

A Midsummer Night's Dream

A text from the University of Texas UTOPIA "Shakespeare Kids" website, created by the UT Shakespeare at Winedale Outreach program; for more information, visit this "knowledge gateway" site at <http://utopia.utexas.edu>.

This text has been edited slightly for students in grades 5-8.

SCENE THREE (ACT 2, SCENE 1)

Setting: The woods outside Athens. Night.

Enter on opposite sides, a Titania Fairy, and Puck .

PUCK:

How now, spirit! whither wander you?

FAIRY

Over hill, over dale,
Thorough bush, thorough brier,
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 favors,
In those freckles live their savors:
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.

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.

FAIRY

Either I mistake your shape and making quite,
Or else you are that shrewd and knavish sprite
Called Robin Goodfellow: are not you he
That frights the maidens of the villagery;
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?

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:
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 laugh,
And waxen in their mirth and neeze and swear
A merrier hour was never wasted there.
But, room, fairy! Here comes Oberon.

FAIRY

And here my mistress. Would that he were gone!

Enter, from one side, Oberon, with his train of fairy spirits; from the other, Titania, with hers

OBERON:

Ill met by moonlight, proud Titania.

TITANIA:

What, jealous Oberon! Fairies, skip hence:
I have forsworn his company.

OBERON:

Tarry, rash wanton: am not I thy lord?

Why should Titania cross her Oberon?

I do but beg a little changeling boy,

To be my henchman.

TITANIA:

Set your heart at rest:

The fairy land buys not the child of me.

His mother was a votress of my order:

And, in the spiced Indian air by night,

Full often hath she gossiped by my side,

And sat with me on Neptune's yellow sands,

Marking the embarkéd traders on the flood,

When we have laughed 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.

OBERON:

How long within this wood intend you 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.

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.

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 thronéd 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
Quenched in the chaste beams of the watery moon,
And the imperial votaress passed on,
In maiden meditation, fancy-free.
Yet marked 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 showed 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.

PUCK:

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

Exit Puck

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.

Enter Demetrius, chased by Helena

DEMETRIUS:

I love thee not, therefore pursue me not.
Where is Lysander and fair Hermia?
Thou told'st me they were stolen unto this wood;
Hence, get thee gone, and follow me no more.

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.

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?

HELENA:

And even for that do I love you the more.

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:

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

HELENA:

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

DEMETRIUS:

I will not stay thy questions; let me go!

HELENA:

Fie, Demetrius!
We cannot fight for love, as men may do;
We should be woo'd and were not made to woo!
Exit Demetrius
I'll follow thee!

Exit Helena

OBERON:

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

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,
Lulled in these flowers with dances and delight;
And there the snake throws her enamelled 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.

PUCK:

Fear not, my lord, your servant shall do so.

Exeunt