

***SAMPLE - INCOMPLETE SCRIPT***



**A Community ShakespeareCompany  
Edition of**

# *A Midsummer Nights Dream*

**Original verse adaptation by**

**Richard Carter**



## CAST OF CHARACTERS

THESEUS	duke of Athens
HYPOLYTA	queen of the Amazons, betrothed to Theseus
EGEUS	a nobleman, Hermia's father
HERMIA	in love with Lysander
HELENA	in love with Demetrius
LYSANDER, DEMETRIUS	young noblemen
PHILOSTRATE	Master of the Revels at Theseus' court
OBERON	king of the fairies
TITANIA	queen of the fairies
PUCK	a mischievous fairy
FIRST FAIRY	meets Puck in the wood
PEASBLOSSOM, COBWEB, MOTH, MUSTARDSEED	fairies
PETER QUINCE	a carpenter
NICK BOTTOM	a weaver
FRANCIS FLUTE	a bellows-mender
TOM SNOOT	a tinker
SNUG	a joiner
ROBIN STARVELING	a tailor
ATTENDANTS FAIRIES	at the court of Theseus attending on Oberon and Titania

*This play should run between 80 and 90 minutes, without intermission*

## **ACT I, Scene 1**

(ATHENS: THE PALACE OF THESEUS. ENTER THESEUS, HIPPOLYTA, PHILOSTRATE, ATTENDANTS)

### **THESEUS**

Now, fair Hippolyta, our nuptial hour draws on soon,  
Four happy days bring in another moon;  
But O methinks, how slow the old moon wanes,  
Like a step-dame or a dowager, doddering with her canes.

### **HIPPOLYTA**

Four days will quickly steep themselves in night;  
Four nights will quickly, like dreams, take flight,  
And then the new moon, like a silver bow bent on high  
Shall behold the night of our solemnities draw nigh.

### **THESEUS**

Go, Philostrate, stir up the Athenian youth;  
Awake the pert and nimble spirit of their mirth.

(EXIT PHILOSTRATE. ENTER EGEUS, HERMIA, LYSANDER, AND DEMETRIUS)

### **EGEUS**

Happy be Theseus, renowned duke!

### **THESEUS**

Good Egeus, what's the news?

### **EGEUS**

My daughter makes me puke!  
Full of vexation, with complaint against my child,  
Come I before your grace: Hermia drives me wild!  
Stand forth, Demetrius: my noble lord, *this* man  
Hath my consent to marry her. Say, Demetrius.

### **DEMETRIUS**

That's the plan.

### **EGEUS**

Stand forth, Lysander: gracious duke, *this* ignoble youth  
Hath bewitched my child. Say, Demetrius.

### **DEMETRIUS**

That's the truth.

**EGEUS**

With feigning voice, with rhymes of love, with bracelets of thy hair,  
Thou, *thou* Lysander, hast stolen this treasure most rare:  
Thou hast *filched* my daughter's heart with your cunning moonlight verses,  
Turned obedience to stubborn harshness; earned a father's curses!  
My gracious duke, before your grace, I beg the ancient right:  
The privilege of Athens says I may dispose of her as I might.  
As she is mine, I give her to Demetrius with my last breath,  
Or according to our law she goes immediately to her death.

**THESEUS**

What say you, Hermia? Be advised, your father is your lord,  
And you but a form in wax, to be imprinted with his word.  
Demetrius is a worthy gentleman.

**HERMIA**

So is Lysander.

**THESEUS**

That's true;  
But lacking your father's voice, he's the lesser. Come, pay your father his due.

**HERMIA**

I would my father looked with *my* eyes.

**THESEUS**

Rather *your* eyes must *his* judgment seek.

**HERMIA**

I do entreat your pardon: I can't be married to this *geek*!  
I know not how I'm made so bold to plead to your grace,  
But I beseech you, tell me the worst that may befall me in this case:  
If I refuse to wed Demetrius?

**THESEUS**

Either die, or give up the society of men;  
Live barren, see man nevermore.

**HERMIA**

Not even now and then?

**THESEUS**

Blessed are they that master their blood in the livery of a nun,  
Chanting faint hymns to the cold fruitless moon, if that's your idea of fun.

**HERMIA**

So will I live, so die, my lord, before I yield myself to *this* man.

**THESEUS**

Take time to pause, and by the new moon, be certain of your plan:  
For upon that day, when my Amazonian love and I shall be wed,  
You must prepare to die, or to take Demetrius to your bed,  
Or else to live a single life, withering on the virgin thorn;  
Earthlier happy is the rose distilled, whose scent is thus reborn.

**DEMETRIUS**

Relent, sweet Hermia! Lysander, yield! Your passion is just a whim.

**LYSANDER**

You have her *father's* love, Demetrius: let you marry him.

**EGEUS**

Scornful Lysander! True, he hath my love, and with it my estate:  
As she is mine, I give her to Demetrius.

**HERMIA**

Urrgh! You know I hate  
Him.

**LYSANDER**

(TO THESEUS) My lord, I am as well derived as he, my fortunes equal;  
What's more, I am beloved of Hermia. For Demetrius, she's just the sequel:  
He woo'd Nedar's daughter, Helena and won her, hook, line and sinker.  
She *dotes* upon this inconstant man!

**HERMIA**

I told you he's a stinker.

**THESEUS**

I confess, I have heard this tale, but my mind being full, did forget.  
Demetrius, come, and Egeus too, we'll have some private talk yet.  
For you, fair Hermia, arm yourself: fit your fancies to your father's will,  
Or the law of Athens yields you to death, or to the nunnery still.

(EXEUNT ALL EXCEPT LYSANDER AND HERMIA)

**LYSANDER**

How now, my love? How chance the roses in thy cheek do fade so fast?  
The course of true love never did run smooth in any tale from the past.

**HERMIA**

If then true lovers have ever been crossed, it is our destiny too.  
We must have patience and bear our cross, and so pay Love its due.

**LYSANDER**

A good persuasion. Therefore, hear me, Hermia: I have a dowager aunt.  
She hath no child; a house seven leagues from Athens is her haunt.  
She respects me as her only son, to *her* house we may flee,  
Where the Athenian law cannot pursue us: *there* may I marry thee.  
Steal forth from thy father's house tomorrow night, and meet me in the wood,  
Where once I met thee with Helena; I'll wait where then I stood.

**HERMIA**

My good Lysander, I swear to thee by Cupid's strongest bow,  
In that same place will I meet thee. Tomorrow will I go!

**LYSANDER**

Keep promise, love. Look, here comes Helena.

(ENTER HELENA)

**HERMIA**

Fair Helena! Whither away?

**HELENA**

Call you *me* fair? O Hermia, that fair again unsay.  
Demetrius loves *your* fair. Sickness is catching, why is not *favor* so?  
*Yours* would I catch, fair Hermia, willingly ere I go.  
My ear should catch your voice, my eye your eye,  
My tongue should speak as *yours* when Demetrius is nigh.  
Teach me how you look, and with what art  
You sway the motion of Demetrius' heart.

**HERMIA**

I frown upon him, yet he loves me still.

**HELENA**

O that your frowns would teach my smiles such skill!

**HERMIA**

I give him curses, yet he gives me love.

**HELENA**

O that my prayers could such affection move!

**HERMIA**

The more I hate, the more he follows me.

**HELENA**

The more I love, the more he hateth me.

**HERMIA**

His folly, Helena, is no fault of mine.

**HELENA**

None but your beauty: would *that* fault were mine.

**HERMIA**

Take comfort: he no more shall see my face;  
Lysander and myself will fly this place.

**LYSANDER**

Helen, to you our minds we will unfold.  
Tomorrow night, when the waning moon you do behold -  
A time that lovers' flights doth still conceal -  
Through Athens' gates have we devised to steal.

**HERMIA**

And in the wood, where you and I were wont to meet,  
Emptying our hearts of their counsel sweet,  
There Lysander and I shall take flight,  
And thence from Athens turn away our sight.  
Farewell, sweet playfellow: pray thou for us;  
And good luck grant thee thy Demetrius.

(EXIT HERMIA)

**LYSANDER**

Till tomorrow, my Hermia! Helena, Adieu:  
As you on him, Demetrius dote on you.

(EXIT LYSANDER)

**HELENA**

How happy some o'er other some can be!  
Through Athens I am thought as fair as she;  
But what of that? *Demetrius* thinks not so;  
He sees *not* what all but he do know!  
I will go tell him of fair Hermia's flight,  
Then to the wood will he tomorrow night:

I'll lead him, and for this most welcome news,  
He may yet thank me, and so change his views.  
Herein mean I to enrich mine own lot,  
To have the love back again, which he hath forgot.

(EXIT)

## **ACT I, scene 2**

(ATHENS: PETER QUINCE'S HOUSE. ENTER QUINCE, SNUG, BOTTOM, FLUTE, SNOOT, AND STARVELING)

**QUINCE**

Is all our company here?

**BOTTOM**

You were best to call them man by man.

**QUINCE**

(WITH A SCROLL) Here is the name of every man in Athens thought fit for our plan: We play before the duke and duchess on their wedding night.

**BOTTOM**

First, good Peter Quince, say what play will greet their sight.

**QUINCE**

*The most lamentable comedy, and most cruel death of Pyramus and Thisbe.*

**BOTTOM**

Now call each actor by the scroll, and say which part will *his* be.

**QUINCE**

Nick Bottom, the weaver?

**BOTTOM**

Ready! Name what I am for, and proceed.

**QUINCE**

You, Nick Bottom, are set down for Pyramus.

**BOTTOM**

What is he? A lover?

**QUINCE**

Indeed.

A lover that kills himself most gallant for love.

**BOTTOM**

Let the audience look to their eyes: storms of tears will I move!

*The raging rocks*

*And shivering shocks*

*Shall break the locks . . .*

This was lofty!

**QUINCE**

Francis Flute, the bellow-mender?

**FLUTE**

Here, Peter Quince.

**QUINCE**

You must take Thisbe.

**FLUTE**

What is Thisbe? A wandering knight, or a prince?

**QUINCE**

It is the lady that Pyramus loves.

**FLUTE**

Nay, faith, I'm growing a beard!

Let me not play a woman.

**QUINCE**

You'll be in a mask.

**FLUTE**

That's weird.

**BOTTOM**

If I may hide my face, let me play Thisbe too!

I'll speak in a monstrous little voice: "Oh Thisne, Thisne, I love you!"

**QUINCE**

No, you must play Pyramus; Flute is Thisbe. Starveling is Thisbe's mother. Pyramus' father is Snout. The lion is Snug.

**ALL BUT SNUG**

Oh, brother!

**SNUG**

Have you the lion's part written? Pray give it me, for I am slow.

**QUINCE**

It is nothing but roaring.

**BOTTOM**

Let *me* play the lion! I will roar till I stop the show!

(ROARS)

**STARVELING**

If you do it too terribly, you will fright the ladies.

**SNOUT**

And then they will hang us all.

**BOTTOM**

Then I'll roar as gently as a sucking dove. Like a nightingale will I call.  
(ROARS SWEETLY)

**QUINCE**

You can play no part but Pyramus.

**BOTTOM**

Well, I will undertake it.

**ALL**

Amen.

**BOTTOM**

What beard were I best to play it in?

**SNOUT**

Oy!

**STARVELING**

Here we go again.

**BOTTOM**

I will play it in either your straw-color beard, orange-tawny, or purple-in-grain.

**QUINCE**

Masters, here are your parts. Tomorrow we meet: con your lines by then.  
We rehearse by moonlight, in the palace wood, a mile without the town,  
For if we meet in the city, our devices shall be known.

**BOTTOM**

We will meet, and there we may rehearse most obscenely, courageously too.  
Enough, hold or cut bow-strings: take pains, be perfect; adieu!

(EXEUNT)

## **ACT II, scene 1**

(A WOOD NEAR ATHENS. ENTER 1<sup>ST</sup> FAIRY, & PUCK ON THE OTHER SIDE)

### **PUCK**

How now, spirit! Whither wander you?

### **1<sup>ST</sup> FAIRY**

Over hill, over dale  
Through bush, through brier  
Over park, over pale,  
Through flood, through fire,  
I do wander everywhere,  
Swifter than the moon's sphere;  
And I serve the fairy queen,  
To dew her orbs upon the green.  
Farewell, thou spirit, I'll be gone;  
Our queen and her elves come here anon.

### **PUCK**

The king doth keep his revels here tonight.  
Take heed the queen come not within his sight;  
For Oberon is full of wrath  
Because *she* as attendant hath  
A lovely boy, stolen from an Indian king,  
And jealous Oberon would have the changeling.

### **1<sup>ST</sup> FAIRY**

Either I mistake your shape and making quite,  
Or else you are that shrewd and knavish sprite  
Called Robin Goodfellow; are you not he  
That frights the maidens of the villagery,  
Misleads night-wanderers, laughing at their plight,  
Who, "Hobgoblin" call you, and "Sweet Puck," am I not right?

### **PUCK**

Thou speak'st aright;  
I am that merry wanderer of the night.  
I jest to Oberon, and make him smile  
When I a fat and bean-fed horse beguile,  
Neighing in likeness of a filly foal;  
And sometime lurk I in a gossip's bowl,  
In very likeness of a roasted crab,  
And when she drinks, against her lips I bob.  
The wisest aunt, sometime for a stool mistaketh me;  
Then slip I from her bum, and down topples she!  
But room, fairy! Here comes Oberon.

**1<sup>ST</sup> FAIRY**

And here my mistress. Would that he were gone!

(THEY STEP ASIDE. ENTER OBERON FROM ONE SIDE, WITH HIS ATTENDANTS; AND TITANIA FROM THE OTHER, WITH HERS.)

**OBERON**

Ill met by moonlight, proud Titania fair.

**TITANIA**

Jealous Oberon! Fairies, haste over there;  
Skip hence, I have forsworn his bed and board.

**OBERON**

Tarry, rash wanton! Am not I thy lord?

**TITANIA**

Then I must be thy lady. But well I know,  
When thou away from Fairlyland dost go,  
Versing love and playing on pipes of corn  
To the amorous shepherdess, or the bouncing Amazon!  
Your warrior love, Hippolyta will soon be wed,  
To Theseus, and *you* must give joy to *their* wedding bed.

**OBERON**

How canst thou thus rail, Titania, for shame,  
Knowing *thy* love to Theseus; I know your game.

**TITANIA**

These are words of jealousy, and well you know  
That never since the middle summer's glow,  
Met we on hill, in forest, or by sea,  
To dance our ringlets to the wind most free,  
But with *thy* brawls thou hast disturbed our sport!  
Therefore the winds, piping in retort,  
Have sucked contagious fogs upon the land;  
Each pelting river made to overflow its sand,  
Till the fold stands empty in the drownèd field -  
The ploughman lost his sweat - for no green corn will it yield;  
The ox hath therefore stretched his yoke in vain,  
From our debate, Oberon: you're a pain.

**OBERON**

It lies in you to fix it then, my fawn:  
Why should Titania cross her Oberon?  
I do but beg the changeling boy.

**TITANIA**

Not for all Fairyland.

**OBERON**

Don't be coy.

**TITANIA**

His mother served me in the spiced Indian air;  
By night, full often hath she gossiped in mine ear,  
But she, being mortal, of bearing that boy did die.  
For her sake do I rear him up; now you know why.

**OBERON**

Give me that boy as page, and I will dance in your round.

**TITANIA**

Not for thy fairy kingdom! Fairies, let us leave this ground.  
We shall chide downright, if I longer stay!

(EXIT TITANIA WITH HER ATTENDANTS)

**OBERON**

Well, Titania, go thy way.  
Thou shalt not from this grove till I torment thee;  
Come, gentle Puck, for this purpose heaven sent thee.  
I once saw Cupid, all armèd with his bow,  
Flying between the cold moon and the earth below;  
He loosed his love-shaft at a virgin by the sea,  
But missed his mark, and she passed on, fancy free.  
Yet marked I where the bolt of Cupid fell,  
Upon a western flower in the dell:  
"Love-in-idleness" maidens call it in their bower,  
I showed it thee once; fetch me that flower.  
The juice of it, on sleeping eyelids laid,  
Will make one madly dote, man or maid,  
On the next live creature that meets the eye.

**PUCK**

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

(EXIT PUCK)

**OBERON**

Fly!  
Having once this juice, I'll watch Titania sleeping,

And drop the liquor in her eyes, like gentle weeping.  
When she wakes, what she sees - beast, fowl or flunky -  
She shall pursue, be it bear, bull or monkey!  
Ere I take this charm from off her sight,  
I'll make her render up her page to my right.  
But who comes here? I am invisible to their eyes,  
And will overhear their conference in this disguise.

(ENTER DEMETRIUS, HELENA FOLLOWING HIM)

**DEMETRIUS**

I love thee not, therefore pursue me not.  
Where is Lysander? Where fair Hermia: she's hot!  
Thou told'st me they were stolen unto this wood,  
And here am I, though it does me no good  
Because I cannot find Hermia. Hence, get thee gone!

**HELENA**

Hard-hearted Demetrius, you draw me on.

**DEMETRIUS**

Do I entice you? Do I speak you fair?  
Or do I not in truth most rare,  
Tell you I do not, *cannot* love you full sore?

**HELENA**

And even for that, I love you the more.  
I am your spaniel: the more you spurn me,  
The more faithful the fire of my love will burn me.

**DEMETRIUS**

Tempt not too much the hatred of my spirit,  
For I am sick when I look on you, and you must hear it.

**HELENA**

And *I* am sick when I look *not* upon you.

**DEMETRIUS**

I'll leave thee to the mercy of wild beasts in this zoo.

**HELENA**

The wildest hath not such a heart as your own:  
Run where you will: I'm your dog, you're my bone!

**DEMETRIUS**

Let me go: if you follow me, it will do you no good,

I shall do thee mischief in this wood.

**HELENA**

Aye, in the temple, the town, the field,  
You do me mischief, Demetrius. Yield!  
Women cannot fight for love, as men may do;  
We should be woo'd, and were not made to woo.  
(EXIT DEMETRIUS)  
I'll follow thee and make a heaven of hell,  
To die upon the hand I love so well.

(EXIT HELENA)

**OBERON**

Fare thee well, nymph. Ere he do leave this grove,  
Thou shalt fly *him*, and *he* shall seek *thy* love.  
(ENTER PUCK)  
Welcome wanderer, hast thou the flower?  
Pray, give it me; I'll unlock its power.  
I know a bank where the wild thyme blows,  
Where oxslips and the nodding violet grows:  
There sleeps Titania some time of the night,  
Lulled in these flowers with dances of delight.  
With the juice of this flower I'll streak her eyes,  
And make her full of hateful fantasies.  
(TO PUCK) Take thou some of it, and seek through this grove:  
A sweet Athenian lady is in love  
With a disdainful youth: anoint his eyes;  
But do it when the next thing that he espies  
May be the lady. Thou shalt know the man  
By the Athenian garments he hath on.  
Look thou meet me ere the first cock crow.

**PUCK**

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

(EXEUNT)

**About the Author –  
RICHARD CARTER**

Richard Carter grew up in Portland, Oregon, the son of a doctor and a dancer. Since 1986 he has made his home in the San Juan Islands, between the Olympic Peninsula and the mainland of Washington State.

After graduating from Vassar College and receiving his MFA in playwriting from the University of Washington, Richard's play *Blood and Iron* won the 1993 Jumpstart New Play Competition and was presented by the Seattle Shakespeare Company, and then on the London stage. His musical play, *Winds in the Morning*, received glowing reviews at the 1997 Seattle Fringe Festival, and was selected to inaugurate the Wooden Boat Festival in 2000, at Port Townsend, Washington.

Richard offers his talents in many venues. As Co-founder/Director of the Community Shakespeare Company, he is one of the few playwrights today with the audacity to work *with* Shakespeare. Working in rhyming couplets, updating some of the language, he delivers the best of the Bard for performance by young actors. The adaptations are so authentic that audiences scarcely know they aren't seeing and hearing the original.

Community Shakespeare Company itself breaks new ground. Its mission, "to enrich young lives and cultivate community" uses Shakespeare as the inspiration and theatre as the means. Richard's unique adaptations motivate and enchant young actors from 3<sup>rd</sup> grade up. His leadership skills engage parents, mentors and artists to support and encourage their youth. The result is a dynamic model that can be replicated in schools, organizations, clubs and communities.

Richard and his wife Jeanna live on a small farm where they have been raising their children and practicing sustainable agriculture together since 1988.