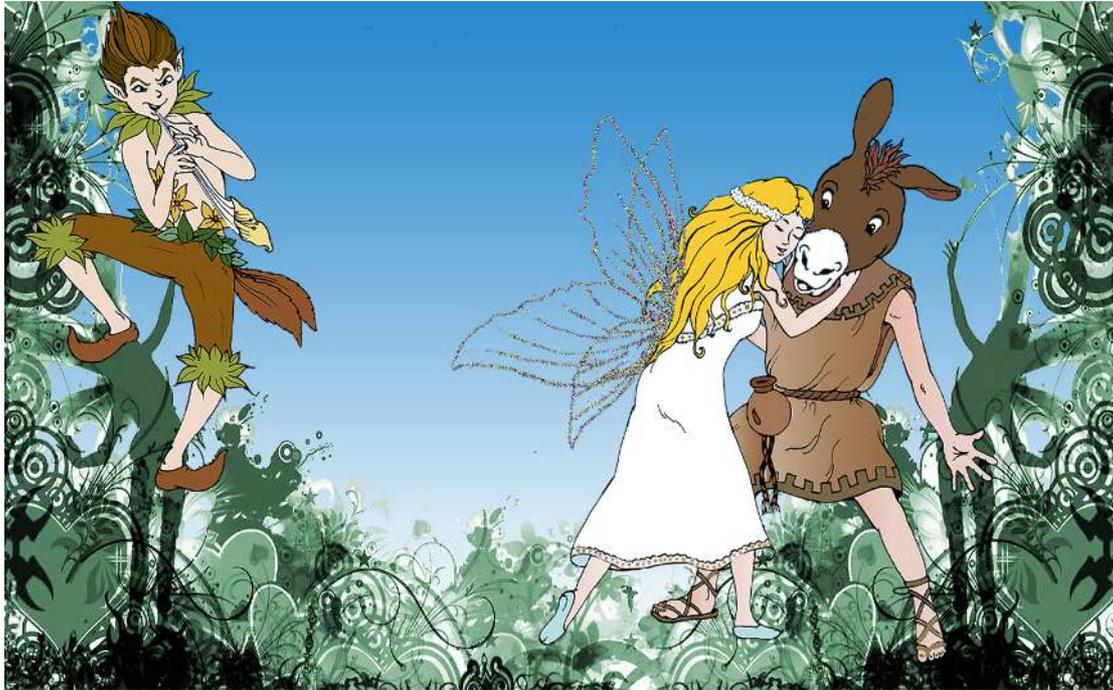




# A Midsummer Nights Dream

By William Shakespeare



Adapted by Leigh Farrant

## Act One

*The cast are posed as fairies, laughing, dancing and doing circus skills.*

**Narrator:** Over hill over dale, through brush through brier  
Over park over pale, through flood through fire  
The fairies have come from far and away  
To juggle and dance and laugh and play.

*The fairies fill the stage with fun.*

Our tale begins one summer's night  
With this magical forest sprite.  
Puck, they call him, he waits upon  
A fairy king called Oberon.

King Oberon rules the forest green  
With Titania, his mighty queen  
But in fairyland things can get tense  
When King or Queen doth take offence.

*Oberon claps his hands and the boy fairies huddle close behind him. Titania does the same with the girls.*

**Titania:** Do not dare tell me what to do.

**Oberon:** I am your king and I command you to obey.

**Girl fairies:** The boy stays with us.

**Boy fairies:** Give us the child.

**Narrator:** Titania had found a human boy  
A beautiful child that brought her much joy.  
But Oberon had his own opinion  
He wanted the boy to be his minion.

**Oberon:** Give me that boy.

**Titania:** Not for thy fairy kingdom. Fairies away!

*Titania laughs at him and leaves with her fairies. Oberon is furious. Puck slowly approaches Oberon.*

**Puck:** That was embarrassing...

**Oberon:** *(Looking after Titania)* You will regret this insult.

*Oberon is furious, puck and the boys back away.*

**Oberon:** PUCK!  
**Puck:** Yes my lord  
**Fairy 1:** Yes my lord  
**Fairy 2:** Yes my lord  
**Fairy 3:** Yes my lord.

**Narrator:** Oberon asked them to find him a flower  
A mystical plant with magical power.  
The juice from the flower, if put in your eye  
Makes you fall in love with the next thing you spy.

**Oberon:** Do you know the flower?  
**Puck:** Next to the bank  
**Fairy 1:** Where the river flows.  
**Fairy 2:** Where the brambles ramble,  
**Fairy 3:** And the red rose grows.

---

*Chorus form straight line for the court and create thrones for Theseus and Hippolyta.*

**Narrator:** Now let's go to the palace scene  
Where Theseus and Hippolyta are king and queen.  
The course of true love was not running smooth  
Much shouting and yelling had therefore ensued.

*Theseus and Hippolyta sit on thrones. Egeus (old man) in front of them. Four 'lovers' shouting at each other in a huddle. Theseus claps his hands, all freeze.*

**Theseus:** What is the meaning of this?

*They all shout again. Hippolyta claps and all freeze.*

**Hippolyta:** Explain yourself.  
**Egeus:** I have arranged for my daughter to marry this man. But she loves that man.  
**Theseus:** It is the law of the land that you must obey your father.

*Hermia weeps, everyone moves away, Lysander comforts her.*

**Lysander:** I have a plan.  
**Narrator:** They had a great plan. They would run off into the forest and be happy together. When Demetrius finds out he chases after them. And because Helena loves Demetrius she chases after him. But this will take them dangerously close to the fairy world. Let's find out what happens in the next scene and let's have a round of applause for group one.

## Act Two

*Half of the chorus are trees, the others are the workmen.*

**Narrator:** Back in the forest, some workmen have come  
To discuss the plans of what must be done.  
But when these folk finish work for the day  
They meet in the forest to rehearse their play.

**Quince:** Our play shall be called 'Pyramus and Thisbe'

**Workman 1:** It is a sad play

**Bottom:** Sad? I can be sad.

*He starts to act out crying, loud and dramatic.*

**Workman 2:** No, like this...

*He tries it.*

**Quince:** Stop it. Bottom, you shall play the part of Pyramus.

**Workman 3:** He dies, he does.

**Bottom:** Dies? Like this?

*He dies.*

**Workman 2:** No, like this.

*He dies too. They all try it.*

**Quince:** STOP IT!

**Snug:** I can be the lion. Rooar.

*Bottom jumps up.*

**Bottom:** Let me play the lion ...RROOOOAAARRR!

**Workman 2:** RRRRRROOOOAAAARRR!

**All:** RRRRRROOOOAAAARRRR!!!

*The workmen become trees, the trees become fairies.*

**Narrator:** Let's move back to the fairy world  
Where Titania sleeps as the fairies twirl.

*Fairies dance with ribbons and scarves*

King Oberon waits, but is soon in luck  
The flower appears in the hands of Puck.

*Puck appears and makes Oberon jump. The dancing fairies  
become trees and freeze.*

**Puck:** I have found the flower.  
**Oberon:** I will use it now, while Titania is asleep.  
**Puck:** I will make sure everything stays quiet.  
**Fairy 1:** Oh yes, very quiet.  
**Fairy 2:** Shhh.  
**Fairy 3:** Shhh.

*Oberon sneaks over to place the juice on Titania and just as he does so, the humans (Demetrius and Helena) burst on the stage and start arguing.*

**Demetrius:** Get off me.  
**Helena:** I love you.

*They repeat this over and over*

**Oberon:** Why are they making so much noise?

*Puck and the fairies shhhh them. Hermia and Lysander come on.*

**Hermia:** I love you!  
**Lysander:** I love YOU!

*Repeat.*

**Oberon:** Arggh, so much noise.

*He claps his hands and the fairies dance around them and take them away.*

**Oberon:** I thought I told you to keep them quiet?  
**Puck:** I did...  
**Fairy 1:** I tried...  
**Fairy 2:** It wasn't my fault...  
**Fairy 3:** Shhh.  
**Oberon:** We best make sure that things stay quiet.  
**Puck:** So... Titania will fall in love with the next thing she sees?  
**Oberon:** Yes, so lets find something disgusting for her to wake up to.  
**Fairy 1:** Like a frog?  
**Fairy 2:** Or a weasel?  
**Fairy 3:** Or a teacher?  
**Oberon:** Shhh.

**Narrator:** Let's find out what horrible thing they find in the next scene, let's have a round of applause for group two.

## Act Three

*Chorus create a tableau of trees, Titania, the lovers etc.  
Oberon and Puck(s) at the front.*

**Narrator:** So Titania sleeps, with magic on her eyes  
Soon to fall in love with the next thing she spies  
The humans argue, all through the woods they fight.  
If only there was a potion that could put all this right.

**Oberon:** I want you to stop the humans arguing.  
**Puck:** But it's funny when they fight.  
**Fairy 1:** They call each other funny names.  
**Fairy 2:** Like Cankerblossom.  
**Fairy 3:** Hehe.  
**Oberon:** Take the flower and make them fall in love. We must keep things quiet until something disgusting is near Titania.

*Oberon leaves. The lovers argue and the fairies (half of the chorus) dance for them. Puck puts them to sleep, juices their eyes but is interrupted by the Workmen (other half of the chorus) entering.*

**Narrator:** Puck and the fairies put the humans to sleep  
And put magic on the eyes so their love would be deep.  
But before Puck decided which way they should lay  
The workman appeared to rehearse their play

**Quince:** Okay, here looks like a good spot to rehearse.  
**Bottom:** I have been practising my death scene.

*He dies*

**Snug:** My roaring is getting better. RRRRROOOAAARRRR  
**Workman 1:** Try it like this... RRRROOOAAARRRR  
**Workman 2:** No, like this... Rooaarr  
**Bottom:** I can play both parts...RRROOOOAAARRRR....AAAARRRGGGH

*He roars ferociously, then dies.*

**Puck:** So much noise!  
**Fairy 1:** Why do humans make so much noise?  
**Fairy 2:** We have to keep them quiet.  
**Fairy 3:** Let's scare them away.

*The fairies dance around them making scary noises. Workmen panic and run in all directions. Puck stops Bottom in the middle of the stage.*

**Narrator:** Then Puck cast a spell on the loudest fool  
And turned him into a braying mule

*Puts donkey ears on Bottom who sits down and says eeeaww at regular intervals.*

Puck found this so funny, he completely forgot  
That the humans were sleeping and about to wake up.

*The humans start yawning.*

**Puck:** Oh dear.  
**Fairy 1:** Did we decide who should love who?  
**Fairy 2:** I thought you were doing that.  
**Fairy 3:** Let's do it now.  
**Puck:** Too late!

*They wake up. And see each other. They all see Hermia and start shouting that they love her. The squabble and leave the stage.*

**Puck:** Ooops.  
**Fairy 1:** Titania is waking up!  
**Fairy 2:** Quick hide!

*They hide.*

**Bottom:** Everybody left me. I will sing a song to myself.

*He does and Titania wakes up*

**Titania:** That is the most beautiful thing I ever heard.  
**All fairies:** It is?

*He sings some more*

**Titania:** And you are the most beautiful creature I have ever seen.  
**Bottom:** I am?  
**All fairies:** He is?  
**Titania:** Fairies, you will all look after him. Give him anything he wants.  
**Bottom:** Eeeeaww.

*They all leave. Oberon comes on stage.*

**Oberon:** Puck where are you?

*Puck creeps up on him again and makes him jump.*

**Puck:** Why are you whispering?  
**Oberon:** I thought it sounded mysterious.

**Fairy 1:** Nice idea.  
**Oberon:** Have you done what I asked?  
**Puck:** Oh yes.  
**Fairy 1:** Definitely  
**Fairy 2:** Absolutely  
**Fairy 3:** Have we?  
**Puck:** Titania is in love with a donkey  
**Oberon:** Excellent! And the humans?  
**Puck:** All sorted.

*The humans start arguing again. Oberon looks at Puck.*

**Puck:** Oops.

**Narrator:** Oh dear, we best see how they fix all this in the last scene, but let's have a big round of applause for group three.

## **Act Four**

*Titania sits with Bottom, watching the girls dance and juggle.*

**Narrator:** Titania is now in love with Bottom  
Who is now an ass, his real life forgotten.  
At last comes Oberon to make things right.  
To win back Titania this midsummer's night.

*Oberon enters, the boy fairies swarm around and juggle with the girls. Oberon claps his hands. Everyone moves to the side and freezes. Oberon goes to Titania.*

**Narrator:** Oberon lifts the spell on Titania.  
**Oberon:** Titania, forgive me  
**Titania:** I am the queen of the fairies. You will beg my forgiveness.  
**Oberon:** I beg you, I have been a fool.  
**Titania:** I had the strangest dream. I dreamt I was in love with an ass...  
**Oberon:** How odd...  
**Narrator:** Puck lifted the spell from Bottom, who said:  
**Bottom:** I had the strangest dream... It was brilliant.  
**Narrator:** But then he remembered he was supposed to be performing in a play with his friends. He had to hurry.

*He runs off. The lovers return, chasing each other.*

**Narrator:** Now all the fairies have to do is stop the humans arguing.

*The fairies all dance on and round up the lovers in the middle of the stage. Oberon, and Titania pair them up. They fall in love with the right people.*

**Narrator:** They were so happy they ran off back to the city to get married. Now, using some fairy magic, we can get ready for the last scene.

*Music plays, a quick stage is built in the middle of the stage (platform with some curtains or some such). The cast all sit down to watch the play.*

**Narrator:** So now we come to the happy ever after  
Everyone gets married with much fun and laughter.  
The workmen have gathered to perform their story  
About true love...and lions...and death, it's quite gory.

## Pyramus and Thisbe

**Narrator:** We now present for you our play. It is the most lamentable comedy, and most cruel death of Pyramus and Thisbe.

**Quince:** I would be a great shame if any of you got scared during our play.

**Workman 1:** So we would like to assure you that none shall be harmed in the performance of this play.

**Bottom:** I shall play the part of Pyramus and although I die in the play, it is just an act.

**Flute:** And I shall play the part of Thisbe, but I am not a woman.

**Snug:** I shall play the part of the lion. Roar. But ladies, do not be scared – I am not really a lion.

**Workman 2:** A lion among ladies is a most dreadful thing.

**Quince:** Let the play commence!

**Workman 3:** Pyramus was a brave knight... Who fell in love.

*Bottom acts this out*

**Workman 4:** With a lady called Thisbe.

**Workman 5:** Thisbe lived with her father behind a huge wall...

**Snout:** I shall now play the part of the wall...

*He does so*

**Workman 1:** At night Pyramus and Thisbe would talk through a small hole in the wall.

**Bottom:** Thisbe, my love, I wish I could hold your hand.

**Flute:** Oh, Pyramus, the hole in the wall is too small.

**Workman 2:** Pyramus and Thisbe agreed to meet by the river that night.

**Workman 3:** Thisbe sat alone by the river and waited.

**Workman 4:** She heard a noise.

**Flute:** Pyramus? Is that you?

**Workman 1:** But it was not Pyramus.

*Lion leaps on stage and roars (there could be several lions)*

**Snug:** (to audience) Do not be scared, remember I am not really a lion.

**Workman 2:** The lion attacked but Thisbe managed to run away.

*They run off, Thisbe drops her scarf.*

**Workman 3:** Moments later, Pyramus arrives.

**Bottom:** Thisbe, my love, where art thou?

**Workman 4:** But she was nowhere to be found...

**Bottom:** What is this? Thisbe's scarf with blood on it? And lion tracks? My poor Thisbe, killed by a lion.

**Workman 1:** Pyramus was devastated.

**Bottom:** Thisbe, I cannot live without you. If you are dead, then I shall be too...

*He draws his sword*

**Bottom:** Remember it is not real

*He plunges the sword under his arm and suffers a dramatic death. Enter Thisbe*

**Workman 2:** Thisbe escaped from the lion and returned to find her love.

**Flute:** Pyramus, there you are. Pyramus?

*She discovers him to be dead.*

**Flute:** No, Pyramus, no. Don't be dead, I cannot live without thee

*She takes the sword and kills herself.*

**Workman 3:** And so our story ends.

**Narrator:** The duke was pleased with the play, and everyone was happy.

**Puck:** If we spirits have offended, think but this and all is mended

**Oberon:** That you have but slumbered here.

**Titania:** While these visions did appear.

*The end*