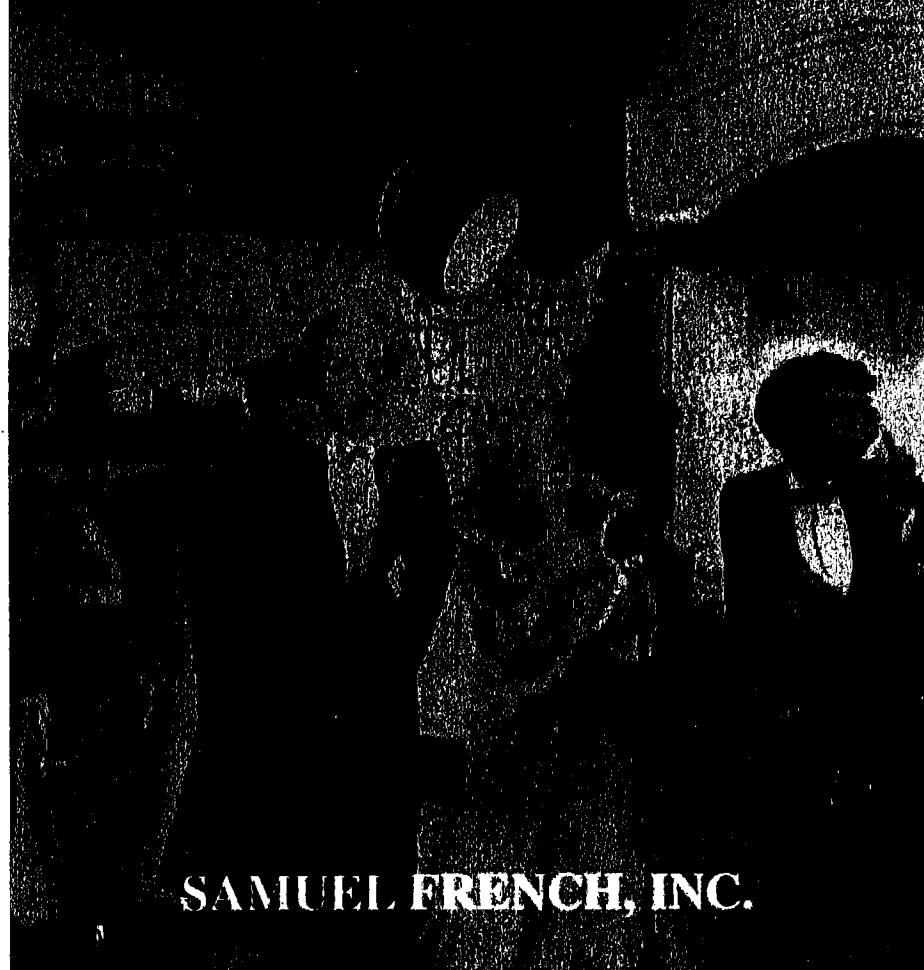


Shakespeare in Hollywood

BY KEN LUDWIG



SAMUEL FRENCH, INC.

SHAKESPEARE IN HOLLYWOOD premiered on September 5, 2004 at Arena Stage in Washington, D.C., Molly Smith, Artistic Director, Stephen Richard, Executive Director, Guy Bergquist, Producer. It was directed by Kyle Donnelly. The set was designed by Thomas Lynch, the costumes were by Jess Goldstein, the lighting by Nancy Schertler, and the sound by Susan R. White. The Company Manager was Jill A. Mauritz, the Casting Director was Eli Dawson, and the Choreographer was Karma Camp. The Stage Manager was Brady Ellen Poole, the Assistant Stage Manager was Amy K. Bennett, the Fight Choreographer was Brad Waller, the Dramaturg was Michael Kinghorn, the Speech and Vocal Consultant was Lynn Watson, and the Technical Director was Jim Glendinning. The production was graciously sponsored by Esthy and Jim Adler.

The cast, in order of appearance was as follows:

LOUELLA PARSONS.....	Ellen Karas
MAX REINHART.....	Robert Prosky
DICK POWELL.....	David Fendig
JACK WARNER.....	Rick Foucheux
DARYL.....	Michael Skinner
LYDIA LANSING.....	Alice Ripley
OBERON.....	Casey Biggs
PUCK.....	Emily Donahoe
OLIVIA DARNELL.....	Maggie Lacey
WILL HAYES.....	Everett Quinton
JOE E. BROWN.....	Hugh Nees
JIMMY CAGNEY.....	Adam Richman
ENSEMBLE.....	Bethany Caputo
	Scott Graham
	Eric Jorgensen
	Robert McClure

CAST OF CHARACTERS

OBERON
PUCK
JACK WARNER
MAX REINHARDT
WILL HAYS
DARYL
OLIVIA DARNELL
LYDIA LANSING
LOUELLA PARSONS
DICK POWELL
JIMMY CAGNEY
JOE E. BROWN

The play is written for 12 actors, 4 women and 8 men. The actors playing Hays, Brown, Cagney, Powell and Daryl double as Albert, Harry, Sam, Groucho, Tarzan and the Cowboy. If extra actors are available, they can play movie stars at the opening of the play, cameramen, seamstresses, etc.

SHAKESPEARE IN HOLLYWOOD

by Simon Reade

for The Arena Stage Production Journal

The name rang a bell. "He's called Ken Ludwig, Simon," said Adrian Noble, then Artistic Director of the Royal Shakespeare Company. "He's in Stratford. Big supporter of the RSC in the States. He's got some ideas he wants to run past us." Ken Ludwig? Surely not Lend-Me-A-Tenor-Crazy-For-You Ken Ludwig? What on earth would that master of American screwball comedy want with a classical, Shakespeare ensemble? As Literary Manager at the RSC at the time I was a champion of poetic theatre, pursuing commissions that tended towards political epics. The imp in me surmised that the RSC could well do with upsetting its own apple-cart; but it is a state subsidised theatre. This Ken Ludwig is the darling of commercial theatre.

Curious, I met the guy.

Well, never judge a writer entirely by his output. Just as Dostoevsky probably wasn't all doom and gloom, wisecracking Ken Ludwig's got his serious points too. Sure, he's fun, full-of-beans. But he's also exceptionally well-read, bright as a button, with an enthusiasm for comedy and music theatre across the centuries. He's an expert who kept — who keeps putting me to shame in my lack of appreciation of the popular stage, of the movies. And I don't just mean the cheesy matinees we'd snigger and sneer at today. He can extemporise on the clown in European Renaissance drama, on the wit of the 18th century playwrights, on the inter-War stars of the Silver Screen... On our first meeting, in the sunshine of Stratford-upon-Avon, he charmed me, he delighted me. And,

canny fellow he is, he'd pitch several ideas at me before I'd even realised he's started.

Some had been long in gestation: a rewrite of a Regency Tony Lumpkin sequel to *She Stoops to Conquer*. We read the original and realised why it necessitated a rewrite. It was trash. We decided not to go there. Some ideas had been dreamt up on the hoof: inspired by walking backstage, along the narrow passage where the huge 1930s Royal Shakespeare Theatre collides with the Elizabethan-style Swan Theatre, Ken had seen the actors from contrasting shows co-mingle, mid-performance. What if, in this collision, the modern dress performers get confused with the doublet-and-hosed, take a wrong turning and end up on the wrong stage in the wrong play, mused Ken. We laughed and laughed as he improvised and then had the good grace to admit Michael Frayn had written *Noises Off*, Alan Ayckbourn *House and Garden*. Ken's is still an even wilder idea, but we didn't pursue this either.

We also talked about the whole Shakespeare industry and how the recent movies — from Ken Branagh, via Baz Luhrman, to *Shakespeare in Love* — had introduced the plays and the man to a whole new generation who'd rejected the works in the classroom or in the lyric theatre. *Shakespeare in Love* in particular inspired us. Marc Norman and Tom Stoppard's marvellous screenplay had illustrated how the Elizabethan Theatre of ruthless producers and jobbing script writers, wasn't a million miles away from the Hollywood studio system.

It was then that Ken mentioned something in passing and we both had that 'ping', light-bulb moment. A film I should have known about, but didn't — Max Reinhardt's 1936 movie of *A Midsummer*

Night's Dream — was even more amazing in its making than the finished product itself. It was a story which got right to the heart of the commercialisation of art, the opportunism of Hollywood, the use and abuse of the most venerated writer of all time, Shakespeare. It charted the creative quirks of a meister of mittel Europäische Kinema, Max Reinhardt. And it had a cast of starlets: Mickey Rooney, Jimmy Cagney. And the more he talked, the more animated he became. Ken explained to me about Will Hays, the daffy self-appointed censor, whose application of the Hays Code to the sexiness and magical realism of Shakespeare's dream play was an outrage — very funny, but an outrage nonetheless. And there it was, the embryo of a play which embraced the Shakespeare industry, Hollywood exploitation, US cultural imperialism, the clash of ideologies (liberal and philistine, European and American), of dreams versus nightmares with fascism in Germany a distant but significant rumble. I saw a serious play in the making. I guess Ken had the genius to see that its seriousness could be conveyed through an accumulation of farcical mayhem.

Key to that, and what I learnt from Ken as we developed it first with the RSC (who didn't produce it, internal political changes getting in the way) and most recently in a try-out reading at Bristol Old Vic where I am now Artistic Director, is this brilliant genre which I believe is peculiar to the American psyche: high-jinx, screwball comedy. British people would never be that zany. We're too knowingly cynical. Funny, yes. But don't we just know it. It is a genre specific to the American stage and screen of the mid 20th century. And Ken is the modern master of it, his passion for its vaudevillian high-octane antics fuelling his messianic zeal to recapture its essence for contemporary audiences.

Ken's passion for Shakespeare (his family, even his personal email address all seem to be named after one Shakespeare character or another) is also evident in his new play. *Shakespeare in Hollywood* is thus a deeply personal play as much as a popular play. And in the spirit with which I used to commission plays at the RSC it's also poetic and political and, let's not be afraid to say it, something of a mini-epic. Yet it's also got a screw loose, the playwright's having a ball. Screwball. Good comedy. Good drama. Good fun.

SIMON READE is Artistic Director of Bristol Old Vic where he has adapted Jill Tomlinson's *The Owl Who Was Afraid of the Dark*. He has worked extensively in film and television, for the BBC and *Tiger Aspect* in particular. He was Literary Manager and Dramaturg at the RSC 1997-2001 where his adaptations included Salman Rushdie's *Midnight's Children* and Ted Hughes' *Tales from Ovid*. He was Literary Manager at London's Gate Theatre in the early 1990s.

FOREWORD

In the 1930s, the talkies discovered Shakespeare in a big way. Four significant movies based on Shakespeare plays were made within a span of four years: "The Taming of the Shrew" starring Douglas Fairbanks and Mary Pickford; "As You Like It" starring Laurence Olivier and Elizabeth Bergner; "Romeo and Juliet" starring Leslie Howard and Norma Shearer; and, the subject of this play, "A Midsummer Night's Dream" directed by Max Reinhardt.

The film studios in the 1930s recognized quickly that movies based on Shakespeare plays were "box office poison." However, in doing research for this play, it soon became clear to me that the Shakespeare films of that time were often made because the mistresses or wives of the studio heads wanted to be in such "prestigious" movies to enhance their reputations. Elizabeth Bergner, who starred in "As You Like It" was married to Robert Czinner, the director of the film. Irving Thalberg, production chief of MGM put his wife Norma Shearer into "Romeo and Juliet" despite her age. And for Fairbanks and Pickford, who were married, "The Taming of the Shrew" was a family affair as well. (This is the movie that caused great hilarity in its opening minute by announcing that the play was "by William Shakespeare with additional dialogue by Sam Taylor.")

In writing *Shakespeare in Hollywood*, I've tried to stick to the historical record as much as possible. Thus, Max Reinhardt, the most famous stage director of his generation, did come to Hollywood from Austria as a refugee from the Nazis, and he directed his first (and only) motion picture, "A Midsummer Night's Dream" for Warner Brothers Pictures in 1934. Jack Warner did have three

brothers, Harry, Albert and Sam, who ran the studio with him. Their father did start out as a shoemaker. And Louella Parsons, the most famous gossip columnist of her day, was born Louella Oettinger in Dixon, Illinois.

Dick Powell, who played Lysander in the movie, was indeed a heartthrob of the 1930s, and he starred in a string of successful musicals, including "42nd Street." James Cagney, the biggest star of the movie, did play Bottom, though he was best known at the time for gangster pictures. The emerging child star, Mickey Rooney, ultimately played Puck in the movie; however, his filming was indeed delayed by the accident he had while skiing with his mother. Also, as Olivia mentions in the course of the play, for the 250 years prior to 1900, Puck was often played by a woman.

The terms of the Production Code that Hays outlines in the play are virtually verbatim from the actual Production Code that caused untold misery for every studio in Hollywood. Moreover, the objections that Hays raises in the play are the ones that the Hays Office actually raised at the time of filming. (Jack Warner himself wanted Reinhardt to cut the "love scene" in "Pyramus and Thisbe" because both characters were played by men and he was afraid that the Hays Office was going to object.) The biggest objection of the Hays Office was to the black fairy overcoming the white fairy towards the end of the movie. Reinhardt said that he created the black fairy to represent the evils of Nazism. Ultimately, this and the other objections were withdrawn. No one knows exactly why.

It is also true that Joe E. Brown, who played Flute, had just finished filming the third of three baseball movies based on the short stories of Ring Lardner. Jimmy Cagney's movie previous to the

"Dream" was a Western, "The Frisco Kid."

To me, one of the most surprising aspects of Shakespeare in the movies is that dozens of silent pictures were made from Shakespeare's plays before the advent of sound. Obviously, the producers in those days thought that Shakespeare's stories alone were strong enough to carry the films. Many of these silent movies can be seen on a DVD entitled *Silent Shakespeare*, released by Milestone Film & Video (2000)

I wrote *Shakespeare in Hollywood* on commission from The Royal Shakespeare Company in England, and I may have enjoyed writing this play more than any other I've ever written. An academic at heart, I loved the research; to me, Hollywood in the 1930s is the bee's knees; and as a Shakespeare addict to end all addicts, I loved living for a few months with Oberon and Puck. So my thanks to Simon Reade, Literary Manager of the RSC (now Artistic Director of the Bristol Old Vic), whose faith in the play has been unwavering, and to Adrian Noble, Artistic Director at the RSC at the time of the commission. Equal thanks to Molly Smith and Arena Stage for mounting the premiere and helping me select such a clever director, Kyle Donnelly, and such an inspired cast.

Ken Ludwig
Washington, D.C.
March 29, 2005

*For Olivia and Jack,
my two Shakespeareans*

*What is love? 'Tis not hereafter,
Present mirth hath present laughter;*

What's to come is still unsure;

In delay there lies no plenty;

Then come kiss me, sweet and twenty;

Youth's a stuff will not endure.

TWELFTH NIGHT
Act Two, Scene Three

Act I

(HOLLYWOOD, 1934. An orchestra is playing "Hooray for Hollywood," and lights are criss-crossing the sky like enormous, reckless fireflies. We feel the excitement and glamour of movie-land at its height.

We're at the world premiere of a new movie in front of Grauman's Chinese Theater. LOUELLA PARSONS, the iconic gossip columnist for the Hearst newspapers and well-known radio personality, is at a microphone, broadcasting live, and a rope barrier separates her from hundreds of screaming fans who have shown up to see their favorite movie stars. Some of these stars, glamorous and trendy, wave to the crowd as they parade into the theatre past LOUELLA.)

LOUELLA. Good evening, good evening to all of you out there in radio-land, this is Louella Parsons, your eyes and ears in Hollywood, at the sensational premiere of the new motion picture "A Midsummer Night's Dream," by the Warner Brothers. That's right, we have a night of culture ahead of us, a movie by the Swan of Avon himself, Mr. William Shakespeare, and if he could only see the excitement here tonight, he would be swimming down that river just as proud as a peacock. And don't let that word "culture" frighten you, my darlings, because the word on this movie is sock-o entertainment from start to finish. And what else would you expect from

a talking picture starring Mr. Dick Powell! *(Screams from the crowd.)* Miss Anita Louise! *(More screams.)* And Mr. James Cagney! *(Even bigger screams — as CAGNEY goes by and waves to the crowd.)* Wait a moment. A limousine is pulling up. Someone is getting out... Oh my darlings, how exciting, it's the director of the movie himself, Mr. Max Reinhardt!

(A disappointed "Ohhhh..." from the crowd as MAX REINHARDT enters. He's a pixie-ish man in his 60s and he has a pronounced German accent.)

LOUELLA. Max! Over here!... He's coming this way... Ah, Professor Reinhardt, it's Louella Parsons. Welcome to the opening of your new cinematic sensation.

REINHARDT. Thank you, Louella, I'm —

LOUELLA. *(To the radio audience.)* I'm sure you all know that Professor Reinhardt is considered the most distinguished director working today in the live theatre. Now tell us, Max, did it scare you a little, directing your first motion picture ever?

REINHARDT. No, not really. But I —

LOUELLA. "No, not really." *(Laughing)* Oh, Max, you're priceless. Now do I hear an accent in your speech? Are you from abroad?

REINHARDT. Ja, I am from Austria. And I have —

LOUELLA. "From Austria." How adorable. And what brings you to the United States?

REINHARDT. Heh heh, this is going to make you laugh, is funny story. There is man in my country named Hitler who is killing people.

LOUELLA. Oh yes of course. And we're just thrilled that you got away. Wait! A limousine has just pulled up... Oh, it is! It's Dick Powell!

(Screams — and DICK POWELL enters. He's a good-looking, boyish actor in his late 20s. He waves to the crowd and sings:)

POWELL. "I'm young and healthy, and you've got chaaaaarm!"

(Bigger screams.)

LOUELLA. Dick! Dick! It's Louella!

(LOUELLA chases after POWELL, leaving REINHARDT stranded. He turns and speaks to the audience.)

REINHARDT. And for this I have left my homeland. True, alternative is the Nazis, but is very close race. So: why am I here, you ask? It all began one year ago when I found myself for very first time in this legendary place called Hollywood: land of glamour and gluttony, palm trees and poodles, sequins and sin. At this time, I have just put on big stage production of Shakespeare's masterpiece "A Midsummer Night's Dream," and I get raves and kudos you would not believe. So, I ask myself, why not make a film of this production using big hot-shot Hollywood stars. It would be a great contribution to world culture, a real treat for lovers of Shakespeare, and, between you and me, I could make a few bucks in the process. With this in mind, exactly one year ago today, I go to see Jack Warner of Warner Brothers Pictures.

(The scene shifts to an office at the Warner Brothers Studio. JACK WARNER is behind his desk. He's a natty dresser and tough as nails. Sitting nearby is DARYL, who's known in the trade as a "yes-man." He's 25 to 30 and wears glasses. As the set is changing, REINHARDT continues:)

REINHARDT. Mr. Warner, I say to him, you are great producer and famous man. But you have not yet achieved the respect you deserve as man of innovation and artistic vision. So what do you say about making movie of Shakespeare's play "A Midsummer Night's Dream."

WARNER. You're an idiot!

REINHARDT. Okay, but what do you say?

WARNER. Listen, Mel — can I call you Mel?

REINHARDT. Sure, but my name is Max.

WARNER. Right, Max, now I've been asking around about you, and people tell me that you're really smart.

REINHARDT. Is true, I am genius.

WARNER. Good. Then you'll understand this perfectly. It's a dumb idea. Am I right, Daryl?

DARYL. Yes sir!

WARNER. Now why do you think we make movies, Max? Take a wild guess.

REINHARDT. To make artistic contribution to world culture?

WARNER. Wrong. We make movies to make money. They even have the same first letter. Movies. Money.

REINHARDT. Ah, but what if you use that money to make "Midsummer Night's Dream." Is another M.

WARNER. And so is moron! It ain't gonna happen!

REINHARDT. But you could make it happen!

WARNER. You're an idiot!

REINHARDT. Okay, fine! I take project back to Adolph Zukor at Paramount, he is begging me for this picture!

WARNER. You're a liar!

REINHARDT. *(To the audience.)* And he's right, of course, I am lying through my head. But at this moment, a miracle occurs. A fairy princess, like in Shakespeare play, comes through that door and changes everything.

LYDIA. *(Striding into the room.)* I'm a slut!

(LYDIA LANSING is a beautiful blond starlet with a whiny, show-girl voice. She sleeps with JACK WARNER, not just to get ahead, but also because she likes him. She's just come off the set of an historical action picture and she's wearing a cheap, bright red costume, torn and shredded along the skirt to show she's been in a battle, and across the chest to show that she has a lot of cleavage. Somewhere deep inside that cleavage is a nice kid. She carries a fan magazine and she's fuming.)

WARNER. Lydia!

LYDIA. That's what they call me, Jack! A slut! Look at this! "Photoplay Magazine." "The Ten Biggest Sluts in Hollywood." And who do ya think is number one? The Queen of the Sluts? Take a guess.

WARNER. You?

LYDIA. Bingo! You got it, Jack. And do you know why it's me? Huh? Do ya?! 'Cause I do all the stinkin' pictures you give me!

WARNER. But darling —

LYDIA. "Gun Moll Mama." Remember that one? And "Hold My Pistol".

WARNER. But they made you a star!

LYDIA. A star? You call this a star?! *(Her costume.)* Look at me! I'm in a fucking French Foreign Legion picture! "Oh Major Waverly, I feel so frightened by those nasty heathens surrounding Fort Chutney." *(She wiggles — her trademark wiggle.)* "How will I ever get back to my ancestral home in Dundee, Scotland?"

WARNER. But sweetie-pie —

LYDIA. Don't touch me! Now I want somethin' decent for a change. Somethin' with prestige. You're makin' biography pic-

tures, give me one of those. I'd be great in a biopic. I could play Madame Curie. Listen to this, I wrote it myself: "Oh, Dr. Mendel, just look at them squiggly things under the microscope. I think they could cure somethin'! Somethin' bad, like disease! Wait! We'll call it...penicillin!"

WARNER. But we just did a doctor picture about Louis Pasteur.

LYDIA. Well they ain't the same person are they?!

REINHARDT. She has a point.

LYDIA. Who's he?

REINHARDT. (*Kissing her hand.*) How do you do, I am Max Reinhardt, and I am famous director.

LYDIA. Gee.

REINHARDT. Good-bye.

LYDIA. Hey, where ya goin'?

REINHARDT. Alas, there is nothing here for me to do. I have just offered to make classic prestige picture for your boyfriend here. Shakespeare picture. Only he tells me he does not have leading lady who could perform in such a picture.

WARNER. That's a lie!

LYDIA. Shut up! (*To REINHARDT.*) What's it about?

REINHARDT. It is about a fairy-land forest that is ruled by a handsome king named Oberon.

LYDIA. Wow.

REINHARDT. He and his helper, named Puck, devise a plan to use a magic flower that makes you fall in love with the very first person you see.

LYDIA. This is really good!

REINHARDT. So Oberon uses the flower on a group of lovers who have fled to the forest — one of whom could be you, Lydia Lansing, in the part of Helena, a ravishing maiden who speaks only in poetry.

LYDIA. Holy cow.

WARNER. Don't listen to him!

LYDIA. Why not? Cause you want me to appear in nothin' but dreck?

WARNER. But honey pie —

LYDIA. I want this picture.

WARNER. Well you can't have it! Because I ain't makin' it! Right, Daryl?!

DARYL. Yes sir!

LYDIA. Shut up, Daryl!

DARYL. Yes ma'am!

LYDIA. Jack, listen to me, I'm gonna tell ya somethin', and I'll say it slow and calm so it's really clear. You get me this picture and you make it fast, or ya never touch these hips again! Comprendo?! (*All sweetness to REINHARDT.*) So very nice to have made your acquaint-tinyance.

WARNER. (*To REINHARDT.*) You son of a bitch.

REINHARDT. (*To the audience.*) And so it happened in a flash of magic that I was soon making film of "Midsummer Night's Dream," and I assure you that all four Warner Brothers could not have been happier.

(The lights change, and we see the WARNER BROTHERS on a telephone conference call with each other, each in his own pool of light. They include HARRY, the elder statesman; ALBERT, the smart one; SAM, the dumb one; and JACK, who we just met. Their dialogue crackles along quickly.)

HARRY. Jack, you're a schmuck!

JACK. Harry, that ain't fair!

SAM. I agree with Harry.

JACK. Sam, stay out of this.

ALBERT. You did it for some toostie, right?

JACK. Al, that's a lie!

SAM. He wanted to get in her pants.

ALBERT. I'll bet it was that girl that wiggles.

SAM. He's got a Hawaiian girl?

ALBERT. Not that kinda wiggle.

JACK. Would you guys just shut up and listen!

HARRY. The big shot is telling me to shut up.

JACK. Harry, please I'm telling you straight. This picture'll be good for the studio.

ALBERT. Like the plagues were good for Egypt.

SAM. Papa always said to us, "Stick to your last." That's what he said, you know, "Stick to your last."

JACK. He was a shoemaker!

HARRY. And what's so wrong with a shoemaker? Are you saying Papa didn't work hard?

ALBERT. He's criticizing Papa now.

JACK. Boys would you just listen to me! This Shakespeare stuff ain't all bad. I read some this morning and there are parts in English.

SAM. It's poison, Jackie.

HARRY. We'll lose a fortune.

SAM. Ya know the title ain't so bad. "Shakespeare." Sounds like a biopic.

JACK. It ain't called "Shakespeare!"

ALBERT. Sam, it's called "A Midsummer Night's Dream."

SAM. Well that'll put us right in the crapper.

ALBERT. Maybe we should get a rewrite man.

HARRY. Mankiewicz is good.

ALBERT. Or Morrison.

SAM. Or pay this Shakespeare guy to do it.

ALBERT. He's dead, you idiot.

SAM. Then he'll cost us peanuts.

HARRY.

ALBERT.

SAM.

I say we axe the . He's got a girl that So how come I'm the
project and we do it wiggles, let her one who needs my
fast before he makes wiggle in some- head examined when
any more commit- body else's picture. he's the one who gets
ments to this dame I need this whole us in trouble? Tell
of his — thing like I need a me that—?
goiter—

JACK. Boys...Boys, would you listen to me! I happen to be head of production for this company, and we are making this film whether you like it or not. End of discussion!

(They all hang up.)

The lights come up and it's mid-morning on the back lot of the Warner Brothers Studios. We're on the Sound Stage where "A Midsummer Night's Dream" is being shot. We see a tree and some foliage as well as lights and cameras.

After a beat, there's a crack of thunder and a flash of lightning, the stage goes dim in a magical way — and OBERON, King of the Fairies from "A Midsummer Night's Dream" appears from nowhere. The stage effect by which he appears should be as magical as possible, so that we realize instantly that this is not a human, but a being from another world.

As for the creature himself, he has all the characteristics of the OBERON we know from Shakespeare. He's imperious, impatient and commanding. He has a child-like temper and there's a sense of whimsy about him. He's also extremely attractive.)

OBERON.

Home,

Home at last to the Magic Wood near Athens,
 Aweary from a night of escapades
 And frolic, where lovers meet, embrace and dream of
 Immortality.

(Calling)

Puck! Robin Goodfellow! Come hither!

(Another crash of thunder, and PUCK magically appears. This is the real PUCK from the same play, that "shrewd and knavish sprite" called Robin Goodfellow, the mischief-maker of the fairy world. Though PUCK is a boy/man, he's played in this case by an actress.)

PUCK.

I am here, my Oberon, swift as a shadow.
 And brief as the lightning in the collied night!

OBERON.

Wither wander you, spirit?

PUCK.

Over hill, over dale,
 Through bush, through briar,
 Over park, over pale,
 Through flood, through fire —
 I do wander everywhere,
 Swifter than the moon's sphere,
 And I serve —

(At this moment, GROUCHO MARX crosses the lot with his characteristic stride and walks right up to OBERON and PUCK.)

GROUCHO. *(To OBERON.)* Why hello. Do you always wear your pajamas on the set, or is it just because I'm good-lookin'?

(JOHNNY WEISMULLER enters dressed as TARZAN and gives his famous yell.)

TARZAN. Aiiiiieeieiiiiieiiiiieeeeeieeee!!

(A COWBOY enters.)

COWBOY. Hey, Johnny, wait up! *(He playfully pulls his six guns and pretends to shoot OBERON and PUCK.)* Blam, blam, blam, blam, blam! Ha ha!

(GROUCHO, TARZAN and the COWBOY all exit. Beat. OBERON looks at PUCK.)

OBERON. ...Where in the Depths of Hell are we?!

PUCK. I have no idea.

(Hollywood, we come to realize, is our modern equivalent of a Wood near Athens. It's a land of enchantment, like the Forest of Arden, where anything can happen. It's a place of liberation and reassessment, where the illusory is part of the total experience of reality.)

OBERON.

(Angry)

I gave thee but one instruction,
 Lead us home from Athens to the magic wood,
 But no, he has to flub it up!

PUCK. "Flub it up?" That doesn't sound like you. Could we be dreaming?

OBERON. We are such stuff as dreams are made on.

PUCK. Now that sounds more like your old self.

OBERON.

Oh shut up!

I have just had one of the longest nights of my life!

First I have an argument with my Queen.

Then I try to sort out four Athenians

Who are so excited by the sex

Of one another they can barely keep their

Pants on. Then I drop the liquor of the

Magic flower on Titania's eyes

And she awakes and makes an ass of herself,

Or rather he does, Bottom, so she couples with him,

Good joke, ha, ha, then it's

Back to the lovers, we watch the play, we get them to

Bed, we give them our blessing, and by this time

I'm so tired I could drop,

And all I ask is a good day's sleep

And you can't even find the way home!

PUCK.

But I know I used all the usual spells.

I bayed at the moon like a wolf and rolled my eyes,

Then spun around three times to the left and...uh oh.

OBERON. To the left?

PUCK. Well —

OBERON. You normally spin to the right.

PUCK. Ay, there's the rub.

OBERON.

I have a blockhead for a henchman.

A coddle-pated, lack-brained, thick-eyed, three-suited, rabbit-sucking

Ignoramus-is-too-good-for-him having

No more brain than a Christian!

Do you have anything to say?!

PUCK. I think we came to the wrong Wood Near Athens.

WARNER. *(Off)* Now listen to me and listen good.

OBERON. But who comes here? We are invisible and we will overhear their conference.

(Zzzzing! And just as in the "Dream," OBERON makes a gesture with his hand and renders himself and PUCK invisible. That is, they remain on stage and we can see them, but no one on the stage can see them. Note: whenever they magically disappear or reappear throughout the play, we hear the distinctive sound you get when you run your fingernail across the strings of a harp. This sound will be indicated in the script by the word "Zzzzing!")

WARNER and DARYL enter.)

WARNER. Daryl, my boy, I need your help. I want you out of my office.

DARYL. *(Getting teary-eyed.)* Well may I say, sir, what a pleasure it's been working for you all these years —

WARNER. No, you idiot, I'm not firing you. I'm assigning you to this Shakespeare project. I want you to be Reinhardt's assistant.

DARYL. Me?

WARNER. The son of a bitch will try to spend me into the grave, I know it. I want you to watch him every minute. If the bastard goes over budget by one penny I want to know about it.

DARYL. Yes sir.

WARNER. And most of all, keep an eye on Lydia.

DARYL. Lydia.

WARNER. She's one in a million.

DARYL. A million.

WARNER. I'm insane about her.

DARYL. You're insane.

WARNER. The poor little thing. She doesn't know Shakespeare from sheep dip. And if she so much as looks at another actor without her legs crossed, I want her...*(LYDIA walks in wearing her costume.)* walking onto the set like a vision from classical drama! What a costume!

(She's happy as a clam and bursting with excitement about her new role. She's carrying her script.)

LYDIA. Thanks, Jack. Pretty classy, huh? It kinda itches around the crotch but that's okay because you gotta make sacrifices for art.

WARNER. Maybe it's just the underwear that's itchy.

LYDIA. It can't be. I ain't wearin' any. Now listen — I got the script and it's fabulous! Real class. I don't understand a single word of it.

WARNER. I'll send it to rewrite.

LYDIA. Good. Cause there's a word in here with like fifteen syllables. Oh, and guess what! I hired a vocal coach. This guy's really cute. He's Irish, I think. His name is Larry O'Liver.

WARNER. Laurence Olivier?

LYDIA. Yeah, that's it.

WARNER. He's big stuff. He just starred in a movie. How much are you paying him?

LYDIA. Don't worry. I know how to pay him.

(She pats his cheek and walks off. WARNER reacts.)

WARNER. *(Running after her.)* Lydia! Lydia, I'll pay him! Daryl, stop her!

DARYL. Yes sir!

WARNER. Lydia, come back here! Listen to me ...!

(And they're gone.)

OBERON gestures with his hand so that he and PUCK reappear. Zzzzing!)

OBERON. Well at least it won't be boring.

(The telephone on the director's table rings. Ring!)

OBERON & PUCK. Ahh!

OBERON. What was that?!

PUCK. It's that black thing. There. *(Ring!)* Is it alive?

OBERON. I have no idea. But if that's its mating call, where's the other one? *(Ring!)* No, wait.

(OBERON has figured it out. He picks up the receiver.)

VOICE THROUGH THE PHONE. *(WARNER)* Hi, is Reinhardt there? We've got a problem.

OBERON & PUCK. Yahh!

(OBERON and PUCK jump backwards in fear, dropping the receiver.)

VOICE THROUGH THE PHONE. *(WARNER)* What was that?!...Hello? Are you there, because if you are, you're fired!!...Hello?!"

(OBERON hangs it up with a bang.)

OBERON. ...O brave new world that hath such creatures in it.
A WOMAN'S VOICE. *(Off)* Oh, now what do I do!

DARYL. *(Off)* Miss Darnell!

OBERON. Someone's coming. Go quickly. Find us a way out of here.

PUCK. I go, I go, look how I go, Swifter than arrow from the T—

OBERON. Just go!

(As PUCK runs off, a young woman hurries in from the other direction. Her name is OLIVIA DARNELL. She has the sass, beauty and natural charm of a heroine from the screwball comedies of the 1930s. She's wearing an attractive day dress.)

OLIVIA. Hide me!

OBERON. What?

OLIVIA. Hide me! Please! Quick!

OBERON. Where?

OLIVIA. Anyplace!

OBERON. Here!

DARYL. *(Off)* Miss Darnell!

OLIVIA. *(Popping up.)* And tell him you haven't seen me!

OBERON. Get down!

(He hides her behind his cloak — and DARYL runs on.)

DARYL. Have you seen a young woman run past here?

OBERON. Black hair, red dress, this high?

DARYL. Right!

OBERON. I haven't seen her.

DARYL. Hey, come on! Mr. Reinhardt's looking for her!

OBERON. Sorry. She went in that direction.

DARYL. Thanks!

(He runs off.)

OBERON. The coast is clear.

(OLIVIA emerges.)

OLIVIA. Thank you for hiding me. I guess I panicked.

OBERON. Are you in trouble?

OLIVIA. No. I mean yes. A little. See, I'm in this movie. I play Hermia. And I fought so hard to get the role, you have no idea! I did screen test after screen test, and I memorized the entire part. Only a different part. I wanted to play Puck.

OBERON. Puck?

OLIVIA. I know, you think a boy should play him, but until this century, Puck was always a girl.

OBERON. *(Horried)* He was? I had no idea.

OLIVIA. Anyway, I got the part of Hermia, which is tremendous, it's the biggest break I ever had, and of course to play opposite Dick Powell, the biggest heartthrob in Hollywood, he's such a sweetheart, God in heaven, but I was going to really memorize the lines last night, at least get a start and learn the ones for today, but then my brother got a cable from his base that he was being sent to flight school in the morning! So anyway, we stayed up the entire night so we could spend a few more hours together, and we tried to make a party of it, and I guess I got a little drunk and then I woke up this morning and I hadn't learned the lines, at least the way I want to, and I just can't bear to face the great Max Reinhardt without being well prepared, so I'm hiding out to get some time alone so I can memorize it better since I'd look like such a fool if I didn't know it really well, do you see?

OBERON. It's perfectly clear.

OLIVIA. I'm Olivia.

OBERON. Oberon. King of the Fairies.

OLIVIA. Oberon? Oh, dear. I hope your heart's not set on it.

OBERON. Set on what?

OLIVIA. Oberon. The part's been cast. Haven't you heard? It's Victor Jory.

OBERON. What's a Victor Jory?

OLIVIA. Are you serious? He's a movie star. Where are you from, outer space?

OBERON. No, but it's another world.

OLIVIA. I knew you were foreign. I could tell from the way you speak. It reminds me of a bell, tolling in the countryside.

OBERON. When the sweet wind did gently kiss the trees and they did make no noise.

OLIVIA. That's from "The Merchant of Venice."

OBERON. Is it? I thought I made it up.

(She laughs.)

REINHARDT. *(Off)* Miss Darnell!

OLIVIA. Oh no, that's Mr. Reinhardt. I've got to run.

OBERON. No, stay. You'll be all right.

OLIVIA. But I told you, I don't know all the lines yet!

OBERON. You will. Just speak the speech, I pray you.

OLIVIA. Hamlet.

OBERON. I thought you said it was Reinhardt!

OLIVIA. It is!

OBERON. Then just do as I tell you! Look over there. He comes.

OLIVIA. Where?

(OBERON has deliberately made her look away. When she does, he gestures with his hand and makes himself invisible again. Zzzzzing! REINHARDT enters.)

REINHARDT. Ah, there you are. I have been looking for you everywhere.

OLIVIA. I was taking a walk, that's all, and I've just been talking to...*(She looks around; he's gone.)* Where did he go? He was right here...

REINHARDT. Okay, fine, now listen to me. I want to take a few minutes right now to rehearse your big speech in Act One.

OLIVIA. Now? I mean, does it have to be now? Could we do it later?

REINHARDT. No. Is first shot of filming, so I want it to be extra good. Let's hear what you've got. Start with scream.

OLIVIA. Scream?

REINHARDT. Big scream. Of frustration. You are angry because your father says you cannot marry boy you love. Go. Big scream.

(OLIVIA takes a breath. She prepares herself. Then:)

OLIVIA. Ahhh!

REINHARDT. Dat was terrible. It shtunk. Big. I want big scream. Go.

OLIVIA. ... Ahh!

REINHARDT. Oy vey iss mir. Big! You know what is big scream? Is opposite of little pathetic scream!

(OLIVIA closes her eyes to get her courage up. OBERON has by this time picked up a pair of scissors from the director's table - and he sticks them into her rear end.)

OLIVIA. AHHHHHHHHHHHHHHH!!!

(OBERON happily tosses the scissors in his hand and puts them back.)

REINHARDT. Okay. Not bad. We continue. Now remember, you are speaking to the Duke of Athens, and he says that you must do exactly as your father tells you and marry a man you do not love. So what do you say?

(Pause. OLIVIA takes a breath. And now OBERON starts to prompt her. He whispers in her ear, and the effect of their two voices echoing and mingling with each other is very sexy.)

OBERON.

"I do entreat your grace."

OLIVIA.

"I do entreat your grace to pardon me."

OBERON.

"I know not by."

OLIVIA.

"I know not by what power I am made bold."

OBERON.

"Nor how it may."

OLIVIA.

"Nor how it may concern my modesty
In such a presence here to plead my thoughts.
But I beseech your grace that I may know
The worst that may befall me in this case
If I refuse to wed Demetrius."

OBERON.

"Either to die the death."

OLIVIA.

"Either to die the death? or to abjure

For ever the society of men?

Oh, so will I grow, so live, so die, my lord,

Ere I will yield my virgin patent up."

REINHARDT. *(Framing the shot.)* And you turn slowly and look into the face of man you love...

(She turns and faces OBERON — but of course she doesn't know it.)

OBERON.

"My good Lysander."

OLIVIA.

"My good Lysander."

OBERON.

"I swear to thee."

OLIVIA.

"I swear to thee by Cupid's strongest bow,
By his best arrow with the golden head,
By the simplicity of Venus' doves,
By that which knitteth souls and prospers loves."

OBERON.

"And by that fire."

OLIVIA.

"And by that fire which burned the Carthage queen
When the false Trojan under sail was seen,
By all the vows that ever men have broke —
In number more than ever women spoke —
In that same place thou hast appointed me.
Tomorrow truly will I meet with thee."

(Pause. It's finished. The magic of it sinks in.)

REINHARDT. Magnificent. I am genius for choosing you. Come now, we shoot the scene.

OLIVIA. I'll be right there. Please. Just a moment.

REINHARDT. I give you one minute, and I'm counting!

(He exits. Zzing! OBERON reappears, and OLIVIA turns and sees him.)

OLIVIA. There you are! Where have you been? Oh, how can I ever thank you enough? You were right, I remembered every word. Every syllable. And I was really good!

OBERON. Bravo.

OLIVIA. It was astonishing. It just took hold of me.

OBERON.

Upon your words

Sit laurel victory, and smooth success

Be strewed before your feet.

OLIVIA. Anthony and Cleopatra.

OBERON. *(Looking around.)* Where?

OLIVIA. *(Laughing)* Oh you're so silly. You make me laugh.

OBERON. Do I? I don't think I've ever made anyone laugh before. I've made them frightened.

OLIVIA. I don't believe that.

REINHARDT. *(Off - perhaps over a speaker.)* Miss Darnell! Now!

OLIVIA. I've got to run. Oh God, I hope I don't forget the lines.

OBERON. You won't, I promise.

OLIVIA. Thanks again. *(She kisses him on the cheek.)* I hope you get a part in the movie!

(Puzzled, OBERON touches his cheek. Something has happened and he's not sure what it is. He exits, and OLIVIA is now alone. She turns front and is lit as though in another place.)

OLIVIA. Mrs. Joan Darnell, 46 Mountain Lane, Sioux City, Iowa. Dear Mother, Well, the filming has started and I am playing opposite Dick Powell, and he's being so nice to me. Anyway, this morning I met the most interesting man. He's an actor who wants to be in the film and he's somehow...strangely inspiring. I like him very much. No, don't call Aunt Ethel and start planning the wedding. We're just friends. I may never even see him again. Write soon. Love, Olivia.

(As she goes, the lights change and WILL HAYS enters. He's in his 50s, full of bluster and vanity. He wears a suit. He wields immense power in Hollywood and he knows it.)

HAYS. Hello?!...Anybody here?!...Typical. *(He looks impatiently at his watch. OBERON enters.)* Ah, good. Will Hays. Hays Office. I'm looking for a Max Reinhardt.

OBERON. I know not where he is.

HAYS. You "know not?"

OBERON. No, but I do wager he'll return without delay.

HAYS. Oh, really?

OBERON. Yea. Have patience and endure, I urge thee.

HAYS. Oh, I see. Well, let me suggest to "thee" that you "cut-teth" the crap and go find Reinhardt for me! Right now. And don't be such a smart-ass!

OBERON. Do you insult me? Call me villain? Break my pate across?

HAYS. Oh, brother. Look, I'm asking for some cooperation around here! Is that so hard to follow?!

OBERON. Sir, if you but ask you'll get a fair reply. If you demand, I'll have to take revenge.

HAYS. Revenge?! I'm Will Hays! Do you know what I'm capable of?!!

OBERON. A lot of wind, apparently.

HAYS. All right, what's your name?! Now! I want your name right now. Let's go. Name!

OBERON. Oberon. King of the Fairies.

HAYS. Don't you try to be funny with me. I could have you out on the street by tomorrow morning selling apples!!

OBERON. Oh, I don't think so.

HAYS. Do you want to bet?!

OBERON. Done! It's a bet! A fair wager! Before I leave this place, you will beg me for forgiveness!

HAYS. (*Astounded*)...Beg you?

OBERON.

Plead with me, on your knees, with tears

In your eyes, like Niobe, turned to stone

And weeping for eternity!

Puck! Ho! Robin Goodfellow!

(*OBERON exits in a rage.*)

HAYS. The man's a crackpot. He's insane.

(*REINHARDT enters in a foul mood. He's followed by DARYL.*)

REINHARDT. Hello? Do I hear yelling on my set?!

HAYS. Are you Max Reinhardt?

REINHARDT. Ja!

HAYS. Well thank God. At last. Will Hays. Hays Office.

(*Hearing the name HAYS, DARYL runs off.*) Now listen, I'm afraid I've got some problems with your script.

REINHARDT. Oh really? How wonderful. He's got problem with my script. I just found, out my Oberon — Victor Jory? — he just quit, my Puck, Mickey Rooney, broke his leg while skiing with his mother, so I am now missing my two big stars, *AND YOU GOT PROBLEMS WITH MY SCRIPT?!* And you are who again?

HAYS. Will Hays. Production Code Administration.

REINHARDT. Never heard of it.

HAYS. Oh of course not. You're a foreigner, from Eastern Europe? Let me fill you in. The Production Code is a set of rules to protect the American public so that movies do not contain anything vulgar, salacious, profane or obscene. We look askance at scenes of sex, adultery, lust, passion, seduction, nudity, venereal disease, sexual hygiene, and childbirth.

REINHARDT. You have good memory.

HAYS. I wrote the Code. At the request of the Legion of Decency — which is composed of millions of Americans who have pledged to boycott any movie that does not receive my seal of approval. No seal, no movie. Are we clear now?

REINHARDT. Ja, very clear. Is censorship.

HAYS. No, it's the will of the people. Now let's discuss your film, shall we? Here is a list of things I'd like to see cut from your script as soon as possible. It includes, of course, the scene on page, let's see, here we are, page 58, where someone named Titania sleeps with a man who has been changed into a donkey.

REINHARDT. So?

HAYS. It is disgusting! It smacks of bestiality. If this Bottom fellow has to be transformed, turn him into something human. It could still be funny. Perhaps he could have a club foot or something. Next item, it's in the stage directions, aha, right here, page 108, it says "the black fairy overpowers the white fairy and carries

her off." A black man carries off a white woman, and you expect to have no problems? And who is this black fairy anyway? It doesn't even say!

REINHARDT. He is spirit of Evil.

HAYS. "Evil?" What "evil?" What are you talking about? That's irrelevant.

REINHARDT. It is? With what is happening in my country, it is irrelevant? People being dragged screaming from their homes. Families separated. Children murdered. This is irrelevant?

HAYS. I meant irrelevant to the picture. It isn't set in Germany.

REINHARDT. And because it's not set in Germany, it cannot be about Germany? It cannot remind us who we are. Are you blind?

HAYS. I beg your pardon?

REINHARDT. You must be blind or stupid.

HAYS. (*Enraged*) How dare you?! Are you insane?! Mr. Reinhardt, here is a list of all of the offending passages in your script. I suggest you clean it up!

REINHARDT. (*Equally enraged*.) Mr. Hays. Here is confetti! I suggest you clean it up!

(*He tears up the list and tosses the bits of paper in the air.*)

HAYS. (*Nose-to-nose.*) I'll be back! You foreigner!

REINHARDT. And I'll be waiting! You native!

(*They exit in opposite directions. As they go, OBERON enters.*)

OBERON. Puck! Puck! Robin Goodfellow!

(*PUCK runs in. Appears magically, but it must be quickly.*)

PUCK. I'm here, your grace! Right here! I was looking for you!

OBERON. (*With the urgency and excitement of a great discovery.*) Listen to me. I think I've figured out what's going on around here. We're in the future, and this place is a kind of theatre. They put on plays here.

PUCK. That's what I heard! Only they're called "movies."

OBERON. Right. And they record them on something called film, using a coma.

PUCK. Film and camera.

OBERON. That's it. And when you sit and watch this "movie," you're not seeing the actors themselves, just flickering shadows. Which is very profound, because it implies that nothing lasts forever. That we are all just flickering shadows. Mere images on the spleen.

PUCK. Screen.

OBERON. Right. Moreover, everybody wants to be a movie actor. It's the great thing to be! They get paid enormous sums of money, they're treated like gods, they do nothing to deserve it, and everyone calls them moons!

PUCK. Stars.

OBERON. That's it. And here's the big surprise — guess who their current movie is about? Hmm? Us!

PUCK. It is?

OBERON. Yes! Apparently at some point in the past we became famous. People love us. They read about us. Our exploits have been chronicled by some cowardly Indian named Shaking Spear. People adore us!

PUCK. Everybody?

OBERON. Yes! No. That reminds me. There is a human here who pollutes this place — his name is Hays, he insulted me! — and I intend to make him suffer for his crimes.

PUCK. *(A guttural whisper.)* Hays...

OBERON. Now listen, I have a plan. My gentle Puck, come hither.

(During the following, as OBERON gives PUCK instructions, REINHARDT enters and listens. OBERON and PUCK don't see him. OBERON speaks with urgency.)

OBERON.

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?

PUCK. I remember.

OBERON.

That very time I saw, but though couldst not,
Flying between the cold moon and the earth,
Cupid, all armed. A certain aim he took
At a fair vestal throned 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 that herb and be thou here again
Ere the Leviathan can swim a league.

PUCK.

I'll put a girdle round about the earth
In forty minutes!

REINHARDT. *(Applauding)* Excellent! That was wonderful.
You boys are good! How did Mr. Varner get you here so fast?

PUCK. Mr. "Varner?"

REINHARDT. That was terrific audition.

OBERON. Thank you, but what exactly is an "audition?"

REINHARDT. Ah! That is exactly how I feel. Bravo. There is no such thing as audition, we must be truthful every second. You just scored big point with me. So, let's continue. Your names please.

PUCK. Puck.

OBERON. Oberon. King of the Fairies.

REINHARDT. Ja, but that remains to be seen. I want your real names.

OBERON. Oh, our real names.

PUCK. Ralph.

OBERON. Hector.

(They look at each other and shrug as if to say "why not".)

REINHARDT. Now tell me about yourselves. Where did you last appear?

OBERON. Just outside Athens. We were playing at the palace.

REINHARDT. You played the Palace? Ooh, that is very good venue. Now have you ever played Oberon and Puck before?

OBERON. Well, yes.

PUCK. Quite a lot, actually.

REINHARDT. Good. Now what about your film experience. What have you shot?

OBERON. Well, once I shot a unicorn. But I was very young.

REINHARDT. "A Unicorn." That was the title?

OBERON. He didn't have a title. He was just a common unicorn. I also did some shooting for the Amazons, I had to, it was the birth of their nation.

REINHARDT. "The Birth of a Nation." Hoo. That was very big hit. Gentlemen, I have good news. You are hired. Congratulations.

OBERON. "Hired?"

REINHARDT. I want you to play Oberon and Puck in my new movie.

PUCK. In this movie?

REINHARDT. Ja.

OBERON. You mean as...actors?

REINHARDT. Ja.

OBERON & PUCK. Ha haaa! Yahoo! We're movie actors!

OBERON. (*Very show biz:*) I'm gonna be a moon!

PUCK. Star.

OBERON. Right!

(*OLIVIA enters.*)

OLIVIA. Excuse me, Mr. Reinhardt, but there's a rumor that Mr. Jory has left!

REINHARDT. Ja, is true, he quit, who needs the bum. I have found someone ten times better. Miss Darnell, meet your new Oberon.

OLIVIA. ...You? Is it really you?

OBERON. Apparently.

(*She almost jumps for joy.*)

OLIVIA. Oh, my God. I'm so happy for you! You did it! You actually did it! (*She runs to him and hugs him with affection.*) Wait! I think we should celebrate. Have you been to the commissary yet? It's like a fairyland. You see one big star after another and they sit right next to you! And don't worry, we'll go dutch.

OBERON. All right, but I don't think I can do the accent.

OLIVIA. Oh, Mr. Reinhardt, could we have our lunch break, please, I mean the cameramen are still setting up the shot and we'll be back before they're done, I promise!

REINHARDT. Ja, go, but don't be long.

OLIVIA. Thanks! Come on! It's my treat!

(*And as she drags OBERON away, PUCK throws his hat in the air and lets out a cry of happiness.*)

PUCK. We're going to be in the movies! Yipeeeee!

[*If the play was in three acts (as it is structurally), this would be the end of Act One.*]

(*As PUCK dances out happily, LYDIA enters, dressed to the nines in her costume, with LOUELLA following her, getting an interview.*)

LOUELLA. Lydia! My dear! You must be so excited arriving for your very first day on such a prestigious picture! May I ask you some questions for my column?

LYDIA. Why of course, Louella, I would be utterly enchanted.

(LYDIA is really putting on the dog now that she's such a classy actress; alas, she is betrayed by her chorus-girl accent.)

LOUELLA. First of all, tell me: who do you play in the picture?

LYDIA. I play a beautiful and delightful young woman named Helena. She is the star. But alas, her boyfriend loves another, and so she flees into a forest.

LOUELLA. How thrilling.

LYDIA. Only this ain't no ordinary forest. It's full of magic, including a magic flower! Of which the juice of it is so powerful that if you get it in your eye, you fall deeply in love with the very next person you look at, whammo! Which, as you can well imagine, makes for some very funny complications. Ho ho.

LOUELLA. How exciting. Now tell me, what does all this mean for Lydia Lansing? Can we expect to see you in other prestigious movies in the future?

LYDIA. Yes, Louella, I think you can. And I would like to add that I personally find it thrilling to be doin' a movie written by the immortal Shakespeare, because he is truly one of our great Americans. And I do hope this is just the beginning, because there are so many other classic roles I hope to play in the future. Like Madame Curie and Moby Dick. Thank you.

(At this moment, POWELL, REINHARDT and DARYL enter.)

DARYL. Okay, let's go! Shot 128. The Wood Near Athens. Lights, check. Set, check. We've got a moon, we've got a tree. Lysander over here, Helena enter here. Quiet, please ladies and gentlemen! Quiet!

REINHARDT. Roll them. And action!

(LYSANDER, as portrayed by DICK POWELL, is asleep on the ground. After a beat, LYDIA, playing HELENA, enters. She is a truly terrible actress. She makes Snout and Tinker look like Laurence Olivier. But she tries her best and gives it all she's got.)

LYDIA as HELENA.

(Her Brooklyn accent as strong as ever.)

"O, I am out of breath in this fond chase.

The more my prayer, the lesser is my grace.

Happy is Hermia, wheresoe'er she lies,

For she hath blessed and attractive eyes."

(She smiles broadly and sighs. That part's out of the way!)

LYDIA as HELENA.

"But who is here? Lysander on the ground?

Dead — or asleep? I see no blood, no wound. *(She pronounces wound to rhyme with "ground.")*

Lysander, if you live, good sir, awake!"

POWELL as LYSANDER.

"And run through fire I will for thy sweet sake!

Not Hermia, but Helena I love.

Who will not change a raven for a dove?"

LYDIA as HELENA.

"Good sooth, you do me wrong — good sooth, you do!

In such disdainful manner me to woo! To woo! To woo!"

REINHARDT. Cut! Cut! Cut! What is this to woo to woo?!

You sound like bird! There is only one "to woo!" "In such disdainful manner me to woo!"

LYDIA. I thought it kinda helped my character. It makes her seem really sad. Ya know? "To woo, to woo."

REINHARDT. Ja, is sad all right.

LYDIA. Gee, thanks! If ya want, I could do some cryin'.

REINHARDT. I will do that for both of us. Now do it again! And do it right this time!

(The scene shifts to the Warner Brothers Commissary. OBERON and OLIVIA sit together at a table. The effect is very romantic.)

OBERON. Thank you for... "lunch."

OLIVIA. Isn't the commissary a dream?! It reminds me of a fairy tale come — ...Omigosh. Don't look behind you. Don't! Don't! It's Bing Crosby!

OBERON. And he does what again?

OLIVIA. He's a singer. And he smokes a pipe. He's very famous.

OBERON. Well no wonder. It must be hard to sing and smoke at the same time. Can I have some more of that brown liquid with the bubbles?

OLIVIA. Coca Cola.

OBERON. And I love those little square things with the layers.

OLIVIA. Sandwiches. I would have thought that every place in the world had sandwiches.

OBERON. Not where I come from.

OLIVIA. Outside Athens.

OBERON. Right. I mean, in a way.

OLIVIA. What way? And don't change the subject this time.

OBERON. *(Hissing)* Look! I mean don't look! The man behind you! He must be important, he's all in white and he has a weapon!

(She peeks over her shoulder.)

OLIVIA. He's a waiter. That's a ladle.

OBERON. Oh. He's not a star?

OLIVIA. No. Well he might be someday, if he's in lots of movies.

OBERON. And then, if he becomes a star, he gets treated like royalty.

OLIVIA. That's right.

OBERON. Doesn't your king get upset at this?

OLIVIA. We don't have a king. Or a queen.

OBERON. Then who runs the place?

OLIVIA. The people do. It's a democracy.

OBERON. Well that'll never work, believe me. They tried it once in Athens, it was chaos.

(She laughs.)

OLIVIA. Come on, tell me the truth. Where are you from?

OBERON. And if I said: a land of magic?

OLIVIA. I'd say how interesting and tell me more.

OBERON.

(Gently)

Think of a world that's full of groves and green,
With fountains clear and spangled starlight sheen.
Where argument between the jealous queen and king.
Makes riot of the middle summer's spring.
A land of paved fountain and of rushy brook.
Where in the beached margent of the sea
We dance our ringlets to the whistling wind.
Would you come to such a place with me?

(Their faces are an inch apart. They could kiss at any moment.)

OLIVIA. Oh my gosh, look at the time. We have to go. Reinhardt'll be furious. *(She leaves money on the table and drags him off.)* Quick! Come on! We can't be late!

(As they run off, the action shifts to the Warner Brothers costume shop where JOE E. BROWN is being fitted by a seamstress with pins in her mouth. BROWN is a good-natured fellow with a wide grin who always looks bemused and slightly baffled by life. He's holding a copy of the movie script and calling to someone offstage.)

BROWN. I can't get over it. Why would they put me in a Shakespeare movie? I can hardly speak regular English.

CAGNEY. *(Off)* Aw it ain't so bad.

BROWN. That's easy for you to say. You're the great Jimmy Cagney. I'm in baseball movies. *(JIMMY CAGNEY walks in wearing a large ass head.)* Yaaah!...What's that?!

CAGNEY. *(With the head still on.)* It's my costume. For the movie.

BROWN. You're kidding me.

CAGNEY. Nope.

(BROWN walks around CAGNEY in amazement.)

BROWN. But I don't get it. I thought you were playing a guy named Bottom.

CAGNEY. I am. But during the movie, I turn into a donkey. Then everybody gets scared and runs away. Except a fairy princess who falls in love with me.

BROWN. And this is by Shakespeare?

CAGNEY. Uh huh.

BROWN. Frankly, I expected more out of him.

(OBERON enters in an urgent mood.)

OBERON. Puck!...Oh where is he? I need that flower. Robin Goodfellow! *(He sees CAGNEY in the ass head.)* Bottom! What are you doing here?

CAGNEY. *(From inside the head.)* Making an ass of myself.

BROWN. That's a good one.

(CAGNEY takes off the head — and we see the real JAMES

CAGNEY, the famous movie star. Despite his image playing tough guys, he's very likeable.)

OBERON. Ah! How did you do that? I thought I was the only one who could take your head off.

CAGNEY. Then you haven't met Mrs. Cagney.

OBERON. Oh, you must be a...star.

BROWN. He's the great Jimmy Cagney. Joe Brown, how are ya.

OBERON. Hector.

CAGNEY. Oh, you're the new guy playing Oberon. You look the part. Nice costume.

OBERON. Have you seen Ralph?

CAGNEY. Who?

OBERON. Puck!

(PUCK appears magically from a laundry basket.)

PUCK. Right here, my liege.

(CAGNEY and BROWN are startled. PUCK is dressed like a star now: sunglasses, bright yellow blazer, designer slacks, the works. And he's carrying packages with logos of expensive stores. He's gone Hollywood.)

OBERON. What in the name of Venus are you wearing?!

PUCK. They're called sunglasses. It's what the stars wear! I bought you a pair. Try 'em on.

(He hands the glasses to OBERON, who puts them on.)

OBERON. Well?

PUCK. *(Brooklyn chorus girl:)* Honey, they were made for you. *(To CAGNEY and BROWN.)* You like 'em?

CAGNEY & BROWN. Uh, yeah. Sure do.

(PUCK snaps his fingers and two more pair jump out of the basket and into his hand.)

PUCK. Here. One for you and one for you. Now we can all be stars together!

CAGNEY. Uh, excuse us...

BROWN. We gotta go now...

(CAGNEY and BROWN exit, spooked and uncertain about these new guys.)

PUCK. Sire, I'm telling you, this being a star is even better than we thought! Cash advance, great clothes, hot chicks...

OBERON. "Hot chicks?" As in little braised poultry?

PUCK. As in women. Babes. When they realize you're a star, they're all over you! And here's the capper: you know they're giving that party tonight.

OBERON. Party? No.

PUCK. The studio gives a party after the first day of filming. It's a tradition. So: guess what? I got us two girls for the party! One each! Mine's called Heather, yours is named Delores. I got you a blond. I thought she'd look good with your coloring.

OBERON. No, I can't.

PUCK. You can't?

OBERON. No.

PUCK. But these are quality women. They talk and everything!

(At this moment, OLIVIA rushes in.)

OLIVIA. Excuse me. I'm sorry to interrupt, but can you believe it, we left our scripts on the table at the commissary. I ran back and got them and this is yours, it's fine but has a little ketchup in the corner so I wiped it off so you can hardly see it, but now I've got to run. *(Beat; OBERON just stares at her, so in love that he's tongue-tied.)* Thanks for lunch. I had a wonderful time.

(She kisses him on the cheek and heads off.)

OBERON. Olivia. My friend here tells me there are revels planned this evening. May I have the pleasure of your company?

OLIVIA. To answer by the method, you may indeed, sir. With all my heart.

OBERON. We shall go coupled and inseparable, like Juno's swans.

OLIVIA. "As You Like It."

OBERON. How very kind. If there be dancing, shall we rock the ground?

OLIVIA. Absolutely. But I warn you, I'm a really good dancer.

OBERON. And so am I.

OLIVIA. (*Demonstrating each dance.*) Do you do the jitter-bug?

OBERON. Yes, I do.

OLIVIA. Big Apple?

OBERON. Indeed.

OLIVIA. The Lindy?

OBERON. Why not?!

OLIVIA. Then pick me up at seven. My place.

OBERON. I'll be the one with the eye shadow.

PUCK. Sunglasses.

OBERON. Sunglasses. (*She exits.*) O Robin. Did you see her? I would live in her heart, die in her lap, and be buried in her eyes.

PUCK. Well, I guess Delores is out. Does she know how you feel?

OBERON. I think so.

PUCK. Does the difference in your ages give her any pause? (*OBERON takes this in and gets angry. We hear the rumble of thunder. PUCK realizes what he's said and starts back-pedaling madly.*) I-I mean, of course, there isn't really much difference at all, when you think about it. What's a few thousand years, here or there...I think I'll go look for the flower again.

OBERON. You haven't found it yet?!

PUCK. No, my Lord.

OBERON. Well keep looking, it's important! I have a score to settle with that creature Hays.

PUCK. The one who insulted you?

OBERON. Yes!

PUCK. All right, all right! I was just asking. I go, I go, look how I go, Swifter than arr —

OBERON. Just go!

(*PUCK disappears down the hamper. OBERON is alone.*)

OBERON. Difference in our ages... We're spirits. We grow to maturity, reach the age of our greatest perfection and stay there. Which is as it should be. No wonder mortals are so depressed all the time. They reach their pinnacle and then decline. Then they limp, limp on to the end, sans teeth, sans eyes, sans taste, sans everything. And for what? Because intimations of mortality make them write better books? Compose better operas? Well it isn't worth it. If I thought for a minute that I was going to leave the planet, I'd — (*He looks at his hands and stops abruptly. He sees something strange about them.*) That's odd. I can see light...through my skin...Maybe that's part of being a star. People can see right through you.

(*At this moment, DICK POWELL enters.*)

POWELL. Knock knock? Hi. I don't think we've met. I'm Dick Powell. I play Lysander.

OBERON. How do you do.

POWELL. Listen. I'm sorry to bother you, but I have a sort of favor to ask. Well. It concerns Miss Darnell. Olivia? See, I've just been talking to her and it's clear to me that, well, she thinks the world of you. She looks on you as a sort of...father figure. (*OBERON reacts. We hear thunder. Perhaps POWELL looks up.*) Okay, now here's the thing. It's hard to put into words, but...well

...I am just so in love with her! See, I met her a few weeks ago. And then I asked her out, and she couldn't go, and, well, the fact of the matter is, she barely knows that I'm alive! And I don't know what to do! And then I thought...oh, it's stupid.

OBERON. Go on.

POWELL. Well, I thought that maybe you could say something to her. About me. Sort of get in my corner. I bet she'd listen to you. I know she would! And, well, that's it.

OBERON. ...I don't know what to say.

POWELL. I guess it's pretty stupid, huh? Thanks for listening.

(He walks away.)

OBERON. Wait. Mr. Powell. I have an idea. I think I can help.

POWELL. Really? Gee, that's great! You mean you'll talk to her?

OBERON. I'll do something appropriate.

POWELL. No kidding! Gee thanks! I mean just...thanks!
(He wrings OBERON'S hand.) What a guy. It's like she said. You're the tops! Thanks...pal.

(He exits.)

OBERON. I don't think anyone has ever called me "pal" before.

(PUCK reenters in some wonderful way. Perhaps he's driving one of those go-carts they use at movie studios.)

OBERON. Welcome wanderer. Hast thou the flower there?

PUCK. Here it is.

OBERON. I pray thee give it me.

(It glows from within with an aura of mystery. We're in the world of magic now, and OBERON intones his instructions with an air of danger.)

OBERON.

Mark me, Robin.

Take this herb and seek through this place.

Find a youth with handsome face.

Be not deceived, his design is foul,

He'll answer to the name of Powell.

Lull him to sleep, then streak his eyes,

So that the next thing he espies

Is a ravishing woman.

PUCK. What woman?

OBERON. Any woman that you find provided it is not Olivia. Offer him some sacrificial virgin or something.

PUCK. It's hard to find a virgin. We're in Hollywood.

OBERON. Look. Just find some woman and let him fall in love! But he cannot have Olivia. She's mine!

PUCK. Yes, Master. But I thought the flower was for Hays.

OBERON. It was. It may be. But now it's for Powell. Go to thy errand!

PUCK. *(Leaving)* I go, I go, look how I go, Swifter than arrow from the Tartar's bow! Thank you for letting me finish it, O King!

(As PUCK disappears, OBERON exits in the opposite direction. The lights change with a snap. OLIVIA appears in her own light.)

OLIVIA. Dear Mother, Do you remember that actor I told you

about? Well I hope you're sitting down for this because he just asked me to the party tonight. No, don't call Aunt Ethel! You know her, she'll be sending out wedding invitations by sundown. It's just a date and I may never even see him again. Love, Olivia

(The lights restore and we're now on Sound Stage Number 2, where REINHARDT is about to film a scene from Act 1, Scene 1 of the play with OLIVIA as HERMIA and POWELL as LYSANDER. DARYL is assisting REINHARDT.)

DARYL. Okay, let's go. Shot 041. The Palace at Athens. Lights, check. Set, check. Rug, check. Lysander over here. Hermia over here. Quiet please, ladies and gentlemen.

REINHARDT. Wait. Where is Miss Lansing. Miss Lansing!

(LYDIA hurries in, excited and happy.)

LYDIA. I'm comin'! I'm right here! Now listen, I made this incredible discovery! You know how you keep tellin' us to "examine the text" and look at the words and discover new stuff and all?!

REINHARDT. Ja.

LYDIA. And you know how I'm always sayin' it doesn't make any sense to me —

REINHARDT. *(Impatiently)* Ja, ja.

LYDIA. Well I just discovered that a lot of his speeches make just as much sense if you say 'em backwards as they do forwards! Listen to this. It's one of my speeches, the way it's written:

"You draw me, you hard-hearted adamant!
But yet you draw not iron: for my heart
Is true as steel. Leave you your power to draw,
And I shall have no power to follow you."

Okay? Now here it is backwards:

(She does it with great feeling as if it makes perfect sense.)

"You follow to power! No?!

Shall have I draw to power your leave?!

Steel as true is heart, not iron.

Draw you yet but adamant?! Hard-hearted you!!"

(Beat. She smiles and shrugs.) You can't tell the difference.

REINHARDT. Miss Lansing, you have just made incredible stride in the history of Shakespeare scholarship. I can see whole book being written about Shakespeare backvards.

LYDIA. Gee...

REINHARDT. But I want to film picture forwards and on time, so into position get! *(The actors scurry into position.)* Are you ready?!

LYDIA. Yes sir! *(She whispers to whoever is closest.)* I think he's jealous cause he didn't think of it first.

REINHARDT. Okay, roll 'em. Aaaaaaand action!

(The lights change and the scene begins. During this, OBERON enters and watches. No one sees him, because he's invisible.)

POWELL as LYSANDER.

"My Hermia, if thou lovest me, then
Steal forth thy father's house tomorrow night,
And in the wood, a league without the town,
Where I did meet thee once with Helena,
There will I stay for thee."

OLIVIA as HERMIA.

"I swear to thee by Cupid's strongest bow,
By his best arrow with the golden head,
In that same place thou hast appointed me,
Tomorrow truly will I meet with thee."

POWELL as LYSANDER.

Keep promise, love.

(He kisses HERMIA passionately — in other words, POWELL kisses OLIVIA passionately — and when they break it off, he's so weak in the knees he almost crumples to the ground. During the kiss, we see OBERON'S jealous reaction — and perhaps we hear the thunder again.)

Look — here comes Helena!"

(LYDIA enters, playing HELENA.)

OLIVIA as HERMIA.

"God speed, fair Helena!"

LYDIA as HELENA.

"Call you me fair? That fair again unsay!" Or, backwards...

"Unsay again! Fair that fair me you call?"

REINHARDT. Cut! Cut! Cut! Miss Lansing! JUST SAY THE LINES!!

LYDIA. I'm tryin', but they don't make any sense!

REINHARDT. Well try harder!!...We resume in ten minutes, when my blood pressure goes down!

DARYL. Okay, ten minutes everybody!

(Everyone leaves except LYDIA. She starts to cry. She's trying so hard and it just isn't working out. After a beat, PUCK enters, holding the flower, talking to himself.)

PUCK. Powell, Powell. "Find a man named Powell..." Hello.

LYDIA. Hi. Gee, what a pretty flower. What kind is it?

PUCK. Oh, you wouldn't know it, it's quite rare.

LYDIA. Let me smell it.

PUCK. No! No! Give it back!

LYDIA. Ooh, it smells so nice.

PUCK. No!

LYDIA. Ow! *(The flower has attacked her eye. It does that.)* I think I got some pollen in my eye.
(As she dabs at her eye, DARYL enters.)

DARYL. Excuse, me, Miss Lansing — Mr. Warner asked me to tell you that he'll meet you at the party tonight at eight.

(She looks up and sees him — Ping! — and falls instantly in love with him. Note: whenever anyone falls in love because of the flower, we hear the distinctive sound made when you pluck the string of a harp. This will be indicated in the text by the word "Ping!")

LYDIA.

(Her eyes glowing with adoration.)

O I'll be there, I promise thee, my dove,

My precious boy, my everything, my love!

DARYL. ...Right. I'll see you there.

(He exits.)

LYDIA. Daryl! Please! Come back! I love you!

(She drops the flower and dashes off.)

PUCK. Oh, no. Miss! Miss! Come back here! Stop!

(PUCK snatches up the flower and runs to stop her. As he goes, he bumps into POWELL, who is just entering.)

POWELL. Oh sorry.

PUCK. Sorry.

POWELL. Hey, you must be the new guy who's playing Puck.

PUCK. 'Tis I. Sorry, but I have to —

POWELL. Dick Powell. I play Lysander.

PUCK. ... Powell? The actor? Excellent. I've been looking for you.

POWELL. You have?

PUCK. You must be getting very sleepy after all that filming. Very sleepy.

POWELL. No, not really.

(PUCK snaps his fingers and POWELL drops off instantly and snores ZZZZZZZZZZ! PUCK tosses the magic flower onto the ground, forgetting about it.)

PUCK.

Nicely done, Mad Spirit.

Now upon thy eyes I throw

All the power this charm doth owe.

What thou seest when thou dost wake,

Do it for thy true love take,

Love and languish for her sake.

(PUCK covers POWELL up in the rug used for the film scene, hiding him from view.)

Now I go and find the girl

To tug the heart of snoring churl.

A buxom wench to join the chorus,

Heather, or perhaps Delores.

Till I bring her stay right here.

Do not arise till I appear.

I'll wake you when the coast is clear.

I am invisible.

(Zzzzzing! He hurries off. A moment later, OLIVIA enters.)

OLIVIA. Mr. Reinhardt, I was wondering if...where is everybody? Hello?!...Hello?!...Well, I guess this gives me time to look at some lines. What's this? *(She sees the blossom of the Magic Flower that PUCK accidentally left on the ground, and she picks it up.)* It's a flower. Oh, it's beautiful! And it smells so ow! *(The flower attacks her eye.)* Ooh, it's in my eye...There, that's better. *(She yawns.)* Oh, I'm so sleepy. I guess I'd better work on those lines. Let's see... *(She sits and looks at her script. She recites her lines with increasing weariness.)*

"Never so weary, never so in woe,
Bedabbled with the dew, and torn with briars —
I can no further crawl, no further go.

My legs can keep no pace with my desires."

(She gets no further.)

ZZZZZZZZZZ!

(She rolls over, pulling the other half of the rug over herself — hiding her from view. A moment later, JIMMY CAGNEY enters dressed as PYRAMUS.)

CAGNEY. *(Calling to BROWN, who's off stage.)* Hey, Joe! Would you come on!

BROWN. *(Off)* No!

CAGNEY. *(Calling)* Would you stop it. You look great. It's what the part calls for.

(JOE E. BROWN enters. He's dressed in drag, as THISBE, the young maiden in "Pyramus and Thisbe," which he and

CAGNEY will perform in the movie. He wears a long blond wig and a dress with a Grecian pattern on the skirt and criss-crossed leather straps across the chest to emphasize his generous female figure — the same costume that JOE E. BROWN actually wears in the movie.)

BROWN. I have to say, I don't know why this is necessary.

CAGNEY. Because you're playing Thisbe, who's a girl.

BROWN. I thought I was playing Francis Flute!

CAGNEY. You are. And in the play that Francis Flute is in, he's playing Thisbe. Which means you wear a dress. You talk "like this." And you walk like this.

(He demonstrates.)

BROWN. I don't know what girls you've been seeing.

CAGNEY. Then your big moment is when you kill yourself.

BROWN. I do?

CAGNEY. Yeah. See, you're in love with Pyramus. That's me. And I know there's a lion around. So I walk into the forest and I see your handkerchief covered with blood. "She's dead!" I cry. But you're not dead. I only think you're dead. So I kill myself. In grief. Then you come along and see me dead, and you kill yourself. In grief.

BROWN. That's a lot of grief.

CAGNEY. Okay, let's rehearse. You stand over here. Start when you're ready.

(PUCK enters. He's invisible, so the men don't hear or see him.)

PUCK. A virgin. A virgin. Where am I supposed to find a virgin?!

BROWN as THISBE.

(In a woman's voice.)

"O wall, full often hast thou heard my moans,

My cherry lips have often kissed thy stones.

PUCK. O wingèd Mercury, I'm getting an idea.

CAGNEY as BOTTOM. "I see a voice. Thisbe?! Thisbe?!"

PUCK. *(His voice magically coming through the public address system.)* Attention please. Will James Cagney please report to the Director's office. James Cagney to the Director's office.

CAGNEY. I wonder what that's about. I'll be right back.

BROWN. I'll go with you.

PUCK. *(Still through the speaker.)* No, you stay right where you are.

(BROWN looks up, amazed. How do they do that? CAGNEY exits. Then PUCK scampers up to BROWN and spins him around and around, as though he's caught in a high wind.)

PUCK.

Up and down, up and down,

I will lead him up and down!

I am feared in field and town,

Goblin lead them up and down!

BROWN. Whoa...whoa!...Hey! What's happening?!

(BROWN spins across the stage and lands on POWELL.)

BROWN. Holy cow! I'm so sorry! I lost my balance!

(Ping! POWELL awakes and instantly falls in love with BROWN.)

POWELL.

Tide life, tide death!
What is this vision that
I see before me!

(Note: as we saw with LYDIA, the flower not only makes you fall instantly in love with the next creature you see, it also makes you speak in Shakespearean verse.)

BROWN. I'm sorry?

POWELL.

Goddess, nymph, divine creature!
O Cupid is a knavish lad.
Thus to make poor fellows mad.

BROWN. Oh, I get it. That must be from the play. That's very good.

POWELL.

Thou art my moon, my star, my sun,
More rare to me than Irene Dunne.

BROWN. No, you can't do that! Because with Shakespeare you can't ad lib. It's a big no-no. Ooh.

(BROWN rubs his backside.)

POWELL. What's the matter?

BROWN. I think I hurt myself when I fell.

POWELL. Oh, no! You poor darling! How you must suffer!
What can I fetch you to make it feel better?

BROWN. It's fine.

POWELL.

No. Please! Send me to the Antipodes,
To the furthest inch of Asia so that I can

Ease the pain.

BROWN. It's really not that —

POWELL. Please!

BROWN. Honestly, it's —

POWELL. Anything!!!

BROWN. ...Well I guess I could use some aspirin.

POWELL.

It shall be done at once! Now rest and stay.

And if perchance I see along the way,

A little present? A little ring,

Or diadem or jewel or anything?

Is that of interest? Hm? Ha!

Ha ha! Ha ha ha ha ha ha!

And then when I return I'll kiss it where it

Hurts and make it aaaaall better.

(POWELL exits. BROWN watches him go.)

BROWN. He's a nice kid, but I think he's got a problem.

PUCK. This turns out even better than I hoped. I must tell Oberon. *(Exiting, PUCK squeezes BROWN'S chest:)* Honk, honk!

(And PUCK is gone.)

BROWN. It might be just me, but I think there's something funny going on around here. Maybe if I sing, it'll go away.

(Singing)

Take me out to the ballgame,

Take me out to the crowd,

Buy me some peanuts and Cracker Jack

I don't care if I never get back —

OLIVIA. What angel wakes me from my — (*Ping!*) I pray thee, gentle actor, sing again! Your voice transports me to another world!

BROWN.

(*Beat; then sings:*)

So it's root, root, root for the home team,
If they don't win it's a shame!

OLIVIA. And yet your voice is nothing to your face, Your eyes, your lips that must be caressed and kissed!

BROWN. (*Fending her off.*) Hey, hey! Hold it! Get back! Now cut that out! You're teasing me and it isn't nice. I'll bet it's because I'm wearing this dress. Well it's not my fault. I've got to make a living, you know.

OLIVIA.

"Love looks not with the eye but with the mind,
And therefore is winged Cupid painted blind."

BROWN. I wish you'd cut that out. It's really not nice.

OLIVIA.

If only, like Titania, I had
A train of fairies here to make you happy.

(*The fairies appear.*)

"Moth! Peaseblossom! Mustardseed!
Be kind to this gentleman and gambol in his eyes;
I'll have my love to bed and to arise."

(*On the word "bed" she puts her arm around his neck. And on the word "arise" she puts her hand on his crotch.*

He looks down at her hand.

He starts to object, but she stops his mouth with a long, passionate kiss.)

OLIVIA.

Come with me now.

We'll go to the party.

Where we two shall dance the night away.

And every maiden there will stare at me.

With longing in her eyes because you're mine.

BROWN. ...(*Sings:*)

"She'll be comin' round the mountain when she comes..."

OLIVIA. No more singing. Come. To bed. And never change a hair on that sweet head.

(*Music plays. With great ceremony, she leads him away.*)

END OF ACT ONE

Act II

Scene One

(We're at an outdoor party at JACK WARNER'S Beverly Hills mansion. Hollywood types walk by chatting and dancing, and we hear a big band playing hits of the great Swing era by Glenn Miller and Count Basie. After a moment, REINHARDT enters, dressed for the party, and addresses the audience.)

REINHARDT. Hollywood! City of dreams! Like the Wood Near Athens, it is a place of magic. Anything can happen here. Especially at a fancy-schmancy party like this one on Jack Warner's estate. Do you see that leading man over there, big heart-throb? In January he was a chauffeur driving other people's cars. Now he has his own Mercedes Benz, the sporty, fun-car made by Nazis. And that movie starlet over there? She couldn't pay her rent until six months ago when she was spotted in some drug store sipping a cherry Coke. Now she has a swimming pool in the shape of her uterus. Lives change overnight. Love affairs appear like lightning and fade as quickly. Dreams are part of life, and after you dream, you bring back to the ordinary world what you learned in the world of imagination. And how bad can Hollywood be if they give parties like this one? The guests at this party alone confirm that yes, this planet has been visited by extraterrestrial life.

(LOUELLA PARSONS enters. She's dressed extravagantly, as only LOUELLA can dress.)

LOUELLA. *(Singing his name.)* Professor Reinhardt...!
REINHARDT. *(To the audience.)* And it stayed.

(She bustles over to him clutching her notebook and pencil.)

LOUELLA. Oh, I have so many questions to ask you about your picture!

REINHARDT. I answer all your questions on one condition.
(Dramatically) Dance with me!

LOUELLA. I thought you'd never ask!

(She flings her notebook over her shoulder and they tango off. As they go, OBERON and PUCK enter. They're both looking ultra-cool for the party. PUCK is in high spirits.)

PUCK. Parties, parties, parties. I'm getting bored with them already. NOT REALLY! Haaa! By all that's sacred, this is fun!

OBERON. I wonder where Olivia is?

PUCK. I thought you were bringing her.

OBERON. I thought so too, but then I couldn't find her.

PUCK. Oh she'll be along. Now guess what? I found someone for that Powell creature to mate with. Ha! Oh, this really is my best work ever. Wait. Look. Here she comes. In full sail.

(JOE E. BROWN enters, still in drag, dressed extravagantly for the party.)

PUCK. The barge she sat in, like a burnished throne, burned on the water!

BROWN. I still think this is wrong.

(OLIVIA sails in, dressed stunningly for the party. She has the magic flower behind one of her ears for decoration.)

OLIVIA.

Then love is wrong, and Fate and Destiny
Are wrong. Oh, my darling love.

(She kisses him passionately. OBERON and PUCK look at each other, then back at the couple.)

BROWN. Why can't I wear my normal clothes?

OLIVIA. Because this is how I fell in love with you!

BROWN. But I don't get it. Why pick me? I'm just a character actor.

OLIVIA. Love and reason keep little company nowadays.

BROWN. I guess I was okay in some of those baseball movies.

OLIVIA.

Oh how I loved to see you in those pictures!

The way you sidled to the plate,

And held your big strong bat in front of you.

BROWN. Then fast ball down the middle of the plate and wham!, it's a home run!

OLIVIA. *(Approaching orgasm.)* O spirit of love, how quick and fresh art thou!

BROWN. And then another and another! Wham, wham!
(OLIVIA lets out an orgasmic scream on each wham.) Then it's out with the glove!

OLIVIA.

O that I were a glove upon that hand.
That I might touch that cheek.

(The music changes to "Cheek-to-Cheek.")

Dance with me now, you mad fool.

(She takes him in her arms and they dance off. OBERON turns threateningly to PUCK. Thunder is heard.)

PUCK. Wait. Wait wait. Wait. Just wait. Okay? I admit it.
Something went wrong.

OBERON. "Something went wrong?"

PUCK. I don't know what happened! I mean, she must have
gotten some of the flower in her eye!

OBERON.

Oh, really? DO YOU THINK SO?!

You spongy, fawning, parasitical oaf! You lump of
Wind, you witless, unwiped, panderly puke-stocking!

PUCK. All right, all right! I made a mistake. I must have
dropped it some place. She must have picked it up —

OBERON. And now it's behind her ear!

PUCK. Right.

OBERON.

You useless, flap-eared measle, get it back!
We can't have a thing like that floating around
Hollywood. That's all they need out here,
Another excuse to copulate.

PUCK. Yes, my Lord.

OBERON. But more important, find the antidote.

PUCK. The antidote?

OBERON. To release her from the spell.

PUCK. I know what it is. I just don't know where to find it.

OBERON. Well then perhaps you should start looking RIGHT
AWAY!

HAYS. *(Off)* Where the hell is Warner!!

OBERON. Go.

PUCK. Yes sir, right away!

*(As OBERON and PUCK exit, HAYS enters, slightly disheveled.
He's wiping his jacket, mopping up a spill.)*

HAYS. Lord I hate these parties! Look at this! That little tramp
Claudette Colbert spilled her drink on me... *(He looks around to
make sure that no one's watching, and he pulls a mirror out of his
pocket. He looks into it and straightens his hair and eyebrows.
He's even more vain than we realized.)* And they say that I'm
unreasonable. Everything is my fault. They don't know anything
about me! *(PUCK reenters, carrying the flower.)* I'm not against
art. I happen to love beautiful things. Real beauty. Like little furry
animals. *(He gestures towards PUCK, who is outraged.)* Or flow-
ers. Like that one, there. Look at that. So delicate. So fragrant.
(Introducing himself.) Will Hays. Hays Office.

PUCK. Did you say Hays? Here.

*(PUCK hands the flower to HAYS. HAYS smells it — and it attacks
his eye.)*

HAYS. Oooh! It's in my eye! *(He throws it down petulantly.)*
Stupid flower! Ooh, it stings. Maybe I can get it out... *(He pulls
out his mirror and looks into it, and Ping! His jaw drops. He's
enraptured by the image in the mirror.)* But soft! What light
through yonder window breaks! It is the East, and I am the sun!

Ooooh! My God! Tis beauty truly blent! Ha ha! *(He swaggers around in front of his image.)* Is this a swagger that I see before me?! *(He kisses his image in the mirror.)* My person beggars all description. I could hop forty paces through the street and make defect perfection! I could make me a willow cabin at my gate And let the babbling gossip of the air cry out "Will Hays! Will Hays!" God in Heaven, just look at that face. So strong, and yet so vulnerable. So harsh, yet so playful. Demanding, yet kindly. Noble, but with a common touch. It's no wonder people frown at me all the time. They're jealous. They all want to be me! Ha! To be or not to be me, That is the question! Well I'll fix them. I'll fix them good. I'll listen to all their little complaints, and I'll smile and smile and be a villain and I'll say NO! You may not fill your films with smut in the name of art. I will not have it! You may not wheedle another concession out of me! You may not bribe me with fame or women or money! Unless it's a lot of money! There shall be no more compromises! Ha ha ha ha ha ha ha! Lead on, MacDuff! Ha ha ha ha ha ha ha!

(He holds the mirror out in front of him and follows it — so it seems to pull him off. The moment HAYS is gone, WARNER enters. He looks around impatiently.)

WARNER. Lydia?...Lydia?!...Where the hell is she? *(He nods graciously to some passing dancers.)* Hello. Hello. *(He looks around and shakes his head in amazement, not at all unhappily.)* Just look at all this opulence. Two tennis courts. Four squash courts. I've got a boathouse — and there isn't a drop of water within fifteen miles. The American Dream. And it's meaningless without Lydia. Lydia. A chorus girl. I'm a 50-year-old mogul and I fell in love with a chorus girl. I'm a walking cliché. On our very first

date, she turned to me and said she wanted a starring part in my next movie. I said "Are you crazy?" She looked at me with those liquid eyes and said "What's the use of sleeping with an old man unless he makes me a star?" *(He chuckles happily, then looks off dreamily.)* If that wonderful girl ever knew how much I love her, she'd make my life a living hell. *(He sees DARYL passing.)* Daryl.

DARYL. Yes sir! Yes sir! Right here, sir!

WARNER. Where's Lydia?! Have you been keeping an eye on her?

DARYL. Oh yes sir.

WARNER. And there's been no funny stuff?

DARYL. Funny stuff?

WARNER. Men. Has she been...entertaining anyone in her dressing room? Offering them a little chips and dip. Putting on a spread, as it were.

DARYL. No sir. I didn't know she cooked.

WARNER. That's a metaphor, you idiot. Has she been fooling around?

DARYL. Oh no sir.

WARNER. Good, good. I'm asking you because tonight could be special. I'm thinking of popping the question. Look at this ring.

DARYL. That's quite a pop.

WARNER. I want her to be happy. That's all that matters. As long as it's not with anyone else.

DARYL. Remember what she told me, sir. She wants to give you a "really big thank you."

WARNER. The vixen. Daryl, boy, I only hope that someday you find a girl even half as wonderful.

(LYDIA enters. She's wearing a stunning, sexy dress. She looks towards WARNER and DARYL, who are standing together.)

LYDIA. My darling, my darling, my darling...! (WARNER puts his arms out, but she sails right past him and goes straight for DARYL and kisses him passionately on the lips.) Oh, Daryl!

DARYL. I-I-I-I

WARNER. What's going on here?!

LYDIA. Jack, come here. (He does. She pushes him away.)

Go away!

What's past is past.

I've found my beacon in the night at last.

DARYL. No you haven't! Sir, I never — ever — would have — sir, is this a joke?

WARNER. A joke?!

LYDIA. (To DARYL.) Daryl, how can you say that! Is this a joke? Or this? Or this? (She puts his hands on her breasts and he screams.) Oh, I've always dreamed of sleeping with a yes-man!

WARNER. (Rolling up his sleeves.) Lydia, stand aside.

(They circle the stage. It turns into a chase.)

DARYL. Sir! Please! It's not my fault!

WARNER. Traitor.

LYDIA. Don't touch him!

DARYL. Please. I bruise easily. Heeeelp!

(They dash off. We can hear them off stage as the chase continues: "Help!" "Don't touch him!" As they go. LOUELLA PARSONS enters, worn out by the party.)

LOUELLA. Parties, parties, every night. If I see one more scallop on a toothpick wrapped in bacon, I'll throw up. Still, who would have thought that I, Louella Oettinger from Dixon, Illinois would end up in Hollywood, hobnobbing with the rich and the

reckless, the base and the brazen, the vile and the vicious. It's like a dream come true. Ha! (Beat.) Oh look at that flower. It's beautiful. And the smell, it's oh, ooh! It's in my eye.

(DARYL runs in. He stops and leans against a statue. He's out of breath and panting hard. He doesn't see LOUELLA.)

DARYL. I can't do this. I need a place to hide.

(LOUELLA turns and sees him — Ping!)

LOUELLA. And hide you shall forever by my side.

DARYL. Oh no.

LOUELLA. Kiss me, you fool.

(As she's kissing DARYL, PUCK enters carrying the yellow antidote flower. PUCK sees them kissing and screams.)

PUCK. Ahhhhhh! I can't believe it. I did it again.

(PUCK picks up the red flower, as HAYS reenters, gazing into his mirror.)

HAYS.

Shall I compare thee to a summer's day?

Thou art more lovely and more temperate. (REINHARDT enters.)

Rough winds do shake the darling buds of May —

REINHARDT. What's going on?

PUCK. (Handing the red flower to REINHARDT.) Nothing, nothing! Here, hold this.

REINHARDT. Thank you. Is beautiful. And the smell is ooh! It's in my eye. (He rubs his eye and looks up. Ping! He's looking right at HAYS.)

Vill Hays, Vill Hays, you have cheeks of bliss,
Und all I ask is a single kiss!

HAYS. Get away from me! Just stop it! If there's anybody I'm
caressing around here, it's me!

(And now LYDIA and WARNER hurry in.)

LYDIA. There you are!

DARYL. Oh no.

WARNER. You lowlife swine. Don't move or I'll call my
guards and have you beaten to a pulp.

LOUELLA. Don't you threaten him, you bully! Can't you see
the boy is frightened? Look at that face! That face those eyes those
lips oh kiss me please my darling boy.

LYDIA. Leave him alone, he's mine!

LOUELLA. No, he's not, he's mine!

WARNER. I've got to admit, this kid must have something.

DARYL. *(Crying)* Aw, please, would you cut it out! I know
why you're doing this. Because I'm a yes-man with ambitions!
But I want to *be* something when I grow up! Once, just once in my
life, I want to say no!

LOUELLA. *(To LYDIA.)* You take one step in his direction
and I'll scratch your eyes out, you slut!

LYDIA. Slut?! You're calling me a slut?

REINHARDT. Ja, Slut.

LYDIA. Ahhhhhhh!

*(LYDIA makes a running leap at LOUELLA — and as she flies by,
WARNER and DARYL catch her under the arms and hold her
dangling in the air. Hubbub. At this moment, POWELL and
OLIVIA enter fighting over BROWN, who keeps trying to get
a word in edgewise.)*

OLIVIA. *I'm being too forward?* You had your hands all over
him!

BROWN. No, he really didn't —

POWELL. I cut in and we were dancing! You didn't have to
make a scene!

*(Now it's back to the other fight, as LYDIA bites WARNER'S
hand:)*

LYDIA. Let go of me!

WARNER. Ow!

LYDIA. Look at you. You're old enough to be his mother!

LOUELLA. "Age cannot with me, nor custom stale my infi-
nite variety."

WARNER. *(To DARYL.)* There's only one way to stop her but
she'd never forgive me.

DARYL. I think you've got to, sir.

LOUELLA. Strumpet! Wench! Harlot!

LYDIA. Witch! Crone!

WARNER. Lydia?

*(WARNER taps LYDIA on the shoulder, and whap!, he gives her a
right to the jaw and knocks her out.)*

LYDIA. *(Crumpling to the floor.)* Geez ...

WARNER. *(Reacting to what he's just done.)* LYDIA!

(Everyone goes mad:)

LOUELLA. POWELL. OLIVIA. REINHARDT. DARYL.
 Ahhhhhh! You want to That's exactly Come, I show No! I'm
 Ahhhhhh! settle this what I want you my saying no!
 Ahhhhhh! outside? to do. Let's etchings. Ha ha! No
 go! no no no

(Suddenly OBERON appears — perhaps from above.) no no!!

OBERON. STOP! (Everyone magically freezes and there is instant silence. OBERON swings down, using a rope, Errol Flynn fashion. Then, to PUCK:)

Give me the flower. The yellow one, you numbskull!
 Take thou some of it and lead them awry,
 Then crush this herb in Louella's eye.
 To Lydia and Reinhardt do the same,
 And put an end to this foul game.
 I'll take these two about to fight
 And remove the error also from their sight
 And so restore some peace unto this night.

(OBERON leads off OLIVIA and POWELL. BROWN runs off in the other direction. PUCK is left with REINHARDT, LYDIA, LOUELLA, DARYL, HAYS and WARNER. He intones the following, making everyone on stage react in rhythm:)

PUCK.

Up and down, up and down,
 I will lead them up and down.
 I am feared in field and town,
 Goblin lead them up and down.

(PUCK causes a mist to arise, so that everyone gets confused by the voices that PUCK now imitates. In LYDIA'S voice:)

PUCK. Hey, Jack, Daryl, Will. It's me, Lydia! Come here, I need your help!

WARNER. Right away!

DARYL. Yes, ma'am!

HAYS. I'm coming!

PUCK. (In DARYL'S voice.) "Louella! Lydia! 'Tis I, your darling Daryl!"

LOUELLA. You divine creature!

LYDIA. (Orgasmically) I come, I come, see how I come...

(And so, they all leave the stage. As the last one exits, OBERON reenters, carrying OLIVIA over his shoulder in a fireman's carry. She's still under the spell of the flower and is kicking and screaming.)

OLIVIA. Let go of me! I need to see Joey! He'll miss me! Would you put me down!

(OBERON lowers OLIVIA so that she's standing in front of him. Then he puts his hand on her forehead and she falls asleep. OBERON lowers her to the ground and presses the petals of the yellow flower on OLIVIA'S eyes.)

OBERON.

Be as thou wast wont to be,
 See as thou wast wont to see.
 Dian's bud o'er Cupid's flower,
 Hath such force and blessed power.
 Awake, my love.

(During the following, JOE E. BROWN enters and is about to speak — then he overhears OLIVIA and listens...)

OLIVIA. ...What's going on? Where am I?...Oh my gosh, I had the most incredible dream! I thought I was in love with Joe E. Brown! And I think he was in drag! *(She laughs. BROWN pulls off his Thisbe wig and leaves down-hearted.)* What a dream. I don't remember much about the party, though.

OBERON.

Oh, it was one of those...unforgettable nights.
 "In such a night,
 When the sweet wind did gently kiss the trees
 And they did make no noise, in such a night,
 Troilus, methinks, mounted the Trojan walls
 And sighed his soul toward the Grecian tents
 Where Cressid lay that night."

OLIVIA.

"In such a night
 Stood Dido with a willow in her hand.
 Upon the wild sea banks, and waft her love.
 To come again to Carthage."

OBERON.

In such a night
 Did Oberon fall in love with a mortal
 Named Olivia and vow to be
 With her forever.

(He picks her up and holds her in his arms, kissing her passionately. She looks out:)

OLIVIA. Dear Mother, Call Aunt Ethel.

(He carries her off.)

[If the play was in three acts (as it is structurally) this would be the end of Act Two.]

The next morning, the WARNER BROTHERS are on another conference call.)

HARRY. Jack, you're a schmuck!

JACK. What'd I do?!

HARRY. We just got a call from your friend Will Hays. He's launching an investigation of the whole studio!

JACK. But why?

ALBERT. You didn't see the paper this morning? It says you had an orgy last night at your place. With the cast and crew of your big-shot picture.

HARRY. It says that everybody in the place was drunk. That fights broke out. Screaming was heard. There was sex on the grass. It says there was even some transvestism!

SAM. What's transvestism?

ALBERT. When a guy dresses up as a girl.

SAM. Jack! I'm your brother, you didn't invite me?!

JACK. It wasn't that bad, I swear to God.

ALBERT. Tell that to Hays. He's issuing a press release denouncing guess which studio.

HARRY. And he says he's going to close your picture unless he gets compliance with his script demands and an apology from Reinhardt.

JACK. So I'll get him to apologize.

HARRY. You better or we're up the creek! We've got a lot invested in this film already.

SAM. Over half a million, I checked this morning.

ALBERT. Half a million?!

SAM. Something like that. It was higher than I can count.

HARRY.	ALBERT.	SAM.
You had no business	I could have told	You want to drop that
starting this film in	you this would hap-	kind of money on a
the first place! You	pen when he got the	gangster picture, I say
said the word "art"	girl involved. Sex	go ahead. But on
and I knew we had	and business don't	some artsy-
trouble!	mix!	fartsy nonsense —?!

JACK. All right, all right! Would you give me a break?!

HARRY, ALBERT & SAM. NO!

(The lights change and we're at the Sound Stage that morning, as a number of actors straggle by. First we see LYDIA, in her work clothes, holding a hot water bottle to her head and weeping. Then REINHARDT, DARYL, CAGNEY and WARNER.)

WARNER. *(Going by, muttering.)* I don't know what happened. It started out real nice. Maybe the rum punch was too strong...

CAGNEY. *(Practicing his lines as Bottom.)* "I have had a dream past the wit of man to say what dream it was. Man is but an ass if he go about to expound this dream..."

(OBERON and OLIVIA now enter together. They're still wearing their clothes from the party — having spent the night together at her apartment.)

OLIVIA. I guess I'd better get to wardrobe. I had a wonderful time last night. Don't forget we're having lunch together.

OBERON. And dinner.

OLIVIA. And breakfast.

OBERON. I want to try one of those round crispy things with the indentations.

OLIVIA. *(Running into his arms and holding him tightly.)*
...Waffles!

(PUCK hurries in. He's very upset.)

PUCK. Majesty, I need to speak to you right away!

OLIVIA. "Majesty?"

OBERON. That's just his little joke...

OLIVIA. I've got to run. I'll see you later.

(She exits.)

PUCK. I'm sorry, sir, but I have dire news.

OBERON. So important that you have to interrupt?!

PUCK. Yes! Look at this! *(He puts out his hand.)* We're fading.

(Beat. OBERON turns gray. He looks at his hand.)

OBERON. *(To himself.)* That was it.

PUCK. I don't know why. Or how. I think it started in the middle of the night. I felt a sort of tingling. Then, since dawn, I've been seeing visions of the Wood near Athens. Ours. The real one. I think we're going home.

OBERON. We can't! Not now.

PUCK. I agree! It isn't fair! I'm a star! I gave an autograph this morning! And all those women. They want to mother me. They think I'm adorable. Can't you reverse it?

OBERON. I don't know how. *(He gives a cry of pain.)* God in Heaven!

PUCK. I wonder how much time is left.

OBERON. Time...Of course. It was about this time we arrived here yesterday.

PUCK. That's it.

OBERON. From sun to sun. Twenty-four hours. How much time does that leave us? *(PUCK looks at his watch — and bursts into tears.)* What's the matter?

PUCK. *(Pointing to his wrist.)* It's a Rolex! A few more days, I could have bought a Studebaker!

OBERON. How much time do we have left!

PUCK. It looks like twenty minutes.

OBERON. I've got to find Olivia.

PUCK. I've got to find a girl who's willing to have sex at 9:30 in the morning.

(They exit. As they go, WARNER, REINHARDT and DARYL enter together.)

WARNER. Hays will be here any second, now what did you say to him?!

REINHARDT. I was reasonable. I listened to what he had to say. And then I told him he was Nazi pig.

WARNER. Look. The fact is, if you don't do as he says, there will be no movie. He can pull the plug.

REINHARDT. So pull the plug.

WARNER. But we have 500,000 dollars invested!

REINHARDT. *(Shrugs)* It's not my money.

(WARNER staggers.)

DARYL. Sir, it's all right. Keep breathing.

(HAYS swaggers in.)

HAYS. Well, well, well. That was quite a party you gave last night.

WARNER. Did you have a good time?

HAYS. No. I despised it. At least I had me for company.

WARNER. I believe you two know each other.

(REINHARDT and HAYS look at each other and shudder, remembering last night.)

REINHARDT. Whatever he says, I take the Fifth Amendment.

HAYS. Don't even speak to me, you hypocrite! You tried to get on my good side last night, didn't you.

REINHARDT. You have a good side?

WARNER. He's kidding, that's a joke.

HAYS. Then here's a joke for you. I have decided that there will be no more compromises. Whatsoever. None! And you have fifteen minutes to agree to my alterations or I withhold the League certificate! In which case, you might as well stop filming because you won't get distribution. It'll be all over!

WARNER. *(To REINHARDT.)* So what do you say?

REINHARDT. What can I say? I cannot give in to censorship and bullying! That is just what happened in my country and look what happened!

HAYS. Then your movie won't get made!

REINHARDT. Fine!

WARNER. Now wait a second! You said you'd give us fifteen minutes.

REINHARDT. And I keep shooting film till final minute! Final second!

DARYL. I agree!

WARNER. Would you be quiet! *(To HAYS.)* You'll hear from us.

REINHARDT. You'll hear bupkis.

WARNER. *(To REINHARDT.)* You! In my office now!

(WARNER pulls DARYL and REINHARDT off, leaving HAYS alone.)

HAYS. How dare he yell at me like that!

(OBERON enters, pre-occupied.)

OBERON. Olivia ... Where did she go...

HAYS. Oh, it's you again. Have you "losteth" your way? Or are you waiting to "appeareth" in the movie?

OBERON. I have to warn you that I'm in no mood for this.

HAYS. You're in "no mood for this?" You two-bit, piddling actor. Are you insane?! I can finish you! A single word from me and you'll be —

(WHAM!! OBERON has pointed his finger at HAYS — and with a crack of lightning, HAYS is frozen solid. He's in the middle of a gesture, but he can't budge. Only his eyes can move, and they're open wide, darting in all directions.)

OBERON. Foolish mortal. Do you know what I could do to you?! What I could turn you into?! A meddling monkey or busy ape. A lion, cat or bear —

BROWN. Good morning. *(JOE E. BROWN has entered. He looks at HAYS.)* Is he all right?

OBERON. No. He has a rare medical condition. He makes other people sick.

BROWN. Oh. I hope you feel better! I've got to run. We're filming my big scene this morning.

(He exits, leaving OBERON with HAYS.)

OBERON. Do you have anything to say?

(OBERON makes a gesture and unfreezes him.)

HAYS. *(Belligerently)* I don't know how you did that, it's probably a gas or something, but I could sue you for assault and battery! And don't you think I wouldn't —

(WHAM!! OBERON has done it again. HAYS is frozen.)

OBERON. Don't you mortals ever learn? You keep making the same mistake, over and over. You don't believe!

REINHARDT. *(Off)* Quickly now! No time to lose! Come quickly!

OBERON. ...Heh, heh. I have an idea. Come. *(OBERON hurries off, forgetting that HAYS can't move.)* Oh, right.

(He snaps his fingers, unfreezing HAYS'S legs — and HAYS backs off after OBERON like a broken robot. As OBERON and HAYS leave, the cast of the movie enters, all in costume, led by REINHARDT. They include OLIVIA as HERMIA, LYDIA as HELENA, POWELL as LYSANDER, CAGNEY as PYRAMUS, and BROWN as THISBE. WARNER and DARYL enter with them.)

DARYL. Hurry up! Make it quick! No time to lose! Everyone on the set please. We're at the palace. On set quickly, please.

REINHARDT. (*Urgently arranging the actors.*) Ve only have fifteen minutes, I vant to get this in one take, so act very happy or I will kill you.

LYDIA. Sorry. But why is Helena happy again?

REINHARDT. (*Impatiently*) Because she has just married the man she loves.

LYDIA. Is this her first marriage or her second?

REINHARDT. Her first!

LYDIA. Did she have a pre-nuptial agreement?

REINHARDT. I DON'T KNOW WHAT SHE HAD, NOW SIT DOWN, VE ARE LOSING TIME! Good. Ladies and Gentlemen. You are at the Palace in Athens watching a play entitled "Pyramus and Thisbe." Love has triumphed and all is well.

(*Suddenly, there is thunder and lightning — and WILL HAYS comes stampeding in wearing an ass-head. It grows out of his shoulders and is part of his body. He runs wildly around the stage, trying desperately to get the head off.*)

OLIVIA & LYDIA. AHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHH!

HAYS. HEE HAW HEE HAW HEE HAW HEE HAW!!

POWELL. Who's that?!

CAGNEY. What is it?!

DARYL. What do you want?

HAYS. I annnnnnt taaaaawk! I annnnnnt taaaaawk!

(*HAYS bolts, and DARYL, CAGNEY, POWELL and BROWN chase the creature around the stage. When they catch him, they try to pull his head off.*)

BROWN. Maybe he's from wardrobe!

HAYS. I'm nooooooot! I'm nooooooot!

WARNER. Well he better stop it. That's an expensive costume!

CAGNEY. And it's mine! Now take it off!

HAYS. I caaaaaan't! I caaaaaan't!

WARNER. Boys, take it off him!

CAGNEY. All right, fuzz face, don't move!

DARYL. Stay where you are!

CAGNEY. Powell, grab him!

POWELL. Hey, come back here!

BROWN. Get him!

HAYS. HEE HAW HEE HAW HEE HAW HEE HAW!!!

DARYL. I got him!

CAGNEY. Now pull his head off!

HAYS. Pleeceeeeee stop! Pleeceeeeee stop!

WARNER. Who are you?!

HAYS. Wiiiiiiiiill Hays! Wiiiiiiiiill Hays!

EVERYONE. Will Hays? That's Will Hays? (*Etc.*)

REINHARDT. Will Hays???...That's good.

(*HAYS grabs a pad and pencil from the director's desk.*)

WARNER. Wait. He's writing something down. (*He snatches the paper and reads.*) "If you will remove this ass head, I will withdraw my objections to the movie."

(*Everyone cheers.*)

BROWN. But it's stuck like glue!

(*HAYS grabs the pad back and scribbles some more.*)

WARNER. Wait, He says: *(Reading)* "I think the actor who plays Oberon can do it." *(HAYS snatches back the pad and scribbles some more. Warner reads:)* "...The son of a bitch."

REINHARDT. But where is Oberon?

(OBERON and PUCK have silently entered by this time.)

OBERON. I'm right here.

WARNER. Can you do it?

OBERON. Of course I can. It's just a costume. *(To HAYS.)* Do you want me to take it off?

HAYS. Yes pleeeeeeese! Yes pleeeeeeese!

OBERON. And are you begging me, like Niobe, all tears? *(HAYS goes down on his knees and clasps his hands together. To PUCK:)* Do you think we should?

PUCK. Oh, why not.

(OBERON removes the head. HAYS staggers backward. The cast react: "It is him!" "WILL HAYS!")

WARNER. *(Angry)* Hays?! What the hell are you doing?!

HAYS. *(Purple with rage.)*...How dare you...How dare all of you!!! I could sue every single one of you for this! And I could stop this foolish movie!

REINHARDT. *(Taking the note from WARNER and holding it up.)* Except that you made a contract.

(Silence.)

HAYS. ...All right, fine! Make your stupid movie. I'll be revenged on the whole pack of you!

(He stomps out, and the cast of the movie express relief.)

REINHARDT. Go. Everyone. Take a break. Fifteen minutes. And when you get back, ve vill continue making movie.

(A cheer from the actors. They and REINHARDT wander off happily, chatting among themselves. As they go, LYDIA and WARNER find themselves face to face.)

WARNER. Lydia.

LYDIA. Jack.

(Then they both speak at the same time.)

BOTH. I know you'll never forgive me, but —

(They stop, surprised.)

BOTH. What did you say?

WARNER. You go first.

LYDIA. No, please, be my guest.

WARNER. ... I was saying that I'm sure you'll never forgive me for hitting you like that.

LYDIA. And I thought you'd still be mad at me for making such a fuss over Daryl. Jack, I-I-I don't know what happened! It was like a brain seizure or somethin'.

WARNER. It made me so jealous.

LYDIA. You were magnificent.

WARNER. I was?

LYDIA. Like Othello when he thought that Desdemona was unfaithful.

("Desdemonia" is her mispronunciation.)

WARNER. *(Astonished)* Lydia...?

LYDIA. This Shakespeare stuff really gets to you.

WARNER. Let me ask you a question: will you marry me?

LYDIA. Let me ask you a question. Do you still have that three-carat ring?

WARNER. Lydia!

LYDIA. I'm kidding, I'm kidding. Of course I want to marry you. Then I can really boss you around. *(They kiss.)* Now where's my ring?

WARNER. Right here.

LYDIA. Ooh! Ahh! Ooh! I love it! Look at this! *(She puts it on and they stroll off together.)* Listen, I got a great idea for our next movie. Another Shakespeare. "War and Peace!"

(And they're gone. PUCK hurries up to OBERON.)

PUCK. Master, we must go. It's any moment now.

OBERON. Anon, good Robin.

PUCK. Lord, what fools these mortals be. And yet, there is some...greatness about them. I'll be waiting for you in the parking lot.

(As PUCK exits, OLIVIA re-enters.)

OLIVIA. There you are.

OBERON. Olivia —

OLIVIA. Lunch?

OBERON. I can't have lunch.

OLIVIA. We'll have dinner then.

OBERON. I can't have dinner with you.

OLIVIA. Why not?

OBERON. Because I have to go away.

OLIVIA. What do you mean?

OBERON. I'm leaving here in a few minutes.

OLIVIA. But when do you get back?

OBERON. I'm not coming back. I can't. I'm sorry.

(Shocked silence. OLIVIA is stunned.)

OLIVIA. *(With rising panic.)* But why? Why are you leaving? Did I do something wrong?

OBERON. Never.

OLIVIA. But you can't just walk away! There must be some reason!

OBERON. You have to trust me. It can't be stopped.

OLIVIA. No! I don't want you to go!

OBERON. Trust me.

OLIVIA. But I love you! *(She holds him and weeps.)* Please. Don't go. Don't you know how I feel?

(She weeps in his arms.)

OBERON. Shhhh. It will be all right. *(Lulling her to sleep; carrying her to some pillows on the floor.)*

I know a bank where the wild thyme blows,

Where oxslips and the nodding violet grows,

Quite over-canopied with luscious woodbine,

With sweet musk-roses and with eglantine.

There the snake throws her enameled skin

Weed-wide enough to wrap a fairy in.

(She sleeps. He has a petal of the Western flower in his hand.)

And with the juice of this I streak your eye
 So that the next thing now that you espy
 Shall be the only love that you recall.
 And you shall never dwell on me at all.
 Or feel the ache of grief, the tear of pain,
 And only in your inmost dreams will I remain.

*(He lays her down on the ground. He kisses her. At this moment,
 POWELL enters.)*

POWELL. Hi. Sorry. Your friend said you wanted to see me?

OBERON. Yes. I have to go now.

POWELL. Olivia...? Is she asleep?

OBERON. She's waiting for you to wake her up.

POWELL. For me? You don't mean you've talked to her?

(OBERON nods.) Really?

OBERON. Wake her and see.

*(POWELL kneels at OLIVIA'S side. As he does, OBERON gestures
 and makes himself invisible. Zzzzing!)*

*As POWELL gently shakes OLIVIA'S shoulder, then speaks to her,
 OBERON stays and watches over the resolution that he's
 wrought, like a benevolent spirit in a Giotto fresco.)*

POWELL. Hello?

(OLIVIA opens her eyes and smiles. Then looks confused.)

OLIVIA. ...What happened? Was I asleep?...Dick? Oh, Dick,
 it's so good to see you!

POWELL. I'm only here because of...Where did he go...?

OLIVIA. Oh, I had the strangest dream. I thought I was in love

with...a spirit of some sort. From another world.

POWELL. Sounds like a pretty nice dream.

OLIVIA. It was.

POWELL. Would you like to get some lunch with me at the
 commissary?

OLIVIA. I'd love to.

(They embrace. Then they head off together.)

POWELL. Then maybe after dinner we can go dancing, would
 you like that? I've got to warn you, though, I'm a really good
 dancer...

OLIVIA. I'll be right there.

*(He exits; and she lingers for a moment. She looks around.
 Something very strange and very wonderful has happened to
 her, and she doesn't quite know what it is.)*

REINHARDT strolls on and speaks in the half-light.)

REINHARDT. The next morning, as if by some miracle, the
 actor Victor Jory changed his mind and asked to come back and
 play Oberon. And by the end of the month, Mickey Rooney's leg
 was healed and he returned to play the role of Puck. Two months
 later, the shooting was finished; six months later, the movie was
 released. Alas, I directed no more movies in Hollywood. But I tell
 you this. I never forgot what I learned in that year of shadows.

(He exits.)

OLIVIA takes one last look at where OBERON must be...)

OLIVIA. Good-bye.

(She runs off. OBERON watches her go as the lights fade.)

OBERON. Good-bye.

(The lights fade slowly on OBERON, standing alone.)

END OF PLAY

PROPERTY LIST

FURNITURE/DESIGN

Spot Towers (2)
 Red Carpet
 Desk
 Armchair
 Camera Dolley
 Tree
 Director's Table
 Director's Chairs (2)
 Groundcloth
 Standlights (2)
 Log
 Hampers (2) w/lids;
 Wardrobe Racks (2)
 Chairs (2)
 Rug
 Curtains (2)
 Chaises (4)
 Moon

ACT I

Props

Microphone
 Mic Stand
 Cigar
 Cameras (2)
 Headshots
 Notepad
 Pencil

Character

Notes

Warner	
Photographers	w/flash
Goldwyn	
Daryl	Small, top spiral
Daryl	

Phone	Warner	on desk
Photoplay Magazine	Lydia	"Ten Biggest Sluts in Hollywood"
Make-up brush	Bethany	
Make-up sponge or powder puff	Bethany	
Phones (3)	Warner Bros.	base & receiver
Sign		A Wood Near Athens, etc.
Mug	Tarzan	
Notepad	Groucho	
Pencil	Groucho	
Cigar	Groucho	
Telephone		on director's table
Pencil Cup		
Scissors		in pencil cup
Midsummer Scripts (3)		
Midsummer Script	Olivia	
Megaphone (1 or 2)	Max/Puck	
List of offending passages	Hays	destroyed
Pocket mirror	Hays	
Midsummer Script	Hays	
Notepad	Hays	small, fits in pocket
Pencil or pen	Hays	
Camera	Photographer	flash
Notepad	Louella	
Pencil	Louella	
Chalk Slate	Daryl	movie clapper
Boom Mic	Eric	
Costume measuring tapes (2)	Bethany/Scott	
Pins	Scott	

Scissors	Bethany	tied around neck
Shopping packages (4)	Puck	Expensive stores, tossed to Oberon
Midsummer Script	Olivia	w/ketchup smudge

ACT II

<u>Props</u>	<u>Character</u>	<u>Notes</u>
Notebook	Louella	
Pencil	Louella	
Purple Flowers (3 stems)	Puck	same
Pocket Mirror	Hays	
Sword	Cagney	
Bloody mantle	Joe Brown	Thisbe
Pad & Pencil	Hays	

COSTUMES

CAPUTO — Starlet into Bride

OUT: Gold and silver sequin dress, white fur, satin pumps with rhinestone buckle, jewelry, starlet wig

IN: Gold long sleeve ombre shirt with shredded sleeves, cathurnae, white schmatta, bride wig

NEES — Joe E. Brown premiere into Albert Warner

OUT: Tuxedo shirt, tuxedo pants, tuxedo jacket, bowtie and cummerbund, wig

IN: White shirt, blue pinstriped suit, maroon tie, maroon pocket square, moustache and glasses

FOUCHEUX — Jack Warner premiere into Jack Warner basic

OUT: Tuxedo shirt, tuxedo pants, tuxedo jacket, bowtie and cummerbund (TRACK TUXEDO BACK TO DRESSING ROOM)

IN: White shirt, blue pinstriped suit, maroon tie, maroon pocket square

RIPLEY — Lydia Lansing premiere into Lydia Lansing foreign legion

OUT: Copper gown, white fur stole, copper shoes, jewelry

IN: Red slip with lace detail, silver, gold, and grey plaid bias dress, distressed silver shoes

RICHMAN — Cagney premiere into Sam Warner

OUT: Tuxedo shirt, tuxedo pants, tuxedo jacket, bowtie, cummerbund, patent shoes (TRACK TUXEDO BACK TO DRESSING ROOM)

IN: White shirt, blue pinstriped suit, maroon tie, moustache

FENDIG — Dick Powell premiere into Groucho Marx

OUT: Tuxedo shirt, tuxedo pants, tuxedo jacket, bowtie and cummerbund (TRACK TUXEDO BACK TO DRESSING ROOM)

IN: White shirt, striped morning trousers, cutaway coat, too big shoes, glasses, wig, moustache is painted on

LACEY — Olivia premiere into Olivia Elizabethan

OUT: Periwinkle gown, glitter net stole, jewelry, silver shoes

IN: Petticoat, greyish underskirt, overskirt, and bodice, grey crepe pumps

KARAS — Louella Parsons premiere into Louella Studio

OUT: Purple and gold velvet gown, brown fur with purple glitter lining, purple velvet hat, jewelry, purple satin pumps

IN: Cream dress with pleats, rust jacket with pleats, neck bow, orange hat with egret, brown leather pumps, brown leather purse with gold buckle

JORGENSEN — Photographer into Crew basic

OUT: Fedora, brown iridescent overcoat

IN: Flat cap

GRAHAM — V4 spot into SG Assistant

OUT: Flat cap

IN: Goldwyn Assistant suit jacket, purple neck tie

PROSKY — Max Reinhardt premiere into Reinhardt basic

OUT: Camel coat and paisley scarf (This happens onstage and then is a handoff to Eric Jorgensen)

MCCLURE — Photographer into Crew Basic

OUT: Overcoat, striped vest, and fedora (Crew basic is already underdressed)

IN: Sweater vest, flat cap

QUINTON — Samuel Goldwyn into Harry Warner

OUT: Light Beige double-breasted suit, purple tie, elevator shoes

IN: Blue pinstriped suit, maroon tie, maroon pocket square, black wingtips, wig

GRAHAM — Goldwyn assistant into Crew Basic

OUT: Brown double-breasted suit, purple tie, white shirt

IN: Cream striped shirt, brown birdseye trousers, brown and cream speckled vest, tie flat cap

JORGENSEN — Crew Basic into Cowboy

OUT: brown herringbone wool trousers and vest, cream striped shirt, flat cap, brown shoes, blue bowtie

IN: Black jeans, black plaid shirt, cowboy hat, leather holster belt, cowboy boots, beige neck bandana

RIPLEY — Lydia Lansing Foreign Legion into Lydia Elizabethan

OUT: Red slip with lace detail, silver, gold, and grey plaid bias dress, distressed silver shoes

IN: Lavender petticoat, pink striped underskirt, grey paisley skirt and bodice, grey leather pumps

SKINNER — Daryl into Tarzan

OUT: Shirt, trousers, sweater vest, glasses, shoes, socks, bowtie

IN: Tarzan dance belt and loincloth with pelt

NEES — Albert Warner into Joe E. Brown

OUT: White shirt, blue pinstripe suit, maroon tie, maroon pocket square, black shoes, wig, and moustache

IN: Period boxers, undershirt, socks with garters, plaid robe, brown stacey adams

RICHMAN — Sam Warner into Jimmy Cagney

OUT: White shirt, blue pinstripe suit, maroon tie, maroon pocket square, black shoes, and moustache

IN: Period boxers, undershirt, socks with garters, polka dot robe, black stacey adams

QUINTON — Harry Warner into Will Hays Basic

OUT: White shirt, blue pinstripe suit, maroon tie, maroon pocket square, black shoes

IN: Cream shirt, bowtie, brown suit, brown shoes, wig

PROSKY — Dark suit into Light basic

OUT: White plaid shirt, maroon tie, green plaid vest, plaid jacket, dark wool pants, cordovan shoes

IN: Cream windowpane shirt, sage green vest, cream wool trousers, light brown shoes, light plaid sportcoat, greenish tie

CAPUTO — Bride of Frankenstein into Make-up girl

OUT: Gold long sleeve ombre shirt with shredded sleeves, cathurnae, white schmatta, bride wig

IN: Cream blouse, plaid skirt, mauve smock, navy pumps, wig

JORGENSEN — Cowboy into Crew Basic

OUT: Black jeans, black plaid shirt, cowboy hat, leather holster belt, cowboy boots, beige neck bandana

IN: Brown herringbone wool trousers and vest, cream striped shirt, flat cap brown shoes, blue paisley bowtie

FENDIG — Groucho Marx into Lysander

OUT: White shirt, striped morning trousers, cutaway coat, too big shoes, glasses, wig!, wipe off moustache

IN: Elizabethan shirt, tights, pumpkin breeches, boots, doublet

SKINNER — Tarzan into Daryl

OUT: Tarzan dance belt and loincloth with pelt

IN: Shirt, trousers, sweater vest, glasses, shoes, socks, bowtie

RICHMAN — Into costume fitting scene

ADD: Period shirt and mechanical trousers, into costume fitting

ON: Leather vest, hat (V1 rack), and donkey head (Hamper) get added onstage

NEES — Into costume fitting scene

ADD: Period shirt and mechanical trousers into costume fitting

ON: Grey schmatta gets (V4 rack) added onstage

RIPLEY — Into "Number One, ..." crossover

OUT: Lavender petticoat, pink striped underskirt, grey paisley skirt and bodice, grey leather pumps (TRACK COSTUME TO V4)

IN: Penoir

RIPLEY — Into Lydia Elizabethan "To Woo"

OUT: Penoir

IN: Lavender petticoat, pink striped underskirt, grey paisley skirt and bodice, grey leather pumps

MCCLURE — Crew into Photographer

OUT: Sweater vest, flat cap

IN: Overcoat, striped vest, and fedora

MCCLURE — Photographer into Crew

OUT: Overcoat, striped vest, and fedora

IN: Sweater vest, flat cap

CAPUTO — Make-up girl into wardrobe assistant

OUT: Cream blouse, plaid skirt, mauve smock, navy pumps, wig

IN: Blue skirt, sage vest, and plaid jacket, black heels, glasses, pageboy wig

GRAHAM — Crew Basic into wardrobe assistant

OUT: Cream striped shirt, brown birdseye trousers, brown and cream speckled vest, tie, flat cap (TRACK CREW BASIC TO V3)

IN: White shirt, blue/grey 3 piece suit, black shoes, tie

DONAHOE — Leafy Puck into Hollywood Puck

OUT: Leafy jumpsuit, leg bands, wrist bands, leaf belt

IN: White shirt, cream pinstriped trousers, blue striped jacket, red ascot, black and white shoes, cream socks (adds sunglasses onstage)

JORGENSEN — Crew Basic into Crew Carpenter

OUT: Brown herringbone wool vest, wool flat cap, brown shoes

IN: Camel overalls and leather flat cap, brown shoes

JORGENSEN — Crew Carpenter into Crew Basic

OUT: Camel overalls and leather flat cap

IN: Brown herringbone wool vest, wool flat cap, brown shoes

RICHMAN — Cagney underwear into Pyramus

OUT: Period shirt, wool trousers, leather vest, wool hat, black stacey adams shoes

IN: Pyramus pleated skirt, white tank top, breastplate (front and back), Greek sandals, leather cuffs, gladiator hat with feathers

NEES — Joe E. Brown underwear into Thisbe

OUT: Period shirt, wool trousers, grey smock, brown stacey adams shoes

IN: Thisbe dress, black Greek sandals, blond wig

CAPUTO — Wardrobe assistant into Make-up girl

OUT: Blue skirt, sage vest, and plaid jacket, black heels, glasses, pageboy wig

IN: Cream blouse, plaid skirt, mauve smock, navy pumps, wig

GRAHAM — Wardrobe assistant into crew basic

OUT: White shirt, blue/grey 3 piece suit, black shoes, tie

IN: Cream striped shirt, brown birdseye trousers, brown and cream speckled vest, tie, flat cap

FOUCHEUX — Jack Warner basic into Warner party tuxedo

OUT: Blue suit, white shirt, maroon tie, black shoes

IN: Tuxedo shirt, tuxedo jacket and pants, bowtie and cummerbund, black wingtips

RIPLEY — Lydia Elizabethan into Lydia party

OUT: Lavender petticoat, pink striped underskirt, grey paisley skirt and bodice, grey leather pumps

IN: Red glitter dress with brooch, red jewelry, red dance shoes

SKINNER — Daryl basic into Daryl party tuxedo

OUT: Shirt, trousers, sweater vest, glasses, shoes, socks, bowtie

IN: Tuxedo shirt, dinner jacket and tux pants, bowtie and cummerbund, black wingtips

RICHMAN — Pyramus into Cagney party tuxedo

OUT: Pyramus pleated skirt, white tank top, breastplate (front and back), Greek sandals, leather cuffs, gladiator hat with feathers

IN: Tuxedo shirt, tuxedo jacket and pants, bowtie and cummerbund, black wingtips

LACEY — Olivia Elizabethan into Olivia party

OUT: Petticoat, greyish underskirt, overskirt, and bodice, grey crepe pumps

IN: Orchid beaded gown, silver shoes, jewelry

MCCLURE — Crew basic into Waiter

OUT: Striped pants, cream shirt, brown tie, sweater vest, brown shoes, flat cap

IN: Black tuxedo trousers, white pleated front tux shirt, black vest, black bowtie, white waiter jacket, black shoes

JORGENSEN — Crew carpenter into Waiter

OUT: Cream striped shirt, wool trousers, overalls, leather flat cap, brown shoes

IN: Black tuxedo trousers, white pleated front tux shirt, black vest, black bowtie, white waiter jacket, black shoes

GRAHAM — Crew basic into party guest

OUT: White shirt, blue/grey 3 piece suit, black shoes, tie

IN: Tuxedo shirt, tuxedo jacket and pants, bowtie and cummerbund, black wingtips

CAPUTO — Make-up girl into party guest

OUT: Cream blouse, plaid skirt, mauve smock, blue pumps, pageboy wig

IN: Lavender and seafoam gown, purple strappy shoes, starlet wig, jewelry

KARAS — Louella Parsons studio suit into Louella party

OUT: Cream dress with pleats, rust jacket with pleats, neck bow, orange hat with egret feathers, brown leather pumps, brown leather purse with gold buckle

IN: Bright orange dress with gold belt, matching hat with feathers, gold shoes

PROSKY — Reinhardt basic into Reinhardt party

OUT: Cream windowpane shirt, sage green vest, cream wool trousers, light brown shoes, light plaid sportcoat, greenish tie

IN: Tuxedo shirt, tuxedo jacket and pants, bowtie and cummerbund, black patent shoes

BIGGS — Oberon basic into Oberon party

OUT: Green snakeskin vest, leather pants, green suede boots, green kimono

IN: White shirt, green tuxedo, snakeskin shoes

DONAHOE — Puck Hollywood into Puck party tuxedo

OUT: White shirt, cream pinstriped trousers, blue striped jacket, red ascot, black and white shoes, cream socks (adds sunglasses onstage)

IN: Tuxedo shirt, green brocade vest, green tux pants, cream dinner jacket, brown-alligator shoes, green bowtie

QUINTON — Will Hays basic into Will Hays party tuxedo

OUT: Cream shirt, bowtie, brown suit, brown shoes

IN: Tuxedo shirt, tuxedo jacket and pants, bowtie and cummerbund, black wingtips

FENDIG — Lysander into Dick Powell part tuxedo

OUT: Elizabethan shirt, tights, pumpkin breeches, boots, doublet

IN: Tuxedo shirt, dinner jacket and tux pants, bowtie and cummerbund, black patent shoes

NEES — Thisbee into evening gown

OUT: Thisbe dress, black Greek sandals, blonde wig

IN: Fuchsia evening gown, blonde wig, brown stacey adams

CAPUTO — Party guest into Make-up girl

OUT: Lavender and seafoam gown, purple strappy shoes, starlet wig, jewelry

IN: Cream blouse, plaid skirt, mauve smock, pageboy wig, brown oxford shoes

GRAHAM — Party guest into Crew basic

OUT: Tuxedo shirt, tuxedo jacket and pants, bowtie and cummerbund, black wingtips

IN: Cream striped shirt, brown birdseye trousers, brown and cream speckled vest, tie, flat cap

MCCLURE — Waiter into Crew basic

OUT: Black tuxedo trousers, white pleated front tux shirt, black vest, black bowtie, white waiter jacket, black shoes

IN: Striped pants, cream shirt, brown tie, sweater vest, brown shoes, flat cap

JORGENSEN — Waiter into Crew basic

OUT: Black tuxedo trousers, white pleated front tux shirt, black vest, black bowtie, white waiter jacket, black shoes

IN: Brown herringbone wool trousers and vest, cream striped shirt, flat cap, brown shoes, blue paisley bowtie

RICHMAN — Cagney party tuxedo into Sam Warner blue suit

OUT: Tuxedo shirt, dinner jacket and tux pants, bowtie and cummerbund, black wing tips

IN: White shirt, blue pinstripe suit, maroon tie, maroon pocket square, black shoes, and moustache

QUINTON — Will Hays party tuxedo into Harry Warner blue suit

OUT: Tuxedo shirt, dinner jacket and tux pants, bowtie and cummerbund, black patent shoes

IN: White shirt, blue pinstripe suit, maroon tie, maroon pocket square, black shoes, wig, and moustache

FENDIG — Dick Powell party tuxedo into court clothes

OUT: Tuxedo shirt, dinner jacket and tux pants, bowtie and cummerbund, black shoes

IN: Period shirt, boots, pumpkin breeches

PROSKY — Max Reinhardt party tuxedo into Reinhardt basic

OUT: Tuxedo shirt, tuxedo jacket and pants, bowtie and cummerbund, black shoes

IN: White plaid shirt, maroon tie, green plaid vest, plaid jacket, olive wool pants, cordovan shoes

FOUCHEUX — Jack Warner party tuxedo into Jack Warner basic suit

OUT: Tuxedo shirt, dinner jacket and tux pants, bowtie and cummerbund, black shoes

IN: White shirt, blue pinstripe suit, maroon tie, maroon pocket square, black shoes

SKINNER — Daryl party tuxedo into Daryl basic

OUT: Tuxedo shirt, dinner jacket and tux pants, bowtie and cummerbund, black shoes

IN: Shirt, trousers, sweater vest, glasses, shoes, socks, bowtie

RIPLEY — Lydia Party into Lydia pink dress

OUT: Red glitter dress with brooch, red jewelry, red dance shoes

IN: Pink dress with fur cuffs, fox fur, cream hat, cream shoes, gloves, pink purse

NEES — Joe E. Brown party gown into Albert Warner

OUT: Fuchsia evening gown, blonde wig, brown stacey adams

IN: White shirt, blue pinstripe suit, maroon tie, maroon pocket square, black shoes, wig, and moustache

KARAS — Louella Parsons party gown into Louella suit

OUT: Bright orange dress with gold belt, matching hat with feathers, gold shoes

IN: Cream dress with pleats, rust jacket with pleats, neck bow, orange hat with egret feathers, brown leather pumps, brown leather purse with gold buckle

DONAHOE — Puck Party tuxedo into Leafy Puck

OUT: Tuxedo shirt, green brocade vest, green tux pants, cream dinner jacket, brown alligator shoes, green bowtie

IN: Leafy jumpsuit, leg bands, wrist bands, leaf belt

QUINTON — Harry Warner blue suit into Will Hays basic

OUT: White shirt, blue pinstripe suit, maroon tie, maroon pocket square, black shoes, wig, and moustache

IN: Cream shirt, tie, brown suit, brown shoes

RICHMAN — Sam Warner blue suit into James Cagney street clothes

OUT: White shirt, blue pinstripe suit, maroon tie, maroon pocket square, black shoes, and moustache

IN: Pinkish rayon shirt, brown trousers with maroon suspenders, brown cloth—and—leather Kenneth Cole shoes, plaid jacket

NEES — Albert Warner blue suit into Joe E. Brown street clothes

OUT: White shirt, blue pinstripe suit, maroon tie, maroon pocket square, black shoes, wig, and moustache

IN: Beige trousers, leafy rayon shirt, brown shoes, Panama straw hat

RIPLEY — Lydia Lansing pink dress into Lydia Lansing court dress

OUT: Pink dress with fur cuffs, fox fur, cream hat, cream shoes, gloves, pink purse

IN: Lavender petticoat, lavender sparkle underskirt, brocade skirt and bodice, collar, grey leather pumps, cross necklace, tiara

RICHMAN — James Cagney street clothes into boxer shorts

OUT: Pinkish rayon shirt, brown trousers with maroon suspenders, brown cloth—and—leather Kenneth Cole shoes, plaid jacket

IN: Pyramus pleated skirt, white tank top, breastplate (front and back), Greek sandals, Pyramus leather cuffs, gladiator hat with feathers, white period underwear

FENDIG — LYSANDER

IN: Doublet and cape

LACEY — Olivia party gown into Olivia court dress

OUT: Orchid beaded gown, silver shoes, jewelry

IN: Petticoat, pinkish Elizabethan court dress with stand-up collar, grey crepe shoes

BIGGS — Oberon party into Oberon basic

OUT: White shirt, green tuxedo, snakeskin shoes

IN: Green snakeskin vest, leather pants, green suede boots, green kimono

NEES — Joe E. Brown street clothes into Thisbe

OUT: Beige trousers, leafy rayon shirt, brown shoes, Panama straw hat

IN: Thisbe dress, black Greek sandals, blonde wig, white period underwear

QUINTON — Will Hays basic add Ass Head

IN: Add magical ass's head