

Fairy, Oberon, Titania, Robin

37

A Midsummer Night's Dream ACT 2. SC. 1

For Oberon is passing fell and wrath 20
Because that she, as her attendant, hath
A lovely boy stolen from an Indian king;
She never had so sweet a changeling.

And jealous Oberon would have the child
Knight of his train, to trace the forests wild. 25
But she perforce withholds the loved boy,
Crowns him with flowers and makes him all her
joy.

And now they never meet in grove or green, 30
By fountain clear or spangled starlight sheen,
But they do square, that all their elves for fear
Creep into acorn cups and hide them there.

Begin

FAIRY

Either I mistake your shape and making quite,
Or else you are that shrewd and knavish sprite 35
Called Robin Goodfellow. Are not you he
That frights the maidens of the villagery,
Skim milk, and sometimes labor in the quern
And bootless make the breathless huswife churn,
And sometime make the drink to bear no barm, 40
Mislead night wanderers; laughing at their harm?
Those that "Hobgoblin" call you and "sweet Puck,"
You do their work, and they shall have good luck.
Are not you he?

ROBIN

Thou speakest aright.

I am that merry wanderer of the night. 45
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, 50
And, when she drinks, against her lips I bob
And on her withered dewlap pour the ale.
The wisest aunt, telling the saddest tale,
Sometime for three-foot stool mistaketh me;

Then slip I from her bum, down topples she 55
And "Tailor!" cries and falls into a cough,
And then the whole choir hold their hips and loffe
And waxen in their mirth and neeze and swear
A merrier hour was never wasted there.
But room, fairy. Here comes Oberon. 60

FAIRY

And here my mistress. Would that he were gone!

Enter 「Oberon」 *the King of Fairies at one door, with his train, and* 「Titania」 *the Queen at another, with hers.*

OBERON

Ill met by moonlight, proud Titania.

TITANIA

What, jealous Oberon? 「Fairies,」 skip hence.
I have forsworn his bed and company.

OBERON

Tarry, rash wanton. Am not I thy lord? 65

TITANIA

Then I must be thy lady. But I know
When thou hast stolen away from Fairyland
And in the shape of Corin sat all day
Playing on pipes of corn and versing love
To amorous Phillida. Why art thou here, 70
Come from the farthest steep of India,
But that, forsooth, the bouncing Amazon,
Your buskined mistress and your warrior love,
To Theseus must be wedded, and you come
To give their bed joy and prosperity? 75

OBERON

How canst thou thus for shame, Titania,
Glance at my credit with Hippolyta,
Knowing I know thy love to Theseus?
Didst not thou lead him through the glimmering
night 80
From 「Perigouna,」 whom he ravishèd,

And make him with fair 「Aegles」 break his faith,
With Ariadne and Antiopa?

TITANIA

These are the forgeries of jealousy;
And never, since the middle summer's spring, 85
Met we on hill, in dale, forest, or mead,
By paved fountain or by rushy brook,
Or in the beachèd margent of the sea,
To dance our ringlets to the whistling wind,
But with thy brawls thou hast disturbed our sport. 90
Therefore the winds, piping to us in vain,
As in revenge have sucked up from the sea
Contagious fogs, which, falling in the land,
Hath every pelting river made so proud
That they have overborne their continents. 95
The ox hath therefore stretched his yoke in vain,
The plowman lost his sweat, and the green corn
Hath rotted ere his youth attained a beard.
The fold stands empty in the drownèd field,
And crows are fatted with the murrain flock. 100
The nine-men's-morris is filled up with mud,
And the quaint mazes in the wanton green,
For lack of tread, are undistinguishable.
The human mortals want their winter here.
No night is now with hymn or carol blessed. 105
Therefore the moon, the governess of floods,
Pale in her anger, washes all the air,
That rheumatic diseases do abound.
And thorough this distemperature we see
The seasons alter: hoary-headed frosts 110
Fall in the fresh lap of the crimson rose,
And on old Hiems' 「thin」 and icy crown
An odorous chaplet of sweet summer buds
Is, as in mockery, set. The spring, the summer,
The childing autumn, angry winter, change 115
Their wonted liveries, and the mazèd world

By their increase now knows not which is which.
And this same progeny of evils comes
From our debate, from our dissension;
We are their parents and original. 120

OBERON

Do you amend it, then. It lies in you.
Why should Titania cross her Oberon?
I do but beg a little changeling boy
To be my henchman.

TITANIA

Set your heart at rest: 125
The Fairyland buys not the child of me.
His mother was a vot'ress of my order,
And in the spicèd Indian air by night
Full often hath she gossiped by my side
And sat with me on Neptune's yellow sands, 130
Marking th' embarkèd traders on the flood,
When we have laughed to see the sails conceive
And grow big-bellied with the wanton wind;
Which she, with pretty and with swimming gait,
Following (her womb then rich with my young 135
squire),
Would imitate and sail upon the land
To fetch me trifles and return again,
As from a voyage, rich with merchandise.
But she, being mortal, of that boy did die, 140
And for her sake do I rear up her boy,
And for her sake I will not part with him.

OBERON

How long within this wood intend you stay?

TITANIA

Perchance till after Theseus' wedding day.
If you will patiently dance in our round 145
And see our moonlight revels, go with us.
If not, shun me, and I will spare your haunts.

OBERON

Give me that boy and I will go with thee.

TITANIA

Not for thy fairy kingdom. Fairies, away.
We shall chide downright if I longer stay. 150
「Titania and her fairies」 exit.

OBERON

Well, go thy way. Thou shalt not from this grove
Till I torment thee for this injury.—
My gentle Puck, come hither. Thou rememb'rest
Since once I sat upon a promontory
And heard a mermaid on a dolphin's back 155
Uttering such dulcet and harmonious breath
That the rude sea grew civil at her song
And certain stars shot madly from their spheres
To hear the sea-maid's music.

ROBIN

I remember. 160

OBERON

That very time I saw (but thou couldst not),
Flying between the cold moon and the Earth,
Cupid all armed. A certain aim he took
At a fair vestal thronèd by *「the」* west,
And loosed his love-shaft smartly from his bow 165
As it should pierce a hundred thousand hearts.
But I might see young Cupid's fiery shaft
Quenched in the chaste beams of the wat'ry moon,
And the imperial vot'ress passèd on
In maiden meditation, fancy-free. 170
Yet marked I where the bolt of Cupid fell.
It fell upon a little western flower,
Before, milk-white, now purple with love's wound,
And maidens call it "love-in-idleness."
Fetch me that flower; the herb I showed thee once. 175
The juice of it on sleeping eyelids laid
Will make or man or woman madly dote
Upon the next live creature that it sees.
Fetch me this herb, and be thou here again
Ere the leviathan can swim a league. 180

ROBIN

I'll put a girdle round about the Earth
In forty minutes. [He exits.]

OBERON

Having once this juice,
I'll watch Titania when she is asleep
And drop the liquor of it in her eyes. 185
The next thing then she, waking, looks upon
(Be it on lion, bear, or wolf, or bull,
On meddling monkey, or on busy ape)
She shall pursue it with the soul of love.
And ere I take this charm from off her sight 190
(As I can take it with another herb),
I'll make her render up her page to me.
But who comes here? I am invisible,
And I will overhear their conference.

End

Enter Demetrius, Helena following him.

DEMETRIUS

I love thee not; therefore pursue me not. 195
Where is Lysander and fair Hermia?
The one I'll stay; the other stayeth me.
Thou told'st me they were stol'n unto this wood,
And here am I, and wood within this wood
Because I cannot meet my Hermia. 200
Hence, get thee gone, and follow me no more.

HELENA

You draw me, you hard-hearted adamant!
But yet you draw not iron, for my heart
Is true as steel. Leave you your power to draw,
And I shall have no power to follow you. 205

DEMETRIUS

Do I entice you? Do I speak you fair?
Or rather do I not in plainest truth
Tell you I do not, 'nor' I cannot love you?

HELENA

And even for that do I love you the more.