

ACT FOUR

SCENE 1

LYSANDER, DEMETRIUS, HELENA, and HERMIA sleep. Enter
TITANIA, *Queen of the Fairies*; and BOTTOM, with the ass's
head; and fairies PEASEBLOSSOM, COBWEB, MOTH,
MUSTARDSEED; OBERON the king behind them, unseen

TITANIA

(to BOTTOM) Come, sit thee down upon this flowery bed
While I thy amiable cheeks do coy,
And stick musk roses in thy sleek, smooth head,
And kiss thy fair large ears, my gentle joy.

BOTTOM

Where's Peaseblossom?

PEASEBLOSSOM

Ready.

BOTTOM

Scratch my head, Peaseblossom. Where's Monsieur
Cobweb?

COBWEB

Ready.

BOTTOM

Monsieur Cobweb, good monsieur, get you your weapons
in your hand and kill me a red-hipped humble-bee on the
top of a thistle. And, good monsieur, bring me the honey
bag. Do not fret yourself too much in the action, monsieur.
And good monsieur, have a care the honey bag break not. I
would be loath to have you overflown with a honey bag,
signor.

Where's Monsieur Mustardseed?

MUSTARDSEED

Ready.

Exit COBWEB

ACT FOUR

SCENE 1

DEMETRIUS, HELENA, HERMIA, and LYSANDER are still
sleeping on the stage. TITANIA enters with BOTTOM, who
still has a donkey's head, and the fairies PEASEBLOS-
SOM, COBWEB, MOTH, and MUSTARDSEED. OBERON
enters behind them, unseen by those onstage.

TITANIA

(to BOTTOM) Come over here and sit down on this flow-
ery bed while I caress those lovable cheeks. I'll put
roses on your silky, smooth head and kiss your big,
beautiful ears, my gentle darling.

BOTTOM

Where's Peaseblossom?

PEASEBLOSSOM

Here.

BOTTOM

Scratch my head, Peaseblossom. Where's Monsieur
Cobweb?

COBWEB

Here.

BOTTOM

Monsieur Cobweb, sir, get out your weapons and kill
me a striped bumblebee on a thistle, and bring me its
honey. Don't tire yourself out, monsieur. Oh, and
monsieur, be careful not to break the honey-sac. I'd
hate to see you drowned in honey, sir.

COBWEB exits.

Where's Monsieur Mustardseed?

MUSTARDSEED

Here.

BOTTOM

Give me your neaf, Monsieur Mustardseed. Pray you, leave your courtesy, good monsieur.

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MUSTARDEED

What's your will?

BOTTOM

Nothing, good monsieur, but to help Cavalery Cobweb to scratch. I must to the barber's, monsieur, for methinks I am marvelous hairy about the face. And I am such a tender ass, if my hair do but tickle me, I must scratch.

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TITANIA

What, wilt thou hear some music, my sweet love?

BOTTOM

I have a reasonable good ear in music. Let's have the tongs and the bones.

TITANIA

Or say, sweet love, what thou desirest to eat.

BOTTOM

Truly, a peck of provender. I could munch your good dry oats. Methinks I have a great desire to a bottle of hay. Good hay, sweet hay, hath no fellow.

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TITANIA

I have a venturesome 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.

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TITANIA

Sleep thou, and I will wind thee in my arms. Fairies, be gone, and be all ways away.

Exeunt FAIRIES

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NO FEAR SHAKESPEARE

BOTTOM

Give me your first, Mr. Mustardseed. Please, stop bowing, good sir.

MUSTARDEED

What would you like me to do?

BOTTOM

Nothing, good sir, except to help Sir Cobweb scratch my head. I should go to the barber's, monsieur, because I think I'm getting really hairy around the face. And I'm such a sensitive ass that if my hair even tickles me a little, I need to scratch.

TITANIA

Would you like to hear some music, my sweet love?

BOTTOM

I have a pretty good ear for music. Let's hear someone play the triangle and the sticks.

TITANIA

Or tell me, my sweet love, what you'd like to eat.

BOTTOM

Actually, I'd like a few pounds of grass. I'd like to munch on some good dry oats. Or maybe I've got a hankering for a bundle of hay. There's nothing like good hay, really sweet hay.

TITANIA

I have an adventurous fairy who'll go seek out the squirrel's secret stash and get you some fresh nuts.

BOTTOM

I'd rather have a handful or two of dried peas. But please don't let any of your people wake me up. I really want to sleep now.

TITANIA

Go to sleep, and I will wrap my arms around you. Fairies, go away. Run off in all directions.

The FAIRIES exit.

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NO FEAR SHAKESPEARE

So doth the woodbine the sweet honeysuckle
Gently entwist. The female ivy so
Enrings the barky fingers of the elm.
Oh, how I love thee! How I dote on thee!

TITANIA and BOTTOM sleep

Enter ROBIN

OBERON

Welcome, good Robin. Seest thou this sweet sight?
Her dotage now I do begin to pity.

For, meeting her of late behind the wood,
Seeking sweet favors from this hateful fool,
I did upbraid her and fall out with her.

For she his hairy temples then had rounded
With a coronet of fresh and fragrant flowers,
And that same dew, which sometime on the buds
Was wont to swell like round and orient pearls,

Stood now within the pretty flowerets' eyes
Like tears that did their own disgrace bewail.
When I had at my pleasure taunted her

And she in mild terms begged my patience,
I then did ask of her her changeling child,
Which straight she gave me and her fairy sent
To bear him to my bower in Fairyland.

And now I have the boy, I will undo
This hateful imperfection of her eyes.

And, gentle Puck, take this transformed 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.
(*squeezing flower juice into TITANIA's eyes*)

I'm putting my arms around you just like the wood-
bine tendrils gently twists itself around the sweet hon-
eysuckle, and like the female ivy curls itself around
the branches of the elm tree. Oh, how I love you! I'm
so crazy about you!

BOTTOM and TITANIA sleep. ROBIN enters.

OBERON

Welcome, good Robin. Do you see this sweet sight?
Now I'm starting to pity Titania for being so infatu-
ated. I ran into her recently at the edge of the forest,
looking for sweet presents for this hateful idiot, and I
scolded her and argued with her. She had put a wreath
of fresh, fragrant flowers around his hairy forehead,
and the drops of dew that lay in the center of the flow-
ers made the flowers look like they were crying with
shame to be decorating the head of that ugly jackass.
When I had taunted her as much as I wanted to, and
she begged me very nicely to leave her alone, I asked
her for the stolen Indian child. She said yes right away,
and sent a fairy to bring him to my home in Fairyland.
And now that I have the boy, I'll undo the spell that
makes her vision so disgustingly wrong. And, gentle
Puck, take this transformed ass's head off of the head
of that Athenian man, so that when he wakes up at the
same time as the rest of them do, they can all go back
to Athens. They'll only remember the events of
tonight as a very unpleasant dream. But first I'll
release the fairy queen from the spell.

(*OBERON squeezes the juice from the second flower into
TITANIA's eyes*)

Be as thou wast wont to be.

See as thou wast wont to see.

Dian's bud o'er Cupid's flower

Hath such force and blessed power.

Now, my Titania, wake you, my sweet queen.

TITANIA

(*waking*) My Oberon, what visions have I seen!

Methought I was enamored of an ass.

OBERON

There lies your love.

TITANIA

How came these things to pass?

Oh, how mine eyes do loathe his visage now!

OBERON

Silence awhile.—Robin, take off this head.—

Titania, music call, and strike more dead

Than common sleep of all these five the sense.

TITANIA

Music, ho! Music such as charmeth sleep!

Music

ROBIN

(*taking the ass's head off bottom*)

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.

(*dances with TITANIA*)

Now thou and I are new in amity,

And will tomorrow midnight solemnly

Dance in Duke Theseus' house triumphantly,

And bless it to all fair prosperity.

There shall the pairs of faithful lovers be

Wedded, with Theseus, all in jollity.

NO FEAR SHAKESPEARE

Be like you used to be, and see like you used to see. This bud belongs to Diana, the goddess of virginity, and it has the power to undo the effects of Cupid's flower. Now, Titania, wake up, my sweet queen.

TITANIA

(*waking up*) Oberon, I've had such a strange dream! I dreamed I was in love with an ass.

OBERON

There's your boyfriend, sleeping right over there.

TITANIA

How did this happen? Oh, I hate looking at his face now!

OBERON

Be quiet for a while.—Robin, take off his donkey head.—Titania, get the fairies to play some music, and make these five people sleep more soundly than humans have ever slept before.

TITANIA

Music! Play the kind of music that puts people to sleep.

The music plays.

ROBIN

(*removing the ass's head from bottom*) When you wake up, see things with your own foolish eyes again.

OBERON

Play the music.—Take my hands, my queen, and we'll lull these people to sleep with our soft dancing. (*he dances with TITANIA*) Now that you and I are friends again, we can dance for Duke Theseus tomorrow at midnight, and bless his marriage and his marriage bed. These other lovers will get married alongside him, and they'll all be in high spirits.

ROBIN

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.

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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.

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Exeunt OBERON, TITANIA, and ROBIN

Wind horn within

Enter THESEUS and all his train, EGEUS, and HIPPOLYTA

THESEUS

Go, one of you, find out the forester.
For now our observation is performed.
And since we have the vaward of the day,
My love shall hear the music of my hounds.
Uncouple in the western valley. Let them go.
Dispatch, I say, and find the forester.

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Exit one of the train

We will, fair queen, up to the mountain's top,
And mark the musical confusion
Of hounds and echo in conjunction.

HIPPOLYTA

I was with Hercules and Cadmus once,
When in a wood of Crete they bayed the bear
With hounds of Sparta. Never did I hear
Such gallant chiding. For, besides the groves,

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ROBIN

Listen, Fairy King. I can hear the lark singing. Morning's here.

OBERON

In that case, my queen, let's travel silently and solemnly across the globe to where it's still night, circling the earth faster than the moon does.

TITANIA

While we're walking, you can tell me how I ended up sleeping on the ground with these humans last night.

OBERON, TITANIA, and ROBIN exit.

A hunting horn blows. THESEUS enters with his servants, EGEUS and HIPPOLYTA.

THESEUS

One of you go find the forest ranger. Since we're done with the May Day rites and it's still so early in the morning, my love will have a chance to hear the beautiful music of my hunting dogs barking as they chase their prey. Unleash the dogs in the western valley. Let them go. Now go find the forest ranger.

A servant exits.

My beautiful queen, we'll go up the mountain and listen to the hounds as their barking echoes in the cliffs and sounds like music.

HIPPOLYTA

I was with the heroes Hercules and Cadmus once, when their Spartan hunting dogs cornered a bear. I'd never heard such impressive barking before. The forests, the skies, the mountains, everything around us

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The skies, the fountains, every region near
Seemed all one mutual cry. I never heard
So musical a discord, such sweet thunder.

THESEUS

My hounds are bred out of the Spartan kind,
So flewed, so sanded, and their heads are hung
With ears that sweep away the morning dew,
Crook-kneed, and dew-lapped like Thessalian bulls,
Slow in pursuit, but matched in mouth like bells,
Each under each. A cry more tunable
Was never hollaed to, nor cheered with horn,
In Crete, in Sparta, nor in Thessaly.
Judge when you hear.
(*sees the four sleeping lovers*)

But, soft! What nymphs are these?

EGEUS

My lord, this is my daughter here asleep.
And this, Lysander. This Demetrius is.
This Helena, old Nedar's Helena.
I wonder of their being here together.

THESEUS

No doubt they rose up early to observe
The rite of May, and hearing our intent
Came here in grace our solemnity.
But speak, Egeus. Is not this the day
That Hermia should give answer of her choice?

EGEUS

It is, my lord.

THESEUS

Go, bid the huntsmen wake them with their horns.

Exit one of the train

Wind horns and shout within

LYSANDER, DEMETRIUS, HELENA, and HERMIA wake and
start up

NO FEAR SHAKESPEARE

seemed to echo the barks of the hounds. I'd never heard such raucous music, such pleasant thunder.

THESEUS

My dogs are bred from Spartan hounds. They have the same folds of flesh around their mouths, the same sandy-colored fur, and hanging ears that brush the morning dew off the grass. They have crooked knees and folds of skin under their necks, just like the Spartan hounds. They're not very fast in the chase, but their barking sounds like bells ringing. Each bark is perfectly in tune with the others, like notes on a scale. No one, anywhere, has ever gone hunting with a more musical pack of dogs. Judge for yourself when you hear them. (*he sees the four lovers sleeping*) But wait a minute! Who are these women?

EGEUS

My lord, that's my daughter asleep on the ground over there, and this is Lysander here, and this is Demetrius, and this is Helena, old Nedar's daughter. I don't understand why they're all here together.

THESEUS

They probably woke up early to celebrate May Day and came here for my celebration when they heard I'd be here. But tell me, Egeus. Isn't today the day when Hermia has to tell us her decision about whether she'll marry Demetrius?

EGEUS

It is, my lord.

THESEUS

Go tell the hunters to blow their horns and wake them up.

A servant exits.

Someone shouts offstage. Horns are blown. LYSANDER, DEMETRIUS, HELENA, and HERMIA, wake up.

Good morrow, friends. Saint Valentine is past.
Begin these woodbirds but to couple now?

LYSANDER, DEMETRIUS, HELENA, and HERMIA kneel

LYSANDER

Pardon, my lord.

THESEUS

I pray you all, stand up.

LYSANDER, DEMETRIUS, HELENA, and HERMIA stand

(to LYSANDER and DEMETRIUS)

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,
Without the peril of the Athenian law—

EGEUS

(to THESEUS) Enough, enough, my lord. You have enough!
I beg the law, the law, upon his head.—
They would have stol'n 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

(to THESEUS) My lord, fair Helen told me of their stealth,
Of this their purpose hither to this wood.

NO FEAR SHAKESPEARE

Good morning, my friends. Valentine's Day is over.
Are you lovebirds only starting to pair up now?

LYSANDER, DEMETRIUS, HELENA, and HERMIA all kneel.

LYSANDER

Forgive us, my lord.

THESEUS

Please, all of you, stand up.

LYSANDER, DEMETRIUS, HELENA, and HERMIA get up.

(to LYSANDER and DEMETRIUS) I know you two are enemies. Has the world really become so gentle and peaceful that people who hate each other have started to trust each other and sleep beside each other without being afraid?

LYSANDER

My lord, what I say may be a little confused, since I'm half asleep and half awake. I swear, at the moment I really couldn't tell you how I ended up here. But I think—I want to tell you the truth, and now that I think about it, I think this is true—I came here with Hermia. We were planning to leave Athens to escape the Athenian law and—

EGEUS

(to THESEUS) Enough, enough, my lord. You've heard enough evidence! I insist that the law punish him— They were going to run away, Demetrius, they were running away to defeat us, robbing you of your wife and me of my fatherly right to decide who my son-in-law will be.

DEMETRIUS

(to THESEUS) My lord, the beautiful Helena told me about their secret plan to escape into this forest. I was

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And I in fury hither followed them,
 Fair Helena in fancy following me.
 But, my good lord, I wot 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 gaud
 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 betrothed 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.—
 Egeus, I will overbear your will.
 For in the temple by and by with us
 These couples shall eternally be knit.—
 And, for the morning now is something worn,
 Our purposed hunting shall be set aside.
 Away with us to Athens. Three and three,
 We'll hold a feast in great solemnity.
 Come, Hippolyta.

Exeunt THESEUS, HIPPOLYTA, EGGEUS, and train

DEMETRIUS

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

HERMIA

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

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furious and followed them here, and the lovely Helena was so in love with me that she followed me. I'm not sure how it happened—but somehow, something made my love for Hermia melt away like snow. My past love for Hermia now seems like a memory of some cheap toy I used to love as a child. Now the only person I love, and believe in, and want to look at, is Helena. I was engaged to her before I ever met Hermia. Then I hated her for a time, as a sick person hates the food he usually loves. But now I have my natural taste back, like a sick person when he recovers. Now I want Helena, I love her, I long for her, and I will always be true to her.

THESEUS

You pretty lovers are lucky you met me here. We'll talk more about this later.—Egeus, I'm overriding your wishes. These couples will be married along with me and Hippolyta in the temple later today.—And now, since the morning is almost over, we'll give up on the idea of hunting. Come with us to Athens. We three couples will celebrate with a sumptuous feast. Come, Hippolyta.

THESEUS, HIPPOLYTA, and EGGEUS exit
 with their followers.

DEMETRIUS

What exactly just happened? The events of last night seem small and hard to see clearly, like far-off mountains that look like clouds in the distance.

HERMIA

Yes, it's like my eyes are out of focus, and I'm seeing everything double.

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HELENA

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

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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?

HERMIA

Yea, and my father.

HELENA

And Hippolyta.

LYSANDER

And he did bid us follow to the temple.

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DEMETRIUS

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

Exeunt LYSANDER, DEMETRIUS, HELENA, and HERMIA

BOTTOM

(*waking*) 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, stol'n hence, and left me asleep? 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.

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HELENA

Me too. I won Demetrius so easily, as if he were a precious diamond I just found lying around. It's mine because I found it, but I feel like someone else could easily come and claim it was hers.

DEMETRIUS

Are you sure we're awake? It seems to me like we're still sleeping, still dreaming. Do you remember seeing the duke here? Did he tell us to follow him?

HERMIA

Yes, he did. And my father was here too.

HELENA

And Hippolyta.

LYSANDER

And he told us to follow him to the temple.

DEMETRIUS

Well, then, we're awake. Let's follow him. We can tell one another our dreams along the way.

LYSANDER, DEMETRIUS, HELENA, and HERMIA exit.

BOTTOM

(*waking up*) Tell me when my cue comes, and I'll say my line. My next cue is "Most handsome Pyramus." Hey! Peter Quince? Flute the bellows-repairman? Snout the handyman? Starveling? My God, they've all run away and left me sleeping here? What a weird dream I had.—You can't even describe such a weird dream. You'd be an ass if you even tried to explain it. I thought I was—no, nobody can even describe what I was. I thought I was, I thought I had—but a person would be an idiot to try to say what I thought I had. No eye has ever heard, no ear has ever seen, no hand has tasted, or tongue felt, or heart described what my dream was like. I'll get Peter Quince to write this

It shall be called "Bottom's Dream" 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.

Exit

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dream down as a ballad. I'll call it "Bottom's Dream" because it's so deep that it has no bottom. And I'll sing it for the duke in the intermission of a play. Or maybe, to make it even more lovely, I'll sing it when the heroine dies.

BOTTOM exits.

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ACT 4, SCENE 2

Enter QUINCE, FLUTE, SNOUT, and STARVELING

QUINCE

Have you sent to Bottom's house? Is he come home yet?

STARVELING

He cannot be heard of. Out of doubt he is transported.

FLUTE

If he come not, then the play is marred. It goes not forward.
Doth it?

QUINCE

It is not possible. You have not a man in all Athens able to discharge Pyramus but he.

FLUTE

No, he hath simply the best wit of any handicraft man in Athens.

QUINCE

Yea, and the best person too. And he is a very paramour for a sweet voice.

FLUTE

You must say "paragon." A "paramour" is, God bless us, a thing of naught.

Enter SNUG

SNUG

Masters, the duke is coming from the temple, and there is two or three lords and ladies more married. If our sport had gone forward, we had all been made men.

FLUTE

O sweet bully Bottom! Thus hath he lost sixpence a day during his life. He could not have 'scaped sixpence a day. An the duke had not given him sixpence a day for playing

ACT 4, SCENE 2

NO FEAR SHAKESPEARE

ACT 4, SCENE 2

QUINCE, FLUTE, SNOUT, and STARVELING enter.

QUINCE

Have you sent anyone to Bottom's house? Has he come home yet?

STARVELING

No one's heard from him. I'm sure he's been kidnapped.

FLUTE

If he doesn't show up, the play is ruined. It won't go on. Will it?

QUINCE

No, it would be impossible. He's the only person in Athens who can play Pyramus.

FLUTE

Definitely. He's quite simply the smartest working-man in Athens.

QUINCE

Yes, and the best looking too. And his voice is the paramour of sweetness.

FLUTE

You mean "paragon." A "paramour" is something bad.

SNUG enters.

SNUG

The duke's leaving the temple. Two or three more lords and ladies have been married too. If we'd been able to put on our play, we would have had it made.

FLUTE

Oh that great, funny guy, Bottom! He would have gotten a pension of six pence a day for his whole life. Six pence a day would've been forced on him. I'll be damned if the duke wouldn't have given him six pence

Pyramus, I'll be hanged. He would have deserved it.
Sixpence a day in Pyramus, or nothing.

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Enter BOTTOM

BOTTOM

Where are these lads? Where are these hearts?

QUINCE

Bottom! O most courageous day! O most happy hour!

BOTTOM

Masters, I am to discourse wonders—but ask me not what, for if I tell you I am no true Athenian. I will tell you everything, right as it fell out.

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QUINCE

Let us hear, sweet Bottom.

BOTTOM

Not a word of me. All that I will tell you is that the duke hath dined. Get your apparel together, good strings to your beards, new ribbons to your pumps. Meet presently at the palace. Every man look o'er his part. For the short and the long is, our play is preferred. In any case, let Thisbe have clean linen. And let not him that plays the lion pair his nails, for they shall hang out for the lion's claws. And most dear actors, eat no onions nor garlic, for we are to utter sweet breath. And I do not doubt but to hear them say, "It is a sweet comedy." No more words. Away, go away!

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Exeunt

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a day for playing Pyramus. And he would have deserved it too. Pyramus is worth six pence a day, or it's worth nothing!

A pension of six pence a day would be a lot of money for a working class man.

BOTTOM enters.

BOTTOM

Where are my guys? Where are my good fellows?

QUINCE

Bottom! Oh, how wonderful to see you! Oh, what a relief!

BOTTOM

My friends, I've got some amazing things to tell you—but don't ask me to tell you what. I swear by my Athenian citizenship that I won't tell you anything. I'll tell you everything exactly as it happened.

QUINCE

Tell us, Bottom.

BOTTOM

No, you won't get a word out of me. All I'll tell you is that the duke has had dinner already. Now it's time to get your costumes together. Find some good strings for tying on your false beards, and grab new ribbons to decorate your shoes. Meet me at the palace as soon as possible. Look over your lines again. Our play's going to be performed for the duke! So make sure Thisbe's wearing clean underwear, and make sure whoever's playing the lion doesn't cut his nails, because he needs them long to look like lion's claws. And no one eat any onions or garlic. If we have sweet-smelling breath, I'm sure they'll say "it's a sweet play." Now no more talking. Get busy, go!

They all exit.

MODERN TEXT

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