

MND 2.1

[Enter, from opposite sides, a Fairy, and PUCK]

- PUCK How now, spirit! whither wander you?
- Fairy Over hill, over dale,
Thorough bush, thorough brier,
Over park, over pale,
Thorough flood, thorough fire,
I do wander everywhere,
Swifter than the moon's sphere;
And I serve the fairy queen,
To dew her orbs upon the green.
The cowslips tall her pensioners be:
In their gold coats spots you see;
Those be rubies, fairy favours,
In those freckles live their savours:
I must go seek some dewdrops here
And hang a pearl in every cowslip's ear.
Farewell, thou lob of spirits; I'll be gone:
Our queen and all our elves come here anon.
- PUCK The king doth keep his revels here to-night:
Take heed the queen come not within his sight;
For Oberon is passing fell and wrath,
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;
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,
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.
- Fairy Either I mistake your shape and making quite,
Or else you are that shrewd and knavish sprite
Call'd Robin Goodfellow: are not you he
That frights the maidens of the villagery;
Skim milk, and sometimes labour in the quern
And bootless make the breathless housewife churn;
And sometime make the drink to bear no barm;
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?

PUCK
 Thou speak'st aright;
 I am that merry wanderer of the night.
 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,
 And when she drinks, against her lips I bob
 And on her wither'd 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,
 And 'tailor' cries, and falls into a cough;
 And then the whole quire hold their hips and laugh,
 And waxen in their mirth and neeze and swear
 A merrier hour was never wasted there.
 But, room, fairy! here comes Oberon.

Fairy And here my mistress. Would that he were gone!

[Enter, from one side, OBERON from the other, TITANIA]

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?

TITANIA Then I must be thy lady: Why art thou here,
 Come from the farthest Steppe of India?
 But that, forsooth, the bouncing Amazon,
 Your buskin'd 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?

TITANIA These are the forgeries of jealousy:
 And never, since the middle summer's spring,
 Met we on hill, in dale, forest or mead,
 To dance our ringlets to the whistling wind,
 But with thy brawls thou hast disturb'd our sport.

Therefore the winds, piping to us in vain,
 As in revenge, have suck'd up from the sea
 Contagious fogs; which falling in the land
 Have every pelting river made so proud
 That they have overborne their continents:
 The ploughman lost his sweat, and the green corn
 Hath rotted ere his youth attain'd a beard;
 The fold stands empty in the drowned field,
 And crows are fatted with the murrion flock;
 The human mortals want their winter here;
 No night is now with hymn or carol blest:
 Therefore the moon, the governess of floods,
 Pale in her anger, washes all the air,
 That rheumatic diseases do abound:
 And this same progeny of evils comes
 From our debate, from our dissension;
 We are their parents and original.

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:
 The fairy land buys not the child of me.
 His mother was a votaress of my order:
 And, in the spiced Indian air, by night,
 Full often hath she gossip'd by my side,
 And sat with me on Neptune's yellow sands,
 Marking the embarked traders on the flood,
 When we have laugh'd 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 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;
 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
 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. *[Exit Titania]*

OBERON Well, go thy way: thou shalt not from this grove
Till I torment thee for this injury.
My gentle Puck, come hither. Thou rememberest
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.

PUCK I remember.

OBERON That very time I saw, but thou couldst not,
Flying between the cold moon and the earth,
Cupid all arm'd: a certain aim he took
At a fair vestal throned by the west,
And loosed his love-shaft smartly from his bow,
As it should pierce a hundred thousand hearts;
Yet mark'd 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 shew'd thee once:
The juice of it on sleeping eye-lids laid
Will make or man or woman madly dote
Upon the next live creature that it sees.

PUCK I'll put a girdle round about the earth
In forty minutes. *[Exit]*

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,
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 render up her page to me.