

A MIDSUMMER NIGHT'S DREAM

Adapted from William Shakespeare

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Rough draft (11/26/25 version)

THESEUS: Duke of Athens
HIPPOLYTA: Queen of the Amazons, his fiancée
PHILOSTRATE: who arranges the entertainment for their wedding
NARRATOR
EGEUS: an older gentleman of Athens, father of Hermia
HERMIA: his daughter, who does not want to marry Demetrius
DEMETRIUS: a rich young man of Athens
LYSANDER: a young man of Athens who Hermia does want to marry
HELENA: Hermia's friend, who loves Demetrius
BOTTOM:
QUINCE
FLUTE
STARVELING
SNOUT
SNUG
—
PUCK
A FAIRY (ZEPHYR)
OBERON
TITANIA
FAIRY TRAIN
FIRST FAIRY (PURSLANE)
SECOND FAIRY (MARIGOLD)
THIRD FAIRY

Act I
Scene 1
Setting: the Athenian palace

Onstage: Theseus and Hippolyta. Narrator in spotlight in “Narrator’s Corner.”

NARRATOR: Good evening, and welcome to Athens. Ancient Athens, home of Theseus and Hippolyta—Theo and Polly to their friends—he’s the Duke of Athens, she’s the Queen of the Amazons. And...well...they’re engaged.

THESEUS: Golly, Polly...I can’t believe that it’s only four days ’til our wedding! *(Pause)*. I can’t believe it’s FOUR WHOLE DAYS ’til our wedding!

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 stares. Hippolyta holds up four fingers, counts them down one by one.)* It’s just four more sleeps ’til our wedding.

THESEUS: Ohhhhhhh.

HIPPOLYTA: We could do more wedding planning...

THESEUS: It might be fun to have some of the local actors do a play...a contest...oh! Yes! Philostrate! *(THESEUS claps, loudly.)*

(PHILOSTRATE enters, clearly just offstage.)

PHILOSTRATE: Yes, sir?

THESEUS: Get some of the local talent to put on some performances...plays or songs or juggling or something?

PHILOSTRATE: Local...talent?

THESEUS: Yep. Local talent.

Philostrate: Talent? Ummmm...I’ll...I’ll see what I can come up with. *(Philostrate exits,)*

(Polly and Theo go back into staring into each other’s eyes. Arguing is heard offstage. Enter EGEUS, pulling his daughter HERMIA, followed by DEMETRIUS, with LYSANDER stomping behind.)

NARRATOR: Dukes and queens don't get much privacy.

EGEUS: Happy day to you, Duke!

THESEUS: You, too...(*Hippolyta whispers in his ear*)...Egeus. What can I do for you?

(NARRATOR pauses *the action with a hand gesture*. NARRATOR moves them around as he talks.)

NARRATOR: This goes on for a bit, so I'll give you the short form. Egeus is Hermia's—this girl's—father. (NARRATOR pulls HERMIA forward.) She loves Lysander—this guy. (Pushes LYSANDER forward.) Egeus isn't okay with that, because he thinks Demetrius—this guy (NARRATOR pushes DEMETRIUS forward, awkwardly) is a better match. Egeus (NARRATOR puts him into pompous pose) thinks he owns Hermia (NARRATOR puts Hermia into tragic pose) and believes she should dump him (NARRATOR puts LYSANDER into furious pose) for him. (NARRATOR puts DEMETRIUS into victorious pose. NARRATOR steps back to corner.)

EGEUS: And that is why I am coming to you, Duke. Talk some sense into her.

THESEUS: I mean, gosh, Hermia...your father DID help make you. You should do what he says.

(*Hippolyta might be giving her own true love the stink eye at this point.*)

THESEUS: I mean, Demetrius seems like a nice enough guy...

HERMIA: So is Lysander!

THESEUS: But your father says Demetrius is better—you should listen to him.

HERMIA: But...if my father only saw Lysander the way I do...

NARRATOR: So, yeah, they go on like that for a while...(EGEUS, THESEUS, HERMIA, LYSANDER, and DEMETRIUS speed through the argument.) Nobody's happy by the end.

DEMETRIUS: C'mon, Hermia...give me a chance!

LYSANDER: You know, her dad loves you. She loves me. I'll marry her, you can marry her dad.

(*Nobody responds positively to that idea.*)

NARRATOR: For future reference, if you're every trying to convince your girlfriend's dad that she should marry you and not some other guy...this is the wrong thing to say.

EGEUS: I've chosen Demetrius **for my daughter** and that's that.

LYSANDER: But she loves ME. And...and, besides...Demetrius already practically promised to marry Helena.

(DEMETRIUS looks embarrassed, tries to protest...)

THESEUS: Oh, yeah, I heard about that...meant to talk to you about it, but...well, anyway, Hermia, you need to marry the guy your dad chose for you. If you two will come with me, I need your help with this contest I'm planning for our wedding...Polly? You coming?

(Exit THESEUS, HIPPOLYTA, EGEUS, and DEMETRIUS. HERMIA and LYSANDER are left onstage. HERMIA is crying.)

LYSANDER: Oh, please, don't cry.

HERMIA: It's all so awful.

LYSANDER: I've read that the course of true love never did run smooth...

HERMIA: Then we must be on the right track!

LYSANDER: But I have an idea...

HERMIA: Do tell!

LYSANDER: I've got an aunt, and she treats me like her son...

HERMIA: Yay? *(Her attitude clearly says "Please get to the point, Lysander.")*

LYSANDER: And she lives outside of Athens, so she's outside of Theseus' rule...we could elope to her house.

HERMIA: Elope?

LYSANDER: We could run away to her house and get married and live happily ever after.

HERMIA: My good Lysander! *(Pause. He is clearly nervous.)* That is a FANTASTIC idea!

LYSANDER *(clearly relieved)*: Then, meet me in the woods outside the city...at that place where you and your friend Helena were picking flowers back in May....and we'll do it.

HERMIA (*grabbing his hands*): Lysander, with Cupid as my witness—I will be there!

LYSANDER: Terrific! (*Helena enters from Stage Left*) Oh, hey...speaking of Helena...

(*HERMIA runs to Helena, grabs her, swings her around.*)

HERMIA: Helena, you gorgeous thing! What are you up to?

(*HELENA wriggles free, not nearly as happy to see HERMIA.*)

HELENA: Sure, I'm so gorgeous that Demetrius wants to marry YOU.

HERMIA: I told him I wasn't interested.

HELENA: I see that worked.

HERMIA: I frown on him, but he still loves me!

HELENA: Teach me how to frown like you!

HERMIA: I tear his notes up, but he won't go away!

HELENA: And I write him notes, but he won't pay attention to me!

HERMIA: The more I hate him, the more he follows me!

HELENA: And the more I love, the more he hates ME!

HERMIA: It's not my fault that he's so bad at seeing love!

HELENA: Just your beauty...if only that were MY problem.

HERMIA: Well, he's not going to be seeing my beauty anymore if I can help it.

LYSANDER: Would it make you feel better if we told you a secret?

(*HELENA sniffles and nods.*)

LYSANDER: Tomorrow night, Hermia and I are going to meet in that meadow that you guys like to pick flowers in, and...ummm...

HERMIA (*very excited*): And then we're going far away, and we're going to get married! (*HELENA gasps.*) I know, right? I'm so excited. And, if I'm out of the way, maybe... well, maybe Demetrius will get smarter! (*To Lysander.*) I will see you tomorrow, sweetie. In the woods, in the meadow...I've got so much packing to do! (*HERMIA runs off.*)

LYSANDER: Not too much—we've got to carry it all! *(Waves at her.)* Tomorrow, pookie! I'll see you tomorrow night, and every day after that! *(To Helena)* Helena, thanks for being such a good friend. I hope Demetrius wises up and loves you as much as you love him! *(LYSANDER runs off in opposite direction.)*

HELENA: Well, at least SOMEONE is happy. *(To audience)* I really don't get it. Everyone in Athens says I'm as pretty as her, but who cares if Demetrius doesn't think so? I mean, he used to...and then he met HER, and... *poof* Now he doesn't see me at all. But I have a plan...

Act I

Scene 2

Setting: a cottage in Athens

(Stage empty. Enter Quince, Snug, Bottom, Flute, Snout, and Starveling.)

QUINCE: Are we all here?

BOTTOM: Peter Quince! That's not the right way to do it! Call everyone by name!

QUINCE *(pulls out list)*: Here's the cast list, for our play for the Duke's wedding...

BOTTOM: No, wait, you have to explain what the play's ABOUT.

QUINCE: We're doing *The Most Lamentable Comedy and Most Cruel Death of Pyramus and Thisbe*.

BOTTOM: Oooh, good show. Good show. Really funny. Okay, Peter Quince. Tell the actors who they are. Guys! Guys! Listen to Peter Quince!

(Note: Snug, Flute, Snout, and Starveling have all been paying close attention already.)

QUINCE *(clears throat)*: Nick Bottom, the weaver.

BOTTOM: Present and accounted for, Mr. Director! Now tell me my part!

QUINCE: I've got you down for Pyramus.

BOTTOM: Ooh! Good guy, bad guy? Hero, villain...monster?

QUINCE: He's...ummm...a lover.

(All actors "ooooo-oooh-ooooh" and swoon and laugh and make fun of Bottom.)

BOTTOM: The ladies will love me. But I kind of want to play a tyrant...I can yell, and throw things, and write laws...Yeah. I wanna play a prince. Or a king. Or an emperor!

QUINCE: We don't need an emperor. You're playing Pyramus, and you get to die for love.

BOTTOM: I am going to die SO WELL. (*Goes into a "blood, blood, death...and scene" bit.*)

QUINCE: Francis Flute, bellows-mender. (*Flute raises her hand.*) You'll be playing Thisbe.

FLUTE: Who is Thisbe?

QUINCE: She's Pyramus' girlfriend.

FLUTE: With...him? (*Looks at Bottom.*)

QUINCE: It's okay. You'll be wearing masks. (*Pause.*) I'm not going to make you kiss him. (*Flute is clearly relieved.*)

BOTTOM: I can play her, too! I can wear two masks and use two voices...(deep voice) Oh, my love! (*High voice*) My MAN!

QUINCE: No. You are playing Pyramus, and Flute is playing Thisbe.

BOTTOM (*pouting*): Fine. Proceed.

QUINCE: Robin Starveling, the tailor. (*Starveling raises hand.*) You'll play Thisbe's mother. Tom Snout, the tinker?

SNOUT: Here, Peter Quince.

QUINCE: You'll play Pyramus's father. I'm Thisbe's father, and Snug the joiner (*he raises hand*) is going to play the lion.

SNUG: Can I have the script? I have trouble memorizing things.

QUINCE: Don't worry...all you need to do is roar.

BOTTOM: Oh, let me play the lion, too! I can roar SO WELL! (*Does so. Quince about jumps out of his skin.*)

QUINCE: No! No. You'll frighten the ladies, and they won't like it, and we won't get paid.

BOTTOM: I can make a *little* roar. (*Cute little kitten roar and hiss.*)

QUINCE: You're playing Pyramus, only Pyramus...(*Bottom starts to pout again.*) He's the most important part...strong and manly, sweet, handsome. We NEED you to play Pyramus! If you play anyone else, the play will be ruined! (*He's laying it on pretty thick, and Bottom is eating it up.*) Please, do me this favor?

BOTTOM: I'll...I'll try. It'll be hard, but I'll try.

QUINCE: Good man. Now, everyone else, here are your parts and we'll need to....

BOTTOM (*grabs scripts and starts handing them out*): Here are your scripts. Learn your lines and have them ready by next rehearsal, or you will be in so much trouble. We're going to... (*QUINCE cuts him off grabs the rest of the scripts, pages fly everywhere.*)

QUINCE: We'll meet tomorrow night in the Prince's wood. There's a nice meadow there, and we should have a full moon. We'll work on our lines and our blocking and I'll bring props.

BOTTOM: We'll rehearse, and we'll be perfect, and...

QUINCE: We'll meet at the Prince's oak.

BOTTOM: We are going to be UNBELIEVABLE!

(*Lights down. Everyone exits.*)

Act II
Scene 1
A wood near Athens, night.

(Enter PUCK and a FAIRY from opposite sides.)

PUCK: Hey, now, friend...with'er wanderest you?

FAIRY: Oh, wherever the Fairy Queen wants me to wander. Today, I've been hanging dewdrops on flowers. HER majesty is really into cowslips right now and wants to be sure they all have dewdrops before she brings her crew here tonight for revels.

PUCK: Ooh...that's going to be a problem. HIS Majesty is planning on bringing his crew here tonight. It would be better if they don't bump into each other.

NARRATOR *(pausing action)*: To sum it up, the Queen and King of the Fairies are having a bit of marital trouble. She's got an attendant she thinks is adorable, and the King agrees—but they can't agree on how to raise the kid. Because they're the King and the Queen, ain't nobody happy when they're in the same room. *(Unpauses action.)*

FAIRY: I know you from somewhere...oh! Oh! You're FAMOUS! You're Robin Goodfellow...you're Puck. You play all those tricks on people!

PUCK: That's me—I'm the one who makes the King laugh. I can make an old lady tip over, and a young lady spill her drink, and they never know it's me. But the King knows, and thinks I'm the funniest thing and...oh, here he is now!

FAIRY: And here comes the queen. Ugh. I wish your master were gone.

PUCK: Don't blame me. *(They split and hide behind trees.)*

(Enter OBERON and TITANIA, with their FAIRY TRAINS.)

OBERON: Ill-met by moonlight, proud Titania.

TITANIA: Pretentious as ever, Oberon? Here, fairies...I don't think I want to have our party here, after all. Let's go.

OBERON: Doesn't my wife want to be around me?

TITANIA: Not if I can help it.

OBERON: Yeah, well...

NARRATOR (*steps in front of them; they continue to silently bicker.*) They're going to do this for a while. He insults her, she insults him, they argue about the kid I mentioned earlier, they argue about old boyfriends and girlfriends, it all goes downhill from there. (*Unfreezes action.*)

OBERON (*VERY loudly*): And so's your mother!

(*ALL FAIRIES gasp.*)

(*Awkward silence.*)

TITANIA (*playing it cool*): Are you going to the wedding?

OBERON: I might. Let me put the kid into military school, and I'll take you with me.

TITANIA: Not for all your kingdom. I can go to a wedding on my own, thank you very much. (*To HER FAIRIES*) Ladies, let's go. There's no point in talking to this petty little king any longer.

(*They depart in high dudgeon.*)

OBERON: Oh, you can leave...but the moon won't set tonight without you being sorry for insulting me in front of everyone this insult. (*Plunks down on a rock or log to pout and plan. Ponders, hums, talks to himself, sits quietly.*) Puck!

PUCK (*from behind a tree*): Yessir?

OBERON: Remember that time we saw a falling star?

PUCK: Yes, sir?

OBERON: Remember that flower I showed you that night?

PUCK: Yes, sir?

OBERON: Well, that flower, if you squeeze the juice out of it, and put it on someone's eyes, they'll fall madly, stupidly in love with the first living thing they see.

PUCK (*aside, to audience*): I think I see where this is going.

OBERON: Puck, my good fellow...bring me that flower. Pronto.

PUCK: I'll be there and back before you can blink. (*Dashes off. Rollerskates?*)

OBERON: I'll put this juice on Titania's eyes, and then put someone ridiculous by her and then, before I give her the antidote, I'll make her apologize and agree I'm right about the kid.

NARRATOR: I just want to remind you all that this is not how healthy relationships work.

(Noises offstage. Enter DEMETRIUS and HELENA.)

OBERON *(ducking behind a tree)*: Hey, who's this?

DEMETRIUS: I don't know why you're following me. *(Pause)* Where are Hermia and Lysander? You told me they'd be in this woods. *(Pause)* Seriously, why are you here?

HELENA: Because you're like a magnet to me.

DEMETRIUS: I keep telling you...I don't love you.

HELENA: And that makes me love you even more!

DEMETRIUS: Women are strange.

HELENA: I can't help it.

NARRATOR: This goes on for a while. To be honest, I don't know what she sees in him, either. There are some really unhealthy relationships in this play. Anyway, we end up here...

DEMETRIUS: I'm leaving. You can be alone in the woods. *(Runs off, SL)*

HELENA: I'm never alone when I'm thinking of you! *(Follows him.)*

OBERON *(coming out of hiding)*: That was hard to watch. Young lady, before the pair of you leave this woods, he is going to be as crazy about you as you are about him.

PUCK *(entering from audience)*: I got your flower!

OBERON: Oh, perfect. Perfect. I know where Titania will be sleeping tonight—she'll be on that bank where the wild thyme grows, in between the violets and the roses...it's her favorite spot. I am going to take the juice from this and...well, you'll see.

PUCK: I bet I will.

OBERON: I've got a different chore for you.

PUCK: Of course you do.

OBERON: There's a young human lady here in the woods, and she's in love with a guy who can't see her value. I think he needs to learn a lesson in love.

PUCK: You're the expert!

OBERON: You'll know who they are by their clothes—they're from Athens. Find them, and (*OBERON plucks a petal from the flower*) put this juice on his eyes, but only when the girl is the next thing he'll see. Meet me here before the rooster crows and we'll compare notes.

PUCK: At your service, sir! (*PUCK exits L, OBERON exits R.*)

NARRATOR: There's no way this can go wrong...

Act II

Scene 2

Setting: a different part of the woods

NARRATOR: Meanwhile, in another part of the woods....

(*Enter TITANIA and her FAIRY TRAIN*)

TITANIA (*lying down*): Okay, ladies...I've got some bedtime tasks for you. I need some of you to keep the aphids out of the rosebuds, I need some of you to keep that darn owl from hooting and keeping me awake, and I need some of you to sing me to sleep.

(*Silence.*)

TITANIA: I'd like a song *now*, please.

(*Fairies all snap to attention and take turns singing—preferably all different tunes*)

FIRST FAIRY: You spotted snakes with double tongue,
 Thorny hedgehogs, be not seen;
 Newts and blind-worms do no wrong,
 Come not near our Fairy Queen:

ALL FAIRIES: Philomel, with melody,
 Sing in our sweet lullaby:
 Lulla, lulla, lullaby; lulla, lulla, lullaby.
 Never harm, nor spell, nor charm,
 Come our lovely lady nigh;
 So good night, with lullaby.

SECOND FAIRY: Weaving spiders, come not here;
 Hence, you long-legg'd spinners, hence.

Beetles black, approach not near;
Worm nor snail do no offence.

ALL FAIRIES: Philomel, with melody,
Sing in our sweet lullaby:
Lulla, lulla, lullaby; lulla, lulla, lullaby.

(TITANIA begins to nod off.)

Never harm, nor spell, nor charm,
Come our lovely lady nigh;

(TITANIA is now full asleep—possibly snoring.)

So good night, with *(FAIRIES trail off, except for THIRD FAIRY who, absolutely belts out)* LULLABY! *(TITANIA snorts and rolls over.)*

THIRD FAIRY: Whew. Ummm...okay. Everybody off to their tasks!

(OBERON has been lurking in the shadows and now appears, approaching TITANIA.)

OBERON *(rubbing the flower over her eyes)*: What you see when you wake up, mistake for your true love. I don't care if it's a wild boar, or a stray cat, or a grasshopper...what you see, is what you love. *(Pause.)* I hope it's really awkward.

(He leaves.)

NARRATOR: Just a reminder...this is NOT how we fix disagreements.

(Enter LYSANDER, helping HERMIA.)

LYSANDER: I know you're tired...but I have to confess: I'm lost. Would you be okay with sleeping in the woods tonight?

HERMIA: That's fine. I'll sleep here, and you can go find a comfy place.

LYSANDER: I'm a little...afraid...of the woods. Can I stay with you?

HERMIA: That wouldn't be proper. Here...you lie down right here, and I'll just be over here. *(She goes to the other side of the stage.)* Nothing will get you!

LYSANDER: I'm glad we're getting married.

HERMIA: Me, too. Good night!

LYSANDER: Sleep tight!

HERMIA *(sleepily)*: Don't let the bedbugs bite!

(They sleep. Lights fade, Wait a beat, then enter PUCK, slowly, with the flower petal.)

PUCK (*to audience*): I have been through this entire forest...up and down, and I haven't seen a single human, let alone the Athenian guy I'm supposed to dose. (*He trips over LYSANDER.*) Hullo! What's this? (*Pokes at LYSANDER.*) Looks human...guy...could be Athenian...Well. Seek and ye shall find, I say. (*Spots HERMIA.*) Oh, and there's the poor, unloved girl over there. She doesn't even feel safe coming over by this creep. Well, Champ...you are going to feel So. Much. Different about her when you wake up after this. (*Wipes flower petal across LYSANDER's eyes.*) Sweet dreams, buddy...and a sweeter temper when you wake up. (*Exit PUCK, USL.*)

(*Enter DEMETRIUS and HELENA, running.*)

HELENA: Please, I know you hate me, but please don't leave me alone!

DEMETRIUS: Can you please just go away?

HELENA: But it's dark in the woods!

DEMETRIUS: I don't care! (*Runs off.*)

(*HELENA sinks to the ground, not seeing LYSANDER or HERMIA.*)

HELENA: Oh, I am so out of breath with chasing my love. (*Sighs.*) Hermia must be having a better night than I am. (*HELENA stands and wanders.*) I don't know why I can't make Demetrius love me like Lysander loves Hermia...or like Demetrius loves Hermia. I mean...I mean...if I hadn't cried so hard, I could have pretty eyes like her! But look at me! No wonder Demetrius doesn't love me. I'm...I'm gross and snotty and dirty and...and...(trips over LYSANDER) And...here's Lysander! (*She pokes him with her foot.*) Are you alive?

(*LYSANDER awakes and is very enthusiastic.*)

LYSANDER: I'm alive, and I would run five hundred miles for you, sweet Helena!

(*LYSANDER grabs for her; she backs away.*)

HELENA: I think you're confused. I'm Helena...helllll-ennnnn-uh. You love Hermia.

LYSANDER: Hermia? Yuck! No, I've wised up...it's you I love! You're the loveliest, the most beautiful, the smartest, the prettiest, the smartestest....

HELENA: Why are you making fun of me? I have just had the worst day of my life, and Demetrius abandoned me, and I am stuck in this woods, and it's night time. I do NOT need you making fun of me. (*HELENA runs off.*)

LYSANDER: I would never make fun of the most beautiful woman in the whole world!
(*LYSANDER runs after HELENA.*)

HERMIA (*waking up*): Lysander! Lysander, are you there? (*HERMIA gets up.*)
Lysander? Where did you go? Gosh, these woods are scary after dark. (*HERMIA runs off.*)

ACT III
Scene 1
Another Part of the Wood

NARRATOR: Meanwhile, in an other other part of the woods...

(TITANIA lies asleep, USR. Enter BOTTOM, QUINCE, SNOUT, STARVELING, SNUG, and FLUTE, DSL.)

BOTTOM *(taking charge, of course)*: Alright, alright, alright...do we have everybody?

QUINCE *(stepping ahead of him)*: Yep. And this is the perfect spot for us to rehearse. This spot is our stage, those bushes over there are our backstage, and we're going to rehearse just as if the Duke and his bride were watching.

BOTTOM: Peter Quince?

QUINCE *(tired of him already)*: Yes, Nick Bottom?

BOTTOM: I think there are some things in our play that aren't going to go over so well with the audience.

QUINCE: Such as?

BOTTOM: There's the killing, and the lion...

STARVELING: Maybe we should leave them out.

SNUG: I'm okay with that.

QUINCE: We can't leave them out. They're practically the whole play.

BOTTOM: We should announce before the play that the lion's not real, it's just Snug, and nobody's dead, because it's just a play.

QUINCE: That could work. Now, we need to figure out how to do the moon and the wall for Pyramus and Thisbe to talk through...

SNOUT: We can't bring in a real moon!

SNUG: Can we bring in a real wall?

FLUTE: I can bring a flashlight...and someone could have some clay or bricks or something, and pretend to be the wall, and hold up their hand like this *(makes an O with her fingers)* for them to whisper through.

(General consensus that FLUTE is a genius. QUINCE opens up script.)

QUINCE: Okay, that's decided. Now, to rehearse. Let's start with Pyramus. You do your line, then go back behind the bushes, and then everybody else does their lines

(Awkward silence. BOTTOM is oblivious.)

QUINCE: Pyramus? *(Bottom is picking his teeth.)* Pyramus, it's your turn. *(BOTTOM is examining whatever he just got out of his teeth.)* Pyramus? Pyramus? *(Loudly)*
BOTTOM!

BOTTOM: Yes, Peter Quince?

QUINCE: We're starting with Pyramus *(Blank stare from BOTTOM.)* that's you.

BOTTOM: Of course it is!

QUINCE: Do your lines and then go behind the bushes, and Thisbe stands here *(Places FLUTE a few feet away.)*

BOTTOM: Gotcha, boss. Get ready...*(strikes a Very Serious Pose, CS.)*

(Enter PUCK, just DS of TITANIA.)

PUCK: What do I see here? Townsfolk...doing...are they doing a play? I'll stay and watch, and maybe I'll play, too.

BOTTOM: Oh, Thisbe...thy sweet breath does call to me, like flowers. *(Pantomimes hearing something, very big.)* But, hey...I heard a noise. I'm going to go check it out. Be right back, girl! *(BOTTOM exits behind the bushes.)*

PUCK: Well, that was one way of doing it...I can have some fun with this. *(PUCK runs behind the bushes.)*

FLUTE: Do I have to speak now?

QUINCE: That's what the script says.

FLUTE: Umm. Okay. *(FLUTE's voice goes up high. She may have stage fright. All of her words come out in one line.)*

Pyramusmylovedon'ttakelongyouaresohandsomeandIwillloveyouforeverand *(gulps for breath)* AndeverandIwillmeetyouatNinny'stomb.

(Silence. QUINCE is both impressed and horrified.)

QUINCE (*slowly*): Ummm. It's pronounced "nigh-NUS," and you don't need to get all your lines out at one time. You have to wait for Pyramus's line after "ever". (*Notices BOTTOM is missing.*) Pyramus! Bottom! "Forever" is your cue! Thisbe, do that last bit again.

FLUTE (*painfully slowly*): You...are...so...handsome...and...I...will...love...you...forever...and...ever.

(*PUCK's head pops up over the bushes at the exact moment that BOTTOM appears onstage, with a donkey's head in place of his own.*)

BOTTOM: And if I'm handsome, it's because of you-haw. (*His voice is a little... donkeyish.*)

(*General chaos among his fellow actors. Dropped scripts, screams, etc.*)

FLUTE: What IS that?

STARVELING: It's the beast of the woods!

QUINCE: Every man for himself!

(*QUINCE, STARVELING, SNOUT, FLUTE, SNUG scatter and run off stage in all different directions.*)

PUCK: Oh, this is going to be fun! (*Puck chases after SNUG, waving his arms and yelling.*) Boogedy-boogedy-boo!

(*BOTTOM is left standing alone onstage, completely confused and unaware that he now has a donkey's head.*)

BOTTOM: What was that all about? (*Thinks.*) Oh, I see...they're trying to play a trick on old Nick Bottom. Make me think the woods are scary. Well, I'm going to stay right here and they'll come back and see I'm brave. (*Starts to sing to himself*):

I am brave Nick Bottom,
This is my bravery song.
My friends thought they'd scare me,
But I will prove them wrong.
Oh, I will prove them wr-oooong-ong! (*Hee-haws loudly.*)

(*TITANIA wakes and tip-toes from her bed.*)

TITANIA: Where is this beautiful music coming from?

(*BOTTOM stops singing when he sees her.*)

TITANIA: Oh, please keep singing. You sound so beautiful...almost as beautiful as you look!

BOTTOM: Well, gosh, lady...I appreciate that. Say...do you know how to get out of this forest?

TITANIA: Oh, please don't leave! I think...I think this might be love at first sight! Come here, sit by me...*(TITANIA sits on the floor and pats a spot next to her. BOTTOM sits.)* I'm a queen, you know. Stay with me, and I'll assign fairies to bring you jewels, and they'll sing to you, and take care of you. Please say you'll stay!

BOTTOM: Okay.

TITANIA: Peaseblossom!

PEASEBLOSSOM: Here!

TITANIA: Cobweb!

COBWEB: At your service!

TITANIA: Moth!

MOTH: Right here!

TITANIA: And Mustardseed!

MUSTARDSEED: Aye, aye, your Queenship!

TITANIA: Take good care of this gentleman. Make sure nothing trips him as he walks, and make sure he has loads of good things to eat, and bring him fireflies for nightlights.

MUSTARDSEED: Sure thing.

TITANIA: And make sure to be polite and curtsy to him.

(THE FAIRIES all stare at her, at ridiculous BOTTOM, and at each other. TITANIA stomps her foot.)

TITANIA: Curtsy!

(ALL FAIRIES give exaggerated bows or curtsies (Moth throws herself on the ground.))

TITANIA: Oh, that's nice.

ACT III
Scene 2
Another part of the woods

NARRATOR: Meanwhile, in another other other part of the woods...

OBERON: I wonder what Titania saw when she woke up.... (*PUCK pops up on the other side of the stage.*) Oh, hey. Puck! Puck! (*PUCK comes to him.*) What's the news, my impish friend?

PUCK: Well...and I think you're going to like this: your ladyship is in love with a monster.

OBERON: Where did she find a monster?

PUCK: Well...I made one.

OBERON: Well done! Now...the other task. Did you give the rude Athenian the love potion, like I asked you to?

PUCK: Done—and with the girl right there, so he'd see her right away.

(*Ruckus offstage. HERMIA rushes on, DEMETRIUS on her heels.*)

OBERON: Perfect timing—here he is!

PUCK (*to the audience*): I recognize the girl, but that's not the guy I gave the potion to.

DEMETRIUS (*to HERMIA*): C'mon. Give me a chance.

HERMIA: I don't have time to give you a chance! I need to find Lysander!

DEMETRIUS (*to audience*): Why Lysander? I'm rich, and her dad likes ME.

HERMIA: You didn't do something to him, did you?

DEMETRIUS: Me? No. I haven't seen him.

HERMIA: Then you're no help. (*She leaves.*)

DEMETRIUS: Oh, I give up. (*Lies down; goes to sleep.*)

OBERON (*to PUCK*): What did you do?

PUCK: Is something wrong, boss?

OBERON: Is that the guy you put the potion on?

PUCK: Nooooo....but that was the girl that was *by* the guy.

OBERON: Fat lot of good that does the *other* girl. Back out you go...find the other girl... drive her here, and I'll take care of the portion.

PUCK: You can count on me! (*Puck exits.*)

OBERON (*putting potion on DEMETRIUS*): Okay, let's give this another shot...

(*Reenter PUCK.*)

PUCK: Yer majesty, the lady you were looking for is on her way. Oh, and the guy I actually gave the potion to...

OBERON: Let's hide. Their noise should awaken this boy and then we'll get things sorted out.

(*Puck and Oberon hide. Helena runs on, pursued by Lysander.*)

LYSANDER: Helena, I mean it! Why would I make fun of you? You're so pretty!

HELENA: Just lay off it, already. Go back to Hermia. You're supposed to be getting married.

LYSANDER: I was stupid when I proposed to her.

HELENA: You're not doing too much better now.

LYSANDER: But she can have Demetrius—he loves her, and not you.

HELENA: Rub it in, why don't you? (*Throws something at LYSANDER, hits DEMETRIUS.*)

DEMETRIUS (*waking up—totally starry-eyed over HELENA*): Oh, beautiful lady! Helena! How have I overlooked how wonderful you are?

NARRATOR: In accordance with various health and safety laws, as well as various rules regarding torture...I'm going to spare you the rest of Demetrius' speech.

HELENA: Oh, ha. You are both so funny. I don't know why you're torturing me, but you (*stomps foot*) need (*stomps foot*) to (*stomps foot*) STOP. (*Jumps up and down a few times.*)

LYSANDER: Yeah, Demetrius. Stop teasing the girl I love.

DEMETRIUS: Back off, Lysander. You've got Hermia.

LYSANDER: I only love Helena.

(Enter HERMIA.)

HERMIA *(dirty, scratched, limping)*: It's dark, but I could swear I hear my Lysander. *(Spots LYSANDER.)* Lysander! Why did you leave me alone?

LYSANDER: Why would I stay with you when I could follow Helena?

HERMIA: What are you talking about?

HELENA: Oh, great...you're in on it, too. Why do you all want to tease me so badly?

NARRATOR: I'm gonna spare you most of this next bit, too.

(HELENA and HERMIA mime arguing in the background.)

HELENA: And why you've got both of these guys pretending to be in love with me, I don't know!

LYSANDER: Oh, sweet Helena...I'M not pretending!

DEMETRIUS: He's pretending...I'M not!

LYSANDER *(grabbing a stick from the ground and getting in a fencing pose.)* En garde!

DEMETRIUS *(grabbing a stick)*: Oh, it's on!

(A classic duel follows. HELENA stands by, sobbing, while HERMIA tries to split them up.)

HERMIA: Come on, you guys...stop teasing her. You're taking it too far!

LYSANDER: Nothing is too far if it convinces Helena of my love!

HERMIA: What are you even talking about?

DEMETRIUS: He is trying to steal my girl!

HERMIA: I said I wasn't interested in you, Demetrius!

LYSANDER: Who said anything about you? It's Helena we're fighting over!

HERMIA (*to HELENA*): You stole my boyfriend!

HELENA: Oh, fine! If you want to play it that way! *Insert insult about height.*

HERMIA: Are you making fun of me for being *short*?

HELENA: If the very tiny shoe fits!

HERMIA: Well, just because I'm petite and you're some kind of...of...giraffe doesn't mean I can't take you down! (*Puts a flying tackle on HELENA and they wrestle while DEMETRIUS and LYSANDER continue to fence.*)

NARRATOR: Really, they've all had a very emotional day. We'll just let them get all of this out of their systems and then everyone will be friends...

(The fight gets tangled up so that the girls are, momentarily, fighting the boys. They stop, switch back, and go on sparring.)

NARRATOR: This might take a while.

(LYSANDER and DEMETRIUS's fight carries them off-stage. HELENA goes running off the other direction.)

HERMIA: I'm not done with you! (*HERMIA runs off after HELENA.*)

(OBERON and PUCK come out of hiding.)

OBERON: Okay, that was your fault. Are you doing this on purpose?

PUCK: To be fair, you just told me to find a guy wearing Athenian clothes. (*Pause.*) Still, you have to admit...that was kinda fun.

OBERON: I think we've had enough fun for one night.

PUCK: Awwww!

OBERON: I know, I know...but it'll be dawn soon. We should set things right. You drive those guys as far away from each other as possible. Don't let them hurt each other, but wear them out so they can't help but go to sleep. Then, I want you to put the potion in Lysander's eyes—remember which one he is? (*PUCK nods.*) ONLY Lysander's eyes. Not anyone else's, got it?

PUCK (*pouting*): Got it.

OBERON (*sighing*): And then I suppose I should give Titania the antidote and we can have a talk about boarding school.

PUCK: Better shake a leg, then. The moon is getting low and the stars are fading already...

OBERON: Good thing fairies are speedy, then. Okay, then. I'll do my work, you do yours. (*OBERON exits.*)

PUCK: Well, then. (*Mimicking DEMETRIUS's voice*): Oi, Lysander! You numpty! Come and get me! (*PUCK runs off the same direction that DEMETRIUS and LYSANDER earlier went.*)

LYSANDER (*off-stage*): WHAT did you call me? I'll have your head! (*LYSANDER runs onto the stage, waving his stick wildly.*)

PUCK (*Still sounding like DEMETRIUS, from opposite side of stage from where he exited*): I called you a numpty, you numpty! What're you gonna do about it? (*NOTE: this might need to be a recorded sound cue rather than a spoken line, depending on the acting space. LYSANDER goes charging off that direction. PUCK pops up on the opposite side of the stage. Doing an impression of LYSANDER.*): Hey, Demetrius! You big *insert insult here*. I'm right here! Hey! (*Ducks offstage.*)

(*Demetrius thunders down the SL aisle, looks around madly, runs back up the other side.*)

NARRATOR: Imagine this goes on for quite a while. (*We hear PUCK laughing madly, from various points around the theater.*) But, eventually, even magically-drugged angry young men get tired...

(*LYSANDER comes on from SL.*)

LYSANDER: I'm gonna gotcha, Demetrius. Just let me...(*He sits down on the floor, DSR, drops his stick, and goes to sleep.*)

(*DEMETRIUS come son from SR.*)

DEMETRIUS: If I weren't so tired, I would totally catch you, Lysander. But...(*He sits down on the floor, DSL, drops his stick, and goes to sleep. PUCK appears from behind a rock.*)

PUCK: Seriously, I thought these two were never going to wear themselves out.

(*HELENA enters from USL, even more bedraggled.*)

HELENA: I'm sure I've been here before...but I've just been going in circles and I know I passed that tree with the weird branch at least three times and...and...*(HELENA sinks down, CL, and goes to sleep.)*

PUCK: Ugh. Just three. I need two pairs before I can fix this mess. *(We hear noise, SR, and HERMIA comes dragging on—leaves in her hair, still clutching her luggage, a complete mess.)*

HERMIA: Eloping sounded so romantic when Lysander suggested it. Now, I just wish I were home, and in bed...oh, bed...

(She starts to wander towards where DEMETRIUS and is lying. PUCK jumps out from behind the rock and takes her arm. PUCK leads her closer to LYSANDER.)

PUCK: Oh, no. Over here where the right guy can see you.

HERMIA *(mumbling)*: Okay, helpful random guy with wings...*(she sets her bag on the floor, puts her head down on it, and goes to sleep.)*

PUCK: That's it...off to sleep with you...*(HERMIA snores rather dramatically.)* That'll do. *(PUCK moves over to LYSANDER.)* Okay, pal. Let me take a moment and fix what I did wrong...*(puts potion on LYSANDER's eyes.)* Okay. Sleep it off...you'll see the right girl when you wake, and all will be well.

(PUCK exits. Lights down on stage.)

ACT IV
Scene 1
The Wood

NARRATOR: The same part of the forest, but a bit later.

(Lights up on stage. HERMIA and LYSANDER sleep DSR, HELENA and DEMETRIUS sleep SL. Enter TITANIA, BOTTOM, and FAIRY TRAIN from audience; light picks out OBERON, hiding at the edge of the stage.)

TITANIA *(to BOTTOM)*: Come, sit here in this pretty meadow. I'll brush your mane and we can put roses behind your ears.

BOTTOM: Where's Peaseblossom?

PEASEBLOSSOM: Here!

BOTTOM: Scratch my nose? *(PEASEBLOSSOM does so, looking slightly grossed out.)*

BOTTOM: Cobweb?

COBWEB: Yessir?

BOTTOM: Can you bring me some honey? And do be careful...I don't want you to get stung or spill the honey.

COBWEB: Your wish is my command. *(Runs off.)*

BOTTOM: Mustardseed, are you here?

MUSTARDSEED: I am, indeed. What can I do you for?

BOTTOM: Can you please help Peaseblossom with scratching? Right here, I think. *(Taps his cheek.)* I really need to shave...I seem to be getting kind of hairy.

TITANIA: Oh, no...I think you're perfect!

BOTTOM: Thanks most kindly, Lady. But...but I find I'm getting sleepy. Would you mind if I closed my eyes?

TITANIA: No. Actually, I find myself growing weary. Fairies! To sleep with us!

(TITANIA, BOTTOM, and remaining members of the FAIRY TRAIN, arrange themselves on the ground and go to sleep. TITANIA is still scratching BOTTOM's head. Enter OBERON and PUCK.)

OBERON: You know, Puck...I'm starting to feel kind of bad for the trick I played on her.

NARRATOR makes some sign of approval.

OBERON: Well, here we go. I'll give her the antidote, and then you can take this donkey's head off of this poor guy, and then she and I can have a good conversation about parenting.

PUCK: Sounds like a plan, boss.

OBERON: Why did you make him a donkey, anyway?

PUCK: I dunno...it just seemed to suit him.

(OBERON kneels by TITANIA and puts a smudge of potion on her eyes.)

OBERON: Be as you were, see the world honestly, and please forgive me.

TITANIA: Oberon? Is that you? I had the weirdest dream...there was a dog or something...

OBERON: Maybe a donkey?

(OBERON points at BOTTOM. TITANIA shrieks. BOTTOM stirs. OBERON pats him on the head.)

OBERON: Settle down there, fellow. *(To TITANIA):* Sorry, it was a cheap trick. But here we are. *(To PUCK):* Make him as he was...and I hope it's an improvement. *(PUCK removes the donkey's head.)* Well, I guess you've got to work with what you've got.

(Sound cue: a morning bird call.)

PUCK: It's morning.

(OBERON stands and helps TITANIA up.)

OBERON: We'd best be off before these mortals wake up.

TITANIA: They really are so cute when they sleep...*(she pulls their coats up over them and tucks them in.)*

(All FAIRIES exit, leaving HELENA, DEMETRIUS, HERMIA, LYSANDER and BOTTOM asleep.)

(The sound of talking offstage. Enter THESEUS, HIPPOLYTA, PHILOSTRATE, and (trailing behind) EGEUS.)

THESEUS: And this is one of my favorite places to hunt.

PHILOSTRATE: I thought this was where your majesty came to write poetry...

THESEUS: That, too. Very manly poetry, of course.

HIPPOLYTA: Ah. You come out and hunt for rhymes.

THESEUS *(turns and smiles at her)*: You really get me, Polly.

(HERMIA lets out a really loud, terrifying snore. The entire party jumps behind HIPPOLYTA, who strikes a heroic stance.)

HIPPOLYTA: Who goes there? Show yourself!

(HERMIA snores again. EGEUS emerges from his hiding spot.)

EGEUS: I know that sound...that's my DAUGHTER!

NARRATOR: I'll admit, I'm not actually sure what Hermia's dad is doing out here...

EGEUS *(uncovering each lover as he names them)*: Here is Hermia...here is that rascal Lysander...and, over here, dear Demetrius, and, here is my daughter's old friend, Helena. What on earth are they doing out here, and sleeping so soundly?

THESEUS *(to PHILOSTRATE)*: Wake them up, okay?

(PHILOSTRATE blows Reveille on a slide whistle. All the lovers jump to their feet and look around in panic.)

THESEUS: Good morning, young people!

LYSANDER *(stammering)*: Your dukeship! Your majesty! Hermia's...dad. Ummm. Fancy meeting you here!

EGEUS: Hermia...*(disgustedly)* Lysander. Would you care to explain yourselves?

NARRATOR: Once again, this is NOT the best way to make a good impression on the father of the girl you want to marry...

HIPPOLYTA: I'm actually curious what *all* of them are doing out here. It seems strange that such bitter enemies as Demetrius and Lysander should be so quiet together.

HERMIA: Dad...your majesties...really, it's a long story and...ummm...

LYSANDER (*braving up*): I'll be honest...Hermia and I were going to elope to my aunt's house and get married. This is all my fault. (*EGEUS makes a threatening move towards LYSANDER; HERMIA jumps between them.*)

HERMIA: But I agreed to it!

THESEUS (*raising a hand to pause them*): But what brings these other two out here?

NARRATOR: I'm really looking forward to this explanation...

HELENA (*steps forward*): I don't know WHY I told him...but I told Demetrius what they had planned...

(*DEMETRIUS steps forward and takes her hand. The adults are, of course, startled.*)

DEMETRIUS: You were kind to me, and followed me forth to keep me from acting on my stupid jealousy, and I am so glad for your loyalty.

HIPPOLYTA: I sense there's been a little bit of a change here?

DEMETRIUS: Yes, your highness. I've come to my senses and realized what a bad idea it is to chase a girl who loves someone else when I have the most perfect girl in the whole world right here.

EGEUS: But...but...you're supposed to be my son-in-law!

DEMETRIUS: Would you settle for a friend-in-law?

(*EGEUS pouts a little.*)

HERMIA: Dad...I'm sorry we tried to elope. (*LYSANDER looks disappointed.*) I still want to marry Lysander, and I would never marry Demetrius...

HELENA: What are you saying about MY boyfriend?

NARRATOR: Ooh...think carefully, Hermia

HERMIA (*tactfully*): I'm saying...umm...that you two are so perfect for each other that it would be like ruining a work of art to split you up.

(*HELENA is very smug about this.*)

HERMIA: Anyway, Daddy...if you could just give Lysander a chance?

(EGEUS is thinking.)

THESEUS: C'mon, Egeus. Do it. It can be your wedding gift to Polly and I...

(PHILOSTRATE looks at his watch.)

PHILOSTRATE: Sir! Speaking of your wedding, we've got loads to do before tonight.

THESEUS: Come with us, all of you. You can be our special guests for the play tonight.

(EVERYONE but BOTTOM leaves the stage. It is quiet for a moment. Then BOTTOM gives a might snorting hee-haw and sits up.)

BOTTOM: Did I miss my cue? *(Looks around.)* Good grief...I slept through rehearsal. And such a strange dream I had. *(Sound effect of a rumbling stomach.)* And I'm starving. I wonder if we have any hay at home...

(BOTTOM exits.)

ACT IV
Scene 2
Quince's House

NARRATOR: While Bottom has been otherwise occupied, his castmates have been trying to make tails or heads of what they saw...

(Enter QUINCE, FLUTE, SNOUT, and STARVELING.)

QUINCE: Starveling, did you check at Bottom's house?

STARVELING: I did...and nobody's seen him all night.

FLUTE: If we can't find him, we can't do the play.

QUINCE: He's the only one I know who can play Pyramus.

SNOUT: There goes the money they were going to pay us...

STARVELING: We could've been set for life if we'd done the play...

QUINCE: Well, we're running out of time...I'm afraid we'll need to let the Duke's man know we can't do it.

FLUTE: They'll be so disappoint—*(FLUTE is cut off by BOTTOM rushing in.)*

BOTTOM: Have no fear! I'm here—Nick Bottom has arrived and the show can go on!

QUINCE: Where have you *been*?

BOTTOM: Oh, Peter Quince, I have a story to tell that will shake your bones, set your blood on fire, and turn your spleen to ice. But there's no time for that—we've got a play to put on!

(ALL exit.)

ACT V
Scene 1
Theseus' Palace

(THESEUS and HIPPOLYTA enter.)

HIPPOLYTA: That may have been the strangest story I've heard any four people swear to.

THESEUS: I know...you have to kind of wonder what REALLY happened last night to bring so many changes.

(LYSANDER, HERMIA, DEMETRIUS, and HELENA enter, ushered by PHILOSTRATE.)

PHILOSTRATE *(gesturing to the seats that are arranged as at a theater)*: Ladies and gentlemen...your newly-married majesties...please be seated. The actors tell me that they are almost ready to begin.

(ALL but PHILOSTRATE sit.)

HIPPOLYTA: Which actors are these, and what play will we see?

PHILOSTRATE *(pulls out his notebook and starts to read)*: These are various workers from Athens, and they are offering *The Most Lamentable*..*(BOTTOM leaps out and cuts him off)*

BOTTOM: Ladies and gentlemen, lords and ladies, guys and dolls...we, the Merrymaking Mechanicals of Athens are proud to present...*(QUINCE leaps out and collars BOTTOM, hauling him backstage. We hear some scuffling backstage. QUINCE emerges, somewhat ruffled.)*

QUINCE: Sirs, madams...we would ask that you lend your ear to our play, the most merry and tragic tale of Pyramus and Thisbe, two lovers separated by fate, their parents, and this wall. *(Drags out SNOOT, dressed in grey and carrying a container of Play-Doh.)* Ladies and gentlemen, our play will involve some scenes of violence that may frighten you. Please know that none of the blood is real, and we do not have a real lion, and nobody will really be dead. Please enjoy!

SNOOT *(slowly)*: 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 clay (*mushes Play-Doh into a donut*), this rough-cast, doth show
That I am that same wall; the truth is so:
And this (*holds up Play-Doh donut*) the cranny is, right and sinister,
Through which the fearful lovers are to whisper.

DEMETRIUS: That is the most talkative wall I've ever seen.

(*SNOUT shushes him.*)

SNOUT: Now, here is our hero, Pyramus.

(*Enter BOTTOM, as PYRAMUS.*)

BOTTOM: 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.

(*SNOUT 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,
Curs'd be thy stones for thus deceiving me! (*BOTTOM kicks SNOUT.*)

LYSANDER: If I were the wall, I'd kick him back. (*SNOUT kicks back.*) Ah. A wall after my own heart. (*BOTTOM glares at him. LYSANDER shushes himself.*)

(*Enter FLUTE as Thisbe.*)

FLUTE: 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. (*As FLUTE*): Ugh...Peter Quince, do I have to kiss him?

(*QUINCE's head pops out from backstage.*)

QUINCE: It's pretend! Stay in character! (*He disappears again.*)

(*FLUTE sighs and makes a kissing noise towards the Wall.*)

FLUTE: Good enough.

BOTTOM: I spy a voice! Now, to look and see if I can hear her face!

FLUTE: Oh, yay. It's my own true love.

BOTTOM: Not Shafalus to Procrus was so true.

FLUTE (*flatly*): To Shafalus to Procrus, so I to you.

BOTTOM: Oh, kiss me through the hole in this vile wall!

(SNOUT holds the Play-Doh donut as far away from his body as possible. FLUTE makes a face. The two "lovers" assume the same pose as those kissing Dutch kid figures you see in some people's yards, their lips several feet away from the wall and from each other.)

BOTTOM: Ah! Sweetness! Will you at Nina's...Nino's...Ninny...

QUINCE (*hissing offstage*): Nigh-nus!

BOTTOM: ...at that guy's tomb meet me straightaway?

FLUTE: Tide life, tide death, I come without delay.

SNOUT (*smushing handful of Play-Doh*): Thus have I, Wall, my part discharged so;
And, being done, thus Wall away doth go.

(SNOUT, BOTTOM, and FLUTE leave. Enter QUINCE with a flashlight and SNUG, dressed as a lion.)

HERMIA: I think I see the fearsome lion...

SNUG: 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.

HELENA: Oh, the lion is ADORABLE!

(SNUG roars. The audience shrieks and applauds.)

DEMETRIUS: But who is the other guy?

QUINCE (*stiffly, turning on flashlight*): I am the moon.

(The audience applauds.)

FLUTE (*as Thisbe*): This is old Ninny's tomb.

QUINCE (*frustrated*): Nigh-nus!

FLUTE: Oh, where is my love?

(*SNUG, as LION, pounces out at her and roars. FLUTE runs off and SNOUT grabs her scarf and wrestles with it like a big cat.*)

(*Enter BOTTOM. SNUG runs off, leaving the scarf.*)

BOTTOM: Sweet Moon, I thank thee for thy sunny beams;
I thank thee, Moon, for shining now so bright;
For, by thy gracious golden, glittering gleams,
I trust to take of truest Thisbe 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, stained with blood?

Approach, ye Furies fell!

O Fates, come, come;

Cut thread and thrum;

Quail, rush, conclude, and quell! (*BOTTOM makes a big deal of this...howling, rolling around, pounding his chest.*)

BOTTOM: O wherefore, Nature, didst thou lions frame,
Since a lion ate my girlfriend?

Which is—no, no—which was the sweetest girl

That liv'd, that lov'd, that lik'd, that look'd with cheer.

Come, tears, confound!

Oh, my heart doth break,

I feel it snap like a cheap pencil

And its chambers tear like paper.

Oh, woe, poor tattered heart, woe!

Thus die I, thus, thus, thus.

Now am I dead,

Now am I fled;

My soul is in the sky.

Tongue, lose thy light!

Moon, take thy flight!

Now die, die, die, die, die. (*BOTTOM collapses, twitches, then pops up one more time.*)

I die! (*Big groan, then flops to floor and finally lies still.*)

HELENA: Is he...is he actually dead?

BOTTOM (*popping up*): Nick Bottom lives on, but poor, poor Pyramus is, alas, dead. (*He dies again, very dramatically.*)

(*FLUTE enters.*)

FLUTE: Drat, I left my scarf. But it looks like Pyramus found it! Thanks, sweetie! (She takes the scarf.) Huh. Are you sleeping, my love? 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.

And...oh, my heart breaks. It breaks.

Farewell, friends.

Thus Thisbe ends.

Adieu, adieu, adieu. (*She falls to the floor.*)

(*Silence.*)

THESEUS: Wait...was that it?

LYSANDER: Oh, and now only Wall and Moonshine are left to bury the dead.

(*BOTTOM pops up again.*)

BOTTOM: Remember—we're not dead! (*BOTTOM, QUINCE, SNOUT, STARVELING, and FLUTE all come out to take bows.*)

(*HIPPOLYTA pats FLUTE on the head.*)

HIPPOLYTA: Well roared, Lion. Well shone, Moon.

HERMIA: And well died, Pyramus and Thisbe.

QUINCE: Did you really like it?

THESEUS: You did very well with the material. And, now...goodnight to all of you.

(The ACTORS go one way, the NOBILITY the other way. PHILOSTRATE stops in the middle, looks around, and shrugs before he leaves.)

(Enter PUCK from the wings.)

PUCK: Nighttime again...time to tidy up and get some sleep.

(ALL FAIRIES enter and begin to strike the set.)

PUCK *(to audience)*: I hope our play has not offended,

If it has...

Think but this, and all is mended,

That you haven just slept here

While all this nonsense did appear.

Ladies and gents, do not be mad

If you pardon us, we would be glad.

And, as I am an honest Puck,

If we have pushed our luck

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 yours truly shall restore amends.

(PUCK starts to exit, then NARRATOR comes onstage and whispers in his ear.)

Oh, yeah...but no refunds.

