

OBERON

Well, go thy way. Thou shalt not from this grove
Till I torment thee for this injury.—
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.

ROBIN

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

ROBIN

I’ll put a girdle round about the Earth
In forty minutes.

(He 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
I’ll make her render up her page to me.

(Enter Robin.)

Hast thou the flower there? Welcome, wanderer.

ROBIN

Ay, there it is.

OBERON

I pray thee give it me.

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.

ROBIN

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

(Exit Robin)

OBERON

What thou seest when thou dost wake

Do it for thy true love take.

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.