyramus and Thisby.”
- ❖ **Hippolyta** laughs, saying it sounds **ridiculous and contradictory** – how can something be both “lamentable” (sad) and “merry”?
- ❖ **Philostrate** warns the Duke not to choose it, saying the play is **terribly performed by ignorant laborers**, who are too clumsy for such serious drama.
- ❖ He says he’s seen them rehearse – it’s **so bad it’s funny**.

Theseus insists on seeing the play

- ❖ **Theseus** insists that they will watch the play anyway.
- ❖ He explains his reasoning:
 - “We must value the effort of simple men.”
 - “Their intention is good, even if their talent is poor.”
- ❖ He says that the **effort and innocence** of such honest men deserve **praise, not laughter**.
- ❖ Hippolyta gently disagrees, saying sometimes the performers try so hard that it becomes funny.
- ❖ Theseus replies that they will **watch it kindly** and **interpret their mistakes as imagination**.
- ❖ He orders Philostrate to **bring in the actors**.

The play begins - the “Prologue”

- ❖ The workmen (now “actors”) enter before the Duke and the guests.
- ❖ **Quince** steps forward to deliver the **prologue**, but he reads it **in the wrong rhythm and tone**.
- ❖ He pauses in the wrong places, mixing up the meaning of his lines, so it sounds **comically confusing**.
- ❖ The audience (Theseus, Hippolyta, and the lovers) laugh at his poor delivery.
- ❖ Theseus and Demetrius comment jokingly that the **prologue is more tragic than the play** itself.

The characters are introduced

- ❖ Quince explains the parts of the play:
 - **Pyramus** (played by Bottom, the weaver)
 - **Thisby** (played by Flute, the bellows-mender)
 - **Wall** (played by Snout)
 - **Lion** (played by Snug)
 - **Moonshine** (played by Starveling)
- ❖ Each actor then steps forward and **explains his role** to the audience in a **silly, literal way**, which ruins any illusion of drama.
- ❖ Theseus and Hippolyta keep exchanging **amused comments**, enjoying the absurdity.

The story of Pyramus and Thisby begins

- ❖ The play is a **tragic love story** of two ancient Babylonian lovers.
- ❖ They live in neighboring houses but are separated by a wall built by their parents.
- ❖ They communicate through a **small hole in the wall** (the “chink”).
- ❖ They plan to meet secretly at **Ninus’s tomb** by **moonlight**.

The wall scene

- ❖ **Snout**, playing the **Wall**, steps forward with his fingers shaped like a hole.
- ❖ **Pyramus (Bottom)** and **Thisby (Flute)** take turns speaking through his fingers, pretending they are whispering love messages.
- ❖ The acting is **terribly exaggerated**, and the dialogue full of **rhyming errors**.
- ❖ The audience laughs loudly, and Theseus jokes that this is **the wittiest wall he’s ever seen**.

The lovers arrange to meet

- ❖ Pyramus and Thisby agree to meet that night at **Ninus’s tomb**.
- ❖ After their exaggerated farewell, they exit in opposite directions.
- ❖ **Snout (the Wall)** ends his part awkwardly, saying, “Thus have I wall’d my part away,” which makes the audience laugh again.

The “Moonshine” and “Lion” scene

- ❖ **Starveling**, playing **Moonshine**, enters carrying a **lantern**, a **thorn bush**, and a **dog**, saying he represents the **man in the moon**.
- ❖ Then **Snug**, playing the **Lion**, enters and roars softly so as not to frighten the ladies.
- ❖ **Thisby** enters first, meets the **Lion**, and **drops her shawl (mantle)** in fear.
- ❖ The **Lion shreds the mantle** with his claws and leaves.
- ❖ **Pyramus** enters later, finds Thisby’s torn mantle, and **believes she has been killed by the Lion**.

Pyramus’s dramatic death

- ❖ **Bottom**, as **Pyramus**, performs a **hilariously overacted death scene**.
- ❖ He stabs himself with his “sword” (really a prop) again and again, making long speeches filled with misused words and rhymes.
- ❖ The audience laughs at his exaggeration and clumsy acting.
- ❖ He finally falls down and declares, “Now am I dead,” repeating it several times before finally “dying.”

Thisby’s death

- ❖ **Flute**, as **Thisby**, enters and finds Pyramus dead.
- ❖ He laments loudly in a **squeaky female voice**, making the scene even funnier.
- ❖ After an overly emotional speech, he also **stabs himself and dies** beside Pyramus.
- ❖ The lovers’ “tragic deaths” become a moment of pure comedy for the watching nobles.

The audience’s commentary

- ❖ Throughout the play, **Theseus, Hippolyta, and the lovers** keep making **witty comments**:
 - They laugh at the actors' mistakes.
 - They finish lines for them.
 - They mock the overdone deaths.
- ❖ **Hippolyta** says the play is silly but charming in its innocence.
- ❖ **Theseus** agrees, saying that imagination often turns foolish things into joy.

The play ends

- ❖ The "actors" bow proudly.
- ❖ **Bottom**, as Pyramus, offers to perform an **epilogue or dance**, but **Theseus kindly refuses**, saying they have all done well enough.
- ❖ He invites everyone to **go to bed**, as it is midnight, and the next day will bring **joyful memories of this night**.

The nobles exit

- ❖ **Theseus, Hippolyta, Demetrius, Helena, Lysander**, and the others **exit the hall**.
- ❖ Music plays softly as the lights dim – the human world now falls asleep.

Epilogue - The Fairies' Blessing and Puck's Final Speech (Still at the Palace, Nighttime)

Enter Oberon, Titania, and the Fairies

- ❖ After the nobles leave, **Oberon and Titania** enter the palace silently with their fairy attendants.
- ❖ They are **reconciled and happy**.
- ❖ Oberon declares that this night has brought **peace and harmony** to both humans and fairies.
- ❖ The fairies have come to **bless the palace and the new marriages**.

Oberon's blessing

- ❖ Oberon leads a **fairy dance** around the sleeping couples.
- ❖ He speaks a charm:
 - Every room shall be **filled with peace**.
 - Every couple shall be **faithful and blessed with children**.
 - The future generations shall be **strong and beautiful**.
 - No evil spirits or curses shall ever harm their homes.
- ❖ **Titania** joins him in blessing the newlyweds and their beds.
- ❖ They dance one last time and **exit before dawn**.

Puck's final monologue (Epilogue)

- ❖ After the fairies leave, **Puck** appears alone on stage.
- ❖ He steps forward and **addresses the audience directly**, saying:
 - If the play offended anyone, think of it only as a **dream**.

- The audience should imagine that the whole story – the fairies, lovers, and foolish actors – was **just a vision** that vanished with the night.
- He asks for **forgiveness and applause**:
 “Give me your hands if we be friends,
 And Robin shall restore amends.”

❖ With that, Puck **bows and exits**, ending the play.

Act	Scene	Setting (Place)
Act I	Scene I	Athens - The Palace of Duke Theseus
Act I	Scene II	Athens - Quince's House
Act II	Scene I	A Wood near Athens
Act II	Scene II	Another Part of the Wood
Act III	Scene I	The Wood - Near Titania's Sleeping Place
Act III	Scene II	Another Part of the Wood
Act IV	Scene I	The Wood - Titania's Bower
Act IV	Scene II	Quince's House in Athens
Act V	Scene I	Athens - The Palace of Theseus

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