

Act Two • Scene 1 scene description

We now meet the members of the fairy world. It is evening and Puck and one of Titania's fairies meet in the woods and they reveal to each other (and of course to the audience) that their respective bosses are having a feud over a little orphan boy who is in Titania's care and whom Oberon wants in his entourage.

Just as we learn of their anger towards each other, Oberon and Titania show up. Immediately they start in on each other, Oberon demanding the boy and Titania refusing him.

We discover that due to their quarreling, the seasons have all gone awry and the world is in a state of confusion.

Oberon tells Titania that if she will give him the boy, all will be well again. She refuses once more and leaves.

Oberon wants revenge and remembers a flower that he once saw hit by one of Cupid's arrows. The juice of this flower, when squeezed into the eyes of someone asleep, has the power to make them fall in love with the first living thing they see when they awake.

Oberon sends Puck to get the flower and tells the audience that he plans to squeeze it into Titania's eyes and hopes that she will awaken when some awful creature is nearby. While she is distracted with this creature, he intends to make her give up

Act One • Scene 2

vernacular

BOTTOM:

Well, I'll do it.

QUINCE:

Men, here are your parts:

and I beg you, implore you, and desire you, to memorize them by tomorrow night, and to meet me in the woods near the palace, a mile outside of town, when the moon comes up—we will rehearse there. I beg you, don't fail me.

BOTTOM:

We'll be there. Adieu. *[they exit]*

Act Two • Scene 1

vernacular

[enter fairy and Puck from separate entrances]

PUCK:

What's up, spirit? Where you off to?

FAIRY:

Off to here, off to there, I am off to everywhere; and I serve the Fairy Queen. Farewell, I must prepare, the Queen is soon coming here.

PUCK:

The King too will be coming here tonight; be sure the Queen stays out of his sight. Oberon is full of rage, because of the boy—stolen from an Indian king—that she keeps as her page. Jealous Oberon wants the child, but she will not part with him. She crowns him with flowers and devotes herself to him. And now whenever they meet, they quarrel.

FAIRY:

If I'm not mistaken, you are that shrewd and rascally sprite called Robin Goodfellow, Are you, "Sweet Puck," are you?

Act Two • Scene 1 scene description

Cont.

the orphan boy. He then will remove the spell, which he can do with another flower.

At this moment Demetrius comes on with Helena in hot pursuit. Oberon makes himself invisible and stays to listen to their conversation.

Demetrius tells Helena that he does not love her and that she should stop following him. She tells him that she can't help it because he attracts her so greatly. Demetrius tries to run off and Helena runs after him.

Oberon decides to help Helena. He sends Puck (who has by now returned with the magic flower) off with some of the love-juice to find the man wearing Athenian clothing and to squeeze some juice in his eyes at a time when the next thing he will see will be Helena. Oberon himself is off to find Titania.

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PUCK:

Yup, you're right; I'm that cheerful fellow of the night. But stand back, fairy. Here comes Oberon.

FAIRY:

And here comes my mistress:—I wish that he were gone!

OBERON:

I'll met by moonlight, proud Titania.

TITANIA:

Oberon!

OBERON:

Stay!

TITANIA:

Why are you here? [*not waiting for an answer*] Never since the middle of summer, have my fairies gathered on the hill, in the dale, the forest or the mead, but your quarreling has disrupted our pastimes. This has caused the seasons to go awry: the spring, the summer, autumn and winter are all confused and the stunned world cannot tell which is which. This evil is the result of our quarreling; we are the cause!

OBERON:

If you wish to change things, it's within your power. Why does Titania cross Oberon? I only want the little orphan boy.

TITANIA:

Set your heart at rest—the whole of Fairy Land couldn't buy the child from me. His mother was a member of my order. But, being human, she died in childbirth, and for her sake I am bringing up her boy, and for her sake I will not part with him.

OBERON:

Give me the boy!

TITANIA:

Not for your fairy kingdom. Fairies,
away. [*Titania and her fairies exit*]

OBERON:

Well, go. I will torment you for this
insult. Gentle Puck, come here. Once
when I was sitting on a rock, I saw
Cupid shoot his love-arrow from his
bow. I noticed where Cupid's arrow fell.
It fell on a little flower which young
girls call "love-in-idleness."

PUCK:

I remember.

OBERON:

Bring me that flower. When the juice
of it is placed on the eyelids of someone
asleep, it will cause that man or woman
to dote on the next living thing it
sees.

PUCK:

I'll search the world in forty minutes.

OBERON:

When I have this juice, I'll keep watch
till Titania is asleep and then drop
it in her eyes. The next thing she sees
when she awakes—whether it's a lion,
bear, or an ape—she will pursue it
with all her heart. And before I remove
this charm from her eyes—which I can
do with another flower—I'll make her
give me the boy. But who is coming?
I'll make myself invisible and hear
their conversation.

[*enter Demetrius with Helena following*]

DEMETRIUS:

I don't love you, therefore do not pursue
me. Where is Lysander and lovely Hermia?
You told me they had snuck off into
these woods. Away, get lost, quit
following me.

HELENA:

You attract me. Stop being so attractive and I'll stop following you.

DEMETRIUS:

Do I entice you? Do I tell you you're pretty? Or rather have I not simply told you that I do not and I cannot love you?

HELENA:

And even for that I love you more.

DEMETRIUS:

I get sick when I see you.

HELENA:

And I get sick when I don't see you.

DEMETRIUS:

I'll run away and hide and leave you at the mercy of wild beasts.

HELENA:

The wildest is not as hard-hearted as you. Run! Only let me follow you.

DEMETRIUS:

I won't stay. Let me go!

HELENA:

Damn, Demetrius! Your treatment of me is a scandal to all women. *[he exits]*
We can't fight for love the way men do; we should be wooed and were not made to woo. *[she follows Demetrius]*

OBERON:

Farewell, nymph. Before he leaves this grove, he will seek your love. *[enter Puck]* Have you got the flower?

Act Two • Scene 2 scene description

In this scene, we find ourselves in the spot where Titania sleeps. She asks her fairies to sing her a lullaby to put her to sleep, they do so and then leave.

At this point Oberon comes on and applies the love-juice to Titania's eyes and then he leaves.

Lysander and Hermia enter. Both are tired and Lysander admits that he is lost and suggests that they sleep where they are and wait for daylight before continuing. Hermia agrees but insists that Lysander sleep far enough away from her to preserve her sense of modesty. He moves away and they both fall asleep.

Puck, who has been looking through the woods for the man dressed in Athenian clothing, comes on and sees Lysander and thinks he has found his man. He applies the love-juice to Lysander's eyes and exits.

Demetrius then enters with Helena close behind. He manages to break free of her and runs off. Helena, exhausted sits down to rest right near where Lysander has fallen asleep. She notices him, wakes him and under the power of the love-juice, he instantly falls madly in love her. Helena thinks Lysander is making fun of her and she walks off and Lysander follows her.

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PUCK:

Yup, there it is.

OBERON:

I know where Titania sleeps for part of the night, and I'll apply the juice of this to her eyes. You take some of it, and search through the woods, a sweet Athenian lady is in love with a disdainful young man. Put some in his eyes; but do it when the next thing he sees will be the lady. You will know the man by the Athenian clothing he has on.

PUCK:

Don't worry, my lord, your servant will do it. *[they exit]*

Act Two • Scene 2

vernacular

[enter Titania and her fairies]

TITANIA:

Come, sing me to sleep, and let me rest.

[the fairies sing]

Lulla, lulla, lullaby, lulla, lulla,
lullaby.

Never harm

Nor spell or charm

Come to our lovely lady here.

So good night, with lullaby.

[Titania sleeps, fairies exit]

[Oberon enters and puts the juice in Titania's eye]

OBERON:

What thou seest when thou dost wake,

Love and languish for his sake;

When thou wak'st, it is thy dear;

Wake, when some vile thing is near.

[he exits]

[enter Lysander and Hermia]

Act Two • Scene 2 scene description

Cont.

Hermia, who has had a bad dream, wakes up frightened and calls out for Lysander. After a few fruitless tries to locate him, she realizes that he is gone and she goes off to find out what has happened to him.

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vernacular

LYSANDER:

Dear love, I've lost our way. We'll rest Hermia, and wait for the comfort of the day.

HERMIA:

No, good Lysander, for my sake, my dear, lie further off. Do not lie so near.

LYSANDER:

Oh!

HERMIA:

Gentle friend, for love and courtesy, lie further away—for modesty.

LYSANDER:

Here is my bed. Let sleep give you a good rest! *[they both sleep]*

[enter puck]

PUCK:

Through the forest I have gone, but as for Athenians, I've found none. *[he sees Lysander]* Who is this? Clothing of Athens he wears. This is he! Churl, upon your eyes I throw all the power this charm can bestow. So awake, when I am gone; for now I must go to Oberon. *[he exits]*

[enter Demetrius with Helena running after him]

HELENA:

Stop, sweet Demetrius.

DEMETRIUS:

I beg you, go away, and don't bother me.

HELENA:

Oh, will you leave me? Don't.

DEMETRIUS:

Remain at your peril; I myself will go. *[Demetrius exits]*

HELENA:

Oh, I am out of breath! But who is here? Lysander! on the ground! Dead? or asleep? Lysander, if you are alive, good sir, awake.

LYSANDER: *[waking up quickly]*

And run through fire for your sweet sake. Where is Demetrius? Oh, that name—I could kill it with my sword!

HELENA:

Don't say that, Lysander; say that not. Even if he does love your Hermia—lord, so what? Hermia still loves you; so be happy.

LYSANDER:

Happy with Hermia? No: I'm sorry for all the time I have wasted on her. It's not Hermia, but Helena that I love!

HELENA:

Was I born to be a laughing stock? What did I do to deserve this? Truthfully, this isn't right—in truth it's not—for you to woo me like this is pure rot. Oh, that a lady, refused by one should then by another be treated like scum! *[she exits]*

LYSANDER:

Hermia, stay sleeping; there while Lysander gets himself out of here. *[Lysander exits]*

HERMIA: *[waking with a start]*

Help me, Lysander! *[recovering a*

Act Three • Scene 1 scene description

The workmen now come on to this same spot to rehearse their play. (Titania is still sleeping.) Before they get to the actual rehearsal, they bring up various problems that they have discovered about the play and the acting of it.

With Bottom pretty much taking charge, they arrive at solutions for these problems and then they start the rehearsal.

Puck comes upon this scene and decides to make himself invisible and listen in. When Pyramus exits into the bushes, Puck takes the opportunity to follow him off and using his fairy magic, he fastens an asses head onto Bottom and then sits back and watches while "all hell breaks loose" when Bottom reenters and his pals see him.

They all run away from him in terror, and he, not aware that anything has happened to him, thinks that they are all just trying to frighten him and he decides to sing to prove that he is not afraid.

His singing wakes Titania and since Bottom is the first creature she sees, she falls in love with him. She then calls her fairies to wait upon him and escort him to her bower (the flowered, tree-shaded spot in the woods where she lives some of the time.) They all exit.

Act Two • Scene 2 vernacular

bit) Oh, dear me! What a dream I had!
Lysander, oh, it was really bad!
Lysander! Lysander! Oh no,
where are you? Say something
or I'll faint from fear. No? Then I
guess you're really not here. Either
my death or you I'll find out there.
[exits]

Act Three • Scene 1 vernacular

*[Titania is still asleep; enter Bottom,
Quince, Snout, Starveling, Snug and Flute]*

BOTTOM:

Are we all here?

QUINCE:

And on time. This is a marvelous spot
for our rehearsal.

BOTTOM:

Peter Quince—

QUINCE:

What is it Bottom?

BOTTOM:

There are things in this comedy of
Pyramus and Thisbe that will offend.
First, Pyramus has to draw a sword to
kill himself; which ladies couldn't
stand. What do you think?

STARVELING:

I think we must leave out the killing,
when all is done.

BOTTOM:

Not at all—I have a plan to solve
the problem. Write a little speech:
and let it say that we won't really
hurt anyone with our swords; and that
Pyramus is not dead—really. This will
keep them from being afraid.

QUINCE:

Well, we'll write it.