

FOLGER SHAKESPEARE LIBRARY

*A  
Midsummer  
Night's  
Dream*

BY WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE

WITH DETAILED NOTES

FROM THE WORLD'S

LEADING CENTER FOR

SHAKESPEARE STUDIES

EDITED BY BARBARA A. MOWAT  
AND PAUL WERSTINE



## 「ACT 1」

---

### 「Scene 1」

*Enter Theseus, Hippolyta, 「and Philostrate,」 with others.*

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.

5

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.

10

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.

5

*「Philostrate 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.

20

32. **feigning voice**: a voice singing softly; **feigning love**: pretended love

33. **the impression of her fantasy**: i.e., her imagination, on which you have impressed your image

34. **gauds**: (1) playthings; (2) showy things; **concelts**: fancy trinkets

35. **Knacks**: knickknacks

36. **prevailment**: influence

40. **Be it so**: i.e., if

44. **this gentleman**: Demetrius

46. **Immediately**: directly, i.e., with nothing intervening between sentence and actual punishment

47. **Be advised**: i.e., think carefully



*Enter Egeus and his daughter Hermia, and 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.—  
Stand forth, Demetrius.—My noble lord, 25  
This man hath my consent to marry her.—  
Stand forth, Lysander.—And, my gracious duke,  
This man hath bewitched the bosom of my child.—  
Thou, thou, Lysander, thou hast given her rhymes  
And interchanged love tokens with my child. 30  
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 35  
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,  
Be it so she will not here before your Grace 40  
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 45  
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

# FOLGER SHAKESPEARE LIBRARY

THE WORLD'S LEADING CENTER  
FOR SHAKESPEARE STUDIES

*Each edition includes:*

- Freshly edited text based on the best early printed version of the play
- Full explanatory notes conveniently placed on pages facing the text of the play
  - Scene-by-scene plot summaries
  - A key to famous lines and phrases
- An introduction to reading Shakespeare's language
  - An essay by an outstanding scholar providing a modern perspective on the play
- Illustrations from the Folger Shakespeare Library's vast holdings of rare books

*Essay by* Catherine Belsey

The Folger Shakespeare Library in Washington, D.C., is home to the world's largest collection of Shakespeare's printed works, and a magnet for Shakespeare scholars from around the globe. In addition to exhibitions open to the public throughout the year, the Folger offers a full calendar of performances and programs. For more information, visit [www.folger.edu](http://www.folger.edu).

TEACHERS: LESSON PLANS FOR THIS PLAY ARE AVAILABLE AT [WWW.FOLGER.EDU](http://WWW.FOLGER.EDU). TO RECEIVE A CURRICULUM GUIDE FOR THIS PLAY, EMAIL YOUR REQUEST TO [FOLGER.MARKETING@SIMONANDSCHUSTER.COM](mailto:FOLGER.MARKETING@SIMONANDSCHUSTER.COM). PLEASE SPECIFY PDF OR PRINT VERSION.