

**PALKETTOSTAGE**<sup>®</sup>  
international theatre productions

# A MIDSUMMER NIGHT'S DREAM

a literary adaptation from the play  
*A Midsummer Night's Dream*  
by **William Shakespeare**

## SYNOPSIS OF SCENES

### ACT I

Prologue	page 1
Scene 1	page 2
Scene 2	page 5

### ACT II

Scene 1	page 7
Scene 2	page 10

### ACT III

Scene 1	page 12
Scene 2	page 16

### ACT IV

Scene 1	page 22
Scene 2	page 24

### ACT V

Scene 1	page 25
Ending	page 28

## **CHARACTERS**

*(in order of appearance)*

PUCK, mischievous elf

HIPPOLYTA Theseus' wife to-be

THESEUS, Duke of Athens

DEMETRIUS, young gentleman in love with Hermia

HERMIA, young woman in love with Lysander

LYSANDER, young gentleman in love with Hermia

HELENA, young woman in love with Demetrius

QUINCE – Peter Quince – carpenter and the company's director

BOTTOM – Nick Bottom – farmer (PYRAMUS in the interlude)

FLUTE – Francis Flute – blacksmith (THISBE in the interlude)

SNOUT – Tom Snout – fisherman (WALL and MOONLIGHT in the interlude)

SNUG – tailor (LION in the interlude)

OBERON, King of the Fairies

TITANIA, Queen of the Fairies

CREATURES: Fairies, Elfs.

## ACT I

### Prologue

*Puck goes onstage.*

**Puck.** Good evening dear creatures. I am Puck. welcome to this enchanted place. The summer's sun will warm our hearts and the moon, will lead our way in the woods and reveal to us the deepest secrets. Often, in the sweet and clear summer nights, lovers wait for their love, they sigh and sometimes... they even cry... but then the dawn dissolves all the grief and the last tears... We would like to tell you what happened during a midsummer night in a forest; it is a beautiful love story full of magic and fairies... But, the dawn is about to arrive, it is better for me to leave you to watch for yourselves, as we prepare for the wedding of the century.

### SONG 1

## SCENE 1

*Garden in front of the palace of Theseus.*

*Theseus, Hippolyta, Demetrius, Lysander, Hermia and then Helena.*

*Theseus, who is looking up, sighs and walks back and forth impatiently but thoughtful and with composure. People who can barely be seen, are taking flowers, chairs, plates from place to another. Hippolyta enters.*

**Hippolyta** (*approaching kindly*). What are you thinking about, Theseus? Do not tell me you have second thoughts about the wedding?

**Theseus** (*to Hippolyta*). Second thoughts? Actually, it is the opposite. The moon... do you see the moon, Hippolyta? It is not changing! Only four days are left to our wedding but the moon does not want to change its shape at all.

**Hippolyta**. Four days shall pass by quickly, Theseus and then the new moon will appear.

**Theseus**. Well, let's see... (*he tries to remember*) ...the invitations, the decorations in the garden, the seats, entertainment... and you may invite some theatrical companies to entertain the guests.

**Hippolyta**. Magnificent! And you, my groom, shall choose one of them and if you enjoy the show... You must reward the actors!

**Theseus**. Everything you wish, my dear bride. It will be a special day.

**Hippolyta**. Joy, celebration and beauty everywhere.

*They hug.*

*She hears masculine and feminine voices shouting. Demetrius enters followed by Hermia and Lysander.*

**Demetrius**. Sorry to disturb you, my lord, my lady, but this is a matter of life and death.

**Theseus** (*surprised and a little sorry for having been disturbed*). Come... come forward.

**Demetrius**. I wish you happiness, Theseus, our illustrious Duke...

**Theseus**. Tell me briefly.

**Demetrius**. My lord, as you know I received by Egeus the approval to marry his daughter Hermia. And this man here, instead (*he points Lysander*) pursued her and stole her heart. (*To Lysander.*) You, you, Lysander, you wrote her some verses, you sang under her balcony...

**Theseus** (*interrupting him*). Hermia, what do you say? Demetrius is a respectable gentleman!

**Hermia**. So is Lysander!

**Theseus**. Without a doubt. But Demetrius has your father's approval.

**Hermia.** I would like my father to look with my eyes!

**Theseus.** The law is clear, Hermia: if you do not accept to marry Demetrius, you will be sent away to live your life alone in a convent. Think about your youth, your beauty... Do you really want to take that risk?

**Hermia.** I would rather die, instead of giving myself to this man. *(Pointing at Demetrius.)*

**Theseus.** Very well. Take your time to think. During the next new moon, which is on the day of my wedding, you shall give me an answer: obey your father's will or enter the convent.

*Hearing these words, Hippolyta leaves embittered.*

**Demetrius.** Hermia, did you hear? There is nothing to do! Lysander, you must accept this too.

**Lysander.** You have her father's love, Demetrius. Give me Hermia's love and... *(provoking him)* marry him!

*Demetrius assaults Lysander.*

**Lysander** *(trying to free himself)*. Lord, I have the same nobility of Demetrius... I love Hermia and what matters most is that she loves me. Why should we give up being happy? Demetrius was pursuing Helena, and he had stolen her heart; and now the poor young girl is in despair and languishing for this capricious and fickle man who does not want her anymore.

**Theseus.** I must confess I had heard something about this. Demetrius, come with me; I have confidential instructions for you. As for you, Hermia, try to accept your father's will. Demetrius, come.

*Everyone exits except Lysander and Hermia.*

**Lysander.** You are so pale!

**Hermia.** This is hopeless.

*Hermia cries.*

**Lysander.** Dear me, as I have read or heard in stories, true love always encounters obstacles...

**Hermia.** So, is it the law of destiny for loyal lovers to always live unhappily?

**Lysander.** Hermia listen to me: I have a widowed aunt, she lives far from this city, she is heir to a big fortune and considers me as her unique son. I could marry you at her place, since there is no strict law there. If you love me, escape tomorrow night from your father's house: I will wait for you in the woods, where I first met you.

**Hermia.** My lovely Lysander, do not doubt of my love, we shall meet tomorrow night at the place you say.

**Lysander.** Keep the promise my love... Look... Helena is coming.

*Helena passes looking as if she is searching for somebody.*

**Hermia.** Beautiful Helena... Where are you going?

**Helena.** You call me beautiful? Do not tell me I am beautiful anymore, because I am not, considering that Demetrius loves your beauty. You know, Hermia... I would like to have your charm... Teach me, please, how to be like you, teach me the ways to win Demetrius' love.

**Hermia.** To tell you the truth I hardly ever look at him, and yet he keeps loving me.

**Helena.** Ah, if only my prayers could obtain this....

**Hermia.** The more I refuse him, the more he follows me...

**Helena.** The more I love him, the more he refuses me....

**Hermia.** It is not my fault! Helena, he has gone mad!

**Helena.** I know Hermia, it is not your fault, but your beauty is. Ah, if only I had this fault!

**Hermia.** Console yourself, Helena... Demetrius shall not see me again.

**Lysander.** Helena, we want to reveal to you our plans. We have decided to escape the city secretly tomorrow night.

**Hermia.** Lysander and I shall meet in the forest. Do you remember? ...where we used to play together when we were children... Goodbye, sweet playmate... I wish Demetrius comes back to you...

**Lysander.** Goodbye Helena. Good luck. Hermia, my love, keep the promise... see you tomorrow!

*Lysander and Hermia exit one after the other.*

**Helena.** It is incredible how some people are happier than others! And to think that everyone considers me as beautiful as her. But what use is this, if Demetrius does not think so... Wait a moment! ...What if I told Demetrius that Hermia is planning to escape with Lysander, he would follow her in the woods all along; and he would feel indebted to me for the information I have given... this way, I could make him pay a very high price...! Demetrius... Demetrius... Wait, I have to speak to you!

## SCENE 2

*On the edge of the forest.  
Puck, Quince, Bottom, Flute, Snout, Snug.*

**Puck** (to the audience). Is everything clear so far, no? ...But... you humans are so boring... Hermia loves Lysander and Lysander loves Hermia... ok, so far so good... but Hermia is also loved by Demetrius, who swore love to Helena first, and so Helena continues to love Demetrius, who does not want to know anything about Helena any more... for the time being... because now she is ready to reveal to him the escape plan Hermia is organising... But now let us go to the magical forest.

**Quince.** Are we all here?

**Bottom.** I am here, and ready.

**Quince.** We only have four days left to rehearse our show. If we are lucky to be chosen, we will act in front of the Duke and the Duchess on the night of their wedding.

**Bottom.** What is it about?

**Quince.** The title is: "A very tearful comedy about the cruel and very sad death of Pyramus and Thisbe".

**Bottom.** Ah, a masterpiece, very well, let us assign the roles.

**Quince.** Nick Bottom, farmer.

**Bottom.** Here I am...

**Quince.** You shall play the role of Pyramus.

**Bottom.** And who is Pyramus? The lover? The tyrant?

**Quince.** The lover who bravely kills himself for love.

**Bottom.** Well... some tears are needed for sure... the audience will have to pay attention to the eyes, I will unleash a storm!!! (*Suddenly excited.*) Even if I can do the role of the tyrant better... Hercules for example.. I would make the theatre fall... (*He acts.*) "Roaring rocks, trembling stones..."

**Quince** (*interrupts*). Alright! Francis Flute, blacksmith.

**Flute.** Here I am.

**Quince.** You shall play the role of Thisbe.

**Flute.** Who is he? A knight-errant?



**Quince.** No. She is the Lady who loves Pyramus.

**Flute.** A lady? But... I am a man, with manly features!

**Quince.** It will be ok if you to put on a costume and act with the highest tone of voice you can...

**Bottom.** I shall play the role of Thisbe, listen (*with big voice, miming Pyramus*): "Thisbe, Thisbe" (*in falsetto miming the feminine voice*) ...Oh Pyramus, dear love, I am your Thisbe...

**Quince.** Stop it, you shall play the role of Pyramus and Flute shall play Thisbe... Snout, the fisherman.

**Snout.** Here I am.

**Quince.** You shall play the role of the wall.

**Snout.** But hang on a minute...

**Quince** (*he looks at Snug who, in the meantime, has fallen asleep*). Snug? Snug?

**Snug** (*he wakes up as if nothing has happened*). Here.

**Quince.** Do not distract yourself... you shall have the role of the lion.

**Snug.** Is it written already? If so, please give me the script now, because I am slow-witted in memorising.

**Quince.** You can improvise it... you only have to roar.

**Bottom.** I want to play the role of the lion... I will roar with such power that the Duke will say "Let him roar again".

**Quince.** Roaring so strongly you could frighten the Duchess and then we would all be in trouble.

**Bottom.** I will play a very, very light lion... I will roar like a nightingale. (*He does it.*)

**Quince.** I said you shall play Pyramus's role, now stop... for everyone, your roles are here... make sure you learn them by heart for tomorrow. Ah... because the city is full of curious people all around, we must meet back here again in the wood tomorrow night to rehearse ... whoever does not attend is a coward.

**Bottom.** We shall all be there. Won't we?

**All.** Yes

**Quince.** See you tomorrow.

## ACT II

### SCENE 1

*The forest.*

*Oberon, Titania enter and then Helena and Demetrius.*

*Oberon, the King of the Fairies, appears and starts singing.  
Thunder and lightning.*

*Oberon sing and Titania will enter in the middle of the song.*

### SONG 2

**Oberon.** It is sad meeting in the moonlight, beautiful Titania.

**Titania.** Oh, jealous Oberon!

**Oberon.** Stop! Am I not your king?

**Titania.** Then should I be your queen? I know that you are here only because your beloved human, Hippolyta, has to marry the Duke Theseus.

**Oberon.** You should be ashamed to criticise my friendship with Hippolyta this way. Just so you know I am also aware about your passion for the Duke! You should be careful Titania, you appear to be acting out of control...

**Titania.** These are fantasies of a jealous mind. Look around! After our fights even the seasons do not know what to do. Enough! My fairies cannot take it anymore, they work all day long to make up for your tantrums!

**Oberon.** It is up to you, Titania, admit your faults. And do not oppose your king! What am I asking you? Simply to be loyal to me.

**Titania.** And I demand the same thing from you.

**Oberon.** How much time are you going to stay in this forest?

**Titania.** Until after Theseus's wedding.

**Oberon.** Me too.

**Titania.** So let us try not to meet.

*Titania disappears.*

**Oberon.** Go, go... run to your fairies! You are not leaving this forest without me punishing you for your insolence. I need to talk to Puck. Puck, where are you? A little while ago, on a day where the sun was shining, I saw a Cupid making a mistake when shooting an arrow. In fact, the arrow hit by mistake a small white flower that became red from the Loves wound. I will ask Puck to ... Search for that flower for me: its core if poured on the eyes of a sleeping creature, makes them ache for the first living creature they see when they awake. I shall be waiting here for Puck to return with that flower. I shall wet the eyes of Titania with the juice of that flower while she is sleeping, so, when she awakes, she will fall in love with the first creature she will see... and I will make sure that it is the most disgusting creature of the entire forest! Oh, but who is arriving? I shall turn myself invisible and I stand nearby to watch. Where is Puck?

**Puck.** Here I am, my lord!

**Oberon.** I have a very important task to give you!

**Puck.** I am ready, I will be faster than the wind!

*Puck and Odeon exit.  
Demetrius enters followed by Helena.*

**Demetrius.** No, no, no: I do not love you, so do not follow me. Where is Lysander? Where is the beautiful Hermia? Did you not say that they escaped into this forest? Where are they? Stop following me! Please!

**Helena.** You attract me: stop attracting me and I shall stop following you.

**Demetrius.** Do not you understand that I do not love you and I shall never do!

**Helena.** It is for this reason that I love you more! I am like your little dog. The more you beat me, the more I am loyal to you.

**Demetrius.** Helena, do not make things harder, because I feel bad seeing you this way!

**Helena.** But, if I do not see you I feel like I am dying.

**Demetrius.** Helena, it is inappropriate for a young woman like you to be in the forest at night.

**Helena.** Ah, Demetrius, it is not night when I admire your face!

**Demetrius.** I am sorry Helena, I must leave you. I do not love you anymore. The woman I must have is Hermia.

### **SONG 3**

**Demetrius.** That is enough! I shall run deep into the forest and leave you at the mercy of the ferocious animals!

**Helena.** No animal has a heart more ferocious than yours.

**Demetrius.** Let me go, I am telling you. I do not want to hear any more from you!

*Demetrius exits.*

**Helena.** Shame on you, shame on you Demetrius. *Us*, women, we were born to be pursued, and *you* men, you were born to pursue. I shall follow you, even if I may die by your hand Demetrius, my love.

*Helena exits.*

**Oberon.** Go, gentle creature: before leaving the forest he shall follow you, and you shall run away!

*Puck enters.*

**Oberon.** Have you found the flower? (*Puck shows a red flower.*) Good! Do you hear this music? (*Soft music can be heard in the distance.*) I recognise it very well! It is the song that Titania loves listening to before she falls asleep. This is the time to act. I shall wait for her to fall asleep and then I shall wet her eyes with the juice of this flower. (*He gives him a part of the flower.*) In the meantime, you take some too; go around the forest, you will find a young lady in love and a young man with a colourful shirt who does not want to know about her... Wet the eyelashes of that presumptuous man, but... be careful... make sure that the first thing he sees when he awakes is the same young lady. Go.

**Puck.** My lord, do not be afraid, I shall do what you wish!

*Oberon and Puck exit.*

## SCENE 2

*Another part of the forest.*

*Titania, 2 creatures, Oberon, then Lysander and Hermia, Puck, then Demetrius, Helena.*

*Soft music, the creatures dance and sing while waiting for Titania.*

*Titania enters the second verse.*

### SONG 4

*The creatures exit and Oberon enters.*

**Oberon** (*pours juice from the flower on her eyelids*). "The first creature you see when you awake... bear or leopard, monkey or donkey ... shall look so handsome and good to you... that your heart will go crazy, and the love will be true".

*Disappears.*

*Lysander and Hermia enter.*

**Lysander.** My love! Quickly, we must hurry. Hermia wandering for so much time in the wood has made you feel tired and, to tell the truth, I believe I have lost the way in this darkness. Let us stop here, we may rest a little and wait for the dawn. (*They kiss.*)

**Hermia.** Ok, Lysander... I shall lay down here... find a place for yourself also.

**Lysander.** (*Lysander after thinking for a moment and taking a look around, lays down next to her.*) I like it right here.

**Hermia.** Oh no! Please, not so close!

**Lysander.** Why?

**Hermia.** Because your love is so strong that it could start a fire! I am sorry, I do not want to disappoint you! I hope you do not think differently about me?

**Lysander.** Of course not, I understand...

### SONG 5

*They kiss.*

**Hermia.** You sing beautifully with words! But Lysander, please, do not lay so close to me. I know how deep your love is and you being so close would prevent us from sleeping.

**Lysander** (*moves away from Hermia*). Ok, I shall sleep here.

**Hermia.** Goodnight sweet friend.

**Lysander.** Goodnight...

*Puck enters.*

**Puck.** I have been wondering in this forest for hours. *(He sees Lysander.)* Ah, here he is... this must be him... the presumptuous young man my Lord was talking about! *(He sees Hermia.)* And here is the sweet sleeping creature! She did not dare lay down next to him! *(Puck squeezes the juice of the flower on Lysander's eyes.)* Miserable man, how can you not love this wonderful young lady... now, I pour on you the spell of this flower. When you awake you will love her so much that you will lose sleep and peace of mind for her love!

*Puck exits. Demetrius and Helena enter running.*

**Helena.** Stop my dear Demetrius, kill me if you want, but stop!

**Demetrius.** You are a shadow, a nightmare, stay away from me, away!

*Demetrius exits.*

**Helena.** What a tiring run! ...I have lost my breath! ...I am exhausted! I cannot compete with Hermia's eyes that are like the stars! But who is here? *(Stumbling upon Lysander's body.)* Lysander. *(She tries to wake him up.)* Lysander my friend, if you are alive wake up!

**Lysander** *(he wakes up)*. Helena? Helena! My love! Helena, my jewel, I can read what is in your heart through your eyes. For your love I would go through fire... Where is Demetrius, the mean, ungrateful Demetrius?

**Helena.** Do not speak like this, Lysander! It is true, Demetrius loves Hermia, but uselessly, because Hermia loves you! Is this not enough for you to be happy?

**Lysander.** Happy? Me happy? Me happy with Hermia? But I regret every single moment spent with her: no, I do not love Hermia, I love you, sweet Helena!

**Helena.** How dare you mock me in such a cruel manner? Oh, coming into this world to suffer such cruel jokes... to tell you the truth I expected more kindness from you, goodbye!

*Helena exits.*

**Lysander.** Ah, beautiful Helena, wait for me, I will be your knight! Stop!

*Lysander follows her.*

**Hermia** *(wakes up)*. Help, my Lysander! A snake! Take it away from my chest! Help! Oh, such a horrible dream... I am still shaking. *(She looks around.)* Lysander...Lysander! Where are you? He is gone... Lysander! Where are you? Please, speak... I must find him immediately... or I feel I could die! Lysander!

### ACT III

#### SCENE 1

*Same place.*

*Titania still sleeping. Puck enters with his carefree air, then he hears the actors coming in and hides himself.*

**Puck.** Oh no no no! This isn't right, this isn't right at all. That young man was meant to fall in love with the girl who was laying next to him, not that other girl who just walked in. That's what Oberon told me to do. Wet the eyes of the man wearing a colourful shirt. But both of those men are wearing colourful shirts. I am confused and I cannot think with all that sound! Who is making all this noise?

*Quince, Bottom, Snug, Flute and Snout enter.*

**Bottom.** *(Offstage)* Are we all here?

**Quince.** *(Offstage)* Precisely... precisely

**Puck** *(hidden)*. They will awake my queen!! Oh, it is the same group of actors... Here comes that loud attention seeking farmer... That's fine... I will act as the audience.

**Quince.** And here it is, a place as if God himself chose it for our rehearsals. We shall act as if we were already in front of the Duke.

**Bottom** *(with a wise demeanour)*. I should make a point right away! In this comedy there are at least two things that I am never going to like: the fact that Pyramus has to pull out a sword to kill himself...

**Snug.** It is true, ladies cannot bear such a scene...

**Quince.** Oh well! We shall take the risk.

**Flute.** I would like to say that I also think that we should give up the idea of the killing.

**Bottom** *(continues with a wise demeanour)*. But if we write a prologue that explains the swords are fake... all the fear will go away.

**Quince.** Ok, we shall do a prologue.

**Snug.** And then the lion.... a lion where there are ladies is a dreadful thing!

**Snout.** Then another prologue shall explain that it is not a real lion.

**Bottom.** No, it is better a speaking lion who says: "Ladies", rather "Beautiful ladies, I beg you" or "I ask you", or " I would like to implore you not to be scared, not to shake. For actually, I am not a real lion but a person like you.

**Quince.** Quite right...we shall do it like that. But we still have to figure out how to do the Moonlight.

**Bottom** (*with fake bashfulness*). I can do the moon!

**Quince** (*taking a breath*). No, we can push aside the tree branches and everyone will see the real moon.

*Bottom sits.*

**Snout**. And I, how can I be a wall?

**Bottom** (*standing up*). Simple, a bit of lime, clay... (*Proud of himself.*) What an idea! ...You could keep your fingers opened in this way (*he forms a circle with fingers, as if to say "OK"*) ...and through this crack in the wall Pyramus and Thisbe can whisper their words of love.

**Quince**. Right then, we are all set. Now we can start. Pyramus, you begin!

**Bottom** (*striking a pose*). "Thisbe Thisbe, oh what a smell from the flowers..."

**Quince** (*reminding*). Not "a smell" but "perfume",

**Bottom**. "...scented flowers, as your breath, dear Thisbe. But what am I hearing? A voice... Wait for me here, I shall come to you in a minute again as Pyramus."

*He exits.*

**Puck**. A Pyramus like this has never been seen in the world. I know how to make this better...(audience) It will be not Pyramus. I'll make you into something else.

Beneath the shining silver moon's light,  
With this dust, transformation takes flight.  
From Bottom's face, so human and mundane,  
Now change, become a donkey, extraordinary and grand!

*Puck pursues Bottom.  
A long silence.*

**Flute**. My turn?

**Quince**. Yes, your turn... Pyramus left because he heard a noise...

**Flute**. "Oh Pyramus, whiter than a white lily... I cannot do this... shining like a rose... a rose, a loyal friend like a never-tired horse; oh Pyramus, we shall meet tomorrow... at my grandfather's grave."

**Quince**. No, Flute, "at Nino's grave". And, you do not have to say this yet. You do not have to act your entire role in one breath!!! Pyramus it is your turn!!!



**Flute.** ...“loyal friend like a never-tired horse”... (*Bottom enters with the head of a donkey on his neck, followed by Puck.*)

*Puck re-appears again upstage, laughing.*

**Bottom/Donkey.** “If I were like this, I would be yours, beautiful Thisbe.”

**Quince.** Ah, such a monster! How horrible! Friends, please, escape, some curse has afflicted us! Run, run, help!

*Quince, Flute, Snug and Snout hide behind the trees.*

**Bottom/Donkey.** Why are you running? Such a foolish joke.

**Snout** (*appearing from behind the tree*). Ah, Bottom, I do not recognise you anymore! You have the head of a donkey!!!

*Runs away.*

**Bottom/Donkey** (*getting angry*). The same head you have!

**Quince** (*appearing from behind the tree*). Bottom... you have turned.

*Runs away.*

**Bottom/Donkey.** Ah, I understand now, they want me to be a donkey: but I am not moving from here. Actually, you know what I say? I shall sing, so they will understand that Bottom is not afraid.

### SONG 6

*The singing wakes up Titania.*

**Titania** (to herself). Which angel is waking me up from my bed?

**Titania.** Please, kind mortal, keep singing!

*Bottom stops and looks around.*

**Titania.** ...My ear fell in love with your voice, like my eye remains bewitched by your appearance.

**Bottom/Donkey.** Kind lady, I do not think you are right for falling in love with me. These days, head and heart do not get along, indeed... but I suggest you to look at me well.

**Titania.** You are wise as much as you are handsome!

**Bottom/Donkey.** You are too nice, madam. (*Stepping backwards.*) I would like to be wise enough to leave this forest.

**Titania** (*commanding*). You shall never leave this forest. You have to stay here, whether you like it or not! I am a powerful spirit, and summer makes my power stronger. (*She changes tone.*) I love you. Stay with me. Come, fairies, where are you, dance for him.

*Two fairies enter.*

**Fairy 1.** Here I am!

**Fairy 2.** So am I.

**All.** Where are we going?

**Titania.** Hurry, serve my love. Be kind with this gentleman. Feed him, bow down to him, fairies, and pay tribute to him!

**Fairy 1.** Hello, strange human!

**Fairy 2.** Hello!

**Bottom/Donkey** (*astonished and frightened*). Hello...

**Titania.** So, fairies, take him to my bedroom.

**Bottom/Donkey** (*stepping backwards*). What! Where? I... I... honestly... I would like...

**Titania** (*commanding*). Silence his tongue and take him quietly.

*The fairies exit, dragging Bottom.  
(For stage directions only) Quick costume change from Puck to Titania.*

## SCENE 2

*Same place.*

*Oberon, Puck, Demetrius, Helena, Lysander, Hermia.*

*Oberon enters.*

**Oberon.** Everything proceeds according to plan. Titania has fallen in love with a donkey. *(He laughs.)* Hilarious. Puck found a very good candidate and I shall ask him for more details when he gets back.

*Puck enters.*

**Oberon.** Ah, here he comes. Tell me everything Puck, where did you find that poor creature with the donkey's head?

**Puck.** A company of actors were rehearsing nearby. When the most foolish of them walked away I, out of spite, turned him into a donkey. Titania, awakening, has fallen in love with that monster! Ah, ah!!

**Oberon.** It worked out better than I thought! And have you cursed the eyelids of the presumptuous young man with the love filter, as I commanded you to do?

**Puck.** Yes! I think so. I did it to him in his sleep, the poor young creature was sleeping close to him... But then another young man entered with another girl, and so the man that was sleeping who I cursed looked at the other girl, so now...

**Demetrius.** *(Off stage)* Hermia wait, listen to me.

**Hermia.** *(Off stage)* Tell me where Lysander is!

*Demetrius and Hermia enter.*

**Oberon.** Hide! They are coming.

**Puck.** Yes look! She is the young woman, but he is not the young man!

*Oberon and Puck hide.*

**Demetrius.** But why do you refuse who loves you?

**Hermia.** Tell me, did you kill Lysander while he was sleeping? If it is so... then kill me too! Confess!

**Demetrius.** You are wasting your breath for a misunderstanding! I am not stained with Lysander's blood. And, as far as I know, Lysander is alive.

**Hermia.** So, please, tell me he is fine.

**Demetrius.** What would you give me in exchange if I told you?

**Hermia.** The favour to not see me anymore. Whether Lysander is dead or not – stay away from me!

*Hermia exits.*

**Demetrius.** What is the point of following her while she is out of her mind? It is better to stop here and contemplate.

**SONG 7**

*Demetrius lays down and falls asleep; Oberon and Puck come forward.*

**Oberon.** Puck you fool! What did you do? You have made a big mistake. With this mistake a real love has turned into a fake one.

**Puck.** As destiny wants.

**Oberon.** Go, run through the forest, faster than the wind, and find Helena. Try and bring her here with some spell. I shall take care of cursing his eyes and he shall love her from the moment he sees her. GO!

**Puck.** I am going, I am going, look, I am going!

*He exits.*

*Oberon squeezes the juice on Demetrius' eyelids; Puck returns.*

**Lysander.** *(Offstage)* Helena please wait for me

**Helena.** *(Offstage)* Get away from me you strange man

**Puck.** My lord, what do we do now? Helena and Lysander are coming.

*Helena's and Lysander's voices can be heard.*

**Oberon.** They are yelling so much that they will end up waking him up!

**Puck.** So, there will be two who are in love with the same person. It will be fun watching this unfold.

*Lysander and Helena enter.*

**Lysander.** But why are you persisting on thinking that I am pursuing you for a joke! *(He cries in floods.)* See how I am crying while I swear my love to you!

**Helena.** These tears are for Hermia. Do you want, maybe, to deny the faith you swore to her? Now your promises do not mean anything.

**Lysander.** I did not have judgement while I was swearing my love to her.

**Helena.** Neither do you have now, denying it.

**Lysander.** Demetrius does not love you anymore.

**Demetrius** (*waking up*). Helena? Oh Helena, my goddess, my nymph, perfect, divine! With what could I compare your eyes? Crystal is mud in comparison. And your lips, cherries to kiss... (*He kisses Helena.*)

*Lysander distracts him from Helena.*

**Helena.** What! You made a promise to make fun of me! You two used to be rivals for your love for Hermia, and now you are partners in crime mocking me.

**Lysander.** Demetrius, you loved Hermia. Here, I give her to you. And you, give me the love of Helena.

**Demetrius.** Oh, Lysander, take your Hermia! There was a time I loved her, but now I do not anymore.

**Lysander.** Helena, listen. It is not like that!

**Demetrius** (*sees Hermia*). But, look, here she is, your love.

*Hermia enters.*

**Hermia.** My Lysander, here you are finally... The sound of your voice led me to you. How could you leave me alone?

**Lysander.** It was love that made me do it.

**Hermia.** And what kind of love could have led Lysander away from me?

**Lysander.** The love for the beautiful Helena.

**Hermia.** What!

**Lysander.** Why do you keep searching for me? Did you not understand that I abandoned you because I do not want you?

**Hermia.** Ah, you do not say what you think. No, it cannot be true!

**Helena.** Have the three of you made a deal to mock me? Hermia; how could you do that? We grew up side by side like two sisters and now you are destroying our friendship!

**Hermia.** I do not understand... it is you who you are mocking me!

**Helena.** I have always been unhappy, because I am the one who has never received love. You should have had empathy for me, not disdain.

**Hermia.** What are you saying? I do not understand.

**Helena.** Stop pretending to be sorry, and then make fun of me as soon as I turn my back...

*Helena is about to leave.*

**Lysander.** Helena, I love you. I swear it on my life.

**Demetrius.** And I say to you that I love you more than he could ever do.

**Lysander** *(to Demetrius)*. If this is what you claim, come with me and prove it.

**Demetrius.** Come on then!

**Helena.** Magnificent!

**Hermia.** Lysander, what is this story?

*Hermia tries to take his hand.*

**Lysander.** Let me go!

**Demetrius.** Look at how he pretends to follow me! Coward!

*Hermia tries again to stop him.*

**Lysander** *(sharply)*. I said, let me go!

**Helena.** What tomfoolery!

**Lysander.** I shall keep my word, Demetrius!

**Demetrius.** Write it down on paper, I do not trust you!

**Hermia.** Last night you said you loved me!

**Lysander.** The only thing I am sure of now is that I love Helena!

**Hermia** *(suddenly she turns to Helena)*. It is you! You came to steal my love!

**Helena.** I am kind, but do you want me to insult you... dwarf!

**Hermia.** Tell me, do you believe I am so short that I cannot stick my nails in your eyes?

**Helena.** Gentlemen, please, do not leave me alone... When she is angry she can be a real pest, even though she is not very tall, she is very cruel!

**Hermia.** Short, again? Why do you let her insult me this way? Let me at her!

**Lysander.** Do not worry Helena... she will not hurt you.

**Demetrius.** Do not worry about Helena. Look, if it should come to your mind to show Helena only an ounce of love, you will pay dearly for it!

**Lysander.** Now, follow me, if you have the courage, and let us test which one of us deserves Helena!

**Demetrius.** Let us go!

*The gentlemen exit.*

**Hermia (to Helena).** Look what you have done! I do not trust you anymore!

**Helena.** It is I who no longer trusts you:

### **SONG 8**

**Helena.** I shall not stay here any longer with someone like you. You may have a strong hand with which to hit me, but I have longer legs to run!

*Helena exits.*

**Hermia.** I do not know what to think anymore!

*Hermia exits.*

**Oberon.** You have created a disaster, Puck! You always make mistakes... Or maybe, you always do it on purpose!

**Puck.** Believe me, King of the shadows, it was a mistake.

**Oberon.** Puck! Fix everything immediately. Confuse them of their ideas, make them not hurt each other and, in the meantime, I shall let the magic mist fall so they will fall asleep. Keep this juice, it has the power to break the previous spell. Pour it onto Lysander's eyes, and make sure you do not make a mistake this time. We shall think about the young women later. I shall do the same with my sweet Titania and she will be free from the spell. She will have learnt her lesson!

**Puck.** Yes, Lord of the darkness, before the sun rises everything shall happen according to your will.

*The mist comes down. The four lovers are in four different points of the stage and they cannot see anything.*

**Lysander.** Demetrius where are you, you coward?

**Hermia.** Lysander? Where are you?

**Demetrius.** Lysander, where are you hiding?

**Helena.** I shall go far from everyone!

### **SONG 9**

*Everyone feels sleepy and then falls asleep. Puck enters with a lantern and lights up progressively the four lovers. He stops by Lysander.*

**Puck.** I shall apply to your eyes, gentle lover, a remedy (*Puck squeezes the juice onto Lysander's closed eyes.*) When you wake up, you shall take delight to be in the presence of your true love, to be in her sweet company.



## ACT IV

### SCENE 1

*In the part of the forest where there is the bed of Titania.  
Titania, Bottom, Oberon, Lysander, Demetrius, Helena, Hermia, Theseus.  
Titania and Bottom enter. Oberon, not seen, is behind them.*

**Titania.** Come, sit down on this bed of roses, I want to pamper your soft cheeks, and kiss your big and beautiful ears.

**Bottom.** Maybe it is time for me to go to the barber, madam.

**Titania.** Tell me, do you wish to listen to some music, my sweet love?

**Bottom.** Yes, I have a decent ear when it comes to music...

**Titania.** ...or, my love, tell me what would you like to eat.

**Bottom.** If I think well, I feel like a bunch of hay would be best, good hay, sweet smelling hay... (*He yawns.*) I do not know why but I feel sleepy.

**Titania.** Sleep, and I shall hold you tight in my arms. Oh, I love you so much!

*They fall asleep.*

**Oberon** (*coming forward*). Look what a delirious sight! I am beginning to have mercy upon Titania's insanity. Now that I have mocked her at my pleasure, I will break this spell. (*He squeezes the flower over Titania's eyes.*) And now, my Titania, my dear queen, wake up!

**Titania.** Oh, Oberon! I had such strange visions, I felt like I had fallen in love with... a donkey!

**Oberon.** Was that him maybe?

**Titania.** Oh my God, how could that happen? So my jealousy lead me to this point? Can you forgive me, Oberon?

**Oberon.** Of course my Queen. A little silence now. Invoke your music and help this human get back his head!

*Oberon exits.*

**Titania.** So be it, (*a magic music can be heard*) the kind of music that recalls the sleeping spell. When you wake up, keep looking at the world through the eyes of a fool! Tomorrow we shall wish prosperity to the Duke Theseus for his wedding. Let us fly around the world, faster than the moonlight.

*She dances and then exit.*

**Theseus.** (*Offstage*) This way... over here. I think I have found them.

*Lysander, Hermia, Demetrius and Helena are still sleeping, but this time in pairs on a part of the stage. Horns and shouts of the palace of Theseus hunt. The lovers wake up.  
Theseus enters and sees the couples on the ground.*

**Theseus.** What does this scene mean? Lysander and Hermia, Demetrius and Helena. Good morning friends! Why are you here all together?

**Lysander.** My lord, I do not know how I arrived here! I believe I came with Hermia. We wanted to leave the city and go to a place where we could marry, far from the severe law here...

**Theseus.** Please, stand up, I know you are rivals and enemies... and how come you sleep next to each other?

**Demetrius.** My lord, Helena informed me about their plan and I came here, furious, to follow them... and Helena followed me. Then, I do not know what kind of spell came upon me, but my love for Hermia melted like snow in the sun. Now, I know that I only love Helena and I shall always be loyal to her.

**Theseus.** Hermia, I remove every punishment and I wish that these two couples join in marriage by my side, at the temple. Come everyone and celebrate not one, but three weddings!

## SCENE 2

*Same place.*

**Puck.** The plan worked! Everything is as it should be. Lysander has restored his love for Hermia. Demetrius is in love with Helena once again. And both couples are set to marry each other at the wedding of Theseus and Hippolyta. The only unknown remaining is whether Bottom will find his way back to the group of actors in time to perform for the Duke.

*Quince, Flute, Snout and Snug enter.*

**Quince.** Bottom! Bottom! Friends, there is no sign of Bottom. Has he returned home maybe?

**Snug.** Ah, without a doubt: someone took him away!

**Flute.** If we do not find him, we can say goodbye to the play and goodbye to any money. How shall we carry on?

**Quince.** Ah, it is impossible! Where could we find another man in the city who is as good as him for the role of Pyramus?

**Flute.** He is the one who has more brain than all the artisans of Athens!

**Snout** (*cries*). Yes! And... he is also the most handsome!

**Flute.** Now stop... do not go too far!

*Bottom wakes up on the other side of the stage.*

**Bottom.** When my line comes, call me and I shall reply... Ohé. (*He yawns and looks around.*) Peter Quince, Flute, Snug, Snout!

**Flute.** Here he is... here he is.. Bottom!

*Everyone hugs him.*

**Bottom.** I had a dream that no mind could explain. I felt like I was... I was having... never mind, I would look like a fool if I tried to tell you what I was feeling. I was...!

**Quince.** Bottom! Oh what a good day it is! Oh what a good moment!

**Bottom.** Any news from the palace?

**Snout.** The ceremony is over, the Duke got married and with him also two or three great lords and ladies. If we could act in from of them, it would be our great fortune.

**Quince.** Let us only hope that they choose our title. Let us go, friends, and pick up the costumes, the laces for fake beards, ribbons for shoes, and meet up at the palace. Hop to it, let us go!

*Everyone exits.*

## ACT V

### SCENE 1

*The palace of Theseus, where a stage has been set up.*

**Hippolyta.** How strange the things that Helena and Hermia told me, Theseus.

**Theseus.** Stranger than reality! Lovers and mad people have such lively and rich minds that they perceive more than cold intellect could understand. Therefore, if you hope to feel a certain joy, you create the person that brings that joy; or at night, if you feel a certain fear, you easily confuse a bush with a bear.

**Hippolyta.** True... But the story of what happened last night seems to me very extraordinary.

**Theseus.** Indeed! It is time to see the show! Now it is necessary to choose the company that shall perform.

**Hippolyta** (*gives Theseus a list with some titles*). The actors are all nervously waiting by. It is time to choose which company shall perform on this stage. And remember, dear husband, to pay them... well.

**Theseus.** Ok. (*He looks at the list.*) So... let us see. I saw these actors last year... (*He runs his finger down the list.*) These are boring, indeed... Here... an interesting title. (*To everyone.*) I have decided: that tonight we shall see "The very tearful comedy about the cruel and very sad death of Pyramus and Thisbe".

*Screams of joy and at the same time of fright in the backstage.*

**Bottom.** That's us, we've been chosen! Quickly everybody... at your places. Places people... Places!

*A long silence. Suddenly Snout gets pushed onto the stage, in the guise of wall.*

**Snout - Wall** (*hesitating*). Ladies and Gentlemen, ...if we offend you... it is done with... the best intention. I remind you that we have come here to please you... this is our intention! We are not here only to entertain you. The actors are ready and from their play you will learn all that is good for you to know.

**Theseus** (*to Hippolyta*). It seems that this person does not take notes of punctuation...

**Snout - Wall.** Dearest audience, this play may intrigue you. And it will continue to intrigue you until you have seen it. (*Bottom enters in the guise of Pyramus.*) This is ... this is P ... P

**Bottom - Pyramus** (*to Snout, whispering*). Py-ra-mus. I am Pyramus!

**Snout - Wall** (*repeats*). I am Pyramus. I mean... This is Pyramus ...only Pyramus. And if you wish to know more, this beautiful lady is Thisbe, (*Flute enters in the guise of Thisbe*) I tell you. We shall also have moonlight and a lion...

**Theseus.** I would like to know if the lion will also speak...

**Hippolyta.** It would not be such a surprise, my husband. I heard that in our city donkeys can talk. If that is true, then also a lion can talk.

*All the artisans exit, only the Wall remains.*

**Snout - Wall.** And I... In this play it happens to be that I perform the wall, imagine a certain wall with a crack through which the two lovers, Pyramus and Thisbe, often whisper secretly and this (*he makes a hole with his fingers*) is the crack through which the lovers talk.

**Theseus** (*comments*). He is the most human wall I have ever seen... oh, Pyramus is approaching.

*Pyramus enters.*

**Bottom - Pyramus.** Oh! Dark night! Oh, so dark night! Oh night that comes always after the day! Oh night! Oh night, oh night! Alas, alas alas, I am afraid my Thisbe is not keeping her promise, and you, wall! Oh sweet, splendid wall! Show me the crack so that I may see through. (*The Wall raises his hand and opens his fingers.*) Thank you, kind wall. But... what? I do not see Thisbe! Oh you evil wall, that do not let me see my joy, curse your damned stones that mislead me! ...and now Thisbe enters.

**Flute - Thisbe.** Oh wall, many times you have heard my complaints because you were separating me from my handsome Pyramus. My cherry lips often kissed your stones, your stones bound by lime and clay...

**Bottom - Pyramus.** I hear a voice, I am looking now through the crack to see the face of my Thisbe! Thisbe!

**Flute - Thisbe.** My love! You are my love, I believe.

**Bottom - Pyramus.** I am your loyal lover... but stop now, kiss me, kiss me through this wall!

**Flute - Thisbe.** I kiss the hole of the wall... but not your lips!

**Bottom - Pyramus.** Do you want to meet me right away at the grave of... Nonno!

**Snout - Wall.** That would be the grave of Nino...

**Flute - Thisbe.** Ah, I am coming right away.

*Pyramus and Thisbe exit.*

**Snout - Wall.** And this way I, the wall, have finished my part... and having done this I shall leave.

*Applauses. The Wall exit.*

**Hippolyta** (*while the Lion comes onstage*). Now it is the lion's turn! This lion is so funny.

*The Lion enters.*

**Lion.** Ladies, you very sensitive hearts, that are afraid of the horrific mouse that scuttles around on the ground, you shall now shake and shiver at the ferocious fury of the roar of this lion! But first I want you to know that I am Snug, the tailor in the guise of a lion.

*Thisbe enters.*

**Flute - Thisbe.** This is the grave of the old Nini.

**Puck.** It is Nino!!!!

**Flute – Thisbe.** ...Nino! Where is my love? Aaahh!

*Thisbe escapes, the Lion roars, he rips apart Thisbe's cape and exits.  
Pyramus enters.*

**Bottom - Pyramus.** Sweet moon. (*Bottom looks around searching for the moon.*) Oh moon...

*Snout enters again.*

**Snout - Moonlight.** We had a brilliant idea... to let you see the real moon shining... but unfortunately a small cloud decided to... show herself and hide the moon.

**Bottom - Pyramus** (whispering). What are you talking about? Go away.

**Snout - Moonlight.** Now the shy wall will turn into the Moon. (*He tries to come up with an idea. He sees some candles downstage and puts one on his hat, trying to maintain his balance.*) I am ready... ready.

**Bottom - Pyramus.** Sweet moon. (*Bottom looks around searching for the moon.*) Oh moon... Sweet moon. I thank you for your moonlight! I thank you for shining so bright: I shall see my Thisbe. But, stop! ...Oh! Look, poor gentleman, what horrible torture is this! My eyes, do you see? How can it be? Oh dear, your golden cape... how? Stained with blood? Come, ferocious fury, cut this life, squash it, step on it, end and curse it! Oh nature, why did you create the lion? Come, tears, confuse me! Fly out, sword, and stab the chest of Pyramus, yes here on the left, where the heart beats... this way I die, this way. I am dead now, I have flown, my soul is in heaven... My tongue, stop talking! Moon, away! (*Snout exits trying not to let the candle fall.*) Now I die, die, die, die.

**Flute – Thisbe** (*enters*). Are you sleeping my love? How, are you dead, little dove? Oh Pyramus, speak, speak! Are you mute? No, you are dead! (*He suddenly starts acting with great talent.*) A grave shall cover your sweet eyes. These lily lips, this cherry nose, these little sugar cheeks are

done, done! Oh lovers moan. Mouth, no more words: come loyal sword, come blade, stab my chest... *(She stabs herself.)* And farewell, friends. This way Thisbe ends, farewell, farewell... *(She dies.)*

*Theseus, and the entire audience clap their hands.*

**Theseus.** Excellent! Excellent!

*The company comes onstage holding hands with each other.  
Darkness.*

### **Ending**

*Puck goes onstage.*

**Puck.**

If we shadows have offended you,  
dear audience already sleeping,  
think of it as a dream, or a vision,  
our entire performance.

The loves of ladies and gentlemen...  
have been only in your thoughts!  
And if you give us an applause...  
We shall free you of our presence!

**SONG 10**

**THE END**