

BOTTOMS DREAM

by Kristen Doherty.

(A One Act cut of The Dream, inspired by Shakespeare's A Midsummer Night's Dream)

CHARACTERS

PRINCIPAL THEODORE – (Theseus) The Principal of Athenian High

MS HIGHGATE – (Hippolyta) Drama teacher.

PHIL – (Philostrate) The sassy Principals assistant

PETER – (Peter Quince) Long suffering student teacher. Plays PROLOGUE

NICK – (Nick Bottom) A “serious actor” Oblivious to the magic. Plays PYRAMUS

TOM – (Tom Snout) Swapped Tech for Drama. Plays WALL/LION

FRANCIS – (Francis Flute) Tries to fit in. Is scared of most things. Plays THISBYROBIN

(Robin Starvelling) Moody costume designer. Does not act! Plays MOONSHINE

TITANIA - Queen of the fairies.

PUCK - A hobgoblin

MOTH - A fairy

MUSTARDSEED - A fairy

PEASEBLOSSOM - A fairy

COBWEB - A fairy

Other Fairies.

Doubling up suggestion (8 Actors)

NICK

MS HIGHGATE/TITANIA

PHIL/PUCK

PRINCIPAL THEODORE/FAIRY

PETER/FAIRY

TOM/FAIRY

FRANCIS/FAIRY

ROBIN/FAIRY

Bottom’s Dream – A play, inspired by a play, inspired by a play.

Connection to Shakespeare: The plot follows the same linear storyline of ‘A Midsummer Night’s Dream - The contemporary characters inspired and named from Shakespeare’s originals. Therefore, in Shakespearean tradition, gender shouldn’t determine casting.

SCENE 1 – THE PRINCIPAL’S OFFICE

(Principal Theodore and Drama teacher, Ms Highgate are meeting. Phil, the Principal’s secretary is writing down Principal Theodore’s words on an iPad for a press release)

PRINCIPAL THEODORE. How does this sound for our socials? ... Ahem! *(announces)* “All the worlds a stage at Athenian High School for our gala day at night...*(awkwardly)* tonight!”

PHIL. Very Shakespearean.

MS HIGHGATE. Um... I’m not quite sure...

PRINCIPAL THEODORE “Tonight, and tonight only, the boy’s and girl’s campuses of Athenian High will unite to present – Scenes from Shakespeare’s finest Comedy ‘A Midsummer Night’s Dream’”

MS HIGHGATE. It’s going to be more like Shakespeare’s worst tragedy, if we don’t have anything ready to perform! We are so underprepared. Today’s rehearsal is our only chance of pulling this show off.

PHIL. Yes. We just love giving up our whole Saturday.

PRINCIPAL THEODORE. Now we won’t hold you too long, Ms Highgate. I know you’ve already got kids rehearsing all over the school. Rest assured, it’s going to be a wonderful event.

(Phil looks at IPAD)

PHIL. Oops. Looks like Milly Macintosh and Julie Yen will be no shows. Both in bed, sick.

MS HIGHGATE. No! That’s my Hippolyta and Titania out.

PRINCIPAL THEODORE. It’ll be just fine. We just need a few scenes. Worst case scenario, just one decent one... You can do that, can’t you?

MS HIGHGATE. Umm...

PRINCIPAL THEODORE. Don’t worry, we have hours before the guests start arriving.

MS HIGHGATE. *(Sighs)* Hours.

PRINCIPAL THEODORE. *(Trying to cheer her up)* Look. Here’s an idea, I’ll have Phil zip around and take photos for a display board. He has exceptional display board skills.

PHIL. Zip around? Display boards? In this heat? Fine! (*sarcastic*) I'll pop it on the list... boss. (*dramatically*) And just so you know, I'm doing this for the Arts... For the Theatre. For Shakespeare... Not for you.

PRINCIPAL THEODORE. (*soothing*) You can give us your honest opinion about which scenes to pick, Phil. You have quite the artistic eye.

PHIL. (*Appeased*) True... That makes sense, I suppose.

MS HIGHGATE. The students are working in the Theatre, in the Gymnasium, the Chapel and the Forest at the rear of the school. You can't miss them. They should all be in costume.

PRINCIPAL THEODORE. The forest?

MS HIGHGATE. Yes, the forest. I thought it would be good for the Mechanical characters to get out of the comfort zone and try out their scenes in an authentic setting. And that particular group can be a bit of a handful, so I have my student teacher Peter working down there with them so I can get on with building the set.

PRINCIPAL THEODORE. Ohh! Phil is amazing at set building!

PHIL. (*With venom*) Principal Theodore, though art a leathern-jerkin, crystal-buttoned, knot-pated, puke-stockinged, smooth-tongued, bull's-pizzle. Away! You starveling, you eel-skin, you dried neat's-tongue, you, you stock-fish! O' thou clay-brained guts, thou knotty-pated fool!

PRINCIPAL THEODORE. (*Shocked*) Phil!

PHIL. Just quoting Shakespeare, boss, just quoting Shakespeare.

PRINCIPAL THEODORE. (*Applauds*) Oh well bravo then! Bravo. (*aside to Ms Highgate*) I didn't understand a word that he said.

MS HIGHGATE. Oh, why did I pick Shakespeare?

.

SCENE 2 – THE SCHOOL YARD

Nick, Tom and Francis stand waiting. Student teacher Peter enters with a class list and a stack of scripts. Robin sits to the side, a pile of costumes in her arms.

PETER. Ok, is everybody here?

NICK. Just read the cast list. Who am I playing?

PETER. Patience please, Nick, is it?

NICK. Nicholas, thank you.

PETER. Ok, Nicholas. Ms H has given me strict instructions to carefully supervise your rehearsal as apparently you all can get a bit unruly. Why she cast you all together is beyond me...

TOM. Because we are frickin' awesome, that's why!

FRANCIS. Yeah we are!

(They high-5, whoop, chest bump etc)

PETER. Ok... So, you guys are going to be playing the Mechanicals, right?

TOM. *(Disappointed)* Mechanicals? But I dropped tech to do Drama.

FRANCIS. Yeah! I wanted to act, not work back-stage again.

ROBIN. You guys are idiots. Your characters are just known as Mechanicals, because they have jobs. You know, like manual labour jobs... carpenters, weavers, tinkers, tailors...

TOM. Candlestick makers?

ROBIN. No.

TOM. Oh.

PETER. You do know this play is on tonight?

TOM. Got it in the bag!

FRANCIS. We've got the whole day you know.

PETER. Luckily, we are only concentrating on two scenes, Act 3 Scene 1- The 'Rehearsal in the forest' and Act 5, Scene 1- The 'Play within the play'.

TOM. The play within the what?

PETER. The play within the play. The characters are Snug, Snout, Flute, Starveling, Quince—

FRANCIS. Quince? Like the jam?

ROBIN. No.

TOM. It's a paste, man. Goes really well with a nice blue brie.

ROBIN. No.

PETER. --and Bottom.

TOM. Bottom!?! (*smirks*) What sort of weird-ass play is this?! (*looks around for approval*)
Get it? Get it?

(Francis eventually gets it and they guffaw together)

FRANCIS. Weird-ass! (*Bahaha*)

ROBIN. That's a character's name... That's what Shakespeare called him.

TOM. That's screwed up man.

ROBIN. I think it's supposed to be ironic. Bottom is an actor whose head is transformed by magic into that of a donkey's. It's a great role.

TOM. I repeat... What sort of a weird-ass play is this?

ROBIN. Exactly... Ironic.

FRANCIS. I'm confused.

ROBIN. Puck does it.

FRANCIS. Excuse me!?

ROBIN. Puck! I said Puck!

PETER. Can I continue?

NICK. Please do. What's my role?

PETER. Nicholas, Ms H has you down for Bottom.

(The boys laugh. Nick waves them away, he is taking it seriously)

PETER. ...Who also plays Pyramus in the play-within-the-play. The Mechanicals are rehearsing a piece called...*(looks it up)* “The Most Lamentable Comedy and Cruel Death of Pyramus and Thisbe.”

FRANCIS. Long title.

TOM. What?! I thought we were doing that “Dream” play!

ROBIN. We are. Pyramus and Thisbe is the “play within the play”.

TOM. The play within the...? *(gives up, confused)*

NICK. So, who is this Pyramus?

PETER. *(He reads)* Pyramus is a “lover that kills himself most gallantly for love”

NICK. Awesome! I’ll nail it. I’ve been creating re-enactments of the death scenes from Tarantino movies on my YouTube channel. I get so many hits on my posts.

(Nick dramatically acts out the Samuel L Jackson death monologue from ‘Pulp Fiction’)

NICK “And I will strike down upon thee with great vengeance and furious anger those who attempt to poison and destroy my brothers. And you will know I am the Lord when I lay my vengeance upon you.”

(Stops suddenly. He bows, blows kisses to the wild applause of Francis and Tom)

FRANCIS. So, what’s my role?

PETER. *(Looks at list)* What’s your name? Um, Francis?

(The other boys laugh and ridicule Francis)

TOM. Pft! Francis... Yoohoo Francis.

FRANCIS. It’s Frank... Everybody calls me Frank.

TOM. Yeah, sure they do.

PETER. Ok... Frank... You’ll be playing Thisbe.

FRANCIS. Who is Thisbe? Some sort of henchman?

PETER. No, she’s Pyramus’ girlfriend.

FRANCIS. No way! I'm not playing a chick!

ROBIN. We'll put a wig on you, no one will recognize you.

NICK. I'll do it! It shows that you are comfortable with your sexuality, if you don't mind being in touch with your feminine side.

FRANCIS. This is garbage. There are plenty of girls who can play the female roles. Like her. What's her role?

ROBIN. It's Robin, and I'm doing costumes. I don't act!

PETER. But she's got you down as Thisbe's mother.

ROBIN. (*Stern*) Not acting!

PETER. (*A bit scared*) Ok... Moving on... Tom?

TOM. Yo!

PETER. You are down as the Wall.

TOM. A wall?! Woohoo! No lines! (*High 5s the others*)

PETER. There are lines.

TOM. What the!?

PETER. And you are also playing the Lion.

TOM. Lion? Like as in a 'roar' (*roars*) lion? Or is this like a metaphysical, psychological drama and I am actually like a 'line'. Like 'in' a supermarket or a bank... with people... and cues and like you know... a line.

PETER. (*Spells it out*) No. Just a lion. But that character has no lines, or lines... (*frustrated as it's just not getting through*) Gahh! It's just roaring.

TOM. Nice! (*He roars with relish*)

PETER. And yep! I hope it's not going to be a huge disaster.

NICK. (*Roars loudly, impressively*) You know I could nail that Lion role as well.

(He roars again. Then Tom and Francis start roaring, trying to see who can roar the best. They have a roar-off, getting down on the ground, acting like lions, rolling around, being idiots – When Peter yells, they scramble up)

PETER. Wow... *(loud)* Ok! We need to find a spot to rehearse. Ms H suggested I take you down to the forest, as the play is mostly set in an enchanted forest... You know this? Don't you? *(sigh)* Anyway, Ms H said this will apparently help get you in the "zone of your characterisation, in an authentic setting" and it'll be cooler in the shade.

FRANCIS. The forest? But that place is creepy.

TOM. Yeah, really creepy, no one ever goes down there.

ROBIN. That's because it's haunted.

FRANCIS. Don't!

ROBIN. It is. Kids have gone in there and never come out again.

TOM. Yeah, as if.

ROBIN. It's true. Don't you remember that guy, from a few years back... Someone dared him to go in, and no one ever saw him again.

TOM. Nuh! Uh! That guy moved to a farm.

FRANCIS. *(Gasps)* That's what they said about my cat, when they had him put down! No way! I'm not going.

TOM. Tink was really old man, it was her time.

PETER. Oh, don't be ridiculous Francis, we need you for the play.

NICK. You know I did say I could play his role as well. I'll just highlight my new lines.

ROBIN. *(Fed up)* Oh great! This is going to tank!

(Peter and Tom turn to Francis)

TOM. Come on man, we need you!

PETER: You cannot pull out now! It's not really haunted, *(forceful)* is it Robin.?

ROBIN. Yeah... Nah, I was just teasing. It's a perfectly normal forest, with no ghosts or fairies or goblins or anything.

FRANCIS. You sure?

ROBIN. Pft! Yeah. That's just kid's stuff... Fairy stories. We're too old for fairy stories, right?

FRANCIS. (*Bravado*) Yeah! Right, of course. I'm all good.

PETER. Good? Great! Ok. Let's do this. I suggest that we re-convene down there in an hour, use this time to read the Pyramus and Thisbe scene. (*under breath*) Which you should have actually done already. (*As she exits*) I'm going to get a coffee. A strong coffee!

(*Peter exits*)

NICK. (*Calls after her*) I'll have a Chai Latte, thanks Miss! (*To others*) Nice! This is going to be a beautiful thing, lads!

FRANCIS. If you say so... 'Bottom' (*laughs, slapping him on the butt*)

TOM. Awh, leave him alone... Don't be a 'pain in the ass'.

FRANCIS. Guys, guys. Let me 'but' in for a minute...

TOM. Hey! Don't be 'cheeky' (*squeeze*)

FRANCIS. Oh, poor guy, don't make him the 'ass-end' of your jokes.

TOM. 'Bummer' dude!

ROBIN. We've officially hit rock 'bottom', but I guess It's all 'behind' us now. Oh! Oh! See what I did there?

(*Silence. Nobody laughs*)

TOM. (*Eventually*) Don't make an ass of yourself.

(*Tom and Francis exit laughing hysterically*)

NICK. (*to Robin, offended*) Too far!

(*Nick exits; Robin is left bewildered*)

SCENE THREE – THE ENCHANTED FOREST

(Light's rise upon a magical forest, fairy lights twinkle in the trees)

(Enter Titania with Puck and the other Fairies)

(SFX – Magical twinkling)

TITANIA. Come, now a roundel and a fairy song;
Sing me now asleep;
Then to your offices and let me rest.

(The Fairies sing/recite to Titania as they put her to bed)

FAIRIES. *(sing)* You spotted snakes with double tongue,
Thorny hedgehogs be not seen
Newts and blindworms, do no wrong
Come not near our Fairy Queen.
Philomel 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

PUCK. Hence, away! now all is well:
One aloof stand sentinel.

(Fairies take places around. Titania sleeps. Puck stands guard)

(Suddenly voices are heard off stage)

PUCK. But who comes here? I am invisible,
And I will overhear their conference.

(Puck and the Fairies step into the darkness as the Mechanicals crash through the forest armed with piles of costumes, swords, scripts etc. They start unloading, Nick enters late)

NICK. *(Announces)* I have arrived!

PETER. Finally.

FRANCIS. You're a bit behind. Ha!

(Francis looks for others for approval, but the joke falls flat)

NICK. Are we all here?

ROBIN. We are now.

PETER. Ok, I think this spot is fine for our rehearsal. Imagine. This grass is our stage. Those trees backstage and we will rehearse like the audience is sitting there.

NICK. Peter?

PETER. Yes, Nick.

NICK. This play is crap. I'm not doing it. This Pieraymouse and Thisbe... I mean who wrote this drivel? It's ridiculous!

PETER. William Shakespeare wrote it.

TOM. Who?

NICK. What!? He did not! Are you telling me that William Shakespeare wrote, and I quote... *(finds section in script)* "I kiss the walls hole, not your lips at all?"

(Tom and Francis look at each other in shock)

TOM. I don't know if I'm comfortable being the Wall anymore.

PETER. You are taking it out of context!

FRANCIS. And I have to play a girl!

NICK. And my character in the "play-within-the-play" ... What's his name Pieraymouse?

PETER. Pyramus.

NICK. Pieraymouse. After he kisses a wall's hole, he mistakenly believes his lover is torn apart by a lion...

TOM. That's me! *(he roars)*

NICK. So, he stabs himself, over and over and over again. Dies. Becomes an angel. Then stabs himself over and over again... and dies, again. Then they all dance. Dead or not! And you're telling me the greatest playwright who ever lived wrote that?!

FRANCIS. And I have to play a girl!

ROBIN. Definitely not acting!

TOM. As long as I just have to be a non-hole-kissing, wall-lion. (*roars*)

PETER. (*Loses it*) We are doing Pyramus and Thisbe!! It is one of the best scenes in the whole play! (*screams*) It's frickin hilarious!

(Everyone is silent for a moment)

TOM. Chill man, we'll do it.

(They all get into position. A little bit sacred of Peter now)

(Puck and the fairies start entering, curious to watch the humans. They remain invisible to the Mechanicals)

PUCK. What hempen homespuns have we swaggering here,
So near the cradle of the fairy queen. What, a play toward?
I'll be an auditor. An actor too, perhaps, if I see cause.

PETER. Ok! Let's start. Pyramus enter. Thisbe stand by.

NICK/Pyramus. O, Thisbe, the flowers of odious savors sweet...

PETER. Odours, odours.

NICK/Pyramus. Odours savors sweet: So hath thy breath, my dearest Thisbe dear...

(Nick stops, looks at Peter)

NICK. Really?!

PETER. (*Hisses*) Shakespeare!

(Nick rolls his eyes and continues mockingly)

NICK/Pyramus. But hark, a voice! Stay thou but here awhile,
And by and by I will to thee appear.

(Exits dramatically)

PUCK. A stranger Pyramus than e'er played here.

(Puck and some of the fairies, follow Nick off. The rest stay to watch the rehearsal)

FRANCIS. Do I speak now?

PETER. Yes. Yes. It's your cue. Go! Go!

FRANCIS/Thisby. *(in a high pitch voice)* Most radiant Pyramus, most lily-white of hue.

(The others laugh, trying not to be irritated, Francis continues)

FRANCIS/Thisby. --Of colour like the red rose on triumphant brier,
Most brisky juvenal and eke most lovely Jew,
As true as truest horse that yet would never tire,
I'll meet thee, Pyramus, at Ninny's tomb.

PETER. "Ninus" tomb! You don't say that yet. That is your answer to Pyramus. Pyramus enter: You've had your cue; it is, "never tire" *(upset)* Never tire! *(breaking down, really upset)* I don't even care anymore. Say anything! Anything!

FRANCIS/Thisby. *(a little afraid, repeats)* O, as true as truest horse, that yet would 'never tire'.

(Re-enter The Fairies, Puck with Bottom who has an ass's head fixed on his own. He is oblivious. All the boys fall about laughing. The fairies giggle. Peter is not impressed)

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

TOM. What's that thing on your head, dude?

FRANCIS. Whoah! Is that like some freaky latex or something?

PETER. *(tantrum)* Why won't anyone take anything seriously?

FRANCIS. Nah, like it's really impressive.

ROBIN. Wait... That is fantastic! Where did you get it? It's much better than the one I brought. Much more realistic.

(They all wander over to him and start poking and pulling at his face, Nick tries to dodge their prying fingers. Puck finds it all hilarious)

NICK. What are you talking about?

ROBIN. I've never seen anything like it.

TOM. I can't work out where you end, and it begins.

(Tom pinches Nick's neck)

NICK. Ouch! What the heck are you doing?

ROBIN. It's incredible!

FRANCIS. Your face, man. That weird mask you've got on.

NICK. What mask?

PETER. Come on! This is wasting time.

FRANCIS. Take it off Nick. It's creepy.

ROBIN. Is it joined at the back?

NICK. Get off!

(He swipes them away)

PETER. Nick! Take the mask off, you're scaring everybody.

TOM. You're freaking us out man!

NICK. You guys are frickin hilarious! Trying to prank me, making me look like an ass.

FRANCIS. Don't even go there.

ROBIN. Just take the mask off, Nick. Jokes over!

(Robin approaches Nick and tries to pull the head off but can't)

ROBIN. *(screams, backs away)* Monster! He's a monster! It's real! It's his head! It's real!
It's real!

(Everyone screams and runs around in a blind panic. Puck entwines the action. Nick stands still in hurt dumbfoundedness)

TOM. Get away from me!

FRANCIS. I told you it was haunted.

PETER. Help me!

ROBIN. Monster!

(There is chaos, people running everywhere, only to be met by Puck becoming all of the horrific things he lists. The unseen fairies, move the trees and twirl the mechanicals around, stopping them from fleeing)

PUCK. I'll follow you, I'll lead you about a round,
Through bog, through bush, through brake, through brier:
Sometime a horse I'll be, sometime a hound,
A hog, a headless bear, sometime a fire;
And neigh, and bark, and grunt, and roar, and burn,
Like horse, hound, hog, bear, fire, at every turn.

(The mechanicals escape, leaving Nick alone, angry and confused. The Fairies think it's hilarious)

(A beat)

NICK. Those jerks!

(Re-enter Tom backwards bumping right into Nick. Tom panics falls over, scrambles backwards)

TOM. What the heck man? What is going on with your head?

NICK. Don't be an ass dude!

TOM. Ass?

(Tom scrambles up. Exits, running, screaming)

NICK. Can you believe that?! *(he looks around)* I bet there's camera's in the trees. *(mocks)* "Ms H said we should rehearse in the forest to help us get into the "zone of our characterisation" Well screw them, man. *(pulls out his phone)* No coverage. Not a single line.

(Nick sits frustrated and plays with his phone. Puts on a lame SONG. Sings/dances along. It has to be bad, but really felt. (pst. good opportunity here)

SCENE FOUR – THE FAIRY BOWER

(The noise awakens Titania in her fairy bower)

TITANIA. What angel wakes me from my flowery bed?

NICK. What the? Who's there? Whoah!

(He sees her. Titania emerges from her bed. She is luminescent)

TITANIA. I pray thee, gentle mortal, sing again:
Mine ear is much enamour'd of thy note;
So is mine eye enthralled to thy shape;
And thy fair virtue's force perforce doth move me
On the first view to say, to swear, I love thee.

NICK. Wow... That costume is incredible!! You are... You are... wow! *(he shakes himself)*
I'm Nick... Nick Bottom... I mean I'm playing Bottom in "The Dream". We've just been rehearsing here. You know, ahem... To help "get in the zone of our characterisation in an authentic setting". Ahem. I guess you're doing the same?

TITANIA. Thou art as wise as thou art beautiful.

NICK. Thanks... I do try to lift you know. *(shows muscles)* Anyhoo, I guess I'd better bolt. The rest of my group are really unprofessional. They were messing around and have taken off. They think they're so funny. Hilarious! I'd better go find them so I can kick every single one of their asses.

(Titania stops him with magic. He is like a puppet under her control)

TITANIA. Out of this wood do not desire to go:
Thou shalt remain here, whether thou wilt or no.
I am a spirit of no common rate; *(spins him)*
The summer still doth tend upon my state;
And I do love thee: therefore, go with me; *(draws him in)*
I'll give thee fairies to attend on thee,
And they shall fetch thee jewels from the deep,
And sing while thou on pressed flowers dost sleep;
And I will purge thy mortal grossness so
That thou shalt like an airy spirit go.
Peaseblossom! Cobweb! Moth! and Mustardseed!

(The Fairies line up. Their movements are beautifully synchronised)

NICK. Whoah!

PEASEBLOSSOM. Ready.

COBWEB. And I.

MOTH. And I.

MUSTARDSEED. And I.

FAIRIES. Where shall we go?

NICK. Seriously! You guys are amazing! Like really, really in the zone. You've obviously been rehearsing really well.

TITANIA. Be kind and courteous to this gentleman;

MOTH. We will hop in his walks and gambol in his eyes.

MUSTARDSEED. Feed him with apricots and dewberries,
With purple grapes, green figs, and mulberries.

COBWEB. The honey-bags steal from the humble-bees,
And for night-tapers crop their waxen thighs.
And light them at the fiery glow-worm's eyes.

PEASEBLOSSOM.

To have your love to bed and to arise;
And pluck the wings from painted butterflies.
To fan the moonbeams from his sleeping eyes.

TITANIA. Nod to him, elves, and do him courtesies.

PEASEBLOSSOM. Hail, mortal!

COBWEB. Hail!

MOTH. Hail!

MUSTARDSEED. Hail!

NICK. (*Stands up clapping*) That was really, really good. Like almost professional standard. Would you call that "Method Acting" or "Meisner Technique"?

TITANIA. Come, wait upon him; lead him to my bower.
The moon methinks looks with a watery eye;
And when she weeps, weeps every little flower,
Lamenting some enforced chastity.
Tie up my love's tongue bring him silently.

(The Fairies pick up Bottom and carry him to Titania)

NICK. Whoah! Definitely Method Acting!

(The Fairies dump him down next to Titania)

TITANIA. Come, sit thee down upon this flowery bed,
While I thy amiable cheeks do coy,
And stick musk-roses in thy sleek smooth head,
And kiss thy fair large ears, my gentle joy.

NICK. Large ears? Do you think? Oh ok, we're rehearsing, are we? I haven't properly memorised this scene yet and I don't have my script anymore. I lost it in the... the... whatever that chaos was back there. I have read it, of course, so I guess I'll just have to improvise. *(he jumps up, ready to impress Titania)* An excellent dramatic devise actually.

(The Fairies sigh)

NICK. *(Continues)* It allows the actor to truly search for their motivation. After all, when words are not at our disposal, our character needs to find an objective.

(Moth hands him his script)

NICK. Ahh, yes. Thank you.

(Nick searches for the page; Moth ends up helping him. Nick nervous with performance anxiety is overcompensating)

NICK. Now... How does this scene start for our Nick Bottom? Act... *(mumble)* Scene... *(indistinguishable)*

(Peaseblossom steps forward)

NICK/Bottom. Ahh yes. *(reads)* "He summons the fairies to be at his beck and call." Um... ahh. "Where's... Where's Pease..."

PEASEBLOSSOM. Peaseblossom.

NICK/Bottom. Ahh yes...*(theatrically)* “Where's Peaseblossom?”

PEASEBLOSSOM. Ready.

NICK/Bottom. *(Over the top)* “Scratch my head Peaseblossom. Where's Mounsieur Spiderweb?”

COBWEB. Cobweb.

NICK/Bottom. *(Dramatically)* “Cobweb”

COBWEB. Ready.

NICK/Bottom. “Mounsieur Cobweb, good mounsieur, get you your weapons in your hand, and kill me a red-hipped humble-bee on the top of a thistle” Wow, specific! “And, good mounsieur, bring me the honey-bag. Where’s Mounsieur Mustardseed?”

MUSTARDSEED. Ready.

NICK/Bottom. *(Pause. To Fairies)* What’s a neaf? He says, “give me your neaf?” *(sigh)* Anyway... “Mounsieur Mustardseed. Pray you, leave your courtesy, good mounsieur”.

MUSTARDSEED. What's your Will?

NICK/Bottom. *(In character)* “Nothing, good mounsieur, but to help Cavalery Cobweb to scratch. I must to the barber's, monsieur; for methinks I am marvellous hairy about the face; and I am such a tender ass, if my hair do but tickle me, I must scratch.”

(Nick breaks character)

NICK. Ok. Look I know this is Shakespeare and you guys are obviously really into it. But don’t you find it slightly pretentious? I mean you’re telling me that Bottom, who is named “Bottom” for some unknown reason, has all these magical creatures at his disposal and all he wants them to do is scratch him!? Like what the heck?! I mean he could ask for anything. Jewels, riches, fame, a huge mansion, a PS5 Pro, awesome cars, a jet!

TITANIA. What, wilt thou hear some music, my sweet love?

(Nick leans into Titania affectionately)

NICK/Bottom. Sweet love. Awh. *(reads)* “I have a reasonable good ear in music. Let's have the tongs and the bones.” Again?! What the heck are “the tongs and the bones!?”

TITANIA. Or say, sweet love, what thou desirest to eat?

NICK/Bottom. (*Reads*) “Truly, a peck of provender: I could munch your good dry oats. Methinks I have a great desire to a bottle of hay: good hay, sweet hay, hath no fellow”. (*informs the others*) That’s cause he’s a donkey that he wants all that hay and oats and stuff. (*contemplates*) That’s what I really don’t get. How can Bottom be sitting there with a donkey’s head on this whole time and not even notice it? I mean like can’t he feel his face?

Nick feels his face and remains oblivious to the fact that he also has a donkey’s head.

NICK. (*Continues*) I mean is he that stupid?

TITANIA. I have a venturous fairy that shall seek
The squirrel's hoard and fetch thee new nuts.

NICK/Bottom. Innuendo! Obviously, a reference to his... (*whispers*) you know what? Shakespeare’s plays are full of double entendre’s ... apparently (*he reads*) “I had rather have a handful or two of dried peas”. (*rolls his eyes*) Peas!?! “But, I pray you, let none of your people stir me: I have an exposition of sleep come upon me”. (*exasperated*) And this! This random falling asleep in the middle of the forest. I mean everybody does it! What is that?

TITANIA. Sleep thou, and I will wind thee in my arms.

NICK. Now, this bit, I don’t mind so much.

(He cuddles into her embrace)

TITANIA. Fairies, begone, and be all ways away.

(Exit Fairies, giggling)

TITANIA. O, how I love thee! how I dote on thee!

(Titania and Nick sleep. We hear the gentle braying of a donkeys’ snore)

SCENE FIVE - BACK IN THE SCHOOLYARD

(The Mechanicals actors are sitting around, still reeling from what they saw, Robin sits to the side, reading the script)

PETER. (*Rushes in*) Have you heard from Nick yet?

TOM. (*Very stressed*) Nah, dude, I don’t think freaky human donkey-boys know how to use a frickin cell phone!

PETER. Calm down, Tom.

TOM. Yeah, nah, I'm freaking out!

FRANCIS. Everybody, stop yelling!

TOM. (*Starts crying*) It's just so messed up! He was a good dude, you know.

FRANCIS. I know.

TOM. I mean he was a weirdo, with all his 'serious actor' bull, but he was alright.

PETER. He's not dead, Tom.

TOM. (*Slightly hysterical*) Nah he's just a human freak show!

FRANCIS. We can't just leave him there in a haunted forest.... Can we?

TOM. Pft! Yes! I'm not going back in.

PETER. You have to. We all have to...

ROBIN. Hey guys! Look at this! I was just reading the play again, and what happened back there...Whatever that was, also happened to the characters in 'The Dream.'

PETER. Shakespeare's Dream?

ROBIN. Yup! The dogs, the fire.

FRANCIS. The headless bear?

ROBIN. Yes! Even the headless bear. So, I don't think that the forest is haunted at all. I think it's enchanted.

TOM. Enchanted? Like as in magic.

ROBIN. Yes, magic, and fairies and spells.... William Shakespeare believed in magic and they say that he copied the spells in Macbeth from real ones he heard around the villages of the time. Real witches' spells. People today still say that Macbeth is cursed... Well, what if?

TOM. What if, what?!

ROBIN. Well, in A Midsummer Night's Dream he uses fairies' spells, not witches'... What if using Shakespeare's magical words in an enchanted forest has stirred up the fairies that live there; and those horrible things we saw, was them just trying to scare us away, so they could keep Nick forever!

FRANCIS. No! they can't keep him forever! He's ours!

ROBIN. Yeah!

TOM. Well, we need to go save him then don't we! I'm not afraid of fairies!

FRANCIS. Heck no! We're too old for fairy stories!

(Everyone is razzed up)

PETER. Well, what are we waiting for, let's go find our Bottom!

(They all stop and look at Peter, quizzically)

PETER. You know what I mean, let's go!

(They exit)

SCENE SIX – BACK IN THE ENCHANTED FOREST

(Titania is asleep, Nick in her arms. Off stage the Mechanicals enter. Calling out)

PETER. (O.S) Nick! Where are you? Nick!

TOM. (O.S) Yo! Nicholas!

ROBIN. (O.S) Nick, we're here. Call out if you can hear us.

FRANCIS. (O.S) We've come back for you Nick. We're not scared of fairies!

(The Fairies and Puck run to wake Titania)

PEASEBLOSSOM. Fairy Queen, can you hear?
In the forest. They are near.

PUCK. We must return him to their arms,
Prove to the mortals, we mean no harm.

(She refuses to budge)

TITANIA. Not for thy fairy kingdom. Fairies, away!
I shall chide downright, if you longer stay.

PUCK. Madam, see now, he must be with his kind.
You've had your fun, Now leave him well behind.

TITANIA. But I don't want to let him go, I mean no harm.
(pouts) My last mortal returned to his cat, and a farm.
I like this one, and his furry head. Can't we keep him here instead?

PUCK. O' Fairy Queen, you know what's right,
You'll find another mortal, on another night.
There's plenty more, from when'st he came.
The stars will align, you'll play, another game.

TITANIA. *(sighs)* You are right my Puck; I shall let him be.
(she looks fondly down at Nick) Farewell my love, remember me.

(She kisses his head; he snorts and resettles into his slumber, the Fairies giggle)

PUCK. Silence awhile. Fairies, take off this head.

(Puck and the Fairies, pull off the donkey's head, he stays asleep)

TITANIA. Sound, music! Come, my Puck, take hands with me,
And rock the ground whereon this sleeper be.

(Music starts, Puck and Titania exit with Fairies following)

(Nick stirs)

NICK. When my cue comes, call me, and I will answer: my next is, 'Most fair Pyramus.
(yawns) Hey! *(calls)* Peter, Francis? Tom? Are you guys there? What's your name? Emo-chick? Hello? Come on guys... Stop pranking me... Was there something in my Chai Latte? I had the most weird-ass dream! There has been some freaky stuff going on! I thought I was... I mean I thought I had... *(he feels his head, relieved)* Oh thank God! *(he gasps)* I know I will get Miss Peter to write a play about this dream. It shall be called "Bottom's Dream" because it has no bottom.

(Bottom laughs at his own joke, it turns into a Donkey's bray, he is shocked for a moment until, off-stage we hear the Mechanicals calling out to him)

MECHANICALS: Nick! Where are you/Nick come out/Come on Nick, stop kidding around.

NICK. Oh, here I am! I am here!

(They all rush him, relieved, elated)

NICK. Ha! Never let it be said that you made an ass out of me!

****End Preview**** Please contact Kristen at kristencmdoherty@gmail.com to request a full script perusal. Royalties: Bottom's Dream is licenced at \$60 USD per performance with unlimited copying of the script and no limitations in streaming and sharing footage with your community.