

Shakespeare	Gounod's No.2 Ballad of Queen Mab
<p>MERCUTIO O, then, I see Queen Mab hath been with you. She is the fairies' midwife, and she comes In shape no bigger than an agate-stone On the fore-finger of an alderman, Drawn with a team of little atomies Athwart men's noses as they lie asleep; Her wagon-spokes made of long spiders' legs, The cover of the wings of grasshoppers, The traces of the smallest spider's web, The collars of the moonshine's watery beams, Her whip of cricket's bone, the lash of film, Her wagoner a small grey-coated gnat, Not so big as a round little worm Prick'd from the lazy finger of a maid; Her chariot is an empty hazel-nut Made by the joiner squirrel or old grub, Time out o' mind the fairies' coachmakers. And in this state she gallops night by night Through lovers' brains, and then they dream of love; O'er courtiers' knees, that dream on court'sies straight, O'er lawyers' fingers, who straight dream on fees, O'er ladies' lips, who straight on kisses dream, Which oft the angry Mab with blisters plagues, Because their breaths with sweetmeats tainted are: Sometime she gallops o'er a courtier's nose, And then dreams he of smelling out a suit; And sometime comes she with a tithe-pig's tail Tickling a parson's nose as a' lies asleep, Then dreams, he of another benefice: Sometime she driveth o'er a soldier's neck, And then dreams he of cutting foreign throats, Of breaches, ambuscadoes, Spanish blades, Of healths five-fathom deep; and then anon Drums in his ear, at which he starts and wakes, And being thus frighted swears a prayer or two And sleeps again. This is that very Mab That plats the manes of horses in the night, And bakes the elflocks in foul sluttish hairs, Which once untangled, much misfortune bodes: This is the hag, when maids lie on their backs, That presses them and learns them first to bear, Making them women of good carriage: This is she--</p>	<p>MERCUTIO Mab, queen of illusions, presides over dreams; more fickle than the deceiving wind; through space, through the night, she passes and is gone! Her chariot, drawn through the limpid ether by swift atomies was made from an empty nutshell – an earthworm was the cartwright! The harness, a delicate lacework, has been cut from the wing of some green grasshopper by her coachman, a gnat! A cricket's bone serves as the handle of her whip, whose white lash is fashioned from a moonbeam shed by Phoebe assembling her court! Nightly in this equipage Mab visits, on her rounds, the husband dreaming of widowerhood and the lover dreaming of love! At her approach the coquette dreams of finery and dresses, the courtier bows and scrapes, the poet rhymes his verse! To the miser in his gloomy lodging she discovers treasures without number, and freedom smiles in the dark at the prisoner loaded with chains. The soldier dreams of ambuscadoes, of battles and surprise attacks, she pours out for him the bumpers of wine with which his laurels are sprinkled. And you, o virgin whom a sigh startles, as you lie abed she lightly touches your lips and makes you dream kisses! Mab, queen of illusions, <i>etc.</i></p>