

With this revelation, the stage is set for a night of love, jealousy, and magic in the enchanted forest.

Whoosh!

Act II: The Fairy Realm Awakens

As night falls, the scene shifts to a **magical forest** outside Athens. This is the realm of **Oberon** and **Titania**, the king and queen of the fairies. However, harmony is far from present. **Oberon and Titania** are locked in a fierce quarrel over a young changeling boy, whom Titania refuses to relinquish. She explains her deep bond with the boy's late mother: *"His mother was a votaress of my order, and, in the spiced Indian air by night, full often hath she gossiped by my side."*

Oberon, jealous and spiteful, vows to punish **Titania**. He devises a mischievous plan and summons his loyal servant, the wicked **Puck**, to assist him. **Oberon** orders **Puck** to fetch a magical flower, whose juice can make anyone fall madly in love with the first creature they see upon waking. He explains the flower's origins:

"The juice of it on sleeping eyelids laid / will make or man or woman madly dote upon the next live creature that it sees."

Oberon plots his revenge, waits until Titania falls asleep and pours the flower's juice onto her eyelids, saying.

What thou seest when thou dost wake, Do it for thy true love take.

Shortly after, he witnesses **Helena** pursuing **Demetrius** through the forest.

Demetrius is obviously annoyed by **Helena** following him.

Helena's desperation is palpable as she pleads with **Demetrius** to love her:

"I am your spaniel; and, Demetrius, the more you beat me, I will fawn on you."

Demetrius rebuffs her cruelly:

"Do I entice you? Do I speak you fair? Or rather do I not in plainest truth tell you, I do not nor I cannot love you?"

Moved by **Helena's** devotion, **Oberon** decides to intervene. He instructs **Puck** to use the magical flower on Demetrius so that he will fall in love with **Helena**. However, **Puck** mistakenly enchants **Lysander** instead.

This happens when the two lovers, **Hermia** and **Lysander**, fall asleep on the ground at the same time as **Demetrius** and **Helena** fall asleep right next to them. **Puck** applies the flower juice to **Lysander's** and to **Demetrius's** eyes while they are asleep.

When **Lysander** awakens, he sees **Helena** and falls madly in love with her, abandoning **Hermia**. He declares passionately:

"Not Hermia, but Helena I love: who will not change a raven for a dove?"