

Hermia is very upset, and **Lysander** pats her on the back to comfort her. The two young lovers don't know what to do, until Lysander has an idea. He asks Hermia to run away with him to his aunt, who he knows will look after them and then they can be married. He takes Hermia by the hand and they run away together into the woods (which is the quickest way to get to Lysander's aunt without being seen). The Athenian woods are full of **trees** that are twisted and spiky. Lysander and Hermia run through the trees until, exhausted, they find a place to hide and fall asleep.

Meanwhile, back in Athens, **Helena** tells **Demetrius** that Hermia has run away with Lysander. She does this in the hope that it will make him like her again. But he pushes her away and says, *'Do I not in plainest truth tell you I do not nor I cannot love you?'* and he runs off into the woods to look for Hermia. Helena follows him, and they run in and out of the trees, but Helena cannot catch Demetrius. Eventually, both exhausted and lost, they stop, drop to their knees and fall fast asleep.

Watching all of this is the Fairy King **Oberon**, who feels sorry for Helena. So he asks **Puck**, his servant, to sort it out with the help of a magic flower. He tells Puck where to find the flower: *'I know a bank where the wild thyme blows, Where oxlips and the nodding violet grows'*. Oberon tells Puck to put the magic juice from the flower onto **Demetrius's** eyes, so that he will fall in love with Helena, and everyone will be happy.

By now, night has fallen, and it is very spooky in the woods. Puck makes himself invisible, and he weaves his way through the trees. He finds **Lysander**, sleeping on the forest floor, with **Hermia** sleeping just a little way off. Puck mistakenly thinks she is Helena and so very carefully he squeezes the flower's juice onto Lysander's eyes. BUT oh no! in the darkness, he's got the wrong person. He should have squeezed the juice onto Demetrius's eyes!

In a nearby part of the woods, **Helena** is still looking for Demetrius. She stumbles close by where Lysander and Hermia are sleeping, sees Lysander and shakes him awake. Because of the magic flower's juice, he falls instantly in love with her and proclaims, *'And run through fire I will for thy sweet sake. Transparent Helena!'* He goes down on one knee and asks Helena to marry him. Helena is really confused, and she runs away. Lysander chases after her, leaving Hermia asleep on the ground and all alone.

Oberon realises that Puck has put the magic juice onto the wrong Athenian's eyes. He searches the woods for **Demetrius** and finds him asleep on the ground. Then Oberon squeezes some of the magic flower's juice onto Demetrius's eyelids to make him fall in love with Helena. Just in time, because in runs **Helena**, chased by **Lysander**. Helena trips over Demetrius, who wakes up and falls instantly in love with her as well. He says, *'O Helena, goddess, nymph, perfect, divine!'* Both Lysander and Demetrius kneel down in front of Helena and, holding her hand, ask her to marry them. Now Helena really doesn't know what is happening. She thinks they must be deliberately trying to confuse her, and she doesn't believe that either of them really loves her. She tries to pull her hands away so she can escape, but they hold on tight, and she is trapped. She says: *'O spite! O hell! I see you all are bent to set against me for your merriment'*

Meanwhile, on the other side of the forest, **Hermia** wakes up, realises she is all alone, and is very frightened. She jumps up and runs through the trees until eventually she finds the other three. She goes to **Lysander**, but he pushes her away and says, *'Not Hermia, but Helena I love'*. Hermia is really angry. She clenches her fists, screams, and, marching up to Helena points her finger at her and shouts, *'You juggler, you canker-blossom, You thief of love!'* Helena is really confused! She replies *'Good Hermia, do not be so bitter with me. I evermore did love you Hermia,'*.