

STAR-CROSSED: A Midsummer Nightmare

By Stephanie Garrison and Andrea Watson

STAR-CROSSED: A MIDSUMMER NIGHTMARE

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*To William Shakespeare:
Thank you for the 17 plays, sonnets, and poems
that gave us these characters and these words.*

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Authors' Notes

A note on gender-blind casting

This is a play about how women exist in a heteropatriarchy. All mortal roles should be played by actors of the same gender as the character. Gender-blind casting would muddy the struggles of two women in love, the power dynamic of a father making decisions about his daughter's life, the indignity of a queen-turned-prisoner of war who must obey a male master.

Titania and Oberon may be played by any gender actor, but the characters should remain female and male, respectively. Even in the realm of magic, the patriarchy rears its head. Perhaps this is due to Oberon's dalliances with mortals. Perhaps not.

Mercutio may be played by any gender actor, but the role should either be male, gender fluid, or gender neutral; not decidedly female. When he is in Athens, he should blend in believably with the mortal males: Romeo, Benvolio, and Tybalt.

A note on Hippolyta's native language

This play was originally performed in New Orleans. The most common world language other than English spoken in New Orleans is Spanish. Therefore, we chose to make Hippolyta's native language Spanish to maximize the number of people "in on the joke" that her Translator doesn't always translate her words with fidelity. Should this play be produced in a region where a language other than Spanish would accomplish this objective, please contact the authors to discuss changing Hippolyta's native language for that production.

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Star-Crossed: A Midsummer Nightmare was originally produced August 2023 at Big Couch in New Orleans, LA by Fat Squirrel, directed by Andrea Watson, and featured the following cast:

Hermia	Hannah Dougharty
Helena	Desirée Burrell
Juliet	Emily C. Russell
Romeo.....	Drew Stroud
Tybalt	Ryan Bruce
Nurse	Mary Pauley
Benvolio.....	David Hidalgo
Mercutio.....	Andrea Watson
Oberon	Laura Bernas
Titania	Lizzy Bruce
Theseus.....	James Wright
Hippolyta	Elyse McDaniel
Translator	Kaylon Willoughby
Egeus	Kyle Daigrepont
Lady Egeus	Chloe Faith Castello
Agapita.....	Becca Larkin
Amazons.....	Gill Box and Maddie Fry

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Characters in the Play

Four lovers:

HERMIA

HELENA

JULIET

ROMEO

THESEUS, duke of Athens

HIPPOLYTA, queen of the Amazons

A TRANSLATOR, an Amazon servant to Hippolyta

EGEUS, father to Hermia

LADY EGEUS, his wife

AMAZONS, Hippolyta's loyal subjects and waiting women

OBERON, king of the Fairies

TITANIA, queen of the Fairies

MERCUTIO, a "puck," or hobgoblin, in Oberon's service and Romeo's friend

NURSE to Juliet

TYBALT, kinsman to the Capulets

BENVOLIO, friend of Romeo

DUCHESS AGAPITA, the exiled wife of Theseus

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PROLOGUE

MERCUTIO.

In nature's infinite book of secrecy
A little I can read.

Open your ears, for which of you will stop
The vent of hearing when loud Rumor speaks?
I, from the orient to the drooping west,
Making the wind my post-horse, still unfold
The acts commencèd on this ball of earth.
Upon my tongues continual slanders ride,
The which in every language I pronounce,
Stuffing the ears of men with false reports.
I speak of peace while covert enmity
Under the smile of safety wounds the world.
And who but Rumor – Why is Rumor here?
I run before Theseus' victory,
Who in a bloody field by the Amazon
Hath beaten down Hippolyta and her troops,
Quenching the flame of bold rebellion
Even with the rebels' blood. But what mean I
To speak so true at first? My office is
To noise abroad that our duchess knelt

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Under the wrath of noble Theseus' sword,
And that she before the hero's rage
Stooped her accursed head as low as death.
This have I rumored through the peasant towns
Between that royal field of Amazon
And this worm-eaten hold of ragged stone,
The posts come tiring on,
And not a man of them brings other news
Than they have learnt of me. From Rumor's tongues
They bring smooth comforts false, worse than true wrongs.

What does the tyrant? Alas, poor Athens,
Almost afraid to know itself. It cannot
Be called a mother, but a grave, where nothing
But who knows nothing is once seen to smile;
Where sighs and groans and shrieks that rent the air
Are made, not marked; where violent sorrow seems
A modern ecstasy.

But what's he, then, that says I play the villain,
I do love Romeo well and would do much
To cure him of this evil— (*He produces some mechanism of magic.*)
I've poured this pestilence into his ear.
So have I turn devotion into pitch,
And out of their own goodness made the web
That shall enmesh them all.
Only to despise them, I will endeavor any thing.

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SCENE 1

HIPPOLYTA'S CHAMBERS

THESEUS.

Now, fair Hippolyta, our nuptial hour
Draws on apace. Four happy days bring in
Another moon. But, O, methinks how slow
This old moon wanes! She lingers my desires
Like to a stepdame or a dowager
Long withering out a young man's revenue.

HIPPOLYTA¹

Sabe, hombre triste, que no soy
Hippolyta;

Ella es tu amiga, y yo tu enemiga:

Soy Venganza: enviada desde el
reino infernal,

Para aliviar el buitro que roe
nuestra mente,

Trabajando una terrible venganza
sobre nuestros enemigos.

TRANSLATOR (*SIMUL*).

Four days will quickly steep themselves in
night;

Four nights will quickly dream away the
time;

And then the moon, like to a silver bow

New-bent in heaven, shall behold the night

Of our solemnities.

THESEUS. (*to Amazon*) Go, tell Egeus,
Stir up the Athenian youth to merriments.
Awake the pert and nimble spirit of mirth.
Turn melancholy forth to funerals;

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The pale companion is not for our pomp. (*Amazon exits.*)
Hippolyta, I wooed thee with my sword
And won thy love doing thee injuries,
But I will wed thee in another key,
With pomp, with triumph, and with reveling.

SCENE 2

A STREET OF ATHENS, EVENING

BENVOLIO.

What sadness lengthens Romeo's hours?

ROMEO.

Not having that which, having, makes them short.

BENVOLIO. In love?

ROMEO. Out—

BENVOLIO. Of love?

ROMEO.

Out of her favor where I am in love.

BENVOLIO.

Tell me in sadness, who is that you love?

ROMEO. What, shall I groan and tell thee?

BENVOLIO.

Groan? Why, no. But sadly tell me who.

ROMEO.

A sick man in sadness makes his will—

A word ill urged to one that is so ill.

In sadness, cousin, I do love a woman.

BENVOLIO.

I aimed so near when I supposed you loved.

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ROMEO.

A right good markman! And she's fair I love.

BENVOLIO.

A right fair mark, fair coz, is soonest hit.

ROMEO.

Well in that hit you miss. She'll not be hit
With Cupid's arrow. She hath Dian's wit,
And, in strong proof of chastity well armed,
From love's weak childish bow she lives uncharmed.
She will not stay the siege of loving terms,
Nor bide th' encounter of assailing eyes,
Nor ope her lap to saint-seducing gold.
O, she is rich in beauty, only poor
That, when she dies, with beauty dies her store.

BENVOLIO.

Then she hath sworn that she will still live chaste?

ROMEO.

She hath, and in that sparing makes huge waste;
For beauty, starved with her severity,
Cuts beauty off from all posterity.
She is too fair, too wise, wisely too fair,
To merit bliss by making me despair.
She hath forsworn to love, and in that vow
Do I live dead, that live to tell it now.

BENVOLIO.

Be ruled by me. Forget to think of her.

ROMEO.

O, teach me how I should forget to think!
Give me a torch. I am not for this ambling.
Being but heavy I will bear the light.

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MERCUTIO.

Nay, gentle Romeo, we must have you dance.

ROMEO.

Not I, believe me. You have dancing shoes
With nimble soles. I have a soul of lead
So stakes me to the ground I cannot move.

MERCUTIO.

You are a lover. Borrow Cupid's wings
And soar with them above a common bound.

ROMEO.

I am too sore enpiercèd with his shaft
To soar with his light feathers, and so bound
I cannot bound a pitch above dull woe.
Under love's heavy burden do I sink.

MERCUTIO.

And to sink in it should you burden love—
Too great oppression for a tender thing.

ROMEO.

Is love a tender thing? It is too rough,
Too rude, too boist'rous, and it pricks like thorn.

MERCUTIO.

If love be rough with you, be rough with love.
Prick love for pricking, and you beat love down.— (*JULIET enters with her NURSE.*) Here's goodly gear. A sail, a sail!

NURSE. My fan, lady.

MERCUTIO. Good lady, to hide her face, for her fan's
the fairer face.

NURSE. God you good e'en, gentlemen.

MERCUTIO. God you good morrow, fair gentlewoman.

NURSE. Is it good morrow?

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MERCUTIO. 'Tis no less, I tell you, for the bawdy hand of
the dial is now upon the prick of midnight.

NURSE. Out upon you! What a man are you?

MERCUTIO. One, gentlewoman, that God hath made, himself
to mar.

NURSE. By my troth, it is well said: “for himself to
mar,” quoth he? I pray you, lady, what saucy merchant is this
that is so full of his ropery?

JULIET. A gentleman, nurse, that loves to hear himself
talk and will speak more in a minute than he will
stand to in a month.

NURSE. An he speak anything against me, I'll take him
down, an he were lustier than he is, and twenty
such jacks. An if I cannot, I'll find those that shall.
Scurvy knave, I am none of his flirt-gills; I am none
of his skains-mates. Now, afore God, I am so vexed that every part
about me quivers. Scurvy knave!

JULIET. *(to Romeo)* Good my lord,
How does your Honor for this many a day?

ROMEO. I humbly thank you, well.

JULIET.
My lord, I have remembrances of yours
That I have longèd long to redeliver.
I pray you now receive them.

ROMEO.
No, not I. I never gave you aught.

JULIET.
My honored lord, you know right well you did,
And with them words of so sweet breath composed
As made the things more rich. Their perfume

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lost,

Take these again, for to the noble mind

Rich gifts wax poor when givers prove unkind.

There, my lord.

ROMEO. Ha, ha, are you honest?

JULIET. My lord?

ROMEO. Are you fair?

JULIET. What means your Lordship?

ROMEO. That if you be honest and fair, your honesty
should admit no discourse to your beauty.

JULIET. Could beauty, my lord, have better commerce
than with honesty?

ROMEO. Ay, truly, for the power of beauty will sooner
transform honesty from what it is to a bawd than
the force of honesty can translate beauty into his
likeness. This was sometime a paradox, but now
the time gives it proof. I did love you once.

JULIET. Indeed, my lord, you made me believe so.

ROMEO. You should not have believed me, for virtue
cannot so inoculate our old stock but we shall
relish of it. I loved you not.

JULIET. I was the more deceived. Adieu! I have too
grieved a heart to take a tedious leave. (*Juliet and Nurse exit.*)

MERCUTIO. Farewell, ancient lady. Farewell, lady, lady,
lady.

Come, we burn moonlight, ho!

ROMEO.

I dreamt a dream tonight.

MERCUTIO. And so did I.

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ROMEO.

Well, what was yours?

MERCUTIO. That dreamers often lie.

ROMEO.

In bed asleep while they do dream things true.

MERCUTIO.

O, then I see Queen Mab hath been with you.
She is the fairies' midwife, and she comes
In shape no bigger than an agate stone
On the forefinger of an alderman,
Drawn with a team of little atomi
Over men's noses as they lie asleep.
Her wagon spokes made of long spinners' legs,
The cover of the wings of grasshoppers,
Her traces of the smallest spider web,
Her collars of the moonshine's wat'ry beams,
Her whip of cricket's bone, the lash of film,
Her wagoner a small gray-coated gnat,
Not half so big as a round little worm
Pricked from the lazy finger of a maid.
Her chariot is an empty hazelnut,
Made by the joiner squirrel or old grub,
Time out o' mind the fairies' coachmakers.
And in this state she gallops night by night
Through lovers' brains, and then they dream of love;
On courtiers' knees, that dream on cur'sies straight;
Sometime she gallops o'er a courtier's nose,
And then dreams he of smelling out a suit.
Sometime she driveth o'er a soldier's neck,
And then dreams he of cutting foreign throats,

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Of breaches, ambuscadoes, Spanish blades,
Of healths five fathom deep, and then anon
Drums in his ear, at which he starts and wakes
And, being thus frightened, swears a prayer or two
And sleeps again. This is that very Mab
This is she—

ROMEO. Peace, peace, Mercutio, peace.
Thou talk'st of nothing.

MERCUTIO. True, I talk of dreams,
Which are the children of an idle brain,
Begot of nothing but vain fantasy,
Which is as thin of substance as the air
And more inconstant than the wind, who woos
Even now the frozen bosom of the north
And, being angered, puffs away from thence,
Turning his side to the dew-dropping south.

BENVOLIO.

This wind you talk of blows us from ourselves.
Supper is done, and we shall come too late.

ROMEO.

I fear too early, for my mind misgives
Some consequence yet hanging in the stars
Shall bitterly begin his fearful date
With this night's revels, and expire the term
Of a despised life closed in my breast
By some vile forfeit of untimely death.
But he that hath the steering of my course
Direct my sail. On, lusty gentlemen.

BENVOLIO. Strike, drum.

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SCENE 3

THE HOUSE OF EGEUS, THE SAME NIGHT

A party for Theseus and Hippolyta - in attendance are the citizens of Athens, as well as Hippolyta and her waiting Amazons.

SCENE 4

A COURTYARD IN THE HOUSE OF EGEUS, SIMULTANEOUS WITH SCENE 3

HERMIA.

How camest thou hither, tell me, and wherefore?
The orchard walls are high and hard to climb,
And the place death, considering who thou art,
If any of my kinsmen find thee here.

HELENA.

With love's light wings did I o'erperch these walls,
For stony limits cannot hold love out,
And what love can do, that dares love attempt.
Therefore thy kinsmen are no stop to me.

HERMIA.

If they do see thee, they will murder thee.

HELENA.

I have night's cloak to hide me from their eyes,
And, but thou love me, let them find me here.
My life were better ended by their hate
Than death prorogued, wanting of thy love.

HERMIA.

Thou knowest the mask of night is on my face,
Else would a maiden blush bepaint my cheek

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HELENA.

Lady, by yonder blessèd moon I vow,
That tips with silver all these fruit-tree tops—

HERMIA.

O, swear not by the moon, th' inconstant moon,
That monthly changes in her circled orb,
Lest that thy love prove likewise variable.

HELENA.

What shall I swear by?

HERMIA. Do not swear at all.

Or, if thou wilt, swear by thy gracious self,
Which is the god of my idolatry,
And I'll believe thee.
Good night, good night. As sweet repose and rest
Come to thy heart as that within my breast.

HELENA.

O, wilt thou leave me so unsatisfied?

HERMIA.

What satisfaction canst thou have tonight?

HELENA.

Th' exchange of thy love's faithful vow for mine.

HERMIA.

I gave thee mine before thou didst request it,
And yet I would it were to give again.

HELENA.

Wouldst thou withdraw it? For what purpose, love?

HERMIA.

But to be frank and give it thee again.
And yet I wish but for the thing I have.
My bounty is as boundless as the sea,

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My love as deep. The more I give to thee,
The more I have, for both are infinite. (*EGEUS calls from within.*)
I hear some noise within. (*Egeus enters.*)

EGEUS.

Give me my long sword, ho!

HELENA.

A crutch, a crutch! Why call you for a sword?

EGEUS. (*to Hermia*)

Out, you green-sickness carrion! Out, you baggage!
You tallow face! (*Romeo and others enter.*)

ROMEO.

Fie, fie, what, are you mad?

TYBALT. (*to Romeo*)

You are too officious
In her behalf that scorns your services.

BENVOLIO.

Do you quarrel, sir?

TYBALT.

A dog of the house of Montague moves me.

BENVOLIO.

We talk here in the public haunt of men.
Either withdraw unto some private place,
Or reason coldly of your grievances,
Or else depart. Here all eyes gaze on us.

TYBALT.

Men's eyes were made to look, and let them gaze.
I will not budge for no man's pleasure, I.

MERCUTIO. Draw if you be men. (*Mercutio instigates an all-out brawl.*)

ROMEO. Part, fools!

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Put up your swords. You know not what you do. (*Romeo and Tybalt fight, joining the brawl. Theseus enters.*)

THESEUS.

Rebellious subjects, enemies to peace,cene
Profaners of this neighbor-stainèd steel—
Will they not hear?—What ho! You men, you beasts,
On pain of torture, from those bloody hands
Throw your mistempered weapons to the ground.

EGEUS.

Happy be Theseus, our renownèd duke!

THESEUS.

Thanks, good Egeus. What's the news with thee?

EGEUS.

Full of vexation am I, with complaint
Against my child, my daughter Hermia.—
Stand forth, Romeo.—My noble lord,
This man hath my consent to marry her.—
Stand forth, Helena.—And, my gracious duke,
This hag hath bewitched the bosom of my child.—
Thou, thou, Helena, thou hast given her rhymes
And interchanged love tokens with my child.
Thou hast by moonlight at her window sung
With feigning voice verses of feigning love
And stol'n the impression of her fantasy
With bracelets of thy hair, rings, gauds, conceits,
Knacks, trifles, nosegays, sweetmeats—messengers
Of strong prevailment in unhardened youth.
With cunning hast thou filched my daughter's heart,
Turned her obedience (which is due to me)
To stubborn harshness.—And, my gracious duke,

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Be it so she will not here before your Grace
Consent to marry with Romeo,
I beg the ancient privilege of Athens:
As she is mine, I may dispose of her,
Which shall be either to this gentleman
Or to her death, according to our law
Immediately provided in that case.

THESEUS.

What say you, Hermia? Be advised, fair maid.
To you, your father should be as a god,
One that composed your beauties, yea, and one
To whom you are but as a form in wax
By him imprinted, and within his power
To leave the figure or disfigure it.

HERMIA.

I do entreat your Grace to pardon me.
I know not by what power I am made bold,
Nor how it may concern my modesty
In such a presence here to plead my thoughts;
But I beseech your Grace that I may know
The worst that may befall me in this case
If I refuse to wed Romeo.

THESEUS.

Either to die the death or to abjure
Forever the society of men.
Therefore, fair Hermia, question your desires,
Know of your youth, examine well your blood,
Whether (if you yield not to your father's choice)
You can endure the livery of a nun,
For aye to be in shady cloister mewed,

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To live a barren sister all your life,
Chanting faint hymns to the cold fruitless moon.
Thrice-blessèd they that master so their blood
To undergo such maiden pilgrimage,
But earthlier happy is the rose distilled
Than that which, withering on the virgin thorn,
Grows, lives, and dies in single blessedness.

HERMIA.

So will I grow, so live, so die, my lord,
Ere I will yield my virgin patent up
Unto his Lordship whose unwishèd yoke
My soul consents not to give sovereignty.

THESEUS.

Take time to pause, and by the next new moon,
Upon that day either prepare to die
For disobedience to your father's will,
Or else to wed Romeo, as he would,
Or on Diana's altar to protest
For aye austerity and single life.

ROMEO.

Relent, sweet Hermia, and, Helena, yield
Thy crazèd title to my certain right.

HELENA.

You have her father's love, Romeo.
Let me have Hermia's. Do you marry him.

EGEUS.

Scornful Helena, true, he hath my love;
And what is mine my love shall render him.
And she is mine, and all my right of her
I do estate unto Romeo.

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HELENA. *(To Theseus.)*

I am, my lord, as well derived as he,
As well possessed. My love is more than his;
My fortunes every way as fairly ranked
(If not with vantage) as Romeo's;
And (which is more than all these boasts can be)
I am beloved of beauteous Hermia.
Why should not I then prosecute my right?
Romeo, I'll avouch it to his head,
Made love to Capel's daughter, Juliet,
And won her soul; and she, sweet lady, dotes,
Devoutly dotes, dotes in idolatry,
Upon this spotted and inconstant man.

THESEUS.

I must confess that I have heard so much,
And with Romeo thought to have spoke thereof;
But, being overfull of self-affairs,
My mind did lose it.—But, Romeo, come,
And come, Egeus; you shall go with me.
I have some private schooling for you both.—
For you, fair Hermia, look you arm yourself
To fit your fancies to your father's will,
Or else the law of Athens yields you up
(Which by no means we may extenuate)
To death or to a vow of single life.—

EGEUS.

With duty and desire we follow you. *(All but Hermia and Helena exit.)*

HELENA.

How now, my love? Why is your cheek so pale?
How chance the roses there do fade so fast?

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HERMIA.

Belike for want of rain, which I could well
Beteem them from the tempest of my eyes.

HELENA.

Ay me! For aught that I could ever read,
Could ever hear by tale or history,
The course of true love never did run smooth.

HERMIA.

If then true lovers have been ever crossed,
It stands as an edict in destiny.
Then let us teach our trial patience
Because it is a customary cross,
As due to love as thoughts and dreams and sighs,
Wishes and tears, poor fancy's followers.

HELENA.

A good persuasion. Therefore, hear me, Hermia:
I have a widow aunt, a dowager
Of great revenue, and she hath no child.
From Athens is her house remote seven leagues,
And she respects me as her only child.
There, gentle Hermia, may I marry thee;
And to that place the sharp Athenian law
Cannot pursue us. If thou lovest me, then
Steal forth thy father's house tomorrow night,
And in the wood a league without the town
There will I stay for thee.

HERMIA. My good Helena,

I swear to thee by Cupid's strongest bow,
By that which knitteth souls and prospers loves,
In that same place thou hast appointed me,

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Tomorrow truly will I meet with thee.

HELENA.

Keep promise, love. Look, here comes Juliet. (*Juliet enters.*)

HERMIA.

Godspeed, fair Juliet. Whither away?

JULIET.

Call you me “fair”? That “fair” again unsay.

Romeo loves your fair. O happy fair!

O, teach me how you look and with what art

You sway the motion of Romeo’s heart!

HERMIA.

I frown upon him, yet he loves me still.

The more I hate, the more he follows me.

JULIET.

The more I love, the more he hateth me.

HERMIA.

His folly, Juliet, is no fault of mine.

JULIET.

None but your beauty. Would that fault were mine!

HELENA.

Julie, to you our minds we will unfold.

Tomorrow night when Phoebe doth behold

Her silver visage in the wat’ry glass,

Decking with liquid pearl the bladed grass

(A time that lovers’ flights doth still conceal),

Through Athens’ gates have we devised to steal.

Juliet, adieu.

As you on him, Romeo dote on you! (*Helena and Hermia exit.*)

JULIET.

O Romeo, Romeo wherefore spurn me, Romeo?

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He will not know what all but he do know.
That, ere Romeo 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 show'rs of oaths did melt. (*Tybalt enters.*)
I will go tell him of fair Hermia's flight.
Then to the wood will he tomorrow night
Pursue her. And, for this intelligence
If I have thanks, it is a dear expense.
But herein mean I to enrich my pain,
To have his sight thither and back again.
Why, how now, kinsman? Wherefore storm you so?

TYBALT.

'Tis he, that villain Romeo.

JULIET.

Content thee, gentle coz. Let him alone.

TYBALT.

I'll not endure him.

JULIET.

He shall be endured. I say he shall.

TYBALT.

Cousin, this same young Romeo, our foe.

Why, cousin, 'tis a shame.

JULIET.

Am I the injured here or you? Go to. (*Romeo enters.*)

TYBALT. (*To Romeo*)

You are a villain. I jest
not. I will make it good how you dare, with what you
dare, and when you dare. Do me right, or I will
protest your cowardice. You have wronged a sweet

STAR-CROSSED: A MIDSUMMER NIGHTMARE

lady, and her pain shall fall heavy on you. Let me hear from you.

ROMEO.

I dare do all that may become a man;
Who dares do more, is none.
Were it my cue to fight, I should have known it
Without a prompter. (*Romeo exits.*)

SCENE 5

HERMIA'S CHAMBERS, THE NEXT EVENING

HERMIA.

Gallop apace, you fiery-footed steeds,
Towards Phoebus' lodging. Such a waggoner
As Phaëton would whip you to the west
And bring in cloudy night immediately.
Spread thy close curtain, love-performing night,
That runaways' eyes may wink, and Helena
Leap to these arms, untalked of and unseen.
Lovers can see to do their amorous rites
By their own beauties, or, if love be blind,
It best agrees with night. Come, civil night,
Thou sober-suited matron all in black,
And learn me how to lose a winning match
Played for a pair of stainless maidenhoods.
Hood my unmanned blood, bating in my cheeks,
With thy black mantle till strange love grow bold,
Think true love acted simple modesty.
Come, night. Come, Helena. Come, thou day in
night,

STAR-CROSSED: A MIDSUMMER NIGHTMARE

For thou wilt lie upon the wings of night
Whiter than new snow upon a raven's back.
Come, gentle night; come, loving black-browed
night,
Give me my Helena, and when she shall die,
Take her and cut her out in little stars,
And she will make the face of heaven so fine
That all the world will be in love with night
And pay no worship to the garish sun.

SCENE 6

HERMIA'S CHAMBERS, THE NEXT MORNING

LADY EGEUS.

Daughter! What, daughter! Hermia!—Fast, I warrant.
Why, lamb, why, daughter! Fie, you slugabed!
Why, love, I say! Darling! Sweetheart!
How sound is she asleep! (*She finds a letter and reads.*)
O me! O me! My child, my only life. (*Egeus enters.*)

EGEUS.

What noise is here? (*Reads aloud.*)
My father: no more shall you see my face.
Helena and myself will fly this place.
Before the time I did Helena see
Seemed Athens as a paradise to me.
O, then, what graces in my love do dwell
That thou hast turned a heaven unto a hell!
And so from Athens turn away our eyes
To seek new friends and stranger companies.

STAR-CROSSED: A MIDSUMMER NIGHTMARE

O child! O child! My soul and not my child!
Grieved I I had but one?
Child I for that at frugal Nature's frame?
O, one too much by thee! Why had I one?
Why ever wast thou lovely in my eyes?
Why had I not with charitable hand
Took up a beggar's issue at my gates,
Who, smirchèd thus, and mired with infamy,
I might have said "No part of it is mine;
This shame derives itself from unknown loins"?
But mine, and mine I loved, and mine I praised,
And mine that I was proud on, mine so much
That I myself was to myself not mine,
Valuing of her—

LADY EGEUS. Sir, sir, be patient.

EGEUS.

Why she, O she, is fall'n
Into a pit of ink, that the wide sea
Hath drops too few to wash her clean again,
And salt too little which may season give
To her foul tainted flesh!
Dead art thou! Alack, my child is dead,
And with my child my joys are buried.

SCENE 7

THE FOREST SURROUNDING ATHENS

OBERON.

Ill met by moonlight, proud Titania.

STAR-CROSSED: A MIDSUMMER NIGHTMARE

TITANIA.

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

OBERON.

Tarry, rash wanton. Am not I thy lord?

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,
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?

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
From Perigouna, whom he ravishèd,
And make him with fair Agapitas break his faith,
With Ariadne and Antiopa?

TITANIA.

These are the forgeries of jealousy;
And never, since the middle summer's spring,
Met we on hill, in dale, forest, or mead,
By paved fountain or by rushy brook,
Or in the beachèd margent of the sea,

STAR-CROSSED: A MIDSUMMER NIGHTMARE

To dance our ringlets to the whistling wind,
But with thy brawls thou hast disturbed our sport.
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.
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.
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.
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
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
Their wonted liveries, and the mazèd world
By their increase now knows not which is which.
And this same progeny of evils comes

STAR-CROSSED: A MIDSUMMER NIGHTMARE

From our debate, from our dissension;
We are their parents and original.

OBERON.

Do you amend it, then. It lies in you.

TITANIA.

Fairies, away.

We shall chide downright if I longer stay. (*She exits.*)

OBERON.

Well, go thy way. Thou shalt not from this grove
Till I torment thee for this injury.
Excellent wretch! Perdition catch my soul
But I do love thee! And when I love thee not,
Chaos is come again.

MERCUTIO.

My noble lord—

OBERON.

What dost thou say, Mercutio?

MERCUTIO.

O, beware, my lord, of jealousy!
It is the green-eyed monster which doth mock
The meat it feeds on. That cuckold lives in bliss
Who, certain of his fate, loves not his wronger;
But O, what damnèd minutes tells he o'er
Who dotes, yet doubts; suspects, yet strongly loves!
Poor and content is rich, and rich enough;
But riches fineless is as poor as winter
To him that ever fears he shall be poor.
Good God, the souls of all my tribe defend
From jealousy!

STAR-CROSSED: A MIDSUMMER NIGHTMARE

OBERON.

I have't. It is engend'red. Hell and night
Must bring this monstrous birth to the world's light.
My gentle Puck, come hither. Thou rememb'rest
Since once I sat upon a promontory
And heard a mermaid on a dolphin's back
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.

MERCUTIO.

I remember.

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
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.
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.
The juice of it on sleeping eyelids laid
Will make or man or woman madly dote

STAR-CROSSED: A MIDSUMMER NIGHTMARE

Upon the next live creature that it sees.
Fetch me this herb, and be thou here again
Ere the leviathan can swim a league.

MERCUTIO.

I'll put a girdle round about the Earth
In forty minutes. (*Mercutio exits.*)

OBERON.

Having once this juice,
I'll watch Titania when she is asleep
And drop the liquor of it in her eyes.
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
(As I can take it with another herb),
I'll make her admit her infidelity.
But who comes here? (*Enter Romeo, followed by Juliet.*)

ROMEO.

I love thee not; therefore pursue me not.
Where is Helena and fair Hermia?
Thou told'st me they were stol'n unto this wood.
Hence, get thee gone, and follow me no more.
Tempt not too much the hatred of my spirit,
For I am sick when I do look on thee.

JULIET.

And I am sick when I look not on you.

ROMEO.

You do impeach your modesty too much
To leave the city and commit yourself

STAR-CROSSED: A MIDSUMMER NIGHTMARE

Into the hands of one that loves you not.

JULIET.

Your virtue is my privilege. For that
It is not night when I do see your face,
Therefore I think I am not in the night.
Nor doth this wood lack worlds of company,
For you, in my respect, are all the world.
Then, how can it be said I am alone
When all the world is here to look on me?

ROMEO.

I'll run from thee and hide me in the brakes
And leave thee to the mercy of wild beasts. (*He exits.*)

JULIET.

I'll follow thee and make a heaven of hell
To die upon the hand I love so well. (*She exits.*)

OBERON.

Fare thee well, nymph. Ere he do leave this grove,
Thou shalt fly him, and he shall seek thy love.

NURSE. (*off*)

What, lamb! What, ladybird!
God forbid. Where's this girl? What, Juliet! (*She enters.*)
Even or odd, of all days in the year,
Come Lammas Eve at night shall she be fourteen.
Susan and she (God rest all Christian souls!)
Were of an age. Well, Susan is with God;
She was too good for me. But, as I said,
On Lammas Eve at night shall she be nineteen.
That shall she. Marry, I remember it well.
'Tis since the earthquake now eleven years,
And she was weaned (I never shall forget it)

STAR-CROSSED: A MIDSUMMER NIGHTMARE

Of all the days of the year, upon that day.
For I had then laid wormwood to my dug,
Sitting in the sun under the dovehouse wall.
Nay, I do bear a brain. But, as I said,
When it did taste the wormwood on the nipple
Of my dug and felt it bitter, pretty fool,
To see it tetchy and fall out with the dug.
“Shake,” quoth the dovehouse. ’Twas no need, I trow,
To bid me trudge.
And since that time it is twenty-three years.
For then she could stand high-lone. Nay, by th’ rood,
She could have run and waddled all about,
For even the day before, she broke her brow,
And then my husband (God be with his soul,
He was a merry man) took up the child.
“Yea,” quoth he, “Dost thou fall upon thy face?
Thou wilt fall backward when thou hast more wit,
Wilt thou not, Jule?” And, by my holidam,
The pretty wretch left crying and said “Ay.”
To see now how a jest shall come about!
I warrant, an I should live a thousand years,
I never should forget it. “Wilt thou not, Jule?”
quoth he.

And, pretty fool, it stinted and said “Ay.” (*Nurse exits, Mercutio enters.*)

OBERON.

Hast thou the flower there? Welcome, wanderer.

MERCUTIO.

Ay, there it is.

OBERON.

I pray thee give it me.

STAR-CROSSED: A MIDSUMMER NIGHTMARE

I know a bank where the wild thyme blows,
Where oxlips and the nodding violet grows,
Quite overcanopied with luscious woodbine,
With sweet muskroses, and with eglantine.
There sleeps Titania sometime of the night,
Lulled in these flowers with dances and delight.
And there the snake throws her enameled skin,
Weed wide enough to wrap a fairy in.
And with the juice of this I'll streak her eyes
And make her full of hateful fantasies.
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 he espies
May be the lady. Thou shalt know the man
By the Athenian garments he hath on.
Effect it with some care, that he may prove
More fond on her than she upon her love.
And look thou meet me ere the first cock crow.

MERCUTIO.

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

SCENE 8

ANOTHER PART OF THE FOREST, WHICH CONTAINS TITANIA'S BOWER

Titania sleeps. Oberon enters with the flower.

OBERON. *(Applying nectar to Titania's eyes)*

What thou seest when thou dost wake
Do it for thy true love take.

STAR-CROSSED: A MIDSUMMER NIGHTMARE

Love and languish for his sake.

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.

Wake when some vile thing is near. (*He exits, Helena and Hermia enter.*)

HERMIA.

Fair love, we faint with wand'ring in the wood.

And, to speak troth, you have forgot our way.

Let's rest us, Helena, if you think it good,

And tarry for the comfort of the day.

HELENA.

Be it so, fair Hermia. Find you out a bed,

For I upon this bank will rest my head.

HERMIA.

One turf shall serve as pillow for us both;

One heart, one bed, two bosoms, and one troth.

HELENA.

Nay, gentle Hermia. For my sake, my dear,

Lie further off yet. Do not lie so near.

HERMIA.

O, take the sense, sweet, of my innocence!

Love takes the meaning in love's conference.

I mean that my heart unto yours is knit,

So that but one heart we can make of it;

Two bosoms interchainèd with an oath—

So then two bosoms and a single troth.

Then by your side no bed-room me deny,

For lying so, Helena, I do not lie.

STAR-CROSSED: A MIDSUMMER NIGHTMARE

HELENA.

Sweet Hermia riddles very prettily.
Now much beshrew my manners and my pride
If Helena meant to say good Hermia lied.
But, gentle friend, for love and courtesy,
Lie further off in human modesty.
Such separation, as may well be said,
Becomes two virtuous loving maids.
So far be distant; and good night, sweet friend.
Thy love ne'er alter till thy sweet life end!

HERMIA.

“Amen, amen” to that fair prayer, say I,
And then end life when I end loyalty!
Here is my bed. Sleep give thee all his rest!

HELENA.

With half that wish the wisher's eyes be pressed! (*They sleep, their faces concealed. (Enter Mercutio.)*)

MERCUTIO.

Through the forest have I gone,
But Athenian found I none (*He sees Helena.*)
Night and silence! Who is here?
Weeds of Athens he doth wear.
This is he my master said
Despisèd the Athenian maid.
And here the maiden, sleeping sound
On the dank and dirty ground.
Pretty soul, she durst not lie
Near this lack-love, this kill-courtesy.—
Churl, upon thy eyes I throw

STAR-CROSSED: A MIDSUMMER NIGHTMARE

All the power this charm doth owe. (*He notices Helena is a woman...and weighs his options.*)

I cannot hide

what I am. I must be sad when I have cause, and
smile at no man's jests; eat when I have stomach,
and wait for no man's leisure; sleep when I am
drowsy, and tend on no man's business; laugh when
I am merry, and claw no man in his humor.

In this, though I cannot be said to be
a flattering honest Puck, it must not be denied but I
am a plain-dealing villain. If I had my
mouth, I would bite; if I had my liberty, I would do
my liking. In the meantime, let me be that I am, and
seek not to alter me. (*He anoints Helena's eyes.*)

When thou wak'st, let love forbid

Sleep his seat on thy eyelid.

So, awake when I am gone,

For I must now to Oberon. (*He exits. Romeo and Juliet enter.*)

JULIET.

Stay, though thou kill me, sweet Romeo.

ROMEO.

I charge thee, hence, and do not haunt me thus. (*Romeo exits.*)

JULIET.

O, I am out of breath in this cursed chase.

The more my prayer, the lesser is my grace.

Why then, O brawling love, O loving hate,

O anything of nothing first create!

O heavy lightness, serious vanity,

Misshapen chaos of well-seeming forms,

Feather of lead, bright smoke, cold fire, sick health,

STAR-CROSSED: A MIDSUMMER NIGHTMARE

Still-waking sleep that is not what it is!
This love feel I, that feel no love in this.
Love is a smoke made with the fume of sighs;
Being purged, a fire sparkling in lovers' eyes;
Being vexed, a sea nourished with loving tears.
What is it else? A madness most discreet,
A choking gall, and a preserving sweet. (*She exits. Enter Mercutio.*)

MERCUTIO.

Up and down, up and down,
I will lead them up and down. (*Tybalt enters.*)

TYBALT. Mercutio, thou consortest with Romeo.

MERCUTIO. Consort? What, dost thou make us minstrels?

Here's my fiddlestick; here's
that shall make you dance. Zounds, consort! (*Mercutio exits.*)

TYBALT.

But who is here? Helena, on the ground!
Dead or asleep? I see no blood, no wound.—
Helena, if you live, lady, awake.

HELENA. (*Waking up*)

And run through fire I will for thy sweet sake.
Transparent Tybalt! Nature shows art,
That through thy bosom makes me see thy heart.
And yea, what light through yonder forest breaks?
It is the East, and Tybalt is the sun.
Arise, fair sun, and kill the envious moon,
Who is already sick and pale with grief
That thou, dear lord, art far more fair than she.
Two of the fairest stars in all the heaven,
Having some business, do entreat your eyes
To twinkle in their spheres till they return.

STAR-CROSSED: A MIDSUMMER NIGHTMARE

What if your eyes were there, they in your head?
The brightness of your cheek would shame those stars
As daylight doth a lamp; your eye in heaven
Would through the airy region stream so bright
That birds would sing and think it were not night.
See how he leans his cheek upon his hand.
O, that I were a glove upon that hand,
That I might touch that cheek!

TYBALT.

Do not say so. Helena, say not so.
You have your Hermia. Then be content.

HELENA.

Content with Hermia? No, I do repent
The tedious minutes I with her have spent.
Not Hermia, but Tybalt I love.
Who will not change a raven for a dove?

TYBALT.

Are such things so as you do speak about?
Or have you eaten on the insane root
That takes the reason prisoner?

HELENA.

O, wilt thou darkling leave me? Do not so. (*Tybalt exits.*)
He sees not Hermia.—Hermia, sleep thou there,
And never mayst thou come Helena near.
For, as a surfeit of the sweetest things
The deepest loathing to the stomach brings,
Or as the heresies that men do leave
Are hated most of those they did deceive,
So thou, my surfeit and my heresy,
Of all be hated, but the most of me! (*She exits.*)

STAR-CROSSED: A MIDSUMMER NIGHTMARE

HERMIA. (*Waking up.*)

Help me, Helena, help me! Do thy best
To pluck this crawling spider from my breast.
Ay me, for pity! What a dream was here!
Helena, look how I do quake with fear.
Methought a spider ate my heart away,
And you sat smiling at his cruel prey.
Helena! What, removed? Helena, love!
What, out of hearing? Gone? No sound, no word?
Alack, where are you? Speak, an if you hear.
Speak, of all loves! I swoon almost with fear.—
No? Then I well perceive you are not nigh.
Either death or you I'll find immediately. (*She exits.*)

SCENE 9

THE SAME, SOME TIME LATER

Tybalt enters. Helena calls from off.

TYBALT.

Love is merely a madness, and, I tell
you, deserves as well a dark house and
a whip as madmen do.
Where art thou, proud Romeo? Speak thou now.
Thou runaway, thou coward, art thou fled?
Speak! In some bush? Where dost thou hide thy head?
You knave; you rascal; you eater of broken meats; you
base, proud, shallow, beggarly, three-suited, hundred-
pound, filthy, worsted-stocking knave; you lily-
livered, action-taking knave, you whoreson, glass-
gazing, super-serviceable finical rogue; one-trunk-

STAR-CROSSED: A MIDSUMMER NIGHTMARE

inheriting slave; one that wouldst be a bawd, in way of good service, and art nothing but the composition of a knave, beggar, coward, pandar, and the son and heir of a mongrel bitch: one whom I will beat into clamorous whining, if thou deniest the least syllable of thy addition.

TITANIA. (*Waking.*)

What angel wakes me from my flow'ry bed? (*Tybalt exits. Nurse enters.*)

NURSE.

Yes, ay me, yet I cannot choose but laugh
To think it should leave crying and say "Ay."
And yet, I warrant, it had upon its brow
A bump as big as a young cock'rel's stone,
A perilous knock, and it cried bitterly.
"Yea," quoth my husband. "Fall'st upon thy face?
Thou wilt fall backward when thou comest to age,
Wilt thou not, Jule?" It stinted and said "Ay."
Thou wast the prettiest babe that e'er I nursed.
An I might live to see thee married once,
I have my wish.

TITANIA.

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.

NURSE.

Methinks, mistress, you should have little
reason for that. And yet, to say the truth, reason
and love keep little company together nowadays.

STAR-CROSSED: A MIDSUMMER NIGHTMARE

The more the pity that some honest neighbors will
not make them friends.

TITANIA.

Thou art as wise as thou art beautiful.

NURSE.

Not so neither; but if I had wit enough to get
out of this wood, I have enough to serve mine own
turn.

TITANIA.

Out of this wood do not desire to go.
Thou shalt remain here whether thou wilt or no.
I am a spirit of no common rate.
The summer still doth tend upon my state,
And I do love thee. Therefore go with me.
I'll give thee fairies to attend on thee,
And they shall fetch thee jewels from the deep
And sing while thou on pressed flowers dost sleep.
Touch but my lips with those fair lips of thine,--
Though mine be not so fair, yet are they red,--
The kiss shall be thine own as well as mine:
What seest thou in the ground? hold up thy head:
Look in mine eyeballs, there thy beauty lies;
Then why not lips on lips, since eyes in eyes?
Art thou ashamed to kiss? then wink again,
And I will wink; so shall the day seem night;
Love keeps his revels where there are but twain;
Be bold to play, our sport is not in sight:
These blue-vein'd violets whereon we lean
Never can blab, nor know not what we mean.

STAR-CROSSED: A MIDSUMMER NIGHTMARE

SCENE 10

ANOTHER PART OF THE FOREST

JULIET.

Thou hast not half that power to do me harm
As I have to be hurt. O gull! O dolt,
As ignorant as dirt!
Let heaven and men and devils, let them all,
All, all, cry shame against me, yet I'll speak.
Let husbands know
Their wives have sense like them. They see, and smell,
And have their palates both for sweet and sour,
As husbands have. What is it that they do
When they change us for others? Is it sport?
I think it is. And doth affection breed it?
I think it doth. Is 't frailty that thus errs?
It is so too. And have not we affections,
Desires for sport, and frailty, as men have?
Then let them use us well. Else let them know,
The ills we do, their ills instruct us so.

SCENE 11

*ANOTHER PART OF THE FOREST, WHERE DUCHESS AGAPITA RESIDES DURING
HER EXILE FROM ATHENS*

LADY EGEUS.

Grief fills the room up of my absent child,
Lies in her bed, walks up and down with me,
Puts on her pretty look, repeats her words,

STAR-CROSSED: A MIDSUMMER NIGHTMARE

Remembers me of her gracious parts,
Stuffs out her vacant garments with his form.
I'll never pause again, never stand still,
Till either death hath closed these eyes of mine
Or fortune given me measure of revenge.

DUCHESS AGAPITA.

Revenge should have no bounds.
Hath not old custom made this life more sweet
Than that of painted pomp? Are not these woods
More free from peril than the envious court?
Here feel we not the penalty of Adam,
The seasons' difference, as the icy fang
And churlish chiding of the winter's wind,
Which when it bites and blows upon my body
Even till I shrink with cold, I smile and say
"This is no flattery. These are counselors
That feelingly persuade me what I am."
Sweet are the uses of adversity,
Which, like the toad, ugly and venomous,
Wears yet a precious jewel in his head.
And this our life, exempt from public haunt,
Finds tongues in trees, books in the running brooks,
Sermons in stones, and good in everything.

LADY EGEUS.

Happy is your Grace,
That can translate the stubbornness of fortune
Into so quiet and so sweet a style. (*Enter Romeo, brandishing a weapon of questionable ferocity.*)
But who comes here?

ROMEO. Forbear, and eat no more.

STAR-CROSSED: A MIDSUMMER NIGHTMARE

LADY EGEUS. Why, I have eat none yet.

ROMEO.

Nor shalt not till necessity be served.

LADY EGEUS. Of what kind should this cock come of?

DUCHESS AGAPITA. *(To Romeo)*

Art thou thus boldened, man, by thy distress,
Or else a rude despiser of good manners,
That in civility thou seem'st so empty?

ROMEO.

You touched my vein at first. The thorny point
Of bare distress hath ta'en from me the show
Of smooth civility, yet am I inland bred
And know some nurture. But forbear, I say.
He dies that touches any of this fruit
Till I and my affairs are answerèd.

LADY EGEUS. An you will not be answered with reason, I
must die.

DUCHESS AGAPITA. *(To Romeo)*

What would you have? Your gentleness shall force
More than your force move us to gentleness.

ROMEO.

I almost die for food, and let me have it.

DUCHESS AGAPITA.

Sit down and feed, and welcome to our table.

ROMEO.

Speak you so gently? Pardon me, I pray you.
I thought that all things had been savage here,
And therefore put I on the countenance
Of stern commandment. But whate'er you are
That in this desert inaccessible,

STAR-CROSSED: A MIDSUMMER NIGHTMARE

Under the shade of melancholy boughs,
Lose and neglect the creeping hours of time,
If ever you have looked on better days,
If ever been where bells have knolled to church,
If ever sat at any good man's feast,
If ever from your eyelids wiped a tear
And know what 'tis to pity and be pitied,
Let gentleness my strong enforcement be. (*He puts away or otherwise
neutralizes his "weapon."*)

DUCHESS AGAPITA.

True is it that we have seen better days,
And have with holy bell been knolled to church,
And sat at good men's feasts and wiped our eyes
Of drops that sacred pity hath engendered.
And therefore sit you down in gentleness,
And take upon command what help we have
That to your wanting may be ministered.
Thou seest we are not all alone unhappy.
This wide and universal theater
Presents more woeful pageants than the scene
Wherein we play in.

ROMEO. All the world's a stage,

And all the men and women merely players.
They have their exits and their entrances,
And one man in his time plays many parts,
His acts being seven ages. At first the infant,
Mewling and puking in the nurse's arms.
Then the whining schoolboy with his satchel
And shining morning face, creeping like snail
Unwillingly to school. And then the lover,

STAR-CROSSED: A MIDSUMMER NIGHTMARE

Sighing like furnace, with a woeful ballad
Made to his mistress' eyebrow. Then a soldier,
Full of strange oaths and bearded like the pard,
Jealous in honor, sudden and quick in quarrel,
Seeking the bubble reputation
Even in the cannon's mouth. And then the justice,
In fair round belly with good capon lined,
With eyes severe and beard of formal cut,
Full of wise saws and modern instances;
And so he plays his part. The sixth age shifts
Into the lean and slippered pantaloon
With spectacles on nose and pouch on side,
His youthful hose, well saved, a world too wide
For his shrunk shank, and his big manly voice,
Turning again toward childish treble, pipes
And whistles in his sound. Last scene of all,
That ends this strange eventful history,
Is second childishness and mere oblivion,
Sans teeth, sans eyes, sans taste, sans everything.

DUCHESS AGAPITA.

Welcome. Fall to. I will not trouble you
As yet to question you about your fortunes.

***THE PLAY IS NOT OVER!! TO FIND OUT HOW IT ENDS—
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