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Turgenev Wallage Fonatne Sydon Freud Schlegel
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Weber Freiligrath Frey
Fechner Fichte Weiße Rose von Fallersleben Kant Ernst Richthofen Frommel
Engels Fielding Hölderlin Eichendorff Tacitus Dumas
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Goethe Elisabeth von Österreich London
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Mommsen Thoma Tolstoi Lenz Hambruch Droste-Hülshoff
Dach Thoma von Arnim Hägele Hanrieder Hauptmann Humboldt
Karrillon Reuter Verne Rousseau Hagen Hauff Baudelaire Gautier
Garschin Defoe Hebbel Hegel Kussmaul Herder
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Bronner Campe Horváth Aristoteles Voltaire Federer Herodot
Bismarck Vigny Gengenbach Barlach Heine Grillparzer Georgy
Storm Casanova Lessing Langbein Gilm Gryphius
Chamberlain Tersteegen Gilm Grillparzer Georgy
Brentano Claudius Schiller Lafontaine Kralik Iffland Sokrates
Strachwitz Bellamy Schilling Raabe Gibbon Tschchow
Katharina II. von Rußland Gerstäcker Raabe Gibbon Tschchow
Löns Hesse Hoffmann Gogol Wilde Gleim Vulpius
Luther Heym Hofmannsthal Klee Hölty Morgenstern Goedicke
Roth Heyse Klopstock Puschkin Homer Kleist Mörike Musil
Luxemburg La Roche Horaz Kraus
Machiavelli Kierkegaard Kraft Kraus
Navarra Aurel Musset Lamprecht Kind Kirchhoff Hugo Moltke
Nestroy Marie de France
Nietzsche Nansen Laotse Ipsen Liebknecht Ringelnatz
Marx Lassalle Gorki Klett Leibniz
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A Midsummer Night's Dream

William Shakespeare

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A MIDSUMMER NIGHT'S DREAM

by William Shakespeare

DRAMATIS PERSONAE

THESEUS, Duke of Athens
EGEUS, father to Hermia
LYSANDER, in love with Hermia
DEMETRIUS, in love with Hermia
PHILOSTRATE, Master of the Revels to Theseus
QUINCE, a carpenter
SNUG, a joiner
BOTTOM, a weaver
FLUTE, a bellows-mender
SNOUT, a tinker
STARVELING, a tailor

HIPPOLYTA, Queen of the Amazons, betrothed to Theseus
HERMIA, daughter to Egeus, in love with Lysander
HELENA, in love with Demetrius

OBERON, King of the Fairies
TITANIA, Queen of the Fairies
PUCK, or ROBIN GOODFELLOW
PEASEBLOSSOM, fairy
COBWEB, fairy
MOTH, fairy
MUSTARDSEED, fairy

PROLOGUE, PYRAMUS, THISBY, WALL, MOONSHINE, LION
are presented

by:

QUINCE, BOTTOM, FLUTE, SNOUT, STARVELING, AND
SNUG

Other Fairies attending their King and Queen
Attendants on Theseus and Hippolyta

SCENE: Athens and a wood near it

ACT I. SCENE I. Athens. The palace of THESEUS

Enter THESEUS, HIPPOLYTA, PHILOSTRATE, and ATTENDANTS

THESEUS. Now, fair Hippolyta, our nuptial hour
Draws on apace; four happy days bring in
Another moon; but, O, methinks, how slow
This old moon wanes! She lingers my desires,
Like to a step-dame or a dowager,
Long withering out a young man's revenue.

HIPPOLYTA. Four days will quickly steep themselves in night;
Four nights will quickly dream away the time;
And then the moon, like to a silver bow
New-bent in heaven, shall behold the night
Of our solemnities.

THESEUS. Go, Philostrate,
Stir up the Athenian youth to merriments;
Awake the pert and nimble spirit of mirth;
Turn melancholy forth to funerals;
The pale companion is not for our pomp. Exit PHILOSTRATE
Hippolyta, I woo'd thee with my sword,
And won thy love doing thee injuries;
But I will wed thee in another key,
With pomp, with triumph, and with revelling.

Enter EGEUS, and his daughter HERMIA, LYSANDER,
and DEMETRIUS

EGEUS. Happy be Theseus, our renowned Duke!

THESEUS. Thanks, good Egeus; what's the news with thee?

EGEUS. Full of vexation come I, with complaint

Against my child, my daughter Hermia.

Stand forth, Demetrius. My noble lord,

This man hath my consent to marry her.
Stand forth, Lysander. And, my gracious Duke,
This man hath bewitch'd the bosom of my child.
Thou, thou, Lysander, thou hast given her rhymes,
And interchang'd love-tokens with my child;
Thou hast by moonlight at her window sung,
With feigning voice, verses of feigning love,
And stol'n the impression of her fantasy
With bracelets of thy hair, rings, gawds, conceits,
Knacks, trifles, nose-gays, sweetmeats- messengers
Of strong prevailment in unhardened youth;
With cunning hast thou filch'd my daughter's heart;
Turn'd her obedience, which is due to me,
To stubborn harshness. And, my gracious Duke,
Be it so she will not here before your Grace
Consent to marry with Demetrius,
I beg the ancient privilege of Athens:
As she is mine I may dispose of her;
Which shall be either to this gentleman
Or to her death, according to our law
Immediately provided in that case.

THESEUS. What say you, Hermia? Be advis'd, fair maid.

To you your father should be as a god;
One that compos'd your beauties; yea, and one
To whom you are but as a form in wax,
By him imprinted, and within his power
To leave the figure, or disfigure it.
Demetrius is a worthy gentleman.

HERMIA. So is Lysander.

THESEUS. In himself he is;

But, in this kind, wanting your father's voice,
The other must be held the worthier.

HERMIA. I would my father look'd but with my eyes.

THESEUS. Rather your eyes must with his judgment look.

HERMIA. I do entreat your Grace to pardon me.

I know not by what power I am made bold,
Nor how it may concern my modesty
In such a presence here to plead my thoughts;
But I beseech your Grace that I may know

The worst that may befall me in this case,
 If I refuse to wed Demetrius.

THESEUS. Either to die the death, or to abjure
 For ever the society of men.
 Therefore, fair Hermia, question your desires,
 Know of your youth, examine well your blood,
 Whether, if you yield not to your father's choice,
 You can endure the livery of a nun,
 For aye to be shady cloister mew'd,
 To live a barren sister all your life,
 Chanting faint hymns to the cold fruitless moon.
 Thrice-blessed they that master so their blood
 To undergo such maiden pilgrimage;
 But earthlier happy is the rose distill'd
 Than that which withering on the virgin thorn
 Grows, lives, and dies, in single blessedness.

HERMIA. So will I grow, so live, so die, my lord,
 Ere I will yield my virgin patent up
 Unto his lordship, whose unwished yoke
 My soul consents not to give sovereignty.

THESEUS. Take time to pause; and by the next new moon-
 The sealing-day betwixt my love and me
 For everlasting bond of fellowship-
 Upon that day either prepare to die
 For disobedience to your father's will,
 Or else to wed Demetrius, as he would,
 Or on Diana's altar to protest
 For aye austerity and single life.

DEMETRIUS. Relent, sweet Hermia; and, Lysander, yield
 Thy crazed title to my certain right.

LYSANDER. You have her father's love, Demetrius;
 Let me have Hermia's; do you marry him.

EGEUS. Scornful Lysander, true, he hath my love;
 And what is mine my love shall render him;
 And she is mine; and all my right of her
 I do estate unto Demetrius.

LYSANDER. I am, my lord, as well deriv'd as he,
 As well possess'd; my love is more than his;
 My fortunes every way as fairly rank'd,

If not with vantage, as Demetrius';
And, which is more than all these boasts can be,
I am belov'd of beauteous Hermia.
Why should not I then prosecute my right?
Demetrius, I'll avouch it to his head,
Made love to Nedar's daughter, Helena,
And won her soul; and she, sweet lady, dotes,
Devoutly dotes, dotes in idolatry,
Upon this spotted and inconstant man.

THESEUS. I must confess that I have heard so much,
And with Demetrius thought to have spoke thereof;
But, being over-full of self-affairs,
My mind did lose it. But, Demetrius, come;
And come, Egeus; you shall go with me;
I have some private schooling for you both.
For you, fair Hermia, look you arm yourself
To fit your fancies to your father's will,
Or else the law of Athens yields you up-
Which by no means we may extenuate-
To death, or to a vow of single life.
Come, my Hippolyta; what cheer, my love?
Demetrius, and Egeus, go along;
I must employ you in some business
Against our nuptial, and confer with you
Of something nearly that concerns yourselves.

EGEUS. With duty and desire we follow you.

Exeunt all but LYSANDER and HERMIA

LYSANDER. How now, my love! Why is your cheek so pale?

How chance the roses there do fade so fast?

HERMIA. Belike for want of rain, which I could well

Beteem them from the tempest of my eyes.

LYSANDER. Ay me! for aught that I could ever read,

Could ever hear by tale or history,

The course of true love never did run smooth;

But either it was different in blood-

HERMIA. O cross! too high to be enthrall'd to low.

LYSANDER. Or else misgraffed in respect of years-

HERMIA. O spite! too old to be engag'd to young.

LYSANDER. Or else it stood upon the choice of friends-

HERMIA. O hell! to choose love by another's eyes.
LYSANDER. Or, if there were a sympathy in choice,
War, death, or sickness, did lay siege to it,
Making it momentary as a sound,
Swift as a shadow, short as any dream,
Brief as the lightning in the collied night
That, in a spleen, unfolds both heaven and earth,
And ere a man hath power to say 'Behold!'
The jaws of darkness do devour it up;
So quick bright things come to confusion.

HERMIA. If then true lovers have ever cross'd,
It stands as an edict in destiny.
Then let us teach our trial patience,
Because it is a customary cross,
As due to love as thoughts and dreams and sighs,
Wishes and tears, poor Fancy's followers.

LYSANDER. A good persuasion; therefore, hear me, Hermia.
I have a widow aunt, a dowager
Of great revenue, and she hath no child-
From Athens is her house remote seven leagues-
And she respects me as her only son.
There, gentle Hermia, may I marry thee;
And to that place the sharp Athenian law
Cannot pursue us. If thou lovest me then,
Steal forth thy father's house to-morrow night;
And in the wood, a league without the town,
Where I did meet thee once with Helena
To do observance to a morn of May,
There will I stay for thee.

HERMIA. My good Lysander!
I swear to thee by Cupid's strongest bow,
By his best arrow, with the golden head,
By the simplicity of Venus' doves,
By that which knitteth souls and prospers loves,
And by that fire which burn'd the Carthage Queen,
When the false Trojan under sail was seen,
By all the vows that ever men have broke,
In number more than ever women spoke,
In that same place thou hast appointed me,

To-morrow truly will I meet with thee.
LYSANDER. Keep promise, love. Look, here comes Helena.

Enter HELENA

HERMIA. God speed fair Helena! Whither away?

HELENA. Call you me fair? That fair again unsay.

Demetrius loves your fair. O happy fair!

Your eyes are lode-stars and your tongue's sweet air

More tuneable than lark to shepherd's ear,

When wheat is green, when hawthorn buds appear.

Sickness is catching; O, were favour so,

Yours would I catch, fair Hermia, ere I go!

My ear should catch your voice, my eye your eye,

My tongue should catch your tongue's sweet melody.

Were the world mine, Demetrius being bated,

The rest I'd give to be to you translated.

O, teach me how you look, and with what art

You sway the motion of Demetrius' heart!

HERMIA. I frown upon him, yet he loves me still.

HELENA. O that your frowns would teach my smiles such skill!

HERMIA. I give him curses, yet he gives me love.

HELENA. O that my prayers could such affection move!

HERMIA. The more I hate, the more he follows me.

HELENA. The more I love, the more he hateth me.

HERMIA. His folly, Helena, is no fault of mine.

HELENA. None, but your beauty; would that fault were mine!

HERMIA. Take comfort: he no more shall see my face;

Lysander and myself will fly this place.

Before the time I did Lysander see,

Seem'd Athens as a paradise to me.

O, then, what graces in my love do dwell,

That he hath turn'd a heaven unto a hell!

LYSANDER. Helen, to you our minds we will unfold:

To-morrow night, when Phoebe doth behold

Her silver visage in the wat'ry glass,

Decking with liquid pearl the bladed grass,

A time that lovers' flights doth still conceal,

Through Athens' gates have we devis'd to steal.

HERMIA. And in the wood where often you and I
Upon faint primrose beds were wont to lie,
Emptying our bosoms of their counsel sweet,
There my Lysander and myself shall meet;
And thence from Athens turn away our eyes,
To seek new friends and stranger companies.
Farewell, sweet playfellow; pray thou for us,
And good luck grant thee thy Demetrius!
Keep word, Lysander; we must starve our sight
From lovers' food till morrow deep midnight.

LYSANDER. I will, my Hermia. [Exit HERMIA] Helena, adieu;
As you on him, Demetrius dote on you. Exit

HELENA. How happy some o'er other some can be!
Through Athens I am thought as fair as she.
But what of that? Demetrius thinks not so;
He will not know what all but he do know.
And as he errs, doting on Hermia's eyes,
So I, admiring of his qualities.
Things base and vile, holding no quantity,
Love can transpose to form and dignity.
Love looks not with the eyes, but with the mind;
And therefore is wing'd Cupid painted blind.
Nor hath Love's mind of any judgment taste;
Wings and no eyes figure unheedy haste;
And therefore is Love said to be a child,
Because in choice he is so oft beguil'd.
As waggish boys in game themselves forswear,
So the boy Love is perjur'd everywhere;
For ere Demetrius look'd on Hermia's eyne,
He hail'd down oaths that he was only mine;
And when this hail some heat from Hermia felt,
So he dissolv'd, and show'rs of oaths did melt.
I will go tell him of fair Hermia's flight;
Then to the wood will he to-morrow night
Pursue her; and for this intelligence
If I have thanks, it is a dear expense.
But herein mean I to enrich my pain,
To have his sight thither and back again. Exit

SCENE II. Athens. QUINCE'S house

Enter QUINCE, SNUG, BOTTOM FLUTE, SNOUT, and STARVELING

QUINCE. Is all our company here?

BOTTOM. You were best to call them generally, man by man, according to the scrip.

QUINCE. Here is the scroll of every man's name which is thought fit, through all Athens, to play in our interlude before the Duke

and the Duchess on his wedding-day at night.

BOTTOM. First, good Peter Quince, say what the play treats on; then

read the names of the actors; and so grow to a point.

QUINCE. Marry, our play is 'The most Lamentable Comedy and most

Cruel Death of Pyramus and Thisby.'

BOTTOM. A very good piece of work, I assure you, and a merry. Now,

good Peter Quince, call forth your actors by the scroll.

Masters,

spread yourselves.

QUINCE. Answer, as I call you. Nick Bottom, the weaver.

BOTTOM. Ready. Name what part I am for, and proceed.

QUINCE. You, Nick Bottom, are set down for Pyramus.

BOTTOM. What is Pyramus? A lover, or a tyrant?

QUINCE. A lover, that kills himself most gallant for love.

BOTTOM. That will ask some tears in the true performing of it.

If I

do it, let the audience look to their eyes; I will move storms; I

will condole in some measure. To the rest- yet my chief humour is

for a tyrant. I could play Ercles rarely, or a part to tear a

cat

in, to make all split.

'The raging rocks
And shivering shocks
Shall break the locks
Of prison gates;

And Phibbus' car
Shall shine from far,
And make and mar
The foolish Fates.'

This was lofty. Now name the rest of the players. This is
Ercles' vein, a tyrant's vein: a lover is more condoling.

QUINCE. Francis Flute, the bellows-mender.

FLUTE. Here, Peter Quince.

QUINCE. Flute, you must take Thisby on you.

FLUTE. What is Thisby? A wand'ring knight?

QUINCE. It is the lady that Pyramus must love.

FLUTE. Nay, faith, let not me play a woman; I have a beard
coming.

QUINCE. That's all one; you shall play it in a mask, and you
may

 speak as small as you will.

BOTTOM. An I may hide my face, let me play Thisby too.

 I'll speak in a monstrous little voice: 'Thisne, Thisne!'

 [Then speaking small] 'Ah Pyramus, my lover dear! Thy
 Thisby dear, and lady dear!'

QUINCE. No, no, you must play Pyramus; and, Flute, you Thisby.

BOTTOM. Well, proceed.

QUINCE. Robin Starveling, the tailor.

STARVELING. Here, Peter Quince.

QUINCE. Robin Starveling, you must play Thisby's mother.

 Tom Snout, the tinker.

SNOUT. Here, Peter Quince.

QUINCE. You, Pyramus' father; myself, Thisby's father; Snug,
the

 joiner, you, the lion's part. And, I hope, here is a play

fitted.

SNUG. Have you the lion's part written? Pray you, if it be,
give it

me, for I am slow of study.

QUINCE. You may do it extempore, for it is nothing but roaring.

BOTTOM. Let me play the lion too. I will roar that I will do
any

man's heart good to hear me; I will roar that I will make the
Duke say 'Let him roar again, let him roar again.'

QUINCE. An you should do it too terribly, you would fright the
Duchess and the ladies, that they would shriek; and that were
enough to hang us all.

ALL. That would hang us, every mother's son.

BOTTOM. I grant you, friends, if you should fright the ladies
out

of their wits, they would have no more discretion but to hang
us;

but I will aggravate my voice so, that I will roar you as
gently

as any sucking dove; I will roar you an 'twere any
nightingale.

QUINCE. You can play no part but Pyramus; for Pyramus is a
sweet-fac'd man; a proper man, as one shall see in a summer's
day; a most lovely gentleman-like man; therefore you must
needs

play Pyramus.

BOTTOM. Well, I will undertake it. What beard were I best to
play

it in?

QUINCE. Why, what you will.

BOTTOM. I will discharge it in either your straw-colour beard,
your

orange-tawny beard, your purple-in-grain beard, or your
French-crown-colour beard, your perfect yellow.

QUINCE. Some of your French crowns have no hair at all, and
then

you will play bare-fac'd. But, masters, here are your parts;
and

I am to entreat you, request you, and desire you, to con them

by

to-morrow night; and meet me in the palace wood, a mile
without

the town, by moonlight; there will we rehearse; for if we
meet in

the city, we shall be dogg'd with company, and our devices
known.

In the meantime I will draw a bill of properties, such as our
play wants. I pray you, fail me not.

BOTTOM. We will meet; and there we may rehearse most obscene-
ly
and

courageously. Take pains; be perfect; adieu.

QUINCE. At the Duke's oak we meet.

BOTTOM. Enough; hold, or cut bow-strings. Exeunt