

# 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>.

"DREAM" – A COLLAGE OF MOMENTS FROM THE PLAY

## 1. Theseus and Hippolyta

**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! It lingers my desires...

**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!

## 2. 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 enthralled to low.

**LYSANDER:**

Or else misgraffed in respect of years,--

**HERMIA:**

O spite! too old to be engaged 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 been ever crossed,  
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.

### 3. Hermia's nightmare

With Hermia on stage, the rest of the class gathers and crouches around the edges of the stage to make insect and animal noises – quietly at first, then getting a bit louder... they also echo key words such as “fear”...

**LYSANDER:**

She sees not Hermia. Hermia, sleep thou there:  
And never mayst thou come Lysander near!  
And, all my powers, address your love and might  
To honour Helen and to be her knight!

*Exit*

**HERMIA:**

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

### 4. Oberon talks of dreams

**OBERON (TO PUCK):**

Like to Lysander sometime frame thy tongue,  
Then stir Demetrius up with bitter wrong;  
And sometime rail thou like Demetrius;  
And from each other look thou lead them thus,  
Till o'er their brows death-counterfeiting sleep  
With leaden legs and batty wings doth creep:  
When they next wake, all this derision  
Shall seem a dream and fruitless vision,  
And back to Athens shall the lovers wend,

With league whose date till death shall never end.  
Whiles I in this affair do thee employ,  
I'll to my queen and beg her Indian boy;  
And then I will her charmed eye release  
From monster's view, and all things shall be peace.

**PUCK:**

My fairy lord, this must be done with haste,  
For night's swift dragons cut the clouds full fast.

**OBERON:**

But we are spirits of another sort:  
I with the morning's love have oft made sport,  
And, like a forester, the groves may tread,  
Even till the eastern gate, all fiery-red,  
Opening on Neptune with fair blessed beams,  
Turns into yellow gold his salt green streams.  
But, notwithstanding, haste; make no delay:  
We may effect this business yet ere day.

## **5. Titania awakes**

Enter Titania and fairies, with Nick Bottom; Oberon watches, unseen.

**BOTTOM:**

Where's Peaseblossom?

**PEASEBLOSSOM:**

Ready.

**BOTTOM:**

Scratch my head Peaseblossom. Where's Mounsieur Cobweb?

**COBWEB:**

Ready.

**BOTTOM:**

Mounsieur Cobweb, good mounsieur, get you your weapons in your hand, and kill me a red-hipped humble-bee on the top of a thistle; and, good mounsieur, bring me the honey-bag. Where's Mounsieur Mustardseed?

**MUSTARDSEED:**

Ready. What's your will?

**BOTTOM:**

Nothing, good mounsieur, but to help Cavalery Cobweb to scratch. I must to the barber's, monsieur; for methinks I am marvellous hairy about the face.

**TITANIA:**

Say, sweet love, what thou desirest to eat.

**BOTTOM:**

Methinks I have a great desire to a bottle of hay: good hay, sweet hay, hath no fellow.

**TITANIA:**

I have a venturous fairy that shall seek  
The squirrel's hoard, and fetch thee new nuts.

**BOTTOM:**

I had rather have a handful or two of dried peas.  
But, I pray you, let none of your people stir me: I  
have an exposition of sleep come upon me.

**TITANIA**

Sleep thou, and I will wind thee in my arms.  
Fairies, begone, and be always away.  
Exeunt fairies  
O, how I love thee! how I dote on thee!

*They sleep; Enter PUCK*

**OBERON:**

[Advancing] Welcome, good Robin.  
See'st thou this sweet sight?  
Her dotage now I do begin to pity.  
And now I have the boy, I will undo  
This hateful imperfection of her eyes:  
And, gentle Puck, take this transforméd scalp  
From off the head of this Athenian swain;  
That, he awaking when the other do,  
May all to Athens back again repair  
And think no more of this night's accidents  
But as the fierce vexation of a dream.  
But first I will release the fairy queen.  
Be as thou wast wont to be;  
See as thou wast wont to see:  
Now, my Titania; wake you, my sweet queen.

**TITANIA:**

My Oberon! what visions have I seen!  
Methought I was enamour'd of an ass.

**OBERON:**

There lies your love.

**TITANIA:**

How came these things to pass?  
O, how mine eyes do loathe his visage now!

**OBERON:**

Silence awhile. Robin, take off this head.

**PUCK:**

Now, when thou wakest, with thine  
own fool's eyes peep.

**OBERON:**

Sound, music! Come, my queen, take hands with me,  
And rock the ground whereon these sleepers be.

**PUCK:**

Fairy king, attend, and mark:  
I do hear the morning lark.

**OBERON:**

Then, my queen, in silence sad,  
Trip we after the night's shade:  
We the globe can compass soon,  
Swifter than the wandering moon.

**TITANIA:**

Come, my lord, and in our flight  
Tell me how it came this night  
That I sleeping here was found  
With these mortals on the ground.

## **6. The lovers awake**

Horns sound; enter Theseus, Hippolyta, Egeus, and attendants; Hermia, Helena, Lysander, and Demetrius are asleep on the ground.

**THESEUS:**

Go, one of you, find out the forester;  
My love shall hear the music of my hounds.  
Uncouple in the western valley; let them go:  
But, soft! what nymphs are these?  
Go, bid the huntsmen wake them with their horns.  
Horns sound. The four lovers awaken.  
Good morrow, friends. Saint Valentine is past:  
Begin these wood-birds but to couple now?

**LYSANDER:**

Pardon, my lord.

**THESEUS:**

I pray you all, stand up.  
I know you two are rival enemies:  
How comes this gentle concord in the world,  
That hatred is so far from jealousy,  
To sleep by hate, and fear no enmity?

**LYSANDER:**

My lord, I shall reply amazedly,  
Half sleep, half waking: but as yet, I swear,  
I cannot truly say how I came here;  
But, as I think,--for truly would I speak,  
And now do I bethink me, so it is,--  
I came with Hermia hither: our intent  
Was to be gone from Athens, where we might,  
Avoid the peril of the Athenian law --

**EGEUS:**

Enough, enough, my lord; you have enough!  
I beg the law, the law, upon his head!  
They would have stolen away; they would, Demetrius,  
Thereby to have defeated you and me,  
You of your wife and me of my consent,  
Of my consent that she should be your wife.

**DEMETRIUS:**

My good lord, I know not by what power,--  
But by some power it is,--my love to Hermia,  
Melted as the snow, seems to me now  
As the remembrance of an idle toy  
Which in my childhood I did dote upon;  
And all the faith, the virtue of my heart,  
The object and the pleasure of mine eye,  
Is only Helena. To her, my lord,  
Was I betroth'd ere I saw Hermia:  
But, like in sickness, did I loathe this food;  
But, as in health, come to my natural taste,  
Now I do wish it, love it, long for it,  
And will for evermore be true to it.

**THESEUS:**

Fair lovers, you are fortunately met:  
Of this discourse we more will hear anon.  
For in the temple by and by with us  
You couples shall eternally be knit:  
Away with us to Athens; three and three,  
We'll hold a feast in great solemnity.  
Come, Hippolyta.

*Exeunt Theseus and Hippolyta*



**DEMETRIUS:**

These things seem small and undistinguishable,  
Like far-off mountains turned into clouds.

Hermia:

Methinks I see these things with parted eye,  
When every thing seems double.

**HELENA:**

So methinks:  
And I have found Demetrius like a jewel,  
Mine own, and not mine own.

**DEMETRIUS:**

Are you sure  
That we are awake? It seems to me  
That yet we sleep, we dream. Do not you think  
The duke was here, and bid us follow him?

**LYSANDER:**

And he did bid us follow to the temple.

**DEMETRIUS:**

Why, then, we are awake: let's follow him  
And by the way let us recount our dreams.

*Exeunt*

**7. Bottom's dream (as a group speech; everyone has a line or two)**

Bottom has been "asleep" all this while... as lovers exit, everyone re-enters stage and quickly finds a sleeping spot. Bottom awakes first, then everyone else gradually joins the first Bottom on stage... divide the lines among the students.

**BOTTOM:**

[Awaking]

When my cue comes, call me, and I will answer:  
My next is, 'Most fair Pyramus.'  
Heigh-ho!  
Peter Quince!  
Flute, the bellows-mender!

Snout, the tinker!  
Starveling!  
God's my life, stolen hence, and left me asleep!  
(slowly remembers dream... others too, silently... remembering, trying to recapture it...)

**CLASS:**

I have had a most rare vision.  
I have had a dream,  
past the wit of man to say what dream it was:  
Man is but an ass, if he go about to expound this dream.  
Methought I was—  
there is no man can tell what.  
Methought I was,--  
and methought I had,--  
but man is but a patched fool, if he will offer to say what methought I had.  
The eye of man hath not heard,  
the ear of man hath not seen,  
man's hand is not able to taste,  
his tongue to conceive,  
nor his heart to report,  
what my dream was.  
I will get Peter Quince to write a ballad of this dream:  
it shall be called...

**ALL:**

Bottom's Dream!

**CLASS:**

...because it hath no bottom;  
and I will sing it in the latter end of a play, before the duke:  
peradventure, to make it the more gracious,  
I shall sing it at her death.

## **8. Puck's final speech**

Can also be divided – with pairs of students performing each line...

**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 escape the serpent's tongue,  
We will make amends ere long;  
Else the Puck a liar call;  
So, good night unto you all.

**ALL:**

Give me your hands, if we be friends,  
And Robin shall restore amends!