A Midsummer Night's Pantomime

A 15-minute version by Jean Morten

By Jean Morten (with a little help from William Shakespeare)

Cast

Narrator
Theseus – Duke of Athens
Egeus – Theseus's friend
Hermia – Egeus's daughter
Lysander – in love with Hermia
Demetrius – betrothed to Hermia
Helena – Hermia's friend
Puck – Mischievous sprite
Oberon – Fairy King
Titania – Fairy Queen

Players:
Quince - Director
Bottom - Pyramus
Flute - Thisbe
Snout - wall
Snug - lion

Narrator
It's Midsummer's Day in Athens and the King is to marry his Queen
So for anyone who's anyone this is the place to be seen

Puck
He's actually a Duke, not a king

Narrator
Don't be such a pedant

Puck
Hold on there!
Who are you calling a peasant?

Theseus
Tonight will be my Stag Do and we're heading into town
Come with us and be merry, let's see what's going down

Egeus
Apologies your majesty, I'm too stressed out to go
My daughter is refusing to marry her betrothed
Your Dukeness needs to tell her it's Demetrius she must marry
That Lysander has no prospects working at the Cash and Carry
If she can't love the man I choose, I know you have the power
To send her to a nunnery or lock her in the tower

Lysander
If you let me love your daughter, I'll cherish her for ever
That Demetrius is a waste of space, not at all her kind of fella

Theseus
Can't you lot just sort this out and leave us on our own?
I really don't care what you do….. Now then, where did I put my phone?

Lysander
Don't fret, my precious Hermia, I have a cunning plan
We'll run away together and I will be your man

Narrator
We head into the forest for the following scene
Where Oberon has fallen out with his Fairy Queen

Oberon
Come here Puck, you clever Sprite
My wife and I have had a fight
So, when she takes her daily nap
Rub her eyes with flower sap

The next thing when she waking looks upon
Be it on lion, bear, or wolf or bull
She shall pursue with the soul of love

Puck
You can't say that it doesn't rhyme

Oberon
Don't blame me, it's Shakespeare's line

Puck
What's that noise coming from the garden? It sounds like a grunting bear
It must be Titania snoring in that hammock over there

Narrator
Meanwhile, a group of players are gathered in the wood
They're always enthusiastic, but rarely any good

Quince

Now then, come and listen. This play has some interesting parts
Our dress rehearsal's tomorrow, in the forest, just after dark
Pyramus and Thisbe is the name of the play, and guess what … somebody dies!
Here are your parts, so get busy, you need to learn all your lines

Bottom

Oooh, you know how I love a good comedy, I'll read the script right away
What!! You didn't tell me that Pyramus doesn't make it to the end of the play

Flute

Why am I always the woman? I've been growing this beard all year
Can't I be the wall, or the lion that everyone fears?

Narrator

Puck watches the players and thinks "now's my chance to play a trick"
I'll turn Bottom into a donkey, with a tail and a good left kick

All

Hee Haw, Hee Haw!

Narrator

Titania wakes from her slumber, turns over, and to her surprise
Sees Bottom proudly strutting around in his new equine disguise

Titania

Hello, you handsome stranger. Be still my beating heart
Come, let us be married, then we will never part

Bottom

Hee haw, hee haw

Puck

Ha ha, success! What a triumph! I see my mischievous plan
Has made Titania fall for this strange looking donkey man

All

Boo!

Flute

Where's Bottom? And what is this creature? Am I going out of my mind?
And do I see Titania stroking his behind?

Bottom

Pyramus, Thisbe, lion and wall, who is the fairest of them all?
I look in the mirror and what do I see? A donkey staring back at me!!
AAAgghhh!

All

Wrong play!

Helena

Hermia is so jammy. All the men are on her trail
I try my best to flirt with them, but somehow always fail
How can I get Demetrius to fall in love with me?
Perhaps I'll get my hair done, lose some weight or take up Tai Chi

Oberon

I feel sorry for this maiden. Puck, take the juice of that flower
To make the young man adore her with its magic power

Puck

Ok, I'll get straight to business and sort out this little affair
Demetrius will fall for Helena, they'll make such a handsome pair

Narrator

But Puck, being not so clever, fails to carry out his plan
Instead of bewitching Demetrius he drugs another man,
Lysander, who, rudely awoken by the sound of donkey's hooves,
Turns around to see Helena, practising Tai Chi moves

Lysander

Is this real, or am I still dreaming? I've been in a trance so deep
Now I wake and see this vision. What has happened while I was asleep?
Dear Helena you are the girl for me. Come quickly and marry me now
Where have you been for all of my life? Let's make our wedding vows

Helena

Why is he suddenly proposing to me?
It must be the diet, or this endless Tai Chi!

Hermia

Lysander, Lysander, wherefore art thou Lysander?

All
Wrong play!

Puck
He's behind you

All
It's not a pantomime!

Oberon
You are so mischievous Puck, you've gone and done it again
But look at the mess you've made! See what chaos reigns!

Puck
Ooops!
I'll give Demetrius a big surprise and squirt this potion in his eyes

Demetrius
Helena, my beauty, say that you'll be mine
And we can be together until the end of time

Helena
Now, hold on there chaps, I find this quite shocking
Do you really love me or are you just mocking?

Oberon
Ok, that's enough now, we've all had our fun
Puck, sort this mess out, then we can go home

Puck
Hee hee! I've led them a merry dance
Now they're asleep again, here's my chance
Abracadabra…

All
Wrong play!

Puck
Abracadabra, reverse my spell
When you awake, all will be well

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Bottom
You'll never believe my crazy dream
I was a donkey in love with a fairy Queen

Demetrius
Where am I now, and who is this? Is it Helena by my side?
Oh wow, such endless beauty. I hope she'll be my bride.

Lysander
Hermia, did you hear that? Now we will be free
To spend our lives together if you will marry me

Narrator
So three happy couples are joined on this long Midsummer's Day
And the Wedding party ends with Peter Quince's play

Quince
We're very proud to present a story of the heart
Two people so in love that none can keep them apart

Snout
I am a wall

Bottom
Thisbe, you can kiss me through this hole in the wall

Flute
I would, my dearest Bottom, but I'm just a bit too small

Bottom
whispers (*Remember, I'm Pyramus, not Bottom*)
Then I'll kiss the wall. Ugghh! It tastes of salt

Snout
Look, this costume makes me sweat, it's really not my fault

Snug
I am a lion, but don't be afraid
It's just me, your old friend Snug, and it's only a play
ROAR!

Bottom
Where's my Thisbe?

ALL
It's behind you

Bottom
I said THISBE, not frisby!

ALL
Oh no you didn't

Puck
Don't start that again

Bottom
I fear that dreadful lion devoured my future wife
My life's just not worth living. I'll end it with this knife
(stabs himself and falls to the ground)

Flute
My sweet Pyramus is dead. That much I can tell
So now what is the point? I'll end it all as well

Quince
That is the end of our tale of woe
I hope you enjoyed it but now we must go

Theseus
Why these players think they can act I've never understood
But now I must admit, this play is so bad that it's good
Let's give them a standing ovation. Join us in clapping our hands
To bestow congratulations on this merry travelling band!

All *(clapping)*
Bravo!