

MNDream/ActV 1

ACT V, SCENE I.

[Athens. An apartment in the palace of Theseus. Enter THESEUS, HIPPOLYTA, PHILOSTRATE, LORDS, and ATTENDANTS.]

HIPPOLYTA.

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

THESEUS.

More strange than true: I never may believe

These antick fables nor these fairy toys.

Lovers and madmen have such seething brains,

Such shaping fantasies, that apprehend

More than cool reason ever comprehends.

The lunatic, the lover, and the poet

Are of imagination all compact:-

One sees more devils than vast hell can hold,-

That is, the madman: the lover, all as frantic,

Sees Helen's beauty in a brow of Egypt:

The poet's eye, in a fine frenzy rolling,

Doth glance from heaven to earth, from earth to heaven;

And, as imagination bodies forth

The forms of things unknown, the poet's pen

Turns them to shapes, and gives to airy nothing

A local habitation and a name.

Such tricks hath strong imagination,

That, if it would but apprehend some joy,

It comprehends some bringer of that joy;

Or in the night, imagining some fear,

How easy is a bush supposed a bear!

HIPPOLYTA.

But all the story of the night told over,

And all their minds transfigured so together,

More witnesseth than fancy's images,

And grows to something of great constancy;

But, howsoever, strange and admirable.

THESEUS.

Here come the lovers, full of joy and mirth.

[Enter LYSANDER, DEMETRIUS, HERMIA, and HELENA.]

Joy, gentle friends! joy and fresh days of love

Accompany your hearts!

LYSANDER.

More than to us

Wait in your royal walks, your board, your bed!

THESEUS.

Come now; what masks, what dances shall we have,

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To wear away this long age of three hours  
Between our after-supper and bed-time?  
Where is our usual manager of mirth?  
What revels are in hand? Is there no play,  
To ease the anguish of a torturing hour?  
Call Philostrate.

PHILOSTRATE.

Here, mighty Theseus.

THESEUS.

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

PHILOSTRATE.

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

[Giving a paper.]

THESEUS [reads].

"The battle with the Centaurs, to be sung  
By an Athenian eunuch to the harp."

We'll none of that: that have I told my love,  
In glory of my kinsman Hercules.-

[Reads.]"The riot of the tipsy Bacchanals,  
Tearing the Thracian singer in their rage."

That is an old device; and it was play'd  
When I from Thebes came last a conqueror.-

[Reads.]"The thrice-three Muses mourning for the death  
Of Learning, late deceased in beggary."

That is some satire, keen and critical,  
Not sorting with a nuptial ceremony.-

[Reads.]"A tedious brief scene of young Pyramus  
And his love Thisbe; very tragical mirth."

Merry and tragical! tedious and brief!

That is, hot ice and wondrous strange snow.

How shall we find the concord of this discord?

PHILOSTRATE.

A play there is, my lord, some ten words long,

Which is as brief as I have known a play;

But by ten words, my lord, it is too long,

Which makes it tedious; for in all the play

There is not one word apt, one player fitted:

And tragical, my noble lord, it is;

For Pyramus therein doth kill himself.

Which, when I saw rehearsed, I must confess,

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Made mine eyes water; but more merry tears  
The passion of loud laughter never shed.

THESEUS.

What are they that do play it?

PHILOSTRATE.

Hard-handed men, that work in Athens here,  
Which never labour'd in their minds till now;  
And now have toil'd their unbreathed memories  
With this same play, against your nuptial.

THESEUS.

And we will hear it.

PHILOSTRATE.

No, my noble lord;

It is not for you: I have heard it over,  
And it is nothing, nothing in the world;  
Unless you can find sport in their intents,  
Extremely stretch'd and conn'd with cruel pain,  
To do you service.

THESEUS.

I will hear that play;

For never any thing can be amiss,  
When simpleness and duty tender it.

Go, bring them in:-and take your places, ladies.[Exit

PHILOSTRATE.]

HIPPOLYTA.

I love not to see wretchedness o'ercharged,  
And duty in his service perishing.

THESEUS.

Why, gentle sweet, you shall see no such thing.

HIPPOLYTA.

He says they can do nothing in this kind.

THESEUS.

The kinder we, to give them thanks for nothing.

Our sport shall be to take what they mistake:

And what poor duty cannot do,

Noble respect takes it in might, not merit.

Where I have come, great clerks have purposed

To greet me with premeditated welcomes;

Where I have seen them shiver and look pale,

Make periods in the midst of sentences,

Throttle their practised accent in their fears,

And, in conclusion, dumbly have broke off,

Not paying me a welcome. Trust me, sweet,

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Out of this silence yet I pick'd a welcome;  
And in the modesty of fearful duty  
I read as much as from the rattling tongue  
Of saucy and audacious eloquence.  
Love, therefore, and tongue-tied simplicity,  
In least speak most, to my capacity.

[Enter PHILOSTRATE.]

PHILOSTRATE.

So please your grace, the Prologue is address'd.

THESEUS.

Let him approach.[Flourish of trumpets.]

[Enter the PROLOGUE.]

PROLOGUE.

If we offend, it is with our good will.  
That you should think, we come not to offend,  
But with good will. To show our simple skill,  
That is the true beginning of our end.  
Consider, then, we come but in despite.  
We do not come as minding to content you,  
Our true intent is. All for your delight,  
We are not here. That you should here repent you,  
The actors are at hand; and, by their show,  
You shall know all that you are like to know.

THESEUS.

This fellow doth not stand upon points.

LYSANDER.

He hath rid his prologue like a rough colt; he knows not the  
stop. A good moral, my lord: it is not enough to speak, but  
to speak true.

HIPPOLYTA.

Indeed he hath play'd on his prologue like a child on a  
recorder; a sound, but not in government.

THESEUS.

His speech was like a tangled chain; nothing impair'd, but  
all disorder'd. Who is next?

[Enter PYRAMUS and THISBE, WALL, MOONSHINE, and  
LION.]

PROLOGUE.

Gentles, perchance you wonder at this show;  
But wonder on, till truth make all things plain.  
This man is Pyramus, if you would know;  
This beauteous lady, Thisbe is certain.  
This man, with line and rough-cast, doth present

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Wall, that vile Wall which did these lovers sunder;  
And through Wall's chink, poor souls, they are content  
To whisper; at the which let no man wonder.  
This man, with lantern, dog, and bush of thorn,  
Presenteth Moonshine; for, if you will know  
By moonshine did these lovers think no scorn  
To meet at Ninus' tomb, there, there to woo.  
This grisly beast, which by name Lion hight,  
The trusty Thisbe, coming first by night,  
Did scare away, or rather did affright;  
And, as she fled, her mantle she did fall,  
Which Lion vile with bloody mouth did stain.  
Anon comes Pyramus, sweet youth and tall,  
And finds his trusty Thisbe's mantle slain:  
Whereat, with blade, with bloody blameful blade,  
He bravely broach'd his boiling bloody breast;  
And Thisbe, tarrying in mulberry shade,  
His dagger drew, and died. For all the rest,  
Let Lion, Moonshine, Wall, and lovers twain,  
At large discourse, while here they do remain.[Exeunt  
PROLOGUE, PYRAMUS, THISBE, LION, and MOONSHINE.]  
THESEUS.

I wonder if the lion be to speak.

DEMETRIUS.

No wonder, my lord: one lion may, when many asses do.

WALL.

In this same interlude it doth befall  
That I, one Snout by name, present a wall;  
And such a wall, as I would have you think,  
That had in it a crannied hole or chink,  
Through which the lovers, Pyramus and Thisbe,  
Did whisper often very secretly.  
This loam, this rough-cast, and this stone, doth show  
That I am that same wall; the truth is so:  
And this the cranny is, right and sinister,  
Through which the fearful lovers are to whisper.

THESEUS.

Would you desire lime and hair to speak better?

DEMETRIUS.

It is the wittiest partition that ever I heard discourse, my lord.

THESEUS.

Pyramus draws near the wall: silence!

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[Enter PYRAMUS.]

PYRAMUS.

O grim-look'd night! O night with hue so black!

O night, which ever art when day is not!

O night, O night! alack, alack, alack,

I fear my Thisbe's promise is forgot!-

And thou, O wall, O sweet, O lovely wall,

That stand'st between her father's ground and mine!

Thou wall, O wall, O sweet and lovely wall,

Show me thy chink, to blink through with mine eyne!

[WALL holds up his fingers.]

Thanks, courteous wall: Jove shield thee well for this!

But what see I? No Thisbe do I see.

O wicked wall, through whom I see no bliss!

Cursed be thy stones for thus deceiving me!

THESEUS.

The wall, methinks, being sensible, should curse again.

BOTTOM.

No, in truth, sir, he should not. "Deceiving me" is Thisbe's cue: she is to enter now, and I am to spy her through the wall. You shall see, it will fall pat as I told you.- Yonder she comes.

[Enter THISBE.]

THISBE.

O wall, full often hast thou heard my moans,

For parting my fair Pyramus and me!

My cherry lips have often kiss'd thy stones,

Thy stones with lime and hair knit up in thee.

PYRAMUS.

I see a voice: now will I to the chink,

To spy an I can hear my Thisbe's face.-

Thisbe!

THISBE.

My love! thou art my love, I think.

PYRAMUS.

Think what thou wilt, I am thy lover's grace;

And, like Limander, am I trusty still.

THISBE.

And I like Helen, till the Fates me kill.

PYRAMUS.

Not Shafalus to Procrus was so true.

THISBE.

As Shafalus to Procrus, I to you.

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PYRAMUS.

O, kiss me through the hole of this vile wall!

THISBE.

I kiss the wall's hole, not your lips at all.

PYRAMUS.

Wilt thou at Ninny's tomb meet me straightway?

THISBE.

'Tide life, 'tide death, I come without delay.[Exeunt

PYRAMUS and THISBE.]

WALL.

Thus have I, wall, my part discharged so;

And, being done, thus wall away doth go.[Exit.]

THESEUS.

Now is the mural down between the two neighbours.

DEMETRIUS.

No remedy, my lord, when walls are so wilful to hear without warning.

HIPPOLYTA.

This is the silliest stuff that e'er I heard.

THESEUS.

The best in this kind are but shadows; and the worst are no worse, if imagination amend them.

HIPPOLYTA.

It must be your imagination then, and not theirs.

THESEUS.

If we imagine no worse of them than they of themselves, they may pass for excellent men.- Here come two noble beasts in, a moon and a lion.

[Enter LION and MOONSHINE.]

LION.

You, ladies, you, whose gentle hearts do fear,  
The smallest monstrous mouse that creeps on floor,  
May now perchance both quake and tremble here,  
When lion rough in wildest rage doth roar.

Then know that I one Snug the joiner am,

No lion fell, nor else no lion's dam;

For, if I should as lion come in strife

Into this place, 'twere pity on my life.

THESEUS.

A very gentle beast, and of a good conscience.

DEMETRIUS.

The very best at a beast, my lord, that e'er I saw.

LYSANDER.

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This lion is a very fox for his valour.

THESEUS.

True; and a goose for his discretion.

DEMETRIUS.

Not so, my lord; for his valour cannot carry his discretion;  
and the fox carries the goose.

THESEUS.

His discretion, I am sure, cannot carry his valour; for the  
goose carries not the fox. It is well: leave it to his  
discretion, and let us listen to the moon.

MOONSHINE.

This lantern doth the horned moon present;-

DEMETRIUS.

He should have worn the horns on his head.

THESEUS.

He is no crescent, and his horns are invisible within the  
circumference.

MOONSHINE.

This lantern doth the horned moon present;

Myself the man-i'-th'-moon do seem to be.

THESEUS.

This is the greatest error of all the rest: the man should  
be put into the lantern. How is it else the man-i'-th'-moon?

DEMETRIUS.

He dares not come there for the candle; for, you see, it is  
already in snuff.

HIPPOLYTA.

I am a-weary of this moon: would he would change!

THESEUS.

It appears, by his small light of discretion, that he is in  
the wane; but yet, in courtesy, in all reason, we must stay  
the time.

LYSANDER.

Proceed, moon.

MOONSHINE.

All that I have to say is, to tell you that the lantern is  
the moon; I, the man-i'-th'-moon; this thorn-bush, my thorn-  
bush; and this dog, my dog.

DEMETRIUS.

Why, all these should be in the lantern; for all these are  
in the moon. But, silence! here comes Thisbe.

[Enter THISBE.]

THISBE.



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This is old Ninny's tomb. Where is my love?

LION.

O-[The LION roars; THISBE runs off.]

DEMETRIUS.

Well roar'd, lion.

THESEUS.

Well run, Thisbe.

HIPPOLYTA.

Well shone, moon.- Truly, the moon shines with a good grace.

[The LION tears THISBE'S mantle, and exit.]

THESEUS.

Well moused, lion.

DEMETRIUS.

And then came Pyramus.

LYSANDER.

And so the lion vanish'd.

[Enter PYRAMUS]

PYRAMUS.

Sweet moon, I thank thee for thy sunny beams;

I thank thee, moon, for shining now so bright;

For, by thy gracious, golden, glittering streams,

I trust to taste of truest Thisbe's sight.

But stay,-O spite!-

But mark, poor knight,

What dreadful dole is here!

Eyes, do you see?

How can it be?

O dainty duck! O dear!

Thy mantle good,

What, stain'd with blood?

Approach, ye Furies fell!

O Fates, come, come,

Cut thread and thrum;

Quail, crush, conclude, and quell!

THESEUS.

This passion, and the death of a dear friend, would go near  
to make a man look sad.

HIPPOLYTA.

Beshrew my heart, but I pity the man.

PYRAMUS.

O, wherefore, Nature, didst thou lions frame?

Since lion vile hath here deflower'd my dear:

Which is-no,no-which was the fairest dame

That lived, that loved, that liked, that look'd with cheer.

Come, tears, confound;

Out, sword, and wound

The pap of Pyramus,-

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Ay, that left pap,  
Where heart doth hop:-[Stabs himself.]

Thus die I, thus, thus.

Now am I dead,

Now am I fled;

My soul is in the sky:

Tongue, lose thy light;

Moon, take thy flight:-[Exit MOONSHINE.]

Now die, die, die, die, die.[Dies.]

DEMETRIUS.

No die, but an ace, for him; for he is but one.

LYSANDER.

Less than an ace, man; for he is dead; he is nothing.

THESEUS.

With the help of a surgeon he might yet recover, and yet  
prove an ass.

HIPPOLYTA.

How chance Moonshine is gone before Thisbe comes back to  
find her lover?

THESEUS.

She will find him by starlight.- Here she comes, and her  
passion ends the play.

[Enter THISBE.]

HIPPOLYTA.

Methinks she should not use a long one for such a Pyramus: I  
hope she will be brief.

DEMETRIUS.

A mote will turn the balance, which Pyramus, which Thisbe,  
is the better; he for a man, God warrant us,- she for a  
woman, God bless us.

LYSANDER.

She hath spied him already with those sweet eyes.

DEMETRIUS.

And thus she moans, `videlicet':

THISBE.

Asleep, my love?

What, dead my dove?

O Pyramus, arise!

Speak, speak. Quite dumb?

Dead, dead? A tomb

Must cover thy sweet eyes.

These lily lips,

This cherry nose,

These yellow cowslip cheeks,

Are gone,are gone:

Lovers, make moan:

His eyes were green as leeks.

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O Sisters Three,  
Come, come to me,  
With hands as pale as milk;  
Lay them in gore,  
Since you have shore  
With shears his thread of silk.  
Tongue, not a word:  
Come, trusty sword;  
Come, blade, my breast imbrue; [Stabs herself.]  
And, farewell, friends,-  
Thus Thisbe ends,-  
Adieu, adieu, adieu.[Dies.]

THESEUS.

Moonshine and Lion are left to bury the dead.

DEMETRIUS.

Ay, and Wall too.

BOTTOM.

No, I assure you; the wall is down that parted their fathers. Will it please you to see the epilogue, or to hear a Bergomask dance between two of our company?

THESEUS.

No epilogue, I pray you; for your play needs no excuse. Never excuse; for when the players are all dead, there need none to be blamed. Marry, if he that writ it had play'd Pyramus and hang'd himself in Thisbe's garter, it would have been a fine tragedy: and so it is, truly; and very notably discharged.

But, come, your Bergomask: let your epilogue alone.

[A dance.]

The iron tongue of midnight hath told twelve:-

Lovers, to bed; 'tis almost fairy-time.

I fear we shall out-sleep the coming morn,

As much as we this night have overwatch'd.

This palpable-gross play hath well beguiled

The heavy gait of night.- Sweet friends, to bed.-

A fortnight hold we this solemnity

In nightly revels and new jollity.[Exeunt.]

[Enter PUCK]

PUCK.

Now the hungry lion roars,

And the wolf behowls the moon;

Whilst the heavy ploughman snores,

All with weary task fordone.

Now the wasted brands do glow,

Whilst the screech-owl, screeching loud

Puts the wretch that lies in woe

In remembrance of a shroud.

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Now is the time of night,  
That the graves, all gaping wide,  
Every one lets forth his sprite,  
In the church-way paths to glide:  
And we fairies, that do run  
By the triple Hecate's team  
From the presence of the sun,  
Following darkness like a dream,  
Now are frolic: not a mouse  
Shall disturb this hallow'd house:  
I am sent, with broom, before,  
To sweep the dust behind the door.  
[Enter OBERON and TITANIA, with their TRAIN.]

OBERON.  
Through the house give glimmering light,  
By the dead and drowsy fire;  
Every elf and fairy sprite  
Hop as light as bird from brier;  
And this ditty, after me,  
Sing, and dance it trippingly.

TITANIA.  
First, rehearse your song by rote,  
To each word a warbling note:  
Hand in hand, with fairy grace,  
Will we sing, and bless this place.[Song and  
dance.]

OBERON.  
Now, until the break of day,  
Through this house each fairy stray.  
To the best bride-bed will we,  
Which by us shall blessed be;  
And the issue there create  
Ever shall be fortunate.  
So shall all the couples three  
Ever true in loving be;  
And the blots of Nature's hand  
Shall not in their issue stand;  
Never mole, hare-lip, nor scar,  
Nor mark prodigious, such as are  
Despised in nativity,  
Shall upon their children be.  
With this field-dew consecrate,  
Every fairy take his gait;  
And each several chamber bless,  
Through this palace, with sweet peace:  
Ever shall in safety rest,  
And the owner of it blest.

Trip away;

Make no stay;

Meet me all by break of day.[Exeunt OBERON,  
TITANIA, and TRAIIN.]

PUCK.

If we shadows have offended,  
Think but this, and all is mended,-  
That you have but slumber'd here,  
While these visions did appear.

And this weak and idle theme,  
No more yielding but a dream,  
Gentles, do not reprehend:

If you pardon, we will mend.

And, as I am an honest Puck,

If we have unearned luck

Now to 'scape the serpent's tongue,

We will make amends ere long;

Else the Puck a liar call:

So, good night unto you all.

Give me your hands, if we be friends,  
And Robin shall restore amends.[Exit.]