

The Dream That Hath No Bottom

a comedy with words and music by

Edward Lambert

with help from the pupils of

Vernham Dean Gillum's School, Hampshire

William Shakespeare

John Frederick Lampe

and others

It's a summer evening towards the end of the sixteenth century; as the shadows lengthen the scholars of Gillum's School are resting. Puck plants the idea in their minds of creating a play and they decide it will be about many things all at once. Puck is the servant to Oberon, King of the Goblins, and he helps the scholars to stage their play, stepping in from time to time to sort things out when they get stuck...

It's August 1588. In an English village the children are anxious about the Spanish Armada and we learn that the village has a new priest, Zachariah, who disapproves of merry making. They cheer up when they think about all the strange and wonderful things happening in London - particularly the theatres. As they wander off, the Fairies and Goblins come out to sing and dance, but Oberon and Titania, the Fairy Queen, are in dispute over mortal's dreams which are kept in Fairyland. Oberon decides to teach Titania a lesson and tells Puck to fetch a magic flower whose juice will make her fall in love with the first creature she sees when she wakes up. While Puck is on his errand, Oberon hears an argument between Hermia and Lysanda, two village girls of opposing religious faiths. Lysanda, who is Zachariah's daughter, finds a mysterious letter which sounds as though it's written by a spy. She decides to make use of it for her own cruel purposes. Puck returns with the flower and Oberon commands him to find Lysanda and teach her a lesson too. The Fairies sing a lullaby which sends Titania to sleep - and Oberon streaks her eyes with the magic juice.

It is by now the dead of night, and just at that moment some village youths arrive to rehearse a play, secretly, because of the ban on frivolous activities, they try to act the drama of Pyramus and Thisbe. They don't get very far because Puck enters and, seeing Bottom in full flight, thinks this must be the deranged mortal whom he was told to make an ass of. He promptly puts on Bottom an ass's head. The other youths flee in terror. This commotion awakens Titania who immediately falls for Bottom. She is ecstatic with love and he is enchanted to be the object of such attention. They leave together.

The village children rush in with the news that Hermia has indeed been arrested on suspicion of spying and it doesn't take long for the rumour to spread that Bottom has been transformed by witchcraft. All feel giddy with emotion. Hermia enters, flanked by guards, to say her farewells. Oberon realises Puck has got the wrong mortal and sends him packing.

The village children sing of the religious troubles that have plagued their country in recent times, successive monarchs imposing contrasting views on the population, most of whom would have been happy to stay as they were. Meanwhile, Bottom is being entertained by the Fairies and Goblins whose life is so enchanted, he thinks, that they agree to keep him for ever. This involves constructing a rainbow bridge to Fairyland spanning the approaching dawn. There are many wonders to be seen on their way. Suddenly the players realize that the play is taking off in the wrong direction; Oberon agrees to release Titania from her infatuation with Bottom who in turn is relieved of his ass-head. He wakes up as if from a dream.

The children are not exactly thrilled by the arrival of a troupe of strolling players: but they do bring the news that the Armada has been defeated. One of their number seems agitated at the sight of Zachariah. The players' drama of the Seven Ages of Man is positively medieval, but when Bottom returns to his mates the opportunity to put on their own play presents itself: if only Zachariah would agree. But Puck has one last trick up his sleeve: Queen Elizabeth and her Courtiers arrive on the scene. She is asked to intervene in the case of Hermia, the supposed spy. When the young girl is cross-examined it appears she was found several years ago on a beach following a shipwreck. That boat contained a husband, a wife and two baby daughters. The player, Isabella, reveals herself as the mother, Zachariah as the husband, and Lysanda and Hermia discover they are sisters. When the letter that incriminated Hermia is produced the Queen recognises it as part of her own speech which she made recently.

Amidst general rejoicing, the youths perform Pyramus and Thisbe. These two lovers were kept apart by a wall. One night they meet in a moonlit graveyard but Thisbe is scared off by a lion. When Pyramus arrives, Thisbe's torn veil leads him to conclude the worst. He kills himself and when Thisbe returns she joins him in death. After all this jollity the villagers go home - and the scholars of Gillum's School are left with Puck, their muse, to ponder what they've created.

Act 1

- 1 Song: Puck & Chorus of Scholars *Over hill, over dale*
- 2 Intorduction & Prayer: Villagers *It's the year of Our Lord*
- 3 Scene: London Life *There are crowds of people*
- 4 Chorus & Dance of Fairies & Goblins (Oberon & Titania) *Over hill, over dale*
- 5 Song: Scholar (& Oberon) *I know a bank where the wild thyme blows*
- 6 Lullaby: *Fairies & Goblins* *You spotted snakes*
- 7 Song & Dance: Titania, Bottom & Four Fairies *What angel wakes me?*
- 8 Chorus of Villagers *Have you heard the news?*
- 9 Hermia & Chorus: *Farewell, my world*

Act 2

- 10 Chorus: Song & Dance *Life was good*
- 11 Song: *Fairies & Goblins*
- 12 Scene: The Rainbow Bridge *Come with me*
- 13 Chorus of Players & Villagers *Have you heard the news?*
- 14 **Dumb show: The Seven Ages of Man**
- 15 Chorus: *What an astonishing turn of the tide!*
- 16 Scene: *Pyramus & Thisbe*
- 17 Dance
- 18 Finale: All *Now the hungry lion roars*

Characters

Titania, Fairy Queen
Oberon, Goblin King
Puck, Oberon's servant

Four Fairies:
Peaseblossom Mustardseed Cobweb Moth

Hermia, a Catholic child
Lysanda, a Protestant child, daughter to Zachariah

Nick Bottom,
 an apprentice weaver; **Pyramus** in the interlude
Peter Quince,
 an apprentice carpenter; **Prologue** in the interlude
Francis Flute,
 an apprentice bellows-mender; **Thisbe** in the interlude
Tom Snout,
 an apprentice tinker; **Wall** in the interlude
Snug,
 an apprentice joiner; **Lion** in the interlude
Robin Starveling,
 an apprentice tailor; **Moonshine** in the interlude

Brother Zachariah,
 village priest and schoolmaster
Isabella
 a strolling player, disguised as a man, wife of Zachariah
Hermia's guardian(s)

Pupils and Scholars at Gillum's School
 as themselves and Village Children
Senior Scholars:
who also play
Queen Elizabeth and Courtiers

Fairies & Goblins

A troupe of strolling players
as themselves and

The Seven Ages of Man

Prologue - Infant - Schoolboy - Lover - Soldier - Justice - Pantaloon - Childishness & Oblivion

The Dream That Hath No Bottom

Act 1

Time: 1590's. It is a summer evening and the Scholars of Gillum's School take a rest

no.1

PUCK

Over hill, over dale,
Thorough bush, thorough briar,
Over park, over pale,
Thorough flood, thorough fire -
I do wander everywhere
Swifter than the moon's sphere,
And I serve the Goblin King,
To pluck sweet tones that we may sing.

SCHOLARS

Either we mistake your meaning quite
or else you are that knavish sprite
called Robin Goodfellow.

PUCK

Good friends, you speak aright:
I am that merry wanderer of the night.
Those that 'Hobgoblin' call me
And 'Sweet Puck',
I do their work,
And they shall have good luck.

(The Scholars discuss a play)

SCHOLAR 1¹

Let's write a play.

SCHOLAR 2

What would it be about?

SCHOLAR 3

About us! About our own times!

SCHOLAR 4

What about Queen Elizabeth?

SCHOLAR 5

..we'd have to be careful what we wrote.

SCHOLAR 6

..lots of interesting things like heads getting chopped off...

SCHOLAR 7

Ideal for a school play!

¹ A note in the original manuscript suggests that these numberings identify the lines that are spoken here (and in other passages of the text), not necessarily the number of characters speaking them.

ALL

Mmmmm.

SCHOLAR 8

There's the Armada!

SCHOLAR 9

Sounds exciting - we can have a battle!

SCHOLAR 10

With a load of ships? 130 of them!

SCHOLAR 11

Well, it was the event of the century, surely?

SCHOLAR 12

Religion?

SCHOLAR 13

Strong idea, that. The powers that be keep changing their minds about it.

SCHOLAR 14

Could be rather violent - people have been burned alive.

SCHOLAR 15

That'd look good on stage!

SCHOLAR 16

There are fire regulations, though.

SCHOLAR 17

I've got it! Shakespeare. Why don't we just put on one of his plays?

SCHOLAR 18

Hubble, bubble, toil and trouble...

SCHOLAR 19

Of course, witchcraft!

SCHOLAR 20

Who is this fellow Shakespeare anyway?

SCHOLAR 21

Nobody seems to know for sure. Bit sinister, if you ask me.

SCHOLAR 22

We want to make our own play!

ALL

About ourselves!

SCHOLAR 23

With a bit of adventure... fantasy...

SCHOLAR 24

History, too!

SCHOLAR 25

Everything in fact, all mixed in together!

ALL

If only we could!

PUCK

This class of scholars seems a jolly lot!
 I'll transport them whither they wish to fly.
Puck waves his wand..
 And if that makes a seemly play -
 All well and good; what care I? (*exit*)

Village children assemble in a forest.

no.2

VILLAGERS

It's the year of Our Lord: fifteen-eighty-eight,
 the twenty-ninth year in the reign of Gloriana,
 Elizabeth the Queen.
 Hail, Good Queen Bess!
 Hail, Good Queen Bess!
 Long may she thrive!

Now England is in danger,
 threatened with invasion
 by the enemy, the Spanish,
 who've set sail to conquer this land of ours.
 With a fleet of mighty galleons
 they approach our shores.

Please, God, our navy will destroy them!
 Protect us all, we pray!
 Provide a strong prevailing wind
 to send the Spanish on their way!

Our fathers joined the fighting throng:
 please spare them any pain!
 Bring them safely home, we beg,
 so peace may reign again.

A GROUP

No news?

ANOTHER GROUP

No messages from London.

FIRST GROUP

We've heard nothing;

SECOND GROUP

It's hot.

FIRST GROUP

I'm bored!

ALL

It's the season of midsummer madness.

SECOND GROUP

Since that new preacher came no entertainment's been allowed.

FIRST GROUP

Brother Zachariah - he's so serious. Never smiles.

SECOND GROUP

He wants to purify people's souls.

ALL

Well, we're too young, thank you very much.

LYSANDA

That's my father you're talking about.

A VILLAGER

People in London are allowed to enjoy themselves. I went there once.

ANOTHER VILLAGER

What is it like?

no.3

ALL

There are crowds of people rushing this way and that.

Life is exciting there, the streets full of sound:
shouting of street cries, horses' hooves,
clogs on the cobbles, and church bells echo round.
People come, people go,
London life is all on show!

Gentlemen bowing, doffing hats to the ladies
Swishing silk and satin as the rich walk along
Some dressed splendidly in sumptuous velvet;
Dodging the hustle and bustle of the throng.
*People come, people go,
London life is all on show!*

'Pork ribs for sale! Succulent fowl!'
'Lovely red apples, ripe and sweet!'
'Straight from the oven, fine fresh loaves!'
All sorts of wonderful things to buy and eat.
*People come, people go,
London life is all on show!*

But watch out for pickpockets: there is nothing worse
than finding some urchin has stolen your purse.
Watch out above you! Mind how you tread!
The muck thrown out may fall on your head!
The stench in the gutters just grows and grows -
So buy a pamander to protect your nose!'
Town life is dirty, yet it is fun,
People there are brave, when all is said and done.

And there in the centre of the market square
is a crooked man with a dancing bear;
I saw it whipped and heard it roar:
yet the cheering crowd cried out for more.

And still the vendors cried their wares
While the beggars cried out for money.
People passed by on their way to a play
To see some history, something sad or funny.
*People come, people go,
London life is like a show!*

Across the river, outside the city,
There's a theatre as round as an O
Where you travel to fantasy, fame or fairyland,
Actors transport you to distant times and places -
There's Shakespeare and Marlowe and many famous faces:
For London is happy and Londoners are sad:

Revelry, profanity, wantonness and crime,
 festivity, pageantry, royalty and spectacle -
 Londoners have everything, and everyone is mad!
*People come, people go,
 London life is like a show!*

As night-time falls, the crowds go home,
 the watch-man starts his rounds.
 Only fairies and goblins come and go:
 the curtains are drawn on the London show...

*They all run off, and one of the scholars drops a letter:
 Oberon and Titania enter with their trains*

no.4

FAIRIES & GOBLINS

Over hill, over dale,
 Thorough bush, thorough briar,
 Over park, over pale,
 Thorough flood, thorough fire -
 We do wander everywhere
 Swifter than the moon's sphere,
 And we serve the King and Queen,
 To dance our rounds upon the green.

OBERON

Ill met by moonlight, proud Titania!
 I know thou hast stolen from Fairyland
 the dreams of mortal humans.

TITANIA

You are jealous, dearest Oberon!

TITANIA & OBERON

Not since the summer's spring
 have we danced our fairy ring
 but the air has turned to heavy mist
 nights no longer moonshine kissed,
 wind piping music all in vain:
 mortals want their dreams again.
 Give me these dreams
 and I will go with thee.
 Not for thy kingdom! No!

FAIRIES & GOBLINS

Over hill, over dale,
 Thorough bush, thorough briar,
 Over park, over pale,
 Thorough flood, thorough fire -
 We do wander everywhere
 Swifter than the moon's sphere,
 And we serve the King and Queen,
 To dance our rounds upon the green.

(they withdraw)

OBERON (*aside*)

My gentle Puck, come hither.
 Fetch me that flower -
 the herb I showed thee once.

PUCK

I'll put a girdle round the earth in forty minutes!

OBERON

The juice of it on sleeping eyelids laid
Will make a boy or girl madly dote
upon the next creature that it sees.

(enter LYSANDA and HERMIA)

But who comes here? I am invisible
and will hear what they say.

LYSANDA

God save the Queen!

HERMIA

God save the Queen.

SCHOLARS

The play contains two characters -
one Protestant, one Catholic,
who once were the best of friends.
But Lysanda doesn't like Catholics -
they make her suspicious.
Why don't they conform like everyone else?

LYSANDA

What brings you here, Hermia?

HERMIA

Just passing. There isn't a law against that, is there, Lysanda?

LYSANDA

Not for law abiding citizens there isn't, no.

HERMIA

But I abide by the laws of the realm.

LYSANDA

And you go to church?

HERMIA

We pay the fines for not going to church.

LYSANDA

Fines?

HERMIA

Yes, of course! Twenty pounds a month.

LYSANDA

Ah, I see, you pay for their religion, so to speak. That can't be right, can it? Only the rich can afford to be Catholics!

HERMIA

Many folk would rather we went back to the old religion.

LYSANDA

Would they now? My father would call that treason.

HERMIA

Never!

LYSANDA

Glad that Spain is on her way are you? Then England would be Catholic again.

HERMIA

No! We are patriotic. I love my country.

LYSANDA

On your way, fat head!

HERMIA

See you!

LYSANDA

Farewell!

LYSANDA (*picking up the letter*)

Hey, what's this ? A document - it says:

'I come amongst you being resolved in the midst and heat of battle to live or die amongst you all. To lay down for God and for my kingdom and for my people my honour and my blood even in the dust.....' Strange writing. This would do for a few dirty tricks! What mischief can I make with this, I wonder? If anyone's found with this they'll be in trouble, for certain. There are spies everywhere. (*she leaves*)

OBERON

Ah ah! A plot is afoot!

Before those two folk leave this wood
they'll like each other, as friends should.

(*enter Puck*)

Welcome, wanderer. Hast the flower?

PUCK

Ay, there it is.

no.5

A SCHOLAR OF POETRY

I've an idea for a verse just here -
Oberon sings something like this:

I know a bank where the wild thyme blows...

OBERON (*learning the song*)

I know a bank where the wild thyme blows...

THE SCHOLAR

Where oxlips and the nodding violet grows.

BOTH

I know a bank where the wild thyme blows
Where oxlips and the nodding violet grows.

THE SCHOLAR

There sleeps Titania some time of the night,
Lulled in these flowers with dances and delight.
And with the juice of this I'll streak her eyes
And make her full of hateful fantasies.
(*all repeat the song*)

A SCHOLAR OF DRAMA

I'm not sure that 'fantasies' rhymes with 'her eyes',
but it 'll do.

ANOTHER SCHOLAR (*to Puck*)

Now Oberon tells his servant Puck
to find Lysanda in this wood.

For the devilish things that she has said
he must plant on her an ass's head!

(Puck leaves; enter Titania, with her train)

SCHOLARS *(One group)*

Why do we need these Fairies at all?

ANOTHER GROUP

We know that they're bound to be pleasing:
They mix with the mortals, but stay invisible,
And make for more fantasy, tears and teasing.

TITANIA

Come now a roundel and a fairy song.
Sing me now asleep, then let me rest.

no.6

SOME SENIOR FAIRIES

You spotted snakes without a song,
Thorny hedgehogs, be not seen.
Newts and blindworms, do no wrong,
Come not near our Fairy Queen.

FAIRIES & GOBLINS

Nightingale with melody
Sing in our sweet lullaby,
Lulla, lulla, lullaby,
Lulla, lulla, lullaby.
Never harm
Nor spell nor charm
Come our lovely lady nigh.
So good night with lullaby.

SENIOR GOBLINS

Weaving spiders, come not here;
Hence, you longlegged spinners, hence!
Beetles black, approach not near,
Worm or snail, do no offence.

FAIRIES & GOBLINS

Nightingale with melody
Sing in our sweet lullaby,
Lulla, lulla, lullaby,
Lulla, lulla, lullaby.
Never harm
Nor spell nor charm
Come our lovely lady nigh.
So good night with lullaby.

Titania sleeps

OBERON *(putting the lotion on her eyes)*

When thou wakest,
Thou takest
True delight
In the sight
of whatever shall appear.
Wake when some vile thing is near!
(exit)

Bottom enters

SCHOLAR(S)

Now for our play we need some fun;
 we must entertain when all is said and done.
 We could have a play-in-a-play
 and watch the players rehearse.
 If that is the case we need some more space:
 Fairies and Goblins - you'd better disperse!

The other Apprentices enter

QUINCE

We all 'ere?

SNUG

No-one's followed us.

QUINCE

Now as you know, Brother Zachariah don't like entertainment, like, so for the village fete we thought we'd put on something classical, like, and serious. The play is called *The most lamentable comedy and most cruel death of Pyramus and Thisbe*. So, Nick Bottom the weaver?

BOTTOM

Yes, boss. What part am I getting?

QUINCE

Pyramus.

BOTTOM

Is that a goodie or baddie?

QUINCE

A gallant lover that kills himself.

BOTTOM

That'll bring tears to the eyes. Best bring your tissues, if I'm going to play him!

QUINCE

Francis Flute, the bellows-mender?

FLUTE

Here, Peter Quince.

QUINCE

Flute, you'd better do Thisbe. That's the girl that Pyramus loves.

FLUTE

Oh, blimey, don't make me play a woman - I've got a beard on its way.

BOTTOM

I'll play Thisbe, too. I'll speak in an enormous little voice 'Ah, Pyramus, my lovely dear; thy Thisbe dear, and lady dear...'

QUINCE

No, no; you've got to do Pyramus; and Flute, you're Thisbe.

BOTTOM

Well, ge' on with i', man.

QUINCE

Snug, the joiner?

SNUG

You written the lion's part yet? 'Cause I'm not much good at learnin' lines.

BOTTOM

I'll do the lion too. I'll roar so loud...

QUINCE

And you'll frighten the ladies and we'll all get hanged.

BOTTOM

Okay, so I'll roar like a nightingale.

QUINCE

You're Pyramus!

SNOUT

Hang on! If Pyramus draws a sword to kill himself, the ladies'll scream with fright, yes?

FLUTE

Quite right.

SNOUT

I've a cunning plan. Write a prologue, and let the prologue say we'll do no actual damage with our swords, and that Pyramus and Thisbe don't really die.

STARVELING

And, to make sure they understand, the Prologue tells the audience that you Thisbe, are not really Thisbe, but Flute the bellows-mender and you, Pyramus, are not really Pyramus but Bottom - Bottom the weaver. This'll put 'em at ease.

QUINCE

Right then let's start, shall we? Clear the stage! Listen for your cues!

SCHOLARS

While they rehearse Puck comes along
Sees Bottom waiting for his cue to be said:
He mistakes him for the villain Lysanda
So puts an ass-head on him instead.

PUCK *entering, carrying an ass's head*

Through the forest have I gone
But evil youth found I none.
But who is here?

BOTTOM *as Pyramus*

O grim -looked night! a night with hue so black!
O night! O night! alack! alack! alack!

PUCK *(seeing Bottom, and putting the head on him)*

This must be the mortal. It seems dumb enough.
I'll follow you, I'll lead you round,
Through bog, through mire, as horse or hound,
a fog, a fire, a noise, a sound:
Puck's adventures know no bound!

FLUTE *as Thisbe*

Hark, a voice I see. My dearest Pyramus dear.
....Pyramus dear!Pyramus dear!
Now will I to the chink,
To spy if I can hear his face, I think.
Most radiant Pyramus dear!

BOTTOM *with an ass's head*

If I were fair, fair Thisbe, I were only thine.

Flute screams as he sees Bottom

QUINCE

What the - ? Weird! Spooky! Quick you lot, run! Help!

SNOUT

Bottom, what's happened?

BOTTOM

What's the matter, ass head?

THE OTHER FIVE

Bless you, mate! You're morphed!

(they run off)

BOTTOM

They want to scare me to make an ass of me; but I'll stay and sing, that'll serve 'em right.

*I'm 'Enery the Eighth, I am,
'Enery the Eighth, I am, I am...*

no.7

TITANIA

What angel wakes me from my flowery bed?
I pray thee, gentle mortal, sing again!

BOTTOM

*I'm 'Enery the Eighth, I am,
'Enery the Eighth, I am, I am...*

TITANIA

Mine ear is much enamoured of thy note.
And thy fair virtue's force doth move me
On the first view to swear I love thee.

BOTTOM

Hang on! One step at a time.

TITANIA

Thou art wise as thou art beautiful.
I'll give thee fairies to attend thee
Peaseblossom, Cobweb, Moth, and Mustardseed!
(enter the four fairies)

THE FOUR FAIRIES

Ready!

TITANIA

Be kind and courteous to this gentleman.

THE FOUR FAIRIES

Hail, mortal! Hail!

TITANIA

Come wait upon him.
Lead him to my bower.
The moon methinks weeps more
with every passing hour.
(they leave)

no.8

VILLAGERS (*to each other, entering*)
 Have you heard the news? *What news?*
 Have you heard the news? *Tell us!*
 Have you heard the news? *Go on!*
 Have you heard the news? *Bad news?*
 Hermia's been arrested! *What?*
 She's been charged with treason! *No!*
 They caught her with a letter,
 a message sent from Spain... *Never!*

(ONE GROUP)

A traitor among us? What can she have done?
 And how can a person do that, who's so young?
 Well, I don't believe that she'd do such a thing.
 She's really not up to committing a sin!

(ANOTHER GROUP)

It's not me who's in trouble, so what do I care?
 They'll take her to prison. Good luck to her there!
 I always thought she's a devious girl! (*boy!*)
 She's got her deserts. My mind's in a whirl! (*Or was it a ploy?*)

(BOTH)

I feel confused by this terrible news:
 you never know whom they'll choose next to accuse!

MORE VILLAGERS (*entering*)

Have you heard the news? *What news?*
 Have you heard the news? *Tell us!*
 Have you heard the news? *Go on!*
 Have you heard the news? *Bad news?*
 Bottom's now a donkey! *What?*
 Turned into a witch they say!
He can't use a broomstick -
no, never could he ride one!

(ONE GROUP)

I bet it was only a rascally plot
 to make us all sadder, and suffer a lot!
 I know someone's playing a terrible game
 to cause dear old Bottom a great deal of pain!

(ANOTHER GROUP)

A witch-hunt here? What can they have done?
 Heavens above! - pray don't harm anyone!
 A witch, being caught, they'll be certain to make
 another martyr to burn at the stake.

(BOTH)

I feel confused by this terrible news!
 Whom on earth will they choose next to accuse?

All fall silent as HERMIA enters on her way to prison

no.9

HERMIA

Farewell, my world!
 There is much that I cherish,
 but have to leave behind me now.
 remember me fondly in happier days!
 Who is it that takes pleasure in betraying me?
 Will no-one pity me?

Remember me!

VILLAGERS

Farewell, sad Hermia, a victim, betrayed.
We weep tears of sorrow, and say farewell.
haunted by memories of happier days.

OBERON (*to Puck*)

What hast thou done?
Now, about the wood go swifter than the wind
and Lysanda the villain look thou find!

Up and down, up and down,
You will lead them up and down.
You are feared in field and town.
Goblin lead them up and down.

PUCK

Up and down, up and down,
I will lead them up and down.
I am feared in field and town.
Goblin lead them up and down.

(*curtain*)

Act 2

A little while later the village children play a game.

SCHOLARS

Having got to this point - what can we do now?
 Everything's quite muddled up.
 Bottom's a donkey, Hermia's in gaol,
 The Fairies are nonsense beyond the pale!
 The people are sad - their lives have gone wrong:
 it must be just about time for a song!

no. 10

ALL

Life was good in olden days
hey fiddle diddle no nonnee
 'till Rome and England parted ways.
hey fiddle diddle no nonnee
 Old King Henry changed the world.
with a nonnee nonnee hey nonnee nonnee-o
 How I wish he had not!

Little King Edward spoke again,
hey fiddle diddle no nonnee
 the church stripped bare, its walls made plain.
hey fiddle diddle no nonnee
 Our prayers we say in English now.
with a nonnee nonnee hey nonnee nonnee-o
 How I wish we did not!

Bloody Mary did the crime
hey fiddle diddle no nonnee
 of making martyrs in her time.
hey fiddle diddle no nonnee
 She turned the clock back far too far.
with a nonnee nonnee hey nonnee nonnee-o
 How I wish she had not!

On the throne sits Virgin Bess:
hey fiddle diddle no nonnee
 Her subjects worship their goddess.
hey fiddle diddle no nonnee
 Our faith seems now a game of throw.
with a nonnee nonnee hey nonnee nonnee-o
 How I wish it did not!

Perhaps there'll come a time one day
with a hey nonnee nonnee
 when churchly strife will go away.
hey nonnee-o
 We hope for peace and tolerance
 however people pray.
 How I wish there were some!

SCHOLARS

We left Titania waking, besotted
 With Bottom, who was confounded.
 To be loved by a beautiful Fairy is one thing:
 to be hairy and itchy - well, the feeling's compounded!

BOTTOM

Where's Pleaseblossom?

PEASEBLOSSOM

Ready.

BOTTOM

Scratch me, Peaseblossom.
Where's Monsieur Cobweb?

COBWEB

Ready.

BOTTOM

Scratch me, Cobweb.
Where's Monsieur Mustardseed?

MUSTARDSEED

What's your will?

BOTTOM

Scratch me, Mustardseed.
I must be due for a shave.
Where's Monsieur Moth?

MOTH

Wilt thou hear some music?

BOTTOM

Yes, sing me a song about Fairyland.
Tell me about the things you do there.

no.11

FAIRIES & GOBLINS

Fairies and Goblins (as the case may be)
Are there when a baby is born.
They bless the child and weave a spell
To shield its soul from harm.

(FAIRIES)

This way, that way,
flying through the night,
carrying sweet dreams
in buckets of love
to children who know
life is not what it seems:
that's what a fairy does!

There are bad fairies, too, in Fairyland;
The Sleeping Beauty was cursed
By a wicked, spiteful hag of a witch
Who sometimes does her worst first.

(GOBLINS)

This way, that way,
keeping out of sight,
having lots of fun,
and playing naughty tricks;
setting traps
till the night is done:
that's what the goblins do!

When you're a few years older,
The Tooth Fairy creeps to your pillow,
Takes your milk teeth and leaves you a coin
Twenty times over for new ones to grow.

But the best jobs in Fairyland are done by the godmothers:
always prepared for a fight,
They weave special spells that change people's lives
and turn wretched wrongs into right.
And, of course, we have a special friendship
with Lapland and Santa Claus.
At Christmas time we take our turns
to help him in his good cause.

This way, that way,
flying through the night...
keeping out of sight...
carrying sweet dreams
in buckets of love...
having lots of fun,
and playing naughty tricks...
to children who know
life is not what it seems...
setting traps
till the night is done:
that's what a fairy does, yes,
that's what the goblins do! No!
that's what a fairy does, yes,
that's what the goblins do!

TITANIA

Dawn approaches. We have to say goodbye.

BOTTOM

Let me come with you! Take me to Fairyland.
I want to go there!

TITANIA

Once there, you can never return.

BOTTOM

Never mind that - I'll be happy there with my new friends.
No-one ever understood me on earth.

no.12

TITANIA

Come with me and I'll lead you to a new morning!
Prepare the bridge!
A rainbow bridge to the dawn of another day!

ALL

Peal out the bells! Let the bridge form
which will take us to Fairyland before the dawn!

Build a rainbow over the moon!
Every colour plays a different tune!

Shout out a song to sing as you go!
Pluck sweet notes that by the wayside grow!
Read the colours and smell the sounds!
Bathe in the music swimming around!
All this in Fairyland: and more besides!

Paint what you think and hear what you see!
 Everything is possible and likely to be!
 Lie in the clouds as soft as silk!
 Sip the sky! Drink mountains like milk!
All this in Fairyland: and more besides!

Castles of candy, streets of sweets,
 Taste them and feel their melodies,
 Statues of sugar, fountains of wine
 Fill your soul with food that is fine!
All this in Fairyland: and more besides!

Wish yourself to anywhere
 or even to nowhere at all!
 Become a shooting star and glance
 How the planets glitter and dance!
All this in Fairyland: and more besides!

All this in Fairyland: and more besides!
 Once earthly life is left behind
 it does not cease to be:
 In Fairyland are spirits,
 And our souls will there be free!

THE SIX SCHOLARS

It's gone too far! They must not leave!
 Do something quickly to bring them back!

OBERON & PUCK

It shouldn't be too hard to find inspiration:
 Let's do the scene this way - it's no perspiration.

OBERON

I'll tell Titania that all is forgiven...
 ...as long as she gives back the dreams that are due to me.
 Casting off the spell that has blinded her senses
 She now wakes up from her nightmare:
(to Titania)
 Be as thou wast wont to be;
 See as thou wast wont to see!

TITANIA *(waking)*

My Oberon, what visions have I seen!
 Methought I was enamoured of an ass.

OBERON

There lies your love.

SCHOLARS

Puck takes the ass-head off long-suffering Bottom
 Who recalls his dream which he thinks was sublime.
 For once not mocked but loved by a Queen
 Who slept on a bank perfumed with thyme.

PUCK *(taking the ass's head off Bottom)*

When thou wakest with thine own eyes peep.

TITANIA *(to Oberon)*

Come now and tell me how it came this night
 That I sleeping here was found
 With these mortals on the ground.

BOTTOM (*waking*)

When my cue comes, call me, and I will answer.. what the...? Peter Quince! Flute! Snug! Snout! Starveling! Heavens above - they've gone off and left me for dead! I have had a really cool dream. I have had a dream beyond the brain of man to tell what it was all about. Man is but an ass if he tries even to describe this dream. I'll write a song about it. I'll call it Bottom's Dream because it ain't got no Bottom.

(He leaves and the stage is empty for a moment; the scene changes to the village; some villagers enter)

VILLAGER (1)

Help! Help!

VILLAGER (2)

What's the matter?

VILLAGER (3)

There are some strange creatures coming towards the village!

VILLAGER (4)

Ah yes - I see them. Wait! They're actors! Strolling players.

VILLAGER (5)

Quick everyone! The players are coming!

VILLAGER (6)

But they'll steal our show!

SVILLAGER (7)

Just act normally everybody!

(The Theatre Troupe enters; one of the players is Isabella, dressed as a man)

no.13

PLAYERS /VILLAGERS

Have you heard the news? *What news?*

Have you heard the news? *Tell us!*

Have you heard the news? *Go on!*

Have you heard the news? *Good news?*

(the other villagers have entered)

Spain has been defeated! *What?*

Th'Armada's lost the battle!

The fireships sent them packing,

All Europe is in turmoil!

(enter Brother Zachariah, in his night dress)

ZACHARIAH

What's all the noise about - at this hour of the morning?

ISABELLA (*seeing Zachariah, aside*)

It is he! Oh heavens!

ALL

England is victorious!

God save our good Queen Bess!

Celebrations are in order

on this very special day!

ZACHARIAH

If the celebrations are of a spiritual kind.

ALL

The hand of God has saved us
So give Him honour, thanks and praise
For great is England's glory now:
Worship the Lord always! Amen.

ZACHARIAH *(to the Players)*

Who are you anyway? Why have you come here?

A PLAYER

Why, Reverend, it is the day of the village fete and we players are come to entertain you.

ZACHARIAH

Entertain! We will have no such frivolity here.
This is a local fete for local people.

A PLAYER

But we are to perform a morality play:
The Seven Ages of Man.

ZACHARIAH

Very well.

no.14**PROLOGUE**

All the world's a stage,
And all the men and women merely players:
They have their exits and entrances?
And one man in his time plays many parts,
His acts being seven ages.

The Troupe performs the Seven Ages of Man as dumb show with music:

Infant - Schoolboy - Lover - Soldier - Justice - Pantaloon - Childishness & Oblivion

At last the dumb show finishes; the audience, except for Zachariah, is not enthusiastic; the Players withdraw

SNUG

How can we enjoy ourselves and drink lots of ale
while Bottom is missing and Hermia is in gaol?

SNOUT

Bottom has vanished into thin air.

STARVELING

The play can't go on. It wouldn't be fair.

FLUTE

Somebody else could take Bottom's part.

QUINCE

It is not possible. He'd have not the heart.
No-one in all the world, you see,
could play Pyramus as well as he.

BOTTOM *(entering)*

Where are my pals? Where are my mates?

THE OTHER APPRENTICES

Bottom! O what a wonderful morning! O most happy hour!

BOTTOM

I have some very strange things to tell you.

APPRENTICES

Tell us what happened, dearest Bottom!

BOTTOM

We'd better get ready to perform our play:

I've a feeling that fortune is turning our way.

SCHOLAR(S)

Puck! Come here!

One thing remains for you to accomplish:

The villain Lysanda must straightway be caught.

She surely can't be beyond redemption,

But it's quite imperative a lesson be taught.

PUCK

That's a tricky one: it must be seen

That justice is done. We need the Queen!

Puck waves his wand. A fanfare is heard. Enter the Head Girl and the Senior Scholars as Queen Elizabeth and her attendants.

COURTIERS

Her Most Royal Majesty, Elizabeth, by God's Grace, Queen of England!

ZACHARIAH

Welcome to Vernham's Dean your majesty.

QUEEN ELIZABETH

I am on a progress through the countryside. Can't stop long. The vanquishing of that most terrible foe, the Spanish Armada, has made me a little exhausted.

TROUPE (aside)

She looks just like her portraits: eternally young and beautiful!

COURTIERS

There is the small matter of a child in custody here.

QUEEN ELIZABETH

Let her be fetched!

Of what, pray, is this child accused?

COURTIER

Of treason, your majesty.

HERMIA (entering)

Oh, why does no-one like me?

QUEEN ELIZABETH

What's your name, girl?

HERMIA

Hermia, your majesty.

QUEEN ELIZABETH

Well, Hermia, do you plead guilty or not?

HERMIA

Not guilty, your majesty.

ZACHARIAH

Oh yes you are!

HERMIA

Oh no I'm not!

ZACHARIAH

Oh yes she is!

VILLAGERS

Oh no she isn't!

QUEEN ELIZABETH

What would your parents say?

HERMIA'S GUARDIAN

I am mortified your majesty. But I think there must have been some dreadful mistake. We are a patriotic family even though we are Catholics. My dear brother is presently serving with the militia and would lay down his life for his country. We have done all we can for this child ever since we took her in. That is to say, ever since we found her.

HERMIA

Found me?

HERMIA'S GUARDIAN

On the beach. In a casket.

HERMIA

In a casket?

ISABELLA (*coming forward*)

A casket? Ten years ago? On a beach in Cornwall? After a terrible storm? The night that the *Titania* sank?

HERMIA'S GUARDIAN

Yes! Near Bude. Found by some international adventurers scaling a cliff. But how do you know?

ZACHARIAH

The *Titania*? I was on that ship too!

PLAYERS

Just at the thought of a terrible gale
His face and hers have gone quite pale.

ISABELLA

She's my daughter, Maria!

COURTIER

What, your daughter?

HERMIA

Papa?

ISABELLA (*taking off her disguise*)

No - your mother!

HERMIA

Mama!

COURTIER

A woman!

ZACHARIAH

Isabella! My wife!

ISABELLA (*indicating Zachariah*)

There stands your father! My husband! My life!

PLAYERS

Brother Zachariah, her husband? Good grief!

ZACHARIAH (*indicating Lysanda*)

So this is your sister! It beggars belief!

ISABELLA

My daughters!

HERMIA & LYSANDA

We're sisters?

no.15

ALL

What an astonishing turn of the tide!
Her husband and daughters now stand by her side.
The sisters united, the priest with a wife:
surely he's now in for trouble and strife!

But what if she's guilty? They'll lock her away:
and that will spoil such a wonderful play.
And if we sing this song quickly enough
the musicians will drop and we'll run out of puff.

As in a dream everyone has gone mad!
Should we feel happy or should we feel sad?

HERMIA

How did I come to be in a casket?

ISABELLA

With my husband and two baby daughters
I was bound on a ship to England.
The *Titania* broke up in a dreadful storm.
As the sea engulfed us to a floating casket
I entrusted my darling baby.
From my husband (who carried the other child)
we were all swept away a moment later.
When I awoke on a beach full of wreckage
I could find no other survivor.
With my talent for acting I dressed as a boy
and joined this band of strolling players.
For nine years now I've lived that lie.
Today I've found my babes grown up
and my husband, too.

ZACHARIAH

I survived the wreck with Lysanda my child
and made my way to London.
To drown my sorrow for what I had lost
there I trained for the clergy.
As priest and teacher to this parish I came,
bent on reform in the Father's name.

COURTIER

What a strange story! It's got to be true!

QUEEN ELIZABETH

Now the trial of treason: what did she do?

COURTIER (*producing the letter*)

Hermia was found to be in possession of this letter sent from Spain.

QUEEN ELIZABETH

Sent from Spain? But this is my speech!

I delivered these inspirational words

to my troops just the other day.

It goes on to say:

“I know I have the body of a weak and feeble woman

but I have the heart and stomach of a king,

and of a king of England, too.”

My speech was so glorious

that seventy six thousand soldiers

would have died for me.

HERMIA

So if this is the Queen’s speech, I am innocent of any crime. Hooray! But how did I come by it?

PUCK

Many strange things have happened this night.

I will now set about to set this matter to right!

(*indicating Lysanda*)

ALL

Lysanda, her sister!

LYSANDA

I played a trick on her; I found the letter

and put it in her bag.

PUPIL

I must have dropped it on the stage.

We were studying it in our history lesson.

SCHOLAR

But that’s not in our play, silly!

ISABELLA (*to Lysanda*)

You naughty girl. You won’t do that again will you?

ZACHARIAH

You must apologise to your sister.

(*Lysanda & Hermia hold hands*)

And in return I shall do something that’s become quite difficult for me: I’ll try to be jolly!

Let’s have some *real* entertainment!

QUEEN ELIZABETH

Right, let’s get on with it before the plot thickens again.

A VILLAGER

There are some enthusiasts here, who have been rehearsing a play in the manner of a Greek Tragedy and Comedy.

QUEEN ELIZABETH

A tragedy *and* a comedy. Sounds interesting. Will one know whether to laugh or cry?

All get ready for the performance.

no.16

The apprentices play the tragical and comical tale of

Pyramus and Thisbe

QUINCE *as Prologue*

If we offend, it is with our good will
 That you should think, we come not to offend
 But with good will, to show our simple skill.
 This is the true beginning of our end.
 The Players are at hand and, by their show
 You shall know all that you are like to know.

SNOUT *as Wall*

In this same interlude it doth befall
 That I - one Snout by name - doth present a wall.
 And such a wall as I would have you think
 That had in it a crannied hole or chink
 And this the cranny is, right and sinister,
 Through which the fearful lovers are to whisper.

The wretched sighs and groans,
 The rueful sobs and moans,
 With pity I
 Have seen, and now condole -
 I'll now comply;
 And give assistance,
 Without resistance,
 If they will hie
 to my whisp'ring hole.

BOTTOM *as Pyramus (entering)*

O night which ever art when day is not
 I fear my Thisbe's promise is forgot.

And thou, O wall!
 Thou sweet and lovely wall,
 That stands between her father's ground and mine,
 Shew me thy chink,
 That I may blink,
 Through with mine eyne.

But what do I see? No Thisbe do I espy.

O wicked wall! through whom no bliss I see:
 Cursed may you be for thus deceiving me! (*exit*)

FLUTE *as Thisbe (entering)*

The promised joys that lovers feel,
 None but a lover can reveal.
 With expectation here I move,
 To crown my wish, and meet my love.

The secret flame that warms my breast,
 And round my heart does move,
 Now gives me Hope I shall be blest,
 And soon embrace my love.

O Wall, full often hast thou heard my moans,
 my cherry lips have often kissed thy stones.

BOTTOM *as Pyramus (entering)*

I see a voice. Now I will to the chink

FLUTE *as Thisbe*

My love! Thou art my love, I think?

BOTTOM *as Pyramus*

O, kiss me through the hole of this vile wall!

FLUTE *as Thisbe*

I kiss the wall's hole, not your lips at all.

BOTTOM *as Pyramus*

Wilt thou at Ninny's tomb meet me straight away?

FLUTE *as Thisbe*

Tide life, tide death, I come without delay.

PYRAMUS & THISBE

I come without delay,

I go without delay.

SNOUT *as Wall*

Thus have I, Wall, my part discharged so;

And being done, thus Wall away doth go. (*exit*)

At the tomb of Ninus in a wood near Babylon

Enter Snug as Lion and Starveling as Moonshine

SNUG *as Lion*

Ladies quake and tremble, perchance, for sure

When Lion in wildest rage doth roar

Then know that I one Snug the joiner am

A lion fell, nor else no lion's dam.

Ladies, don't fright you,

I will delight you

With gentle roar!

Let not a creature,

Though fierce in nature,

Change any feature,

I do implore.

Who can say 'Fie on

So tame a Lion?'

so full of breeding,

so far exceeding

all lions before.

STARVELING *as Moonshine*

This lanthorn doth the horned moon present;

Myself the man in the moon doth seem to be.

The Man in the Moon am I, Sir,
And hither come down from the sky, Sir,

To tell how we people above,

Enjoy our pleasures and love.

Ever ranging ever changing;

Ever drinking;

Never thinking;

Thus we riot, thus we rove.

FLUTE *as Thisbe*

This is old Ninny's tomb. Where is my love?

Where is my love, my Pyre dear?

Good sweet Moon,

sweet good Moon,

Bright good Moon,

good bright Moon

conduct him here.

SNUG *as Lion (roaring)*
O!

*Lion roars. Thisbe runs off, dropping her veil.
Lion tears Thisbe's veil; exit.*

PYRAMUS *(entering)*
Sweet Moon, I thank thee for thy sunny beams:
I thank, thee, Moon, for shining now so bright.
For, by thy gracious, golden, glittering streams,
I trust to taste of truest Thisbe's sight.

But stay!
What dreadful dole is here?
Eyes, do you see?
How can it be?
O dainty duck! O deer!
Thy mantle, good!
What, stained with blood?

Approach, ye Furies fell!
O Fates! Come, come,
Cut thread and thrum,
Quail, crush, conclude and quell.

Come, tears, confound:
Out, sword, and wound,
The pap of Pyramus.
Thus die I, thus, thus, thus! *(He stabs himself)*

Now am I dead,
Now am I fled.
My soul is in the sky!
Tongue, lose thy light,
Moon, take thy flight;

(exit Starveling as Moonshine)

I die, die, die, die.

THISBE *(entering)*
Asleep, my love!
What, dead, my Dove?
O Pyramus, arise!
Speak, speak: quite dumb!
Dead! Dead! A tomb
Must cover thy sweet eyes.

These lilly lips,
This cherry nose,
These yellow cowslip cheeks
Are gone, are gone.
Lovers make moan,
His eyes are green as leeks.

Tongue, not a word!
Come, trusty sword,
Come, blade, my breast embrace.

(She stabs herself)

Now farewell, friends,
Thus Thisbe ends.
Adieu, adieu, adieu.

QUEEN ELIZABETH

That was really quite sad. Hilarious and sad. At the same time. Now I see some children here. Perhaps they would like to perform a Dance for me. Then I really must be on my way. It's getting late.

no.17

QUEEN & COURTIERS

Now the hungry lion roars
And the wolf behowls the moon
Whilst the heavy ploughman snores
All with weary task foredone.

FAIRIES & GOBLINS

So we fairies that do run
From the presence of the sun
Now are frolic. Not a mouse
Shall disturb this hallowed house.

PLAYERS & VILLAGERS

First rehearse your song by rote
To each word a warbling note.
Hand in hand with fairy grace
Will we sing and bless this place.

ALL

Now until the break of day
Through this house each fairy stray.
Trip away; make no stay.
Meet us all by break of day.

(Everybody leaves except the Scholars and Puck)

SCHOLARS *(addressing the audience)*

If we players have offended
Think but this and all is mended:
That you have but slumbered here
While these visions did appear.

SCHOLAR (1)

Well, that was a piece of cake.

SCHOLAR (2)

We ought to send it to Shakespeare.

SCHOLAR (3)

It's funny - but I have a strange feeling that all this has actually happened to me somehow...

SCHOLAR (4)

And me...

SCHOLAR (5)

...and me...

SCHOLAR (6)

..that we really took part in all this.

SCHOLAR (7)

But wait. Are we still taking part? Or has the play finished?

PUCK *(to the Scholars)*

Give me your hands if we be friends
For I declare: the play now ends!

(curtain)