

# **WHERE THE WILD THYME BLOWS**

by Rebecca Salomonsson

Based on “A Midsummer Night’s Dream” by William Shakespeare

# WHERE THE WILD THYME BLOWS

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### **Production Note:**

*Where the Wild Thyme Blows* has a flexible cast of 23 scripted roles. If you have less than 23 actors, the fairies (other than Titania and Oberon) can be combined. If you have more than 23 actors, more fairies can be added and the lines divided among them. Philostrate can also be divided into two harried wedding planners and a name of your choosing given to him or her (I suggest Bob).

The Mechanicals, the Fairies, and Philostrate can all be played by either gender. If Flute is cast as female, simply remove the line, “Let me not play a woman. I have a beard coming.” Or you can leave it in, for the humor of it.

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### *Cast of Characters*

#### *The Fairies:*

Titania – the Fairy Queen  
Oberon – the Fairy King  
Puck – Oberon’s lead messenger  
Mustardseed  
Mote  
Peaseblossom  
Cobweb  
Muskrose  
Eglantine

#### *The Court:*

Theseus – the Duke  
Hippolyta – the soon to be Duchess  
Egeus – Hermia’s father  
Philostrate – the Master of the Revels  
Hermia – a young lady in love with Lysander  
Lysander – a young gentleman in love with Hermia  
Helena – a young lady in love with Demetrius  
Demetrius – a young gentleman in love with Hermia

#### *The Mechanicals:*

Nick Bottom  
Peter Quince  
Starveling  
Francis Flute  
Tom Snout  
Snug

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*A forest. Enter PUCK, MUSTARDSEED, MOTE, PEASEBLOSSOM, COBWEB, EGLANTINE, and MUSKROSE creeping onto stage.*

**PUCK.** Shhhhhhhh! We just put a toad in a lady's purse. (*Loud scream from off stage.*)

I think she just found it - what could be worse? (*He and other fairies laugh hysterically.*)

**COBWEB.** Fairies of the woods are we,  
We'll tell the tale you're here to see.  
My name is Cobweb, and Puck is he,  
This Mote, this Muskrose, and Mustardseed.

**EGLANTINE.** She is Peaseblossom, and I Eglantine,  
Watch the mischief we'll soon design!  
We wander through this forest by night,  
Causing ladies to scream with fright,

**MUSKROSE.** Or misleading travelers to get them lost,  
And watching them by the winds be tossed.

**MUSTARDSEED.** A bit of mischief we do enjoy,  
But we're as harmless as a child's toy.

**MOTE.** We're here today to tell you a tale  
Where love and duty to self prevail.

**PEASEBLOSSOM.** But there's mischief, too, and jealousy;  
Lo' what fools these mortals be!

**MUSKROSE.** You'll understand our meaning soon;  
Fairies, the mortals now enter the room! (*Fairies scatter to hiding places; Enter THESEUS and HIPPOLYTA.*)

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**THESEUS.** Fair Hippolyta, our nuptial hour draws on apace. Soon we'll be married and on a ship sailing for the Bahamas. But, I fear these next days will drag on and on!

**HIPPOLYTA.** Not so, dear Theseus. There's still so much to do! I have to make sure the cake is ready – hopefully they got the frosting right this time – pick up my dress from the tailor's – they put a pearl in the wrong place, so I had to make them do it over; schedule a practice run with the hair stylist – our last three tries just haven't been right; make up the seating arrangement by alphabetical order and register for gifts at the butcher's, the baker's, and the candlestick maker's. By the way, your family still has not RSVP'd.

**THESEUS.** I told you a hundred times they're coming. Now would you please relax? Everything will be done on time. You know, you are marrying a Duke. I do have servants for this sort of thing. Take Philostrate, for example. Why don't you give him a few things to take care of? He's our Master of Revels, after all. Ah, here he comes now. *(Enter PHILOSTRATE, frazzled and stressed, mumbling and checking things off a long scroll that reaches his feet.)*

**HIPPOLYTA.** I've given him a few things to do. Philostrate, have you reminded the musicians that they must play classical music during dinner and dance music after?

**PHILOSTRATE.** About seven times, madam.

**HIPPOLYTA.** And what about the tent? They sent over the wrong color. I must have egg shell white, not cream white.

**PHILOSTRATE.** Yes, madam. They are rectifying the matter as we speak.

**HIPPOLYTA.** And what about the entertainment? I do not, I repeat, do not want jugglers, sword swallows, or fire eaters. I must have actors!

**PHILOSTRATE.** All the acting troupes are booked up, madam. They're all on tour for the queen.

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**HIPPOLYTA.** What? That is unacceptable! Find me an acting troupe, and find me one now, or I will replace you faster than Lady Macbeth's madness comes upon her. Do I make myself clear?

**PHILOSTRATE.** Yes, madam. (*Enter EGEUS, DEMETRIUS, LYSANDER, and HERMIA.*)

**EGEUS.** Happy be Theseus, our renowned duke!

**THESEUS.** Thanks, good Egeus. What's the news with you?

**EGEUS.** Full of vexation come I, with complaint against my daughter Hermia. Stand forth Demetrius. My lord, this man has my consent to marry her. Stand forth Lysander. And, my gracious duke, this man has tricked her into falling in love with him. She refuses to marry Demetrius. I'm just bedside myself! I don't know what to do with her, honestly.

**THESEUS.** What say you, Hermia? Is this true? You know our laws require you to obey your father.

**HERMIA.** Yes, sir. But I do not love Demetrius.

**THESEUS.** Love has very little to do with anything in the 16<sup>th</sup> century.

**HERMIA.** So I've noticed.

**EGEUS.** My lord, I have told her that the laws of our land say she must do as I say or I may commit her to a nunnery.

**THESEUS.** Your father speaks true, Hermia. Either follow his command or live the rest of your days within the walls of a convent.

**HIPPOLYTA.** That's a bit extreme, don't you think, darling?

**THESEUS.** Hey, the law is the law. I'm actually going easy on her, to tell you the truth. I *could* have her beheaded. (*Everyone gasps.*) I don't write the laws, I just enforce them. So what say you, Hermia? Either marry Demetrius or live as a nun, or... (*He draws his finger across his neck.*)

**DEMETRIUS.** Don't be a fool, Hermia. I'm not that bad a guy. Lysander, ol' buddy ol' pal, would you really rather see her dead than married to me? Come on, Hermia, marry me! Regale me with math problems over the dinner table each evening, sing lullabies of

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mathematical formulas as we tuck little Demetria and Hermia into their cradles at night. What do you say?

**HERMIA.** No! You only like me for my math skills.

**DEMETRIUS.** It's true. They fascinate me.

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

**THESEUS.** I trust you'll make the right decision, Hermia. Come, Hippolyta. We have much to do. Come, Philostrate. You have much to do. Come Egeus and Demetrius, too. I wish to discuss last night's game with you. (*Exiting.*) Did you see that interception by Harry the Brave? I mean I've never seen anything like it... (*Exit all except Lysander and Hermia.*)

**HERMIA.** Lysander my love! What shall we do?

My father says I cannot marry you.

The Duke has said he'll have my head

If I Demetrius refuse to wed.

**LYSANDER.** Excellent rhyme, darling.

**HERMIA.** Thank you. I've been working on that all morning. I knew the duke would side with my father on this one. But seriously, Lysander. What are we going to do?

**LYSANDER.** Blast this 16th Century! You know, some of the top scholars are predicting that in future centuries, women will be allowed to make their own decisions about all kinds of things, from who they marry, to what profession they wish to pursue, to what type of horse and carriage they buy.

**HERMIA.** Really? I'm just dying to have one of those new SUV's.

**LYSANDER.** What's an SUV?

**HERMIA.** A Shakespearean Utterance Vehicle. The horses are trained to quote Shakespeare as you ride.

**LYSANDER.** Hmm. Sounds expensive. Anyway, I have a plan. I have an old aunt on the other side of the forest who loves me like a son. I say we hide out at her place for a while, just until things cool



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down around here and then we get married and live happily ever after.

**HERMIA.** That sounds like a good plan to me. I would do anything to get out of marrying Demetrius. (*Enter HELENA.*)

Helena, how now?

**HELENA.** Huh?

**HERMIA.** What's up?

**HELENA.** What's up? I'll tell you what's up. I've never felt so rejected in my whole life. This is the worst thing that's ever happened to me. Worst. Ever. And now I have to run into you two. You, without a care in the world, so happy and in love. I think I'm going to puke!

**HERMIA.** Actually, the Duke threatened chop off my head if I refuse to marry Demetrius.

**HELENA.** Oh poor you! No offense Hermia, but cry me a river. I wish the Duke would make *me* marry Demetrius, you ungrateful lout.

**HERMIA.** Now Helena, is that anyway to treat your best friend? I know you're in love with Demetrius, and I know he has rejected you, but don't take it out on me.

**HELENA.** Rejected me? Is that all it was?

For, ere Demetrius looked on Hermia's eyne  
He hailed down oaths that he was only mine.  
And when this hail some heat from Hermia felt  
So he dissolved and showers of oaths did melt.

**HERMIA.** What does that mean?

**HELENA.** He asked me to marry him and then he met you and decided he likes you better.

**HERMIA.** Oh. Well, look, you don't have to worry about us anymore. Lysander and I are going to run away tonight. Then we'll probably elope in Vegas. (*To Demetrius.*) I'm not really into big weddings, anyway. (*To Helena.*) I'm sure Demetrius will forget all about me within a week or two.

**HELENA.** You really think so?

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**HERMIA.** He only thinks he loves me because I helped him with a math problem he was trying to solve.

**HELENA.** What was it?

**HERMIA.** The square root of two. See all you do is-

**LYSANDER.** Well, darling Hermia, we better get going?

**HERMIA.** Cheer up, Helena, my friend. You only have to do a few math problems to impress Demetrius. He'll come around. You'll see.

**LYSANDER.** Toodles, Helena! Good luck. *(Hermia and Lysander exit.)*

**HELENA.** But I'm terrible at math! *(She sighs.)*

How happy some o're other some can be.

Through Athens I am thought as fair as she.

But what of that? Demetrius thinks not so.

He will not know what all but he do know. *(Moment of*

*realization.)* Wait a minute! I have an idea. I'll go tell him that Hermia and Lysander are running away together. He'll be so grateful for the information that he'll fall instantly, madly in love with me and forget all about her. It makes perfect sense! It's fool-proof! *(She exits. Fairies come out from their hiding places.)*

**PUCK.** Away young Helena goes to tell

Demetrius, whom she loves so well,

That Hermia, whom he wishes to wed,

Has run away with Lysander instead.

**MOTE.** Helena hopes that her efforts will make Demetrius sit up and notice take.

**PEASEBLOSSOM.** And perhaps by letting him in on the secret, He'll give his heart back to her and let her keep it. *(Enter QUINCE, SNUG, BOTTOM, FLUTE, SNOUT and STARVELING. Bottom distributes scripts to the players.)*

**MUSTARDSEED.** Meanwhile in another part of the wood,  
A band of workers in brotherhood  
Are met together to rehearse a play  
Intended for the Duke's wedding day.

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**MUSKROSE.** Watch a moment what they discuss;  
Fairies! Away, before they see us!

**QUINCE.** Is all our company here? I have very exciting news. I have just received a telegram from Philostrate, the Duke's Master of Revels. We have been asked to perform at the wedding of the Duke and new Duchess! How such an honor fell to us, I have no idea. I didn't know anyone knew of our existence. And I'm certain there are many more talented acting troupes out there. But no matter. It is us they have chosen. And so, the play we are performing is entitled, "The most lamentable comedy and most cruel death of Pyramus and Thisbe."

**BOTTOM.** I love this play! A lamentable comedy! Is there anything better than a lamentable comedy? Now, good Peter Quince, call forth your actors by the scroll and say what roles we are to play. Masters, spread yourselves. *(The players scramble and line up in a straight line facing the audience.)*

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

**BOTTOM.** Ready. Name what part I am to play. I can't stand the suspense!

**QUINCE.** You, Nick Bottom, are to play Pyramus.

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

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

**BOTTOM.** Lovely. Just lovely. I'll get to cry real tears this time. I just taught myself to cry on command, just in case such an opportunity would arise. Watch. *(He squeezes his face, trying to cry.)*

**QUINCE.** I'll bring the onions just in case. Francis Flute, the bellows-mender.

**FLUTE.** Here, Peter Quince. Oh, I love the first day of rehearsal! What's my part?

**QUINCE.** Flute, you must take the part of Thisbe.

**FLUTE.** What is Thisbe? A wand'ring knight? A brave dragon slayer perhaps?

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**QUINCE.** Thisbe is the lady that Pyramus loves. *(The others try to stifle laughter. Quince silences them with a look.)*

**FLUTE.** Nay, faith, let me not play a woman. I have a beard coming. And besides, you promised I could play the hero in our next production. I've been working on my swordplay. *(He demonstrates, very poorly.)*

**QUINCE.** Keep working on it. You're almost there. Robin Starveling, the tailor.

**STARVELING.** Here, Peter Quince. What role are you giving me?

**QUINCE.** You are to play Thisbe's mother.

**STARVELING.** I can do that. I play an excellent mother figure. *(He offers a plate of baked goods around.)* Muffins, anyone? I baked them this morning.

**QUINCE.** Tom Snout, the tinker.

**SNOUT.** Here Peter Quince. I'm so nervous! Tell me what part I have!

**QUINCE.** You will play Pyramus' father.

**SNOUT.** His father? Does he have many lines? I get so nervous, you know? I threw up on opening night of the last show we did.

**FLUTE.** Yes, the ladies in the front row that night will never forget it.

**QUINCE.** Don't worry. It's a small part. But don't eat before the performance, just in case. Snug, the joiner.

**SNUG.** Yes, Peter. I don't know if I should be a part of this play. You know how slow I am at learning lines.

**QUINCE.** Yes, yes, I thought of that. That is why you shall play the part of the lion. All you have to do is roar. All right men, study your parts and have them memorized for this evening. I'm going to collect props and costumes. Meet back here tonight when the moon shines. *(Mechanicals exit, fairies appear.)*

**EGLANTINE.** The third component of this story of ours, Involves a creature with magical powers.

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**COBWEB.** His name is Oberon, the Fairy King, (*OBERON and TITANIA enter from opposite doors.*)

**PUCK.** Look, here he comes. What a fierce brow he brings!

**PEASEBLOSSOM.** And look, there stands the Fairy Queen.

**MOTE.** Titania's her name; we haven't been seen.

**MUSTARDSEED.** Let's divide between them and listen a while.

**PUCK.** I wonder why these two never smile. (*Puck, Muskrose, and Mustardseed stand behind Oberon, while Mote, Peaseblossom, and Eglantine stand behind Titania. Cobweb looks at each of them and eventually sits on the floor between them, not taking sides.*)

**OBERON.** Ill met by moonlight, proud Titania.

**TITANIA.** Ill met by any light, jealous Oberon.

**OBERON.** Come, enough of this fighting. I am your husband. This is ridiculous. Hand over that boy you're keeping and we'll be done with it.

**TITANIA.** How dare you ask such a thing of me? You want the child to be your page. That's hardly better than a servant, and you know he is like a son to me. I loved his mother like I would a sister, but she, being mortal, died when her son was born. I swore to her on her deathbed that I would raise him like my own, and for her sake I will not give him up.

**OBERON.** You'll give him up soon enough.

**TITANIA.** Never. Now if you wish to drop this whole subject and end this quarrel then go with me and dance at our moonlight revelries. If not, I will do my best to avoid you until you come to your senses.

**OBERON.** Give me that boy and I will go with you.

**TITANIA.** Not for the fairy kingdom. Fairies, away. We'll fight outright if I longer stay. (*Titania exits with the fairies from her side. Cobweb hesitates, then follows them.*)

**OBERON.** Well, go your way then. You'll be sorry for this injury you have caused me. (*Turning to fairies.*) My gentle Puck, Muskrose, and Mustardseed, I have an errand for you three. I once showed you a little purple flower that grows in the woods. Do you

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remember it? The juice from that flower, when placed on the eyes of someone sleeping, will make them fall madly in love with the next living creature they see. Fetch me that flower quickly.

**PUCK.** We'll put a girdle round about the earth in forty minutes.

*(The fairies exit, leaving Oberon alone.)*

**OBERON.** Once I have this flower I'll drop the juice of it into Titania's eyes while she sleeps. The next thing she sees when she wakes – be it lion, bear, wolf or bull – she'll pursue it with the soul of love. She'll forget about the boy and I'll steal him away to be my page. But who comes here? I am invisible and I will overhear their conference. *(He hides. Enter Hippolyta and Theseus.)*

**HIPPOLYTA.** Philostrate will be the death of me! I'm firing him right after the wedding. He's done nothing that I asked.

**THESEUS.** My dear, he's done at least the first ten things on that list you gave him.

**HIPPOLYTA.** Yes, well, there are at least twenty more for him to get to before our wedding day.

**THESEUS.** I'm sure he's working as hard as he can. He'll get everything done, and if he doesn't, everything will be fine. We'll still get married and have each other. *(Hippolyta starts to cry.)*

**THESEUS.** What? What did I do?

**HIPPOLYTA.** I thought you wanted a nice wedding as much as I do!

**THESEUS.** I do, darling. All I'm saying is that the wedding itself doesn't have to be so perfect.

**HIPPOLYTA.** If our wedding isn't perfect, how can our marriage be?

**THESEUS.** Because they aren't—

**HIPPOLYTA.** You just don't get it do you?

**THESEUS.** No, no I really don't. *(Enter Egeus and Philostrate.)*

**EGEUS.** Gone! Gone! All is lost! She's gone!

**THESEUS.** Egeus, what is the matter?

**EGEUS.** It's over! Over, I tell you! Gone! Gone! Gone! *(He falls to the floor.)*

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**THESEUS.** Philostrate, what is his meaning? Who is gone?

**PHILOSTRATE.** Poor, Egeus is inconsolable. His daughter ran off in the night and all signs point to—

**EGEUS.** No, do not utter his name. Oh, the treachery! The deceit! The backstabbing dog has taken her!

**PHILOSTRATE.** L-Y-S-A-N-D-E-R, my lord.

**EGEUS.** I can spell, Philostrate.

**PHILOSTRATE.** It appears he and Hermia have run away together.

**HIPPOLYTA.** This is most terrible indeed. But be of good cheer, good Egeus. Hermia is a smart and sensible girl. I'm sure she'll see the error of her ways and return to you soon.

**EGEUS.** I don't think that's likely, my lady.

**HIPPOLYTA.** Why do you say so?

**EGEUS.** She left this note. *(He hands Hippolyta a note.)*

**HIPPOLYTA.** *(Reading.)* "I'm never coming back. Sincerely, Hermia." Oh dear.

**THESEUS.** Don't worry. We'll find her. You and Philostrate search this side of the woods. Hippolyta and I will search on the other side of the river.

**HIPPOLYTA.** Oh, no no no no no, my dear! Philostrate has way too much to do.

**THESEUS.** Darling, we need all hands on deck to find Hermia and Lysander. We must hurry before they get too far.

**HIPPOLYTA.** Fine, but if everything isn't done in time for my wedding, I'll—

**PHILOSTRATE.** I know, I know... you'll fire me. *(Egeus and Philostrate exit together and Hippolyta and Theseus exit together, opposite. Enter Demetrius and Helena.)*

**DEMETRIUS.** How many times do I have to tell you, Helena? I don't like you! Leave me alone! Where is Lysander and fair Hermia? You told me they were here in this wood. Tell me where they are then go away and follow me no more.

**HELENA.** But I love you, Demetrius.

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**DEMETRIUS.** Do I say nice things to you? Do I whisper sweet nothings in your ear? Or rather do I not tell you quite plainly I do not, cannot, and will not like you?

**HELENA.** Shame on you, Demetrius. How dare you treat me this way? You loved me once. How hard would it be to do it again?

**DEMETRIUS.** Yes, I loved you once, but that was before I met Hermia.

**HELENA.** Right, and then you chucked me for her. What does she have over me, anyway?

**DEMETRIUS.** She has the most amazing mind for math.

**HELENA.** Two plus two is four! Four plus four is eight! Six plus six is eleven! *(Demetrius exits in a huff.)* Wait! *(She runs off after him, as Puck, Muskrose, and Mustardseed enter. Oberon comes out of hiding.)*

**OBERON.** Do you have the flower?

**MUSKROSE.** We do.

**OBERON.** I pray thee, give it me.

I know a bank where the wild thyme blows,  
Where oxlips and the nodding violet grows;  
Quite over-canopied with luscious woodbine,  
With Sweet musk-roses, and with eglantine:  
There sleeps Titania, sometime of the night,  
Lull'd in these flowers, with dances and delight.

I will anoint her eyes with the juice of this flower, so that she will fall madly in love with whoever – or whatever – she sees upon waking. You take some as well. There is a sweet lady in this wood by the name of Helena who is in love with a young man, Demetrius, who despises her. Anoint his eyes with the juice of the flower, but be sure you do it when the next thing he sees shall be this lady.

**MUSTARDSEED.** Fear not, my lord, we shall do as you say.

**PUCK.** And love will conquer another day. *(They all exit; Enter Titania with Mote, Peaseblossom, Eglantine, and Cobweb.)*



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**TITANIA.** Come, fairies. I'm weary with this foul fight with Oberon. Sing me to sleep.

**PEASEBLOSSOM.** (*Music plays. Fairies circle Titania.*) You spotted snakes with double tongue,  
Thorny hedgehogs, be not seen.

**COBWEB.** Newts and blindworms, do no wrong,  
Come not near our Fairy Queen.

**ALL.** 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.

**MOTE.** Weaving spiders, come not here.  
Hence, you long-legged spinners, hence.

**EGLANTINE.** Beetles black, approach not near.  
Worm nor snail, do no offense.

**ALL.** 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. (*Titania Sleeps and fairies tip-toe away. Enter Oberon.*)

**OBERON.** (*Placing the nectar in Titania's eyes.*)  
What e'er you see when you awake,  
Do it for thy true love take.  
Be it ounce, or cat, or bear,  
Pard, or boar with bristled hair,  
In thy eye that shall appear  
When thou wak'st, it is thy dear.

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Wake when some vile thing is near. (*He exits; Enter Puck, Mustardseed, and Muskrose.*)

**PUCK.** So our master with the magic flower  
Deceives Titania in her sleeping hour.

**MUSTARDSEED.** We will assist our master in this,  
And watch Titania fawn over and kiss  
A beast of our making. We know just the man  
Who will serve as this beast. Watch if you can!

**MUSKROSE.** But first we must do the wish of our master  
And find that scornful young man faster  
Than he can outrun his loving lady. (*Yawns.*)  
But I'm tired. Let's rest in this spot. It's most shady. (*The fairies lie down and fall asleep. Enter Egeus and Philostrate.*)

**EGEUS.** Good Philostrate, thank you for accompanying me into  
the woods to help me find my dear daughter. I can't believe she  
would do such a thing to her father. What have I ever done, but  
love her and want good things for her? You know, besides try and  
force her to marry someone she doesn't love.

**PHILOSTRATE.** I'm only here because the duke ordered me to  
help you. I really don't have time for this nonsense, you know. I  
have so many things to do. The duchess to be is driving me  
absolutely crazy! Who knew such a nice woman could turn into  
such a bridezilla? Nothing I do for her is right, absolutely nothing.  
I'd quit if I didn't need the job so badly. Maybe I could go into  
business on my own. I could call it Philostrate's Fancy Festivities.  
What do you think?

**EGEUS.** All you do is complain! Now help me find Hermia.  
Hermia! Hermia!

**PHILOSTRATE.** All I do is complain? Look who's talking! You  
know, there are people in this world who have bigger problems  
than you.

**EGEUS.** I suppose by that you mean you. Right. The consistency  
of wedding cake frosting is so much more important than finding a  
lost child.

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**PHILOSTRATE.** I'm talking about her marrying Lysander. Who cares who she marries?

**EGEUS.** How dare you? You have no idea what it's like to be a loving father.

**PHILOSTRATE.** I really don't have time for this. I'm going back to the palace.

**EGEUS.** No no no no! Wait! Please don't go! Come, Philostrate. Let us not be angry with each other. Tell you what: you help me find Hermia and I'll help you with the last minute wedding plans.

**PHILOSTRATE.** Deal. *(They shake hands and exit. Enter Lysander and Hermia.)*

**HERMIA.** *(Reciting math problems wearily.)* 6,475 times 41,697 equals 269,988,075. 47.9958 divided by 62.358 equals .769681516. 54,000 times 21.8765 equals—

**LYSANDER.** My dearest Hermia, you are tired, and to tell you the truth, I'm not quite sure where we are.

**HERMIA.** Should we ask someone for directions?

**LYSANDER.** No, that's not necessary. Let's sleep here for the night and in the morning we can find our way.

**HERMIA.** No, no. We must keep going. But I'm so tired I can hardly concentrate on math anymore. I'll lie down and close my eyes for just a minute. I'll be in tip top shape again in no ti— *(She falls down, asleep.)*

**LYSANDER.** Right. Me too. *(He wanders a few steps away from her and drops to the floor, asleep. Fairies wake.)*

**PUCK.** Fairies, we seem to have fallen asleep, Forgetting the responsibilities we keep.

Let's get up now and see to our duties. *(They stand and begin to exit, see Hermia and Lysander sleeping.)*

Hello! Who are these two sleeping beauties? *(They examine them, but cannot see their faces clearly in the dark.)*

**MUSTARDSEED.** Is this the man in whose eyes we must drop The juice from this flower so that he will stop Rejecting this lady? Is she the one

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Who he spurns and denies and mistreats for fun?

**MUSKROSE.** I cannot tell; we've ne'er seen his face.

**PUCK.** He must be the one; let's end their sad chase. (*He anoints Lysander's eyes.*)

**MUSKROSE.** And now we must see Oberon,  
To tell him that this work is done. (*Fairies exit; Enter Helena and Demetrius. They do not see Hermia and Lysander.*)

**HELENA.** Three plus seven is ten. Six plus seven is eighteen.  
Nine times nine is sixty-two?

**DEMETRIUS.** For the last time, scram you annoying gnat! I must find Hermia. Hermia! Hermia! (*He rushes off, leaving Helena.*)

**HELENA.** Oh, I am out of breath with this chase! (*Seeing Lysander.*) Who is this? Lysander, on the ground! Dead or asleep? I see no blood, no wound – Lysander, if you live, good sir, awake. (*He wakes and sees Helena.*)

**LYSANDER.** And run through fire I will for thy sweet sake.  
Helena, my love, my light, my darling. Marry me!

**HELENA.** What? You love Hermia.

**LYSANDER.** Hermia? No, no I have forgotten all about Hermia. I've grown tired of her incessant math problems. You are the one for me.

**HELENA.** What are you talking about? Oh, I see what's going on here. You're making fun of me, aren't you? How could you? How could you? (*She starts to walk away.*)

**LYSANDER.** Darling, Helena, believe me, my love! I speak the truth!

**HELENA.** Is it not enough that I should be rejected by Demetrius, and then to have you make fun of me like this? And to think I thought you were a noble person! How dare you! I'm leaving! (*Helena storms off. Lysander follows her, forgetting Hermia.*)

**HERMIA.** (*Waking.*) Lysander? Lysander, where are you? Oh, I've had such a terrible dream. Lysander? Where did you go? I don't want to be in this forest all alone. Lysander! Lysander! (*She Exits. Fairies come out from hiding.*)

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**MUSTARDSEED.** Ooops. Fairies, this may lead to our demise,  
We placed the juice in the wrong man's eyes.

**MUSKROSE.** Now Lysander is after Helena's love  
And Hermia is left like a discarded glove.

**PUCK.** Let us be off and Demetrius find  
In order to get him to change his mind  
And fall in love with Helena soon.

**MUSTARDSEED.** I'm so confused I think I may swoon! (*Enter  
the Mechanicals.*)

**MUSKROSE.** But now for the other part of our plot...

**PUCK.** I really don't know if it will work or not. (*Fairies hide and  
watch the Mechanicals.*)

**QUINCE.** Are we all met? This is a marvelously convenient place  
for our rehearsal. This here shall be our stage. Mechanicals take  
your places!

**BOTTOM.** Peter Quince?

**QUINCE.** What sayest thou, bully Bottom?

**BOTTOM.** There are things in this comedy of Pyramus and  
Thisbe that will never please. First, Pyramus must draw a sword to  
kill himself which the ladies cannot abide.

**SNUG.** True, Bottom, true. The ladies will be terrified.

**STARVELING.** I believe we must leave the killing out, when all  
is done.

**BOTTOM.** Never! I can't give up my chance to show off my great  
dying on stage skills. Rather, I shall speak a prologue that will say  
we will do no harm with our swords and that Pyramus is not killed  
indeed. This will put them out of fear.

**FLUTE.** Right! Let there be a prologue, Quince. That will do the  
trick.

**SNUG.** Will not the ladies be afraid of the lion?

**STARVELING.** I fear it, I promise you.

**SNOUT.** Another prologue must say he is not a real lion, just so  
there is no question.

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**QUINCE.** Fair enough, two prologues to say that no one will be killed and that Snug is not a true lion. Now, we have another problem and that is that Pyramus and Thisbe are said to meet by moonlight, so we need someone to play the part of Moonshine. Also, we must have a wall, for Pyramus and Thisbe, so says the story, talk through a hole in the wall.

**FLUTE.** But how can we bring a wall into the palace? Surely we cannot fit one through the door.

**STARVELING.** Someone must present Wall. And let him have some plaster about him to signify a wall, or let him hold his fingers thus, and through that cranny shall Pyramus and Thisbe whisper.

**QUINCE.** Right. Starveling and Snout, I'm sorry to tell you this, but I had to cut out the scene with the parents. The duke has requested our play be short.

**STARVELING.** So I have no part at all? But I was so looking forward to playing the mother. I even bought a new apron.

**SNOUT.** And I've been practicing my stern father expressions all day!

**QUINCE.** Not to worry. Starveling, you will play the role of Moonshine and Snout, you shall be Wall. All right. We must begin. Places! Pyramus, you have the first line.

**BOTTOM.** *(As Pyramus.)* Thisbe, the flowers of odors savors sweet. So hath thy breath, my dearest Thisbe dear. But hark, a voice! Stay thou but here awhile, and by and by I will to thee appear. *(Bottom exits and the fairies follow him, giggling.)*

**FLUTE.** *(As Thisbe.)* Most radiant Pyramus, most lily-white of hue. Of color like the red rose on a triumphant brier, as true as truest horse, that yet would never tire. *(Bottom enters, his head changed into that of a donkey. The other Mechanicals are stunned. Fairies watch with great amusement.)*

**BOTTOM.** *(As Pyramus.)* If I were fair, fair Thisbe, I were only thine. *(Mechanicals stare at him in horror, frozen.)* Your line is next, Flute. *(He looks around at everyone staring at him with their mouths agape.)* Why do you all look as if you've seen a monster?

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**SNUG.** Monster! Monster! We are haunted! Run, men, save yourselves!

**SNOUT.** Oh, Bottom! You are changed! You are transformed! Help! Help! *(The Mechanicals all scream and fall over each other as they exit.)*

**BOTTOM.** Where's every one going? Oh, I see trying to make an ass of me are you? Well, fine. We'll just see about this. *(He sits near Titania's bed without seeing her.)* I'll just wait here until they come back. *(He sings a few words of a song:)* I feel pretty...

**TITANIA.** *(Waking.)* What angel wakes me from my flow'ry bed? I pray thee, gentle mortal, sing again.

Mine ear is much enamored of thy note,  
So is mine eye enthralled to thy shape,  
And thy fair virtue's force perforce doth move me  
On the first view to say, to swear, I love thee.

**BOTTOM.** I think, my lady, that you have little reason for that. And yet, to say the truth, reason and love keep little company together.

**TITANIA.** Thou art as wise as thou art beautiful.

**BOTTOM.** Thank you for noticing. I've been trying to tell people that for as long as I can remember. Now if you'll excuse me, I must find my friends.

**TITANIA.** No, do not leave me! Perhaps you don't realize who I am. I am an uncommon spirit of this wood. Therefore go with me, for I do love thee so! I'll give you fairies to serve your every need! Peaseblossom, Cobweb, Mote, and Eglantine! *(Enter the four fairies.)*

**PEASEBLOSSOM.** Ready.

**COBWEB.** And I.

**MOTE.** And I.

**EGLANTINE.** And I.

**ALL.** What is your will?

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**TITANIA.** Be kind and courteous to this gentleman. Feed him with apricots and blueberries, with purple grapes, green figs, and raspberries. Give him all that he desires and more.

**FAIRIES.** Yes, my lady. Come, my lord. (*Titania, Mote, Eglantine, and Cobweb lead Bottom away. Oberon enters, as Puck, Muskrose, and Mustardseed come out of hiding.*)

**OBERON.** Has Titania awoken from her sleep? Tell me, has anything interesting happened?

**PUCK.** My mistress with a monster is in love!  
She swoons and calls him her flower, her dove!

**MUSKROSE.** But he is nothing pretty of the sort;  
Unless you say he can prettily snort!

**MUSTARDSEED.** A donkey's head he presently wears,  
And seems confused by the love she bears.

**PUCK.** But he follows her in his transformed state  
And lets her love him and his new shaped pate!

**OBERON.** Let me get this straight; you made Titania fall in love  
with a man-donkey? This has turned out better than I could plan.  
And how about the young man and the lady?

**MUSKROSE.** That work too is done...

**MUSTARDSEED.** (*Aside.*) Though we tampered with the wrong  
one! (*Enter Demetrius and Hermia.*)

**OBERON.** Look, here comes that gentleman now, but this is not  
the same lady. Stand aside and listen. (*The fairies hide.*)

**DEMETRIUS.** Hermia, why do you scorn me when I love you so?

**HERMIA.** I am in love with Lysander, Demetrius. Why can't you  
get that through your thick head? And where is he anyway? I woke  
up and he was gone. Have you seen him? Tell me where he is or  
I'll pulverize you.

**DEMETRIUS.** I haven't the slightest idea where he is. What kind  
of man leaves his girlfriend alone in the woods? (*He moves in on  
her.*) If I were your boyfriend, I would never leave you alone in the  
woods.



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**HERMIA.** (*Pushing him away.*) He hasn't left me. I just misplaced him. Now if you'll excuse me, I'm going to go find him. (*She exits.*)

**DEMETRIUS.** (*Calling after her.*) One math problem before you go? (*To himself.*) Oh, this is impossible. I'm growing rather sleepy anyway. I'll just lie down and take a little nap. (*He lies down and sleeps. Fairies try to sneak out of Oberon's presence.*)

**OBERON.** Wait! What have you done? This was the man whose eyes you were to anoint with the juice of the flower. He was to fall in love with Helena, the maid who loves him.

**PUCK.** We can't tell one human from the other;  
This man could be the other's twin brother.

**OBERON.** Find Helena and bring her here.

**MUSTARDSEED.** We go, we go, look how we go!

**MUSKROSE.** Swifter than the arrow from a hunter's bow!  
(*Fairies exit.*)

**OBERON.** If I want something done right around here, I have to do it myself. (*He places the juice of the flower in Demetrius' eyes, then exits as Titania and Bottom enter.*)

**TITANIA.** Come, sit down on this flowery bed, while I kiss thy fair large ears, my gentle joy.

**BOTTOM.** Actually, would you scratch behind my ears a little, rather than kiss them?

**TITANIA.** Anything for you. (*She scratches his ears.*) Say, sweet love, what you wish to eat.

**BOTTOM.** I have a strange craving for some dry oats. Or some hay. Do you have any hay around?

**TITANIA.** I have a fairy who will go and fetch you sweet hay. Peaseblossom! Fetch my love a bale of hay!

**BOTTOM.** No, don't bother. I really must go find my friends. We have a play that we must rehearse.

**TITANIA.** Stay but a little while longer! Do not go! (*She snuggles him as Lysander and Helena enter, not seeing Titania and Bottom.*)

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**LYSANDER.** Helena, if I were not sincere, would I be following you through a forest, down on my knees before you, begging for your love? I swear on my life, Helena, I love you!

**HELENA.** Oh for shame Lysander. These vows are Hermia's!

**LYSANDER.** I had poor judgment when to her I swore.

**HELENA.** It is poorer still, now that you swear to me.

**LYSANDER.** Demetrius loves her. Let him have her, he doesn't love you! *(Helena turns to go and trips over Demetrius, waking him.)*

**DEMETRIUS.** *(Seeing Helena.)* Oh Helen, goddess, perfect, divine! My love! Marry me!

**HELENA.** Okay. I mean – WHAT? Five minutes ago you despised me. *(A beat.)* Oh, I get it. I see what's going on here. Don't think I can't see right through you boys. This is a trick, isn't it? Let's all pretend we're in love with Helena. Well, ha-ha-ha! Very funny! Okay, you got me. Now let's all go back to the way it was before so I can get on with my life and find someone new. *(She tries to go, but the boys each grab one of her arms and have a tug-of-war over her.)*

**LYSANDER.** Demetrius, don't be unkind. You love Hermia and I freely give up my love of her to you. Do the same with me for Helena, who I love and will love until I die.

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