

A REIMAGINED MIDSUMMER NIGHT'S DREAM

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**(A Reimagined Midsummer Night's Dream is a tale of love,
acceptance, and magical mayhem, based on the classic play by
William Shakespeare)**

Characters

Hermia: A young autistic woman from Athens. Her father Egeus has betrothed her to Demetrius, but she is already in love with Lysander.

Lysander: A young neurodiverse man, in love with Hermia. He has sensory processing issues which means he is sensitive to touch and loud noise. He flaps his hands when happy.

Helena: A young autistic woman and Hermia's friend. She believes in fairies and fairytales and tries her best to be nice to everyone.

Demetrius: A young neurodiverse man with anxiety issues, stemming from society's expectations to "man-up". He has problems trying to express his problems and desires to others, including that he secretly loves Helena.

Theseus: Duke of Athens, ruler of everything thanks to the Law. He demands respect and obedience from everyone.

Egeus: Father of Hermia, a conservative patriarch.

Azaelea-Rose: Only 'appears' to Theseus as the 'Voice of Reason'.

Peter Quince: A neurodiverse tradie, who likes to boss everyone around in a kindly but fussy way.

Snug: A female neurodiverse carpenter, who has been assigned the part of 'Lion' in the play, Pyramus & Thisbe.

Nick Bottom: A weaver by trade and neurodivergent. He plays the lead role of Pyramus in Peter Quince's play. He loves being a star and makes sure that everyone knows he is indeed the 'star of the show'.

Snout: A neurodiverse tradie with spatial sensitivity issues. He doesn't like to talk much, but he does enjoy the companionship of the other tradies.

Starvling: A neurodiverse, paranoid tradie, who has sensitivity to light and is always in need of something soothing.

Frances Flute: A female bellows-maker, who is anxious about the world around her and perpetually picks fights with other objects.

Puck: A fairy and shapeshifter, neurodivergent son of Oberon and Titania. He is full of mischief and likes playing tricks on people. You never know what he is going to do next!

Oberon: King of the Fairies and guardian of the Forest.

Titania: Queen of the Fairies. With her husband Oberon, she rules and protects the forest.

Hippolyta: Theseus's bride to be...

The action of the play begins in ancient Athens for Act I, moves to a magical forest outside Athens in the 1990s for Act II, and finally returns to Athens in 2022 for Act III...

A Reimagined Midsummer Night's Dream

ACT I

SCENE 1

Daytime. The Parth-a-non in Ancient Athens on top of an inaccessible hill.

Enter HERMIA. She is flustered, angry and upset.

Enter LYSANDER.

LYSANDER: Why must thou marry Demetrius? Why?!

HERMIA: It's what my father wants, but not what I want. You know Lysander!
I love thee!

Enter DEMETRIUS.

DEMETRIUS: But the rules are the rules, Hermia. We must do as we are told to
do even if it's not what we want to do.

Enter HELENA.

HELENA: Sadly yes, we must follow the rules of the City. But perhaps we can
follow the rules, and yet alter the rules?

HERMIA: How cunning Helena? How shall we carry this out?

HELENA: I do not know yet.

DEMETRIUS: We need to give this some thought...

THESEUS enters to the sound of a tolling bell.

The lovers bow, eyes downcast, to show respect.

THESEUS: Arise, citizens! Arise! As you know, my wedding is nigh! My
wedding day to my bride, will be one of excellence and beauty.
Hippolyta, a beauty you have yet to behold. Lips as red as rubies,
eyes like starlight, teeth as white as pearls, spools of golden thread,
a figure of woman as bright as the Sun.

Enter EGEUS, who is annoyed and frustrated.

EGEUS: Hermia! Hermia! Here!

HERMIA hides behind LYSANDER.

EGEUS: Come here at once!

HERMIA: No!

LYSANDER: Dear Sir, please understand. Hermia does not wish to marry Demetrius. She loves me! She wishes to marry me!

EGEUS: My daughter shall not disobey the law of Athens. *(To HERMIA)*. As your father, I have decreed that thou shall marry Demetrius.

DEMETRIUS: But sir!

EGEUS: No buts Demetrius!

THESEUS: What is this confusion?

EGEUS: Well, you see, my daughter has come of age, and I have decided it is time for her to be married. She will not marry the man I have chosen for her. She has decided rather to marry this scoundrel, Lysander!

LYSANDER: Sir, Hermia should be allowed to marry whom she chooses.

THESEUS: You must listen to your father, Hermia!

All bow, and EGEUS shows his gratitude to THESEUS.

EGEUS: Come daughter.

We hear the Voice of Reason. She is calm, peaceful and talks reasonably.

AZEALEA–ROSE: Theseus, please think about the people's best interests. This woman Hermia has made it clear to this company whom she wishes to marry. How would you feel from the heart if you could not marry the one you loved?

THESEUS: Who speaks?!

AZEALEA–ROSE: I am Mother of the People, the Voice of Reason. I am the voice of peace and tranquillity. I speak to thee, Theseus.

THESEUS: And I am the law! Show thyself!

AZEALEA-ROSE: You will come to an understanding of what I say. Everything is about to change!

AZEALEA-ROSE 'Voice' fades away.

THESEUS: Hermia! The choice is this. You will marry Demetrius, or you will live out the rest of your days in a convent! What say you?

HERMIA does not respond.

THESEUS: You have until the morrow to decide!

THESEUS exits to the sound of the tolling bell.

EGEUS: Listen to the Law, daughter!

EGEUS exits.

HERMIA: What am I to do? This is so unfair! I don't want to live in a convent, nor do I wish to marry Demetrius (*To DEMETRIUS*) Sorry Demetrius!

DEMETRIUS: It's alright Hermia. I don't want to marry you either. If I had my choice, I would marry...

HELENA: Oh Demetrius!

LYSANDER: What choice is a convent?

HERMIA: I won't be able to talk to anyone. I will be a prisoner of religion. I will be trapped in endless routine. And all my fears will eat me alive! And more than anything I won't have freedom to be who I am!

LYSANDER: That is so devastating, Hermia. What shall we do? Where shall we go?

HERMIA: We need to leave this City.

LYSANDER: We shall go to the Forest...the forest has trees that stretch tall to the clouds. There is grass as green as can be. And stars that are bright as the never-ending Cosmos...

HERMIA: That sounds so romantic my Lysander...Let us embark on this journey tonight.

DEMETRIUS: Is that a wise decision?

HELENA: Do you know where you are going? What you may encounter?

HERMIA: O Helena. Thou dost worry too much...Lysander and I will be safe from harm. We have each other for protection.

LYSANDER: There is nothing in the forest to harm us...come...let us go my Hermia! The night is young, the darkness rises and the stars shine bright upon us...

HERMIA and LYSANDER exit.

HELENA: But there are wild animals in the forest! Bears!

DEMETRIUS: Jackals!

HELENA: Wolves!

DEMETRIUS: Minotaur!

HELENA: Pegasae!

DEMETRIUS: And...

H/D (together) The Fairies!

HELENA: We must go after them!

DEMETRIUS: We must!

HELENA: Before...

Blackout.

End of Scene 1

ACT I, Scene 2

Night. In another part of the Parth-a-non, on top of an inaccessible hill.

Six tradies enter one by one, each to a rhythm of their own. They're tired, exhausted after their weary climb up this hill and collapse in a heap.

QUINCE, the director, stays standing, looks at his map.

SNUG: Can we please have five minutes?

BOTTOM: Can we have ten minutes...instead?

SNOUT: We need a lifetime of rest. We work endlessly from dawn till dusk.

STARVLING groans.

STARVLING: I don't know how much more I can take.

FLUTE: I've lost the will to act!

QUINCE: There it is! That's where we need to go! Alright, come on you rascals. Up! Up! (*claps his hands*).

SNUG: What is this play we're doing? Why are we here?

SNOUT: It is such an inaccessible place!

BOTTOM: It is a shambles.

STARVLING proves it by karate-chopping a piece of wood from a wall.

FLUTE: That is going to cost a few Krona to fix!

BOTTOM: Did someone say Carona?

QUINCE: Silence! What are you people doing? We are here to do the tragedy of Pyramus and Thisbe. We are here to do this play for the Duke and his bride for their wedding day, and you are behaving like little children.

SNOUT: Well, give me a role then!

QUINCE: Snout...here! You are Wall!

SNOUT: The role I have always wanted...(puts out his arms) Wall!

QUINCE: Oh wonderful Wall!...Starvling here! You are Moon!

STARVLING: How do I be Moon?

QUINCE shows STARVLING how to hold a mini-moon like a baby.

QUINCE: Snug, here! You shall be Lion!

SNUG: But there may be people in the audience who are scared of lions.

QUINCE: Well maybe not a ferocious lion, rather a lion that is tame.

SNUG: Perhaps I should explain to the audience that I am not a real lion, but rather a person in a lion suit.

QUINCE: And you can smile a smirk smile so they are not afeard of your teeth...now who is next?

BOTTOM? Me? Me? Me?

QUINCE: Not yet Bottom...Where is Frances Flute? Frances?

FRANCES FLUTE bursts through the Wall.

QUINCE: You are Thisbe...a dainty, precious lady...Perhaps you need not be so excessive in your actions.

FLUTE: What does that mean?

QUINCE: Perhaps you can use the door next time?

FLUTE: What door? There is no door here!

QUINCE manoeuvres SNOUT in to be a door.

SNOUT: I don't want to be a door. I want to be Wall!

BOTTOM: Me? Me? What is my role, Peter Quince?

QUINCE: Ah...Bottom, I have saved the best role for you...You will be playing the hero!

BOTTOM: What hero?

QUINCE whispers in BOTTOM's ear 'Pyramus'.

BOTTOM: Who is Pyramus?

QUINCE: Pyramus is the tragic hero who takes his life when his beloved Thisbe appears to be dead, killed by the Lion...and yet she is not dead...

BOTTOM: I am the hero!...But we cannot work in this place! / cannot work in this place!

QUINCE: But we have only just arrived here.

SNUG: It is too loud. It hurts my ears!

STARVLING: It is too bright. It hurts my eyes!

SNOUT: It smells. It is an affront to my nostrils!

FLUTE: I need space!

QUINCE: Wait! I have a solution...We can go somewhere natural and magical, somewhere where there is gentle light and ambient sound, somewhere we shall not be disturbed.

BOTTOM: What is this place? Does it suit our purposes?

SNUG: Is it a quiet place?

STARVLING: Does it have a soothing outlook?

SNOUT: Does it smell like daisies on a spring day?

FLUTE: Is there room to move?

BOTTOM: Will it be a secret place, so that our play can be a surprise gift for Theseus and his new bride Hippolyta?

QUINCE: Well my cast, it is all these things...as in everything you can imagine. Come...we have a play to play...

They exit.

End of Scene 2

Act II, Scene 3

Night. A forest outside Athens in the 1990s, with firs, pines and plane trees. We can hear soft night sounds of wind, water, crickets, frogs, owls, crackling fire. We can see shifting shadows of bears, wolves, jackals.

On the forest floor are brightly coloured slugs, glow-in-the-dark worms, neon spiral timers, tangles, slinkies, larva lamps, poppits, orange sensory socks, fibre optic shrubs. Fairy lights hang from the trees.

Enter PUCK as a fully formed fox on all fours. He acts curious, cunning, suspicious. He makes yipping noises, digs desperately, checks his paws. He is unsure how to act as a fox. He spots a tree and climbs it.

OBERON enters. He is grumpy and looking for PUCK.

TITANIA enters quickly, flustered.

TITANIA: Where's Puck?

OBERON: I don't know! You're way too harsh on him!

TITANIA: I'm too harsh? Who do you think lost our son?

OBERON: He's growing up, he deserves his freedom.

TITANIA: Does he really need any more freedom? He's a shapeshifter...he turns into whatever he wants to turn into. Last week he was a phoenix and he burnt down nearly half the forest and we had to ask the creatures of the forest for help. It was a joke...I barely had enough resources. We were lucky that an elephant turned up and sprayed water over it...This week he was a llama and llamas don't even live in Greece...What's he going to be today?

PUCK falls out of the tree.

TITANIA: Oh for heaven's sake!

TITANIA/OBERON (together):
Puck!

OBERON: Puck

OBERON gets down on all fours and eyeballs Puck.

OBERON: What are you doing? (*PUCK trembles, lowers his head*). It's okay
I'm not going to hurt you, just come out of this form.

PUCK responds in fox language.

TITANIA: For goodness sake Puck!

We hear voices off-stage, the sounds of people approaching.

OBERON: What's that noise?

TITANIA: What do I care about noise? Our son is a fox!

PUCK makes fox noises.

OBERON: Humans! Humans approach...

TITANIA: Humans! We must hide!

OBERON: We must protect our son!

TITANIA: Here Puck! Behind me!

OBERON: We must all hide?

OBERON, TITANIA and PUCK hide behind the trees.

Enter HERMIA and LYSANDER. They run around in joy.

HERMIA: We're freeeeeeee! (*seeing a sensory item and picking it up*) Look at
this! It's so beautiful!

LYSANDER: Wow! This is amazing! Look Hermia!

HERMIA: Look at all these things! They're fascinating.

LYSANDER gives her something.

LYSANDER: Here Hermia! A gift for you...

HERMIA: Thank you! I've never seen anything like this back in Athens!

LYSANDER: I've never seen anything like this in my lifetime!

HERMIA: Let's stay here forever!

LYSANDER: For a lifetime!

HERMIA: Where are we going to rest?

LYSANDER: I have found the perfect spot!

LYSANDER finds the orange sensory socks, gives one to Hermia.

HERMIA: I've never seen anything like this before! Oh! It's so stretchy and so soft!

HERMIA sits down and climbs into one.

LYSANDER (getting into the other one):
I like the colour! It's like the colour of autumn leaves!

HERMIA: So nice and warm, so comfy!

HERMIA and LYSANDER pull the socks over their heads and lie down!

LYSANDER: Hermia! Hermia! Are you there?

HERMIA: Yes! I'm here...I'm so warm, so cozy, I never want to come out of here!

HERMIA giggles and rolls into LYSANDER, who giggles and rolls back into her.

Eventually, they settle for the night and the sounds of the crickets, frogs and night-time creatures take over, disturbing their thoughts.

HERMIA (sitting up):
This is a bad idea.

LYSANDER (sitting up):
A bad idea? (*hearing a wolf sound*) Where did that come from?

HERMIA: I don't know! We need to rest but how can we?

Enter DEMETRIUS and HELENA.

HERMIA (getting out of the sock):
What are you doing here?

HELENA: Hermia! Are you all right?

HERMIA: I'm fine!

DEMETRIUS: You all right mate?

LYSANDER (getting out of his sock):
I'm in a forest!

HELENA: Yes, you're in a forest, a place of wonder and everything you can imagine.

HERMIA: What do you mean everything you can imagine?

DEMETRIUS: Don't you realise you're in the kingdom of the fairies!

HERMIA: Don't be ridiculous. Fairies don't exist!

HELENA: Yes they do!

HERMIA: No they don't!

HELENA: Yes they do!

HERMIA! No they don't!

LYSANDER: But *how* do fairies exist?

DEMETRIUS: They exist from the old religion, from the story books that are powerful, they are the guardians of the forest that spread their dust onto all things...to protect!

We see one tree lights up, then another, then a waterfall, then a golden tree.

HERMIA: Huhhh! What's going on?!

LYSANDER: Look at this golden beauty!

HELENA: Now you see Hermia, you see the work of the fairies, how they create magic, how they protect the forest.

DEMETRIUS: You see...fairies do exist!

OBERON and TITANIA come out of their hiding places.

HERMIA and LYSANDER are in awe. LYSANDER bows to OBERON.

OBERON (to TITANIA):
What are they doing?

TITANIA shrugs.

LYSANDER: Fairies exist!

HERMIA: We are sorry we did not believe in you!

LYSANDER: What is that creature over there (*pointing to PUCK*)

PUCK doesn't come out.

OBERON and TITANIA block LYSANDER's way. OBERON raises his hand to stop them.

OBERON: What are you doing here? What do you want?

LYSANDER: We are sorry for intruding.

HERMIA: Your land is beautiful.

TITANIA: But why are you here?

HELENA: We have come from the city because we cannot be our true selves there.

DEMETRIUS: We cannot be with who we want.

HERMIA: Because of the Law!

OBERON: The Law? What law is this?

LYSANDER: The Law that makes you suffer through loud noise, sirens, cars, when my mind craves quiet and classical music.

DEMETRIUS: A law that demands expectations when I don't have anything to give. Man up, I'm told. Man up!

HELENA: A law that demands that I cannot marry who I want, even though I love him (*indicates Demetrius*)

HERMIA: A law which forces me to a convent, where I have no choice. No freedom.

OBERON and TITANIA are stunned.

OBERON (to TITANIA):
It's all very well, they've got their problems! What about us?

TITANIA: We don't want strangers and their problems in our forest!

OBERON: What are we going to do with them?

TITANIA: Banish them!

HERMIA: Banish them? What's next...off with their heads?

HELENA: Oh...I think they might be serious!

LYSANDER: Why so serious!

HELENA: We need to be reasonable.

HERMIA: Respectful!

LYSANDER: Rational!

DEMETRIUS: We need to be calm!

We hear animal sounds, a bird screeches.

HELENA: Stay calm!...Stay calm!

OBERON and TITANIA can't believe what they're witnessing.

TITANIA: What are these humans doing?

OBERON: Shall we put them in a cage to calm them?

TITANIA: Put them in a cage? Isn't that a bit extreme?

OBERON: Well, let's enchant them then!

We hear the sound of a bugle and far-off hunting dogs barking.

LYSANDER: The Duke's hunting party comes.

HELENA: Quick...Hide!

The Lovers hide, one by one, behind a single tree.

The dogs bark louder.

PUCK comes out of his hiding place.

OBERON: Puck! What are you doing?

PUCK slinks forward, trembling, afraid.

TITANIA: Dogs!

OBERON: Dogs!

Lights down on PUCK as the sounds grow.

End of Scene 3.

ACT II, Scene 4

Daybreak in another part of the Forest.

QUINCE enters first. He marches in as a director. He turns, notices no-one has followed him, claps his hands.

QUINCE: Come on! Come on cast!

SNUG, SNOUT and STARVLING enter making their character sounds.

QUINCE: Mmm? (to SNOUT) Maybe a bit better (to SNUG) Yes good...(to STARVLING) Good! Frances? Frances Flute Where's Frances Flute?

FLUTE enters fighting with the trees who seem to be able to block her way.

QUINCE: And...Where is the Star of the Show?

BOTTOM enters to applause.

FLUTE: I thought I was the star of the show!

STARVLING makes moon sounds.

STARVLING: Why can't I be the star?

SNOUT: I am Wall!

SNUG: These pine trees would make such great building materials!

BOTTOM: We could build a set!

QUINCE: Look at this mud! We can build a wall!

SNOUT: I'm Wall...I'm THE Wall!

QUINCE: But we can build a better wall!

BOTTOM: Look Peter Quince...Look!...We can chop this tree down and create a stump!

QUINCE is bemused.

BOTTOM: You can step on the stump...You can elevate yourself...you can cast your magic spell over us as the...Director.

SNUG: Cool! I have my axe!

BOTTOM: Let's go tree shopping! Aha...this is the perfect tree Snug!

SNUG: One, two three – huh!

The tree grabs the axe, and after a struggle the handle comes off in SNUG's hand.

SNUG: Oh shit!

The tree groans.

SNUG screams.

BOTTOM: Oh my gosh!

SNUG: We're haunted!

SNOUT: It's sentient!

BOTTOM: What the heck does that mean?

SNOUT: It's alive!

QUINCE: And that's coming from a wall!

STARVLING: What did you do to piss off the tree?

SNUG: Who's going to rescue my axe?

QUINCE: Calm down everyone, calm down!

QUINCE approaches the tree, has a battle for the axe, eventually wins but is propelled backwards into the other tradies who fall in a heap.

QUINCE: I have the axe!...Come on everyone up up!

The tradies rise groggily to their feet.

The sounds of the hunting party, the bugle, the dogs. PUCK runs in, collides with BOTTOM's legs.

BOTTOM: Owww....what was that?

SNUG: It's a fox!

FLUTE: And a fox hunt!

QUINCE: The duke's fox hunt!

SNUG: If we catch the fox, maybe we'll get rewarded!

QUINCE: Promoted!

BOTTOM: No! We need money!

SNOUT: Maybe we'll get to work at the Palace!

BOTTOM: Money, lots and lots of money!

The Tradies look intently at Puck.

STARVLING: Let's get him!

SNOUT: Come on Bottom!

BOTTOM: Huh? Where's he gone?

The Tradies try and individually catch PUCK. Each time they think they have him they realise they haven't.

Eventually QUINCE beckons them into a huddle, and as a group they capture PUCK.

OBERON and TITANIA fly in.

TITANIA: They've got Puck!

OBERON: They're going to kill him!

TITANIA: We have to stop them!

OBERON: Here! (*gives her some fairy dust*)

OBERON and TITANIA fly around and deposit the dust on the Tradies and on PUCK. They freeze into Grecian marble statues.

TITANIA: Our son is safe!

OBERON: And now he's marble!

TITANIA: Now at least he can't get up to mischief!

OBERON: How are we going to get a lump of marble home?

TITANIA: We're fairies, we can do anything!

OBERON: I miss you Puck! For one, life would be so boring without your tricks.

TITANIA: Or mischief-making...

OBERON: We need to bring back Puck as Puck!

TITANIA: We can't leave you as a fox!

OBERON: We will create a potion of tender unconditional love from ingredients of rosemary, lavender, honey, musk, petals of blue, spices of clove and star anise (*produces the ingredients and puts them in a pestle and mortar*). A wolf's tear will bind together such gifts, and in the mixing, bestow kindness, care, devotion, trust, affection, equality, unity, strength and peace on all who breathe its fumes and taste its sweet delight.

TITANIA: And helpfulness father?

OBERON: And helpfulness...

TITANIA: And understanding?

OBERON: Yes!

TITANIA: But will Puck come back to us as Puck?

OBERON: Yes mother...he will come back to us as Puck!

OBERON and TITANIA dispense the potion onto PUCK's lips. The trees glow as the potion goes on.

PUCK becomes PUCK, but he still has his fox ears and his tail.

TITANIA: The potion's malfunctioned! Oberon, do something!

OBERON: Well these ears and tail are a reminder of his mischief!

PUCK: What just happened?...Wait can you hear my voice!

TITANIA: Yes!

OBERON: Yes!

PUCK: I dreamt I was a fox!

OBERON: Well...

TITANIA: You were a fox!

PUCK: Can I go back to being a fox?

T/O (together): No!

PUCK: Can I be a llama then?

TITANIA: Greece doesn't have llamas!

PUCK: Can I stay like this forever?

OBERON: What do you think mother?

TITANIA: Sure! Why not?

PUCK: Yay! I can be different!

PUCK eventually notices the Tradies.

PUCK: Who are these people? What's happened to them?

TITANIA: These people were trying to catch you

OBERON: And they might have killed you... These are the consequences of your mischief Puck!

PUCK: Wait...kill?...I'm sorry I just wanted to have a bit of fun.

TITANIA: It wasn't fun for us!

OBERON: But he's back with us now, mother, our little foxy!

TITANIA: Oh dear...

We hear the sounds of the Hunt, the dogs, the bugle.

OBERON: Mother, I feel a teaching moment is upon us...a lesson for the humans.

TITANIA: I do agree...After all these humans were trying to catch our son!

OBERON: Our little foxy.

TITANIA: What do you have in mind?

OBERON: Well mother...here...spread this around and about...

OBERON and TITANIA spread the dust around the tradies.

OBERON: Humans, you must watch, beware

TITANIA: In the forest you must take care

OBERON: What you chase you may replace

TITANIA: Be careful what you wish or trick for

OBERON: In the Duke's eyes...you become the prize!

The tradies have metamorphosed and become foxes. They try to speak but fox language comes out: gibberish. The fairies find the human antics very funny.

The sounds of the hunt, louder, closer. The tradies hide behind the trees, all except QUINCE who flops down in the open, plays dead.

The four LOVERS enter, HERMIA leads the way.

HERMIA: Where's the fox?

LYSANDER: Here foxy foxy foxy foxy!

HELENA finds something on the ground.

HELENA: Hey look at this! Pawprints!

DEMETRIUS: And look! The pawprints become footprints!

HELENA nearly trips over QUINCE.

Gradually, the Lovers raise their eyes to see OBERON and TITANIA standing over them in powerful positions. They see PUCK standing between his parents.

HERMIA: The fox is not a fox!

LYSANDER: What is this strange creature?

HELENA: It's okay, it's okay...

DEMETRIUS: We're not going to hurt you!

All look at the trees and ground, find sensory gifts for PUCK to give to him.

HERMIA (*giving a poppit*):
 A poppit for a poppit!

LYSANDER (*giving a glowing moon*):
 The moon that dazzles through centuries of time.

DEMETRIUS (*giving pipes*):
 The soothing sound of these Pan pipes.

HELENA (*giving a feather*):
 A feather from the Pegasae...and will you tell us your name?

PUCK: Puck!

TITANIA: Thank you for giving our son all these lovely gifts.

OBERON: Thank you for showing us a different side to your nature, one we have not seen before.

LYSANDER: We came here seeking true freedom.

HERMIA: And we found it here!

The tolling bell rings. THESEUS enters. The LOVERS bow and curtsy.

HERMIA: Oh! Lord Theseus!

LYSANDER: Welcome Lord Theseus!

HELENA: Yes...Yes...Welcome

DEMETRIUS: Um...Yes!

OBERON: What are these strange customs? Who is this person?

TITANIA: I have no idea!

THESEUS eyeballs OBERON.

THESEUS: Why do you not bow to me?

OBERON: Bow to you? (*laughs*)

THESEUS: I am a duke!

OBERON: And *I* am a King...a king trumps a duke!

TITANIA: And a Queen trumps a duke as well!

QUINCE, who has been playing dead all this time, raises a trembling head.

PUCK realises that QUINCE is in danger.

PUCK: Come with me if you want to live!

THESEUS: Excuse me? Did you just threaten me?

OBERON: Back off if *you* want to live?

THESEUS: Is that a fox I see!

TITANIA: That's my son you see!

The VOICE of REASON shines behind PUCK.

AZAELEA-ROSE: Theseus! Oh great Theseus! Why do you hurt these people? You see this vulnerable creature. You see how he shakes, you see how he shivers, you see the fear in his eyes, see the tear that rolls down his cheek!

THESEUS: That voice! Where is that damned voice coming from?

AZAELEA-ROSE: I am Azaelea-Rose...the Voice of Reason, Theseus. Listen to the advice I give you. You can be a kinder version of yourself! You can be a better version of yourself!

PUCK is whimpering, has tears rolling down his face.

AZAELEA-ROSE: You see Theseus? You must give choice, you must give respect, you must give freedom. Look at these people! Look at this family. Look at this king and queen, how they rule, how they protect, how they guide, how they love...And look at these lovers. Let them be with whom they want to be. Let them love who they wish...

A silence.

THESEUS: Stop the hunt!

The Tradies, still foxes, come out from their hiding places. They approach QUINCE try to get him out of his dead drop.

TITANIA: We cannot leave these humans as foxes, father.

OBERON: Let us reverse our spell, mother!

OBERON and TITANIA put the potion of unconditional love onto the lips of the tradies who immediately turn back into their human form.

SNOUT: I am Wall!

STARVLING: I am Moon!

BOTTOM: And I am the Star of the Show!

THESEUS bows to OBERON and TITANIA.

OBERON: Arise duke!

THESEUS: May I call you friends now?

TITANIA and OBERON look at each other.

TITANIA: You may!

THESEUS: And Hermia I must apologise to you...for my treatment of you. I can see how much you love Lysander and therefore I announce that I will revoke this hostile law of Athens this day to enable you to marry this man! And I can see too that Demetrius and Helena are showing love and care towards each other...My friends...including the King and Queen, I invite you to the city on this my wedding day, on these our wedding days...where we shall live in peace.

LYSANDER: Is this really happening?

HERMIA: It is...finally!

DEMETRIUS: This is so lovely!

HELENA: Are you going to revoke the law for real?

THESEUS: I have done so...Come all my friends! Let us return to Athens!

PUCK: Let's go!

PUCK runs off. The others follow.

End of Scene 4.

ACT III, Scene 5

Athens in 2022, (an accessible city but there is always room for improvement).

The Parth-a-non now boasts a ramp.

Enter TITANIA, OBERON and PUCK. They spread the sensory items from the Forest and flower petals on the ground in front of the newlyweds.

HERMIA and LYSANDER enter newly married.

HELENA and DEMETRIUS married; and finally THESEUS and HIPPOLYTA, also married.

PUCK throws flower petals over himself.

The TRADIES enter as their Pyramus and Thisbe characters.

QUINCE: Newly weds, community of Athens and fairies, my fellow casties and I have been working very hard on a hilarious tragedy that features a forbidden love, and a lion and a woman who gets chased by the lion, and she drops her scarf; and when her hero lover arrives on the scene, he immediately assumes she is dead – and so he...

THESEUS: Please don't spoil the ending!

HERMIA: No, we don't want to know the ending!

BOTTOM: Okay! On with the show! Ladies and gentlemen please switch off your mobile phones now. We would like to thank our sponsors and the fairies for teaching us to be kinder to trees and to animals, especially a fox...

PUCK: Yip! Yip! Let the magic begin...

The newlyweds and fairies settle down to watch the show.

SNUG: I may be a lion but please don't be frightened
Under this rug I am the carpenter Snug...

SNOUT: I am Wall that stands proud and tall
I am stout and my name is Snout

STARVLING: I am the Moon, I make you swoon
My name is Starvling you are my darlings

FLUTE: I am Thisbe, dignified lady not oafish tradie
Although gifted with bellows, I am dainty and mellow.

BOTTOM: I am the Star, my name is Pyramus
I may be last but I'm Best in the cast.

The newlyweds applaud in AUSLAN language.

SNOUT positions himself as a Wall, front and centre.

SNUG: Snout?

FLUTE: Where's my sledgehammer!

BOTTOM: Out of the way!

SNOUT: I Am Wall!

QUINCE: Take your positions!

BOTTOM positions SNOUT at the back of the stage as wall. STARVLING positions himself as moon.

BOTTOM: Stand over here!

SNOUT: I AM WALL!

SNUG the Lion roars and chases FLUTE (Thisbe) around and around the pillars until such time as FLUTE is chasing SNUG!

QUINCE: Oi! (*QUINCE makes the Time Out sign*).

SNUG roars and chases FLUTE off stage.

STARVLING: Have we finished?

BOTTOM: No we have not!

BOTTOM finds THISBE's scarf on the ground.

BOTTOM: Oh no! The scarf! Thiiiiisbee! Where are you? It appears that you have been eaten by that lion. Now I have to flee, so I don't meet the same fate!

SNUG as LION comes back and roars. BOTTOM turns and runs off stage.

STARVLING: What kind of hero is that!

THESEUS: And the moral of this tale is...do not give up your day job!

The newlyweds and fairies applaud in AUSLAN and with sound.

SNOUT: I am Wall! I am Wall!

BOTTOM (stepping to the front):
I am the star of the show!

The TRADIES bow and jostle calling 'Encore, Bravo' to each other.

PUCK stands up amongst the audience. He has a hoodie pulled over his head.

PUCK: Mum! These lights they're too bright for me. This noise, it's hurting my ears...May I have quiet? Quiet please!

(*to the audience*) I have something very important to say...To all of you here, let me tell you what neurodiversity means to me. To be neurodiverse means to adapt to a world that has not been built for me. I must learn to navigate on my own where I am an alien to everyone else. Some may feel sorry for me, however neurodiversity is not a punishment. It is a gift. My neurodiversity makes me stand out from a lot of people and gives me a sense of how different I am...My neurodiversity is having to mask my disability in the community for the non-disabled to be able to understand me...Whenever I get social anxiety or tired, I must find a way to stay calm and I always think about what I'm going to say in any conversation and *that* always makes me feel better...Neurodivergence is a different way of being, thinking and communicating with its own set of challenges and strengths...I would not be who I am today if I was not neurodiverse...And so I ask all of you, how can we make a society in which I do not feel like an alien, where I do not have to mask, where I do not have to feel socially anxious and where my difference can thrive...

HERMIA: When you entered here tonight...

LYSANDER: You were given a form for feedback about how to make our society more accessible and inclusive.

DEMETRIUS: We invite you to fill in those forms now...

HELENA: And return them to us...

TITANIA (*beckoning to PUCK*):
Come my son!

PUCK joins TITANIA and OBERON.

TITANIA: Puck, I have a special stone for you...You must take good care of this diamond for it contains all the knowledge of the world from the earth and beyond. You must take it to the place of the golden tree, which your father and I know about but have not yet told you. This golden tree is a marker of the old religion from long ago, of another tribe of fairies, keepers of the knowledge and guardians of all things. You must place it in the crown of the tree and not be afraid when it shimmers and glows because it is brightening the world to a better place, where neurodiversity is paramount, and where all living citizens and creatures are united in peace.

PUCK takes the diamond. It glows in his hand...

The Golden Tree glows behind him.

Fade Out.

END OF PLAY