

# A Midsummer Night's Dream Act 2

William Shakespeare, 1590s, performed in 1594-96

William Shakespeare

ACT 2

SCENE I

Oberon and Titania are quarrelling, but the fairy king sends Puck to fetch a magic flower- which will also help Helena to secure the love of Demetrius.

- Oberon is planning his revenge against his wife so he sends Puck to get a magic flower.

A wood near Athens: enter, from opposite sides, a Fairy, and PUCK

**PUCK:** How now, spirit! whither wander you?

**Fairy:** Over hill, over **dale**,  
**Thorough** bush, thorough **briar**,  
Over park, over **pale**,  
Thorough flood, thorough fire,  
I do wander everywhere,  
Swifter than the **moon's sphere**;  
And I serve the fairy queen,  
To **dew her orbs** upon the green.  
The **cowslips** tall her **pensioners** be:  
In their gold coats spots you see;  
Those be rubies, fairy **favours**,  
In those freckles live their **savours**:  
I must go seek some dewdrops here  
And hang a pearl in every cowslip's ear.  
Farewell, thou **lob of spirits**; I'll be gone:  
Our queen and all our elves come here **anon**.

1. *Dale*: valley
2. *Thorough*: an old form of "through" (it was retained for the sake of rhythm).
3. *Briar*: thorn
4. *Pale*: piece of land enclosed by fencing
5. *Moon's sphere*: the orbit of the moon.
6. *Dew*: sprinkle with dew
7. *Her orbs*: circles of rich grass, thought to be formed by the dancing of fairies.
8. *The cowslips*: cowslips are wild flowers (with red spots in yellow, bell-shaped heads) about 15cm high, which is "tall" from a fairy's point of view; tall also meant "brave", "handsome".
9. *Pensioners*: the Gentlemen of the royal bodyguard in Queen Elizabeth's court (who wore red and gold uniforms) were known as "pensioners".

10. *Favours*: gifts
11. *Savours*: scents, fragrance
12. *Lob of spirits*: peasant fairy
13. *Anon*: very soon.

**Puck**: The king doth keep his revels here to-night:  
 Take **heed** the queen come not within his sight;  
 For Oberon is **passing fell** and wrath,  
 Because that she as her attendant hath  
 A lovely boy, stolen from an Indian king;  
 She never had so sweet a **changeling**;  
 And **jealous** Oberon would have the child  
**Knight of his train**, to **trace** the forests wild;  
 But she **perforce** withholds the loved boy,  
 Crowns him with flowers and makes him all her joy:  
 And now they never meet in grove or green,  
 By fountain clear, or spangled starlight **sheen**,  
 But, they do **square**, that all their elves for fear  
 Creep into **acorn-cups** and hide them there.

1. *Heed*: care
2. *Passing*: extremely
3. *Fell*: fierce
4. *Changeling*: child (usually ugly or stupid) left by the fairies in exchange for a beautiful human baby.
5. *Jealous*: envious
6. *Knight of his train*: to be a knight in his service.
7. *Trace*: roam through
8. *Perforce*: forcibly
9. *Sheen*: shining
10. *Square*: quarrel
11. *Acorn-cups*: The cup-shaped holder of the acorn is less than 2cm in diameter.

**Fairy**: Either I mistake your shape and **making quite**,  
 Or else you are that shrewd and knavish sprite  
 Call'd Robin Goodfellow: **are not you he**  
 That frights the maidens of the **villagery**;  
**Skim milk**, and sometimes labour in the **quern**  
 And **bootless** make the breathless housewife churn;  
 And sometime make the drink to bear no **barm**;  
**Mislead** night-wanderers, laughing at their harm?  
 Those that Hobgoblin call you and sweet Puck,  
 You do their work, and they shall have good luck:  
 Are not you he?

1. *Making*: appearance
2. *Quite*: completely
3. *Villagery*: village people
4. *Skim milk*: take the cream from the mlk

5. *Quern*: churn (in which milk is violently stirred to make butter).
6. *Bootless*: without result
7. *Barm*: froth
8. *Mislead*: Puck demonstrates this skill in Act 3, Scenes 1, 2.

Are...*milk*: in these lines, Puck is both 'he' and 'you'.

**PUCK**: Thou speak'st aright;  
I am that merry wanderer of the night.  
**I jest to Oberon** and make him smile  
When I a fat and bean-fed horse beguile,  
Neighing in likeness of a **filly** foal:  
And sometime lurk I in a **gossip's** bowl,  
In **very** likeness of a roasted **crab**,  
And when she drinks, against her lips I bob  
And on her wither'd **dewlap** pour the ale.  
The wisest **aunt**, telling the saddest tale,  
Sometime for **three-foot** stool mistaketh me;  
Then slip I from her bum, down topples she,  
And '**tailor**' cries, and **falls into a cough**;  
And then the whole **quire** hold their hips and **loffe**,  
And **waxen** in their mirth and **neeze** and swear  
A merrier hour was never **wasted** there.  
But, **room**, fairy! here comes Oberon.

1. *I jest to Oberon*: am Oberon's jester
2. *Filly*: female
3. *Gossip*: old woman
4. *Very*: true
5. *Crab*: crab apple (used as a spice in warmed ale)
6. *Dewlap*: the folds of skin hanging round an old person's throat.
7. *Aunt*: old woman
8. *Threefoot*: three-legged.
9. *Tailor*: cheat
10. *Falls into a cough*: starts coughing
11. *Quire*: "choir" company
12. *Loffe*: laugh; Puck imitates the language of peasants.
13. *Waxen*: increase
14. *Neeze*: sneeze
15. *Wasted*: spent
16. *Room*: make room

**Fairy**: And here my mistress. **Would** that he were gone!  
- *Would*: I wish

[Enter, from one side, OBERON, with his train; from the other, TITANIA, with hers]

**OBERON**: **Ill met** by moonlight, proud Titania.

1. *Ill met*: an unlucky meeting: rhyming couplets give way to blank verse when Oberon meets Titania.

**TITANIA:** What, **jealous** Oberon! Fairies, skip hence:  
I have **forsworn** his bed and company.

1. *Jealous*: envious
2. *Forsworn*: refused

**OBERON:** **Tarry, rash wanton:** am not I thy **lord**?

1. *Tarry*: wait
2. *Rash wanton*: headstrong, wilful creature
3. *Lord*: husband (and therefore entitled to respect from his wife)

**TITANIA:** Then I must be thy **lady**: but I know  
When thou hast stolen away from fairy land,  
And in the shape of Corin sat all day,  
Playing on **pipes of corn** and versing love  
To amorous **Phillida**. Why art thou here,  
Come from the farthest **Steppe** of India?  
**But that, forsooth,** the **bouncing Amazon**,  
Your **buskin'd** mistress and your warrior love,  
To Theseus must be wedded, and you come  
To **give their bed** joy and prosperity.

1. *Lady*: wife (and therefore entitled to expect faithfulness from her husband).
2. *Phillida*: behaved like one of those shepherds in pastoral poetry singing to his lady-love; Oberon, being a spirit, would need to assume human form in order to have any conversation with a mortal.
3. *Pipes of corn*: corn-stalks used as musical pipes
4. *Steppe*: hill (perhaps the Himalayas)
5. *But that, forsooth*: only, indeed, because
6. *The bouncing Amazon*: i.e. Hippolyta.
7. *Buskin'd*: wearing high boots
8. *Give their bed*: bless their union with.

**OBERON:** How canst thou thus for shame, Titania,  
**Glance at** my credit with Hippolyta,  
Knowing I know thy love to Theseus?  
Didst thou not lead him through the glimmering night  
**From Perigenia, whom he ravished?**  
**And make him with fair Aegle break his faith,**  
**With Ariadne and Antiopa?**

1. *Glance at*: make rude remarks about
2. *From...Antiopa*: Little is known about three of these women except that Theseus deserted all of them. Ariadne helped him to find his way through the labyrinth on his expedition to kill the Minotaur.

**TITANIA:** These are the **forgeries** of jealousy:  
 And never, since the **middle summer's spring**,  
 Met we on hill, in dale, forest or **mead**,  
 By **paved fountain** or by **rushy brook**,  
 Or in the beached **margent** of the sea,  
 To dance our **ringlets** to the **whistling wind**,  
 But with thy **brawls** thou hast disturb'd our **sport**.  
 Therefore the winds, piping to us in **vain**,  
 As in revenge, have suck'd up from the sea  
**Contagious** fogs; which falling in the land  
 Hath every **pelting** river made so proud  
 That they have **overborne their continents**:  
**The ox hath therefore stretch'd his yoke in vain**,  
 The ploughman **lost his sweat**, and the corn  
 Hath rotted ere his youth attain'd a beard;  
 The fold stands empty in the drowned field,  
 And crows are **fatted** with the **murrion flock**;  
 The **nine men's morris** is fill'd up with mud,  
 And the **quaint** mazes in the **wanton green**  
 For lack of tread are undistinguishable:  
 The human mortals **want** their winter **cheer**;  
 No night is now with hymn or carol bless'd:  
 Therefore the moon, the **governess of floods**,  
 Pale in her anger, **washes** all the air,  
 That **rheumatic** diseases do abound:  
 And **thorough** this **distemperature** we see  
 The seasons alter: **hoary-headed frosts**  
 Far in the fresh lap of the crimson rose, .  
 And on old **Hiems'** thin and icy crown  
 An **odorous chaplet** of sweet summer buds  
 Is, **as in mockery**, set: the spring, the summer,  
 The **childing** autumn, angry winter, change  
 Their **wonted liveries**, and the **mazed** world,  
**By their increase, now knows not which is which**:  
 And this same **progeny** of evils comes  
 From our **debate**, from our dissension;  
 We are their parents and **original**.

1. *Forgeries*: falsehoods
2. *Middle summer's spring*: beginning of midsummer period
3. *Mead*: meadow
4. *Paved fountain*: paved; fountain with small pebbles at the bottom.
5. *Rushy brook*: small stream with tall rushes growing at the sides
6. *Margent*: margin, edge
7. *Ringlets*: dances round the fairiy rings
8. *Whistling wind*: the wind whistled as music for their dancing.
9. *Brawls*: quarrels
10. *Sport*: entertainment
11. *In vain*: uselessly

12. *Contagious*: carrying disease
13. *Pelting*: paltry
14. *Overborne their continents*: flooded over their banks
15. *The ox...vain*: the ploughing has been useless
16. *Lost his sweat*: wasted his effort
17. *Green*: unripe; ripe corn has hanging tendrils, like a man's beard.
18. *Fatted*: grown fat
19. *Murrion flock*: sheep and cattle
20. *Nine men morris*: a game played with nine pins or stones on specially marked ground.
21. *Quaint*: intricate; the maze was a popular feature of Elizabethan gardens.
22. *Wanton green*: overgrown grass
23. *Want*: are deprived of
24. *Cheer*: festivities
25. *Governess of floods*: the moon is partly responsible for the tides.
26. *Washes*: it was thought that the moon shed moisture on the earth.
27. *Rheumatic...abound*: there are a lot of colds and sniffles about; ('rheum' = a watery discharge from eyes and nose).
28. *Distemperature*: disturbance in the temperature of the weather.
29. *Hoary-headed frosts*: frosts covering everything with white.
30. *Hiems*: winter (personified as an old man).
31. *Odorous*: scented
32. *Chaplet*: wreath worn on the head
33. *As in mockery*: as though making fun of the old man.
34. *Childing*: fruitful (bearing children)
35. *Wonted liveries*: usual uniforms
36. *Mazed*: bewildered
37. *By...which*: cannot distinguish the seasons by their produce.
38. *Progeny*: offspring
39. *Debate*: arguing
40. *Original*: origin

**OBERON: Do you amend it then; it lies in you:**

Why should Titania **cross** her Oberon?

I do **but** beg a little changeling boy,

To be my **henchman**.

1. *Do...it*: you make it better
2. *It lies in you*: it is in your power.
3. *Cross*: disobey
4. *But*: only
5. *Henchmen*: page

**TITANIA: Set your heart at rest:**

The fairy land buys not the child **of** me.

His mother was a **votaress of my order**:  
And, in the **spiced** Indian air, by night,  
Full often hath she gossip'd by my side,  
And sat with me on **Neptune's** yellow sands,  
**Marking** the **embarked traders on the flood**,  
When we have laugh'd to see the sails **conceive**  
And grow big-bellied with the **wanton** wind;  
Which she, with pretty and with **swimming gait**  
**Following**,--her womb then **rich** with my young  
**squire**,--  
Would imitate, and sail upon the land,  
To fetch me trifles, and return again,  
As from a voyage, rich with merchandise.  
But she, being mortal, **of that boy** did die;  
And for her sake do I rear up her boy,  
And for her sake I will not part with him.

1. *Set...rest*: be assured
2. *Of*: from
3. *Votaress of my order*: a nun vowed to serve me
4. *Spiced*: fragrant
5. *Neptune*: god of the sea (URANUS IN GREEK)
6. *Marking*: observing
7. *Embarked traders on the flood*: embarked; merchant ships on the tide bringing them to the shore.
8. *Conceive*: swell (as though pregnant)
9. *Wanton*: playful, amorous
10. *Swimming*: glifing
11. *Gait*: movement
12. *Following*: copying
13. *Rich*: pregnant
14. *Squire*: gentlemen (especially one who attends a lady)
15. *Of that boy*: giving birth to the boy

**OBERON**: How long within this wood **intend you stay**?

1. *Intend you stay*: do you intend to stay?

**TITANIA**: **Perchance** till after Theseus' wedding-day.

If you will patiently dance in our **round**  
And see our moonlight revels, go with us; .  
If not, shun me, and I will spare your haunts.

1. *Perchance*: perhaps
2. *Round*: circular dance- compare 'ringlets'.

**OBERON**: Give me that boy, and I will go with thee.

**TITANIA**: Not for thy fairy kingdom. Fairies, away!  
We shall chide downright, if I longer stay. .

[Exit TITANIA with her train]

**OBERON:** Well, go thy way: thou shalt **not from** this grove  
Till I torment thee for this **injury**.  
My gentle Puck, come hither. Thou rememberest  
**Since once** I sat upon a **promontory**,  
And heard a mermaid on a dolphin's back  
Uttering such **dulcet** and harmonious **breath**  
That the **rude** sea grew **civil** at her song  
And certain stars shot madly from their **spheres**,  
To hear the sea-maid's music.

1. *Not from:* not go from
2. *Injury:* insult
3. *Since once:* the time when
4. *Promontory:* piece of land jutting out into the sea
5. *Dulcet:* sweet-sounding
6. *Breath:* song
7. *Rude:* rough (badly behaved)
8. *Civil:* calm (well-behaved)
9. *Spheres:* orbits

**PUCK:** I remember.

**OBERON:** That **very** time I saw, but thou couldst not,  
Flying between the cold moon and the earth,  
Cupid all arm'd: a certain aim he took  
At a fair **vestal** throned by the west,  
And loosed his **love-shaft** smartly from his bow,  
**As it** should pierce a hundred thousand hearts;  
But I **might** see young Cupid's **fiery** shaft  
Quench'd in the **chaste** beams of the watery moon,  
And the **imperial votaress** on,  
In maiden meditation, fancy-free.  
Yet **mark'd** I where the **bolt** of Cupid fell:  
It fell upon a little western flower,  
Before milk-white, now purple with love's wound,  
And maidens call it **love-in-idleness**.  
Fetch me that flower; the herb I shew'd thee once:  
The juice of it on sleeping eye-lids laid  
Will make or man or woman madly dote  
Upon the next live creature that it sees.  
Fetch me this herb; and be thou here again .  
Ere the **leviathan** can swim a **league**.

1. *Very:* same
2. *Vestal:* virgin; the Roman vestal virgins vowed eternal  
virginity, in service to Vesta (HERA IN GREEK), goddess of the  
home.
3. *Loveshaft:* arrow of love
4. *As it:* as though it
5. *Might:* was able to



6. *Fiery*: i.e. because it produced the fire of love
7. *Chaste*: Diana, goddess of the moon, was also goddess of chastity and protector of virginity.
8. *Imperial votaress*: royal lady who has taken vows.
9. *Mark'd*: observed
10. *Bolt*: arrow
11. *Love-in-idleness*: the flower is the pansy- but the myth is Shakespeare's own creation.
12. *Leviathan*: whale
13. *League*: about 3 miles (almost 6km).

**PUCK**: I'll **put a girdle** round about the earth  
In forty minutes.

1. *Put a girdle*: encircle

[Exit]

**OBERON**: Having once this juice,  
I'll watch Titania when she is asleep,  
And drop the liquor of it in her eyes.  
The next thing then she waking looks upon,  
Be it on lion, bear, or wolf, or bull,  
On meddling monkey, or on **busy** ape,  
She shall pursue it with the soul of love:  
And ere I take this charm from off her sight,  
As I can take it with another herb,  
I'll make her render up her page to me.  
But who comes here? **I am invisible**;  
And I will overhear their **conference**.

1. *Busy*: mischievous
2. *I am invisible*: Oberon probably throws a black cloak around himself
3. *Conference*: conversation

[Enter DEMETRIUS, HELENA, following him]

**DEMETRIUS**: I love thee not, therefore pursue me not.  
Where is Lysander and fair Hermia?  
The one I'll slay, the other **slayeth me**.  
Thou told'st me they were **stolen** unto this wood;  
And here am I, **and wood** within this wood,  
Because I cannot meet my Hermia.  
Hence, get thee gone, and follow me no more.

1. *Slayeth me*: i.e. because she refuses to love him
2. *Stol'n*: escaped
3. *And wood*: and mad

**HELENA**: You **draw** me, you hard-hearted **adamant**;  
But yet you draw not iron, for my heart  
Is true as steel: **leave you** your power to draw,

And I shall have no power to follow you.

1. *Draw*: attract
2. *Adamant*: magnet
3. *Leave you*: if you will give up

**DEMETRIUS**: Do I entice you? do **I speak you fair**?

Or, rather, do I not in plainest truth .

Tell you, I do not, nor I cannot love you?

1. *Speak you fair*: say kind words to you

**HELENA**: And even for that do I love you the more.

I am your **spaniel**; and, Demetrius,

The more you beat me, I will **fawn** on you:

Use me but as your spaniel, **spurn** me, strike me,

Neglect me, lose me; only give me leave,

Unworthy as I am, to follow you.

What worser place can I beg in your love,--

And yet a place of high respect with me,--

Than to be used as you use your dog?

1. *Spaniel*: this breed of dog has a reputation for faithfulness, even when treated badly.
2. *Fawn*: cringe, beg for favour
3. *Spurn*: kick

**DEMETRIUS**: Tempt not too much the hatred of my spirit;  
For I am sick when I do look on thee.

**HELENA**: And I am sick when I look not on you.

**DEMETRIUS**: You do **impeach your modesty** too much,

To leave the city and commit yourself

Into the hands of one that loves you not;

**To trust the opportunity of night**

**And the ill counsel of a desert place**

**With the rich worth of your virginity.**

1. *Impeach your modesty*: cause your modesty to be suspected
2. *To...virginity*: to trust that your precious virginity will be safe when the night gives opportunity and the lonely place offers temptation.

**HELENA**: Your **virtue** is my **privilege: for that**

It is not night when I do see your face,

Therefore I think I am not in the night;

Nor doth this wood lack worlds of company,

For you in my **respect** are all the world:

Then how can it be said I am alone,

When all the world is here to look on me?

1. *Virtue*: particular nature.
2. *Priviledge*: protection

3. *For that*: because
4. *Respect*: opinion

**DEMETRIUS**: I'll run from thee and hide me in the **brakes**,  
And leave thee to the mercy of wild beasts.

1. *Brakes*: bushes

**HELENA**: The wildest hath not such a heart as you.  
Run when you will, the story shall be changed:

**Apollo flies, and Daphne holds the chase;**

The dove pursues the **griffin**; the mild **hind**  
Makes speed to catch the tiger; **bootless** speed,  
When cowardice pursues and valour flies.

1. *Apollo...chase*: Apollo chased after Daphne, but she prayed to Diana for protection- and was changed into a laurel tree; the story is told in Ovid's Metamorphosis.
2. *Griffin*: a fabulous monster, with head and wings of an eagle and the body of a man.
3. *Hind*: female deer
4. *Bootless*: useless

**DEMETRIUS**: I will not **stay thy questions**; let me go:  
Or, if thou follow me, do not believe  
**But** I shall **do thee mischief** in the wood.

1. *Stay thy question*: wait to hear your arguments
2. *But*: but that
3. *Do thee mischief*: harm you

**HELENA**: Ay, in the temple, in the town, the field,  
You do me mischief. Fie, Demetrius!  
Your **wrongs** do **set a scandal on my sex**:

We cannot fight for love, as men may do;  
We should be wood and were not made to woo.

1. *Wrongs*: ill-treatment
2. *Set...sex*: make me act in a way that is improper for a woman.

[Exit DEMETRIUS]

I'll follow thee and make a heaven of hell,  
To die upon the hand I love so well.

[Exit]

**OBERON**: Fare thee well, **nymph**: ere he do leave this grove,  
Thou shalt **fly him** and he shall seek thy love.

1. *Nymph*: girl
2. *Fly him*: run away from him.

[Re-enter PUCK]

Hast thou the flower there? Welcome, wanderer.

**PUCK**: Ay, there it is.

**OBERON:** I pray thee, give it me.

I know a bank where the **wild thyme blows**,  
Where **oxlips** and the nodding violet grows,  
Quite over-canopied with luscious **woodbine**,  
With sweet **musk-roses** and with **eglantine**:  
There sleeps Titania **sometime** of the night,  
**Lull'd** in these flowers with dances and delight;  
And there the snake **throws** her **enamell'd** skin,  
**Weed wide enough** to wrap a fairy in:  
And with the juice of this I'll streak her eyes,  
And make her full of hateful fantasies.  
Take thou some of it, and seek through this grove:  
A sweet Athenian lady is in love  
With a disdainful youth: anoint his eyes;  
But do it when the next thing he espies  
May be the lady: thou shalt know the man  
By the Athenian garments he hath on.  
Effect it with some care, that he may prove  
More fond on her than she upon her love:  
And look thou meet me ere the first **cock crow**.

1. *Wild thyme*: a low-growing scented herb with tiny purple flowers.
2. *Blows*: blossoms
3. *Oxlips*: flowers slightly bigger than cowslips.
4. *Woodbine*: honeysuckle, a climbing plant that makes a shelter (canopy) over the bank.
5. *Musk-roses*: these also climb, and are heavily scented.
6. *Eglantine*: another type of wild rose
7. *Sometime*: at some time or other
8. *Lull'd*: sent to sleep
9. *Throws*: sheds (when it is out-grown).
10. *Enamell'd*: coloured (and smooth)
11. *Weed wide enough*: a garment that is wide enough.
12. *Cock crow*: the crowing of a cock is usually the signal for supernatural beings to leave the world of mortals- although Oberon will say, later in the play (3.2.388), that he and other fairies are not confined to the hours of darkness.

**PUCK:** Fear not, my lord, your servant shall do so.

[Exeunt]

## SCENE II

Oberon sprinkles magic juice on Titania's eyes; Puck mistakes Lysander for Demetrius, and anoints his eyes so that he falls in love with Helena. Hermia is left alone in the forest.

[Another part of the wood: enter Titania, Queen of Fairies, with her train]

**TITANIA:** Come, now a **roundel** and a fairy song;

Then, for the **third part of a minute**, hence;  
Some to kill **cankers** in the musk-rose buds,  
Some **war** with **rere-mice** for their leathern wings,  
To make my small elves coats, and some keep back  
The clamorous owl that nightly hoots and wonders  
At our quaint spirits. Sing me now asleep;  
Then **to your offices** and let me rest.

1. *Roundel*: dance in a circle
2. *Third...minute*: this is the speed of fairy life
3. *Cankers*: worms
4. *War*: fight
5. *Reremice*: bats
6. *To your offices*: go and do your duties.

[The Fairies sing]

**First Fairy**: You spotted snakes with **double** tongue,  
Thorny hedgehogs, be not seen;  
**Newts and blind-worms**, do no wrong,  
Come not near our fairy queen.

1. *Double*: forked
2. *Newts and blindworms*: the Elizabethans (wrongly) believed these to be poisonous.

**Chorus**:

**Philomel**, with melody  
Sing in our sweet lullaby;  
Lulla, lulla, lullaby, lulla, lulla, lullaby:  
Never harm,  
Nor spell nor charm,  
Come our lovely lady **nigh**;  
So, good night, with lullaby.

1. *Philomel*: the hymph Philomela was transformed into a nightingale after being raped by Tereus (another story told in *Metamorphosis*).
2. *Nigh*: near to

**First Fairy**:

Weaving **spiders**, come not here;  
Hence, you long-legg'd spinners, hence!  
Beetles black, approach not near;  
Worm nor snail, do no offence.

1. *Spiders*: the Elizabethans believed these to be poisonous as well

**Chorus**:

**Philomel**, with melody,  
Sing in our sweet lullaby;  
Lulla, lulla, lullaby, lulla, lulla, lullaby:  
Never harm,  
Nor spell nor charm,  
Come our lovely lady **nigh**;  
So, good night lady night;

[Titania sleeps]

**Second Fairy:** Hence, away! now all is well:  
One aloof **stand sentinel**.

1. *Stand sentinel:* keep guard.

[Exeunt Fairies.]

[TITANIA sleeps Enter OBERON and squeezes the flower on TITANIA's eyelids]

**OBERON:** What thou seest when thou dost wake,  
Do it for thy true-love take,  
Love and languish for his sake:  
Be it **ounce**, or cat, or bear,  
**Pard**, or boar with bristled hair,  
In thy eye that shall appear  
When thou wakest, it is thy dear:  
Wake when some vile thing is near.

1. *Ounce:* lynx

2. *Pard:* leopard

[Exit Enter LYSANDER and HERMIA]

**LYSANDER:** Fair love, you faint with wandering in the wood;  
And to speak troth, I have forgot our way:  
We'll rest us, Hermia, if you think it good,  
And **tarry** for the comfort of the day.

1. *Tarry:* wait

**HERMIA:** Be it so, Lysander: find you out a bed;  
For I upon this bank will rest my head.

**LYSANDER:** One turf shall serve as pillow for us both;  
One heart, one bed, two bosoms and one **troth**.

1. *Troth:* truth

**HERMIA:** Nay, good Lysander; for my sake, my dear,  
Lie **further off yet**, do not lie so near.

1. *Further off yet:* still further away from me

**LYSANDER:** O, **take the sense, sweet, of my innocence!**  
**Love takes the meaning in love's conference.**

I mean, that my heart unto yours is **knit**  
So that **but one** heart we can make of it;  
Two bosoms **interchained** with an oath;  
So then two bosoms and a single **troth**.  
Then by your side no bed-room me deny;  
For **lying so, Hermia, I do not lie.**

1. *Take...innocence*: understand my innocent meaning
2. *Love...conference*: love gives a generous interpretation to what is being said in the conversation of lovers.
3. *Knit*: inextricably joined together
4. *But one*: only one
5. *Interchained*: linked
6. *Troth*: bond of love
7. *Lying...lie*: sleeping next to you like this I would not be deceiving you; Lysander puns on the different senses of "lie".

**HERMIA**: Lysander **riddles** very **prettily**:

Now **much beshrew** my manners and my pride,  
If Hermia meant to say Lysander **lied**.

But, gentle friend, **for** love and courtesy  
Lie further off; in human modesty,  
Such separation as may well be said  
Becomes a virtuous bachelor and a maid,

**So far be distant**; and, good night, sweet friend:

Thy love ne'er alter till thy sweet life end!

1. *Riddles*: plays with words
2. *Prettily*: cleverly
3. *Much beshrew*: i really curse (hermia is only half-serious)
4. *Lied*: told a lie
5. *For*: for the sake of
6. *So far be distant*: keep just so far away.

**LYSANDER**: Amen, amen, to that fair prayer, say I;  
And then end life when I end loyalty!  
Here is my bed: sleep give thee all his rest!

**HERMIA**: With half that wish the wisher's eyes be press'd!

[They sleep, Enter PUCK]

**PUCK**: Through the forest have I gone.  
But Athenian found I none,  
On whose eyes I might **approve**  
This flower's **force in stirring love**.  
Night and silence.--Who is here?  
**Weeds** of Athens he doth wear:  
This is **he, my master said**,  
Despised the Athenian maid;  
And here the maiden, sleeping sound,  
On the dank and dirty ground.  
Pretty soul! she **durst** not lie  
Near this **lack-love**, this **kill-courtesy**.  
**Churl**, upon thy eyes I throw  
All the power this charm doth owe.  
When thou wakest, **let love forbid**

**Sleep his seat on thy eyelid:**

So awake when I am gone;

For I must now to Oberon.

1. *Approve*: test
2. *Force...love*: power to awaken love
3. *Weeds*: garments
4. *He my master said*: the man that my master said
5. *Durst*: dares
6. *Lack-love*: man who does not love her
7. *Kill-courtesy*: one whose rudeness destroys courtesy
8. *Churl*: brute
9. *Let...eyelid*: may love prevent sleep from settling in his eyes.

[Exit]

[Enter DEMETRIUS and HELENA, running]

**HELENA**: Stay, though thou kill me, sweet Demetrius.

**DEMETRIUS**: **I charge thee, hence,** and do not **haunt** me thus.

1. *I...Hence*: command you to go away
2. *Haunt*: pursue

**HELENA**: O, wilt thou **darkling** leave me? do not so.

1. *Darkling*: in the dark

**DEMETRIUS**: Stay, on thy peril: I alone will go.

[Exit]

**HELENA**: O, I am out of breath in this **fond** chase!

The more my prayer, **the lesser is my grace**.

Happy is Hermia, wheresoe'er she lies;

For she hath blessed and attractive eyes.

How came her eyes so bright? Not with salt tears:

If so, my eyes are oftener wash'd than hers.

No, no, I am as ugly as a bear;

For beasts that meet me run away for fear:

Therefore no marvel though Demetrius

Do, **as a monster** fly my presence thus.

What wicked and dissembling **glass** of mine

Made me compare with Hermia's **sphery eyne**?

But who is here? Lysander! on the ground!

Dead? or asleep? I see no blood, no wound.

Lysander if you live, good sir, awake.

1. *Fond*: foolish
2. *The...grace*: the less favour do I receive
3. *As a monster*: as though I were a monster
4. *Glass*: mirror
5. *Sphery eyne*: starlike eyes



**LYSANDER:** [Awaking] And run through fire I will for thy sweet sake.

**Transparent** Helena! Nature shows **art**,  
That through thy bosom makes me see thy heart.  
Where is Demetrius? O, how fit a word  
Is that vile name to perish on my sword!

1. *Transparent*: glorious; Lysander proceeds to play on the more usual meaning (= able to be seen through)
2. *Art*: magic

**HELENA:** Do not say so, Lysander; say not so  
**What though** he love your Hermia? Lord, what though?  
Yet Hermia still loves you: then be content.

1. *What though*: what does it matter.

**LYSANDER:** Content with Hermia! No; I do repent  
The tedious minutes I with her have spent.  
Not Hermia but Helena I love:  
Who will not change a raven for a dove?  
**The will of man is by his reason sway'd;**  
And reason says you are the worthier maid.  
Things growing are not ripe until their season  
So I, being young, **till now ripe not to reason;**  
And **touching now the point of human skill,**  
Reason becomes the **marshal** to my **will**  
And leads me to your eyes, where I **o'erlook**  
Love's stories written in **love's richest book.**

1. *The...sway'd*: a man's heart is ruled by reason
2. *Till...reason*: was not mature in judgement until now
3. *Touching...skill*: having reached the height of discrimination
4. *Marshal*: director
5. *Will*: desire
6. *O'erlook*: read over
7. *Love's richest book*: i.e. the eyes of a woman; Shakespeare frequently plays with this image.

**HELENA:** **Wherefore** was I to this **keen** mockery born?  
When at your hands did I deserve this scorn?  
Is't not enough, is't not enough, young man,  
That I did never, no, nor never can,  
Deserve a sweet look from Demetrius' eye,  
But you must flout my **insufficiency**?  
**Good troth**, you do me wrong, **good sooth**, you do,  
In such disdainful manner me to woo.  
But fare you well: **perforce** I must confess  
I thought you lord of more true **gentleness**.  
O, that a lady, **of** one man refused.  
Should of another therefore be abused!  
[Exit]

1. *Wherefore*: why

2. *Keen*: cruel
3. *Insufficiency*: unattractiveness
4. *Good troth*: indeed
5. *Good sooth*: really
6. *Perforce*: indeed
7. *Gentleness*: courtesy
8. *Of*: by

**LYSANDER**: She sees not Hermia. Hermia, sleep thou there:  
 And never mayst thou come Lysander near!  
 For as a **surfeit of** the sweetest things  
 The deepest loathing to the stomach brings,  
 Or as **the heresies that men do leave**  
**Are hated most of those they did deceive,**  
 So thou, my surfeit and my heresy,  
 Of all be hated, but the most of me!  
 And, all my powers, **address** your love and might  
 To honour Helen and to be her knight!

[Exit]

1. *Surfeit of*: over-indulgence in
2. *The...deceive*: false beliefs, now renounced, are hated most by those who once believed them.
3. *Address*: apply

**HERMIA**: [Awaking] Help me, Lysander, help me! do thy best  
 To pluck this crawling serpent from my breast!  
 Ay me, for pity! what a dream was here!  
 Lysander, look how I do quake with fear:  
 Methought a serpent eat my heart away,  
 And you sat smiling at his cruel **prey**.  
 Lysander! what, **removed**? Lysander! lord!  
 What, out of hearing? gone? no sound, no word?  
 Alack, where are you speak, an if you hear;  
 Speak, of all loves! I swoon almost with fear.  
 No? then I well perceive you all not **nigh**  
 Either death or you I'll find immediately.

[Exit]

1. *Prey*: act of preying on something
2. *Remov'd*: gone away
3. *Of all loves*: for love's sake
4. *Nigh*: near