

A MIDSUMMER NIGHT'S DREAM

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A midsummer night's dream by William Shakespeare & Arthur Rackham

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WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE & ARTHUR RACKHAM

**A MIDSUMMER
NIGHT'S DREAM**



A MIDSUMMER-
NIGHT'S DREAM
BY WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE



WITH ILLUSTRATIONS BY
ARTHUR RACKHAM, R.W.S.



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DRAMATIS PERSONÆ

THESEUS, *Duke of Athens.*
EGEUS, *father to Hermia.*
LYSANDER } *in love with Hermia.*
DEMETRIUS }
PHILOSTRATE, *master of the revels to Theseus.*
QUINCE, *a carpenter.*
SNUG, *a joiner.*
BOTTOM, *a weaver.*
FLUTE, *a bellows-mender.*
SNOUT, *a tinker.*
STARVELING, *a tailor.*

HIPPOLYTA, *queen of the Amazons betrothed to Theseus.*
HERMIA, *daughter to Egeus, in love with Lysander.*
HELENA, *in love with Demetrius.*

OBERON, *king of the fairies.*
TITANIA, *queen of the fairies.*
PUCK, or Robin Goodfellow.
PEASEBLOSSOM } *fairies.*
COBWEB }
MOTH }
MUSTARDSEED }

Other fairies attending their King and Queen.
Attendants on Theseus and Hippolyta.

Scene—Athens, and a wood near it.

A MIDSUMMER- NIGHT'S DREAM.

ACT I.
SCENE I.

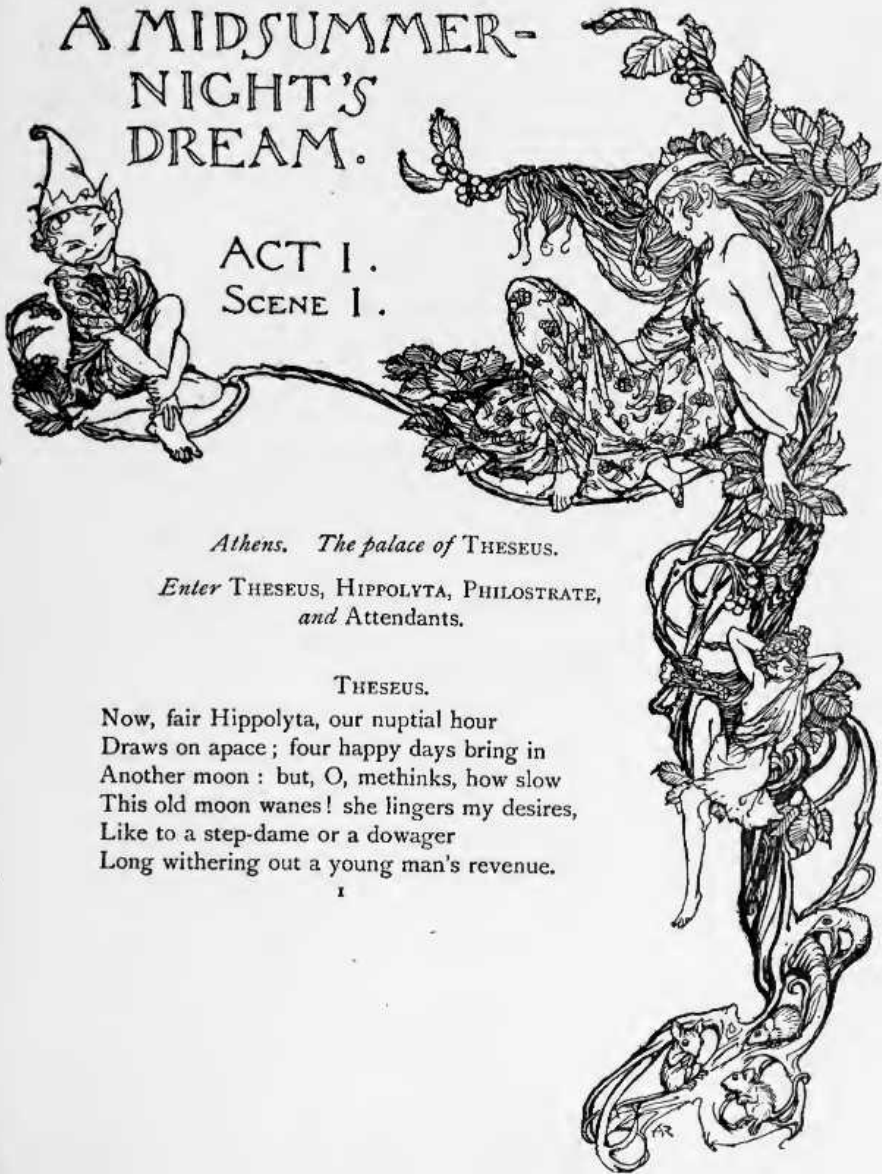
Athens. The palace of THESEUS.

*Enter THESEUS, HIPPOLYTA, PHILOSTRATE,
and Attendants.*

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 step-dame or a dowager
Long withering out a young man's revenue.

1



HIPPOLYTA.

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.

Go, Philostrate,

Stir up the Athenian youth to merriments ;
 Awake the pert and nimble spirit of mirth :
 Turn melancholy forth to funerals ;
 The pale companion is not for our pomp.

[*Exit* PHILOSTRATE.]

Hippolyta, I woo'd 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 revelling.

Enter EGEUS, HERMIA, LYSANDER, and DEMETRIUS.

EGEUS.

Happy be Theseus, our renowned duke !

THESEUS.

Thanks, good Egeus : what's the news with thee ?

EGEUS.

Full of vexation come I, with complaint
 Against my child, my daughter Hermia.

sc. 1. A MIDSUMMER-NIGHT'S DREAM 3

Stand forth, Demetrius. My noble lord,
This man hath my consent to marry her.
Stand forth, Lysander : and, my gracious duke,
This man hath bewitch'd the bosom of my child :
Thou, thou, Lysander, 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 stolen the impression of her fantasy
With bracelets of thy hair, rings, gawds, conceits,
Knacks, trifles, nosegays, sweetmeats, messengers
Of strong prevailment in unharden'd youth :
With cunning hast thou filch'd my daughter's heart,
Turn'd her obedience, which is due to me,
To stubborn harshness : and, my gracious duke,
Be it so she will not here before your grace
Consent to marry with Demetrius,
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

4 A MIDSUMMER-NIGHT'S DREAM ACT I.

To leave the figure or disfigure it.
Demetrius is a worthy gentleman.

HERMIA.

So is Lysander.

THESEUS.

In himself he is ;
But in this kind, wanting your father's voice,
The other must be held the worthier.

HERMIA.

I would my father look'd but with my eyes.

THESEUS.

Rather your eyes must with his judgement look.

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 Demetrius.

THESEUS.

Either to die the death or to abjure
For ever the society of men.
Therefore, fair Hermia, question your desires ;
Know of your youth, examine well your blood