

OBERON

Stand aside: the noise they make
Will cause Demetrius to awake.

PUCK

Then will two at once woo one,
That must needs be sport alone.
And those things do best please me
That befall preposterously.

UNIT 23

Enter LYSANDER and HELENA

LYSANDER

Why should you think that I should woo in scorn?

HELENA

These vows are Hermia's. Will you give her o'er?

LYSANDER

I had no judgment when to her I swore.

HELENA

Nor none, in my mind, now you give her o'er.

LYSANDER

Demetrius loves her, and he you.

DEMETRIUS

[Awaking] O Helen, goddess, nymph, perfect, divine!
To what, my love, shall I compare thine eyne?
Crystal is muddy. O, how ripe in show
Thy lips, those kissing cherries, tempting grow!

HELENA

O spite! O hell! I see you all are bent
To set against me for your merriment:
Can you not hate me, as I know you do,
But you must join in souls to mock me too?

LYSANDER

You are unkind, Demetrius; be not so,
For you love Hermia; this you know I know;

DEMETRIUS

lysander, keep thy Hermia, I will none:
If e'er I loved her, all that love is gone.
Look, where thy love comes, yonder is thy dear.

Re-Enter HERMIA

HERMIA

Thou art not by mine eye, Lysander, found,
Mine ear, I thank it, brought me to thy sound.
But why unkindly didst thou leave me so?

LYSANDER

Why should he stay, whom love doth press to go?

HERMIA

You speak not as you think; it cannot be.

HELENA

Lo, she is one of this confed'racy!
Now I perceive they have conjoined all three
To fashion this false sport in spite of me.
Injurious Hermia, most ungrateful maid,
Have you conspired, have you with these contrived
To bait me with this foul derision?

HERMIA

I am amazed at your passionate words.
I scorn you not; it seems that you scorn me.

HELENA

Have you not set Lysander, as in scorn,
To follow me and praise my eyes and face?
And made your other love, Demetrius,
Who even but now did spurn me with his foot,
To call me goddess, nymph, divine and rare,
Precious, celestial?

HERMIA

I understand not what you mean by this.

HELENA

Ay, do. Persever, counterfeit sad looks,
Make mouths upon me when I turn my back,
But fare ye well. 'Tis partly my own fault,
Which death or absence soon shall remedy.

LYSANDER

Stay, gentle Helena, hear my excuse:
My love, my life, my soul, fair Helena!

HELENA

O excellent!

HERMIA

Sweet, do not scorn her so.

DEMETRIUS

If she cannot entreat, I can compel.

LYSANDER

Thou canst compel no more than she entreat.
Thy threats have no more strength than her weak prayers.
Helen, I love thee; by my life, I do;

DEMETRIUS

I say I love thee more than he can do.

LYSANDER

If thou say so, withdraw, and prove it too.

DEMETRIUS

Quick, come!

HERMIA

lysander, whereto tends all this?

LYSANDER

Hang off, thou cat, thou burr! Vile thing, let loose,
Or I will shake thee from me like a serpent!

HERMIA

Why are you grown so rude?
What change is this, sweet love?

LYSANDER

Out, loathèd medicine! O hated potion, hence!

HERMIA

Do you not jest?

HELENA

Yes, sooth, and so do you.

LYSANDER

Demetrius, I will keep my word with thee.

DEMETRIUS

I would I had your bond, for I perceive
A weak bond holds you; I'll not trust your word.

LYSANDER

What, should I hurt her, strike her, kill her dead?
Although I hate her, I'll not harm her so.

HERMIA

What, can you do me greater harm than hate?
Hate me? Wherefore? O me! What news, my love?
Am not I Hermia? Are not you Lysander?

LYSANDER

Ay, by my life;
And never did desire to see thee more.
Therefore be out of hope, of question, of doubt;
Be certain, nothing truer: 'tis no jest
That I do hate thee and love Helena.

HERMIA

O me! You juggler, you canker-blossom,
You thief of love! What, have you come by night
And stolen my love's heart from him?

HELENA

Fie, fie! You counterfeit, you puppet, you!

HERMIA

Puppet? Why so? Ay, that way goes the game.
Her height, forsooth, she hath prevailed with him.
And are you grown so high in his esteem
Because I am so dwarfish and so low?
How low am I, thou painted maypole? Speak!
How low am I? I am not yet so low
But that my nails can reach unto thine eyes.

HELENA

I pray you, though you mock me, gentlemen,
Let her not hurt me. You perhaps may think,
Because she is something lower than myself,
That I can match her.

HERMIA

Lower? Hark, again.

LYSANDER

Be not afraid: she shall not harm thee, Helena.

DEMETRIUS

No, sir, she shall not, though you take her part.

HELENA

O, when she's angry, she is keen and shrewd.
She was a vixen when she went to school,
And though she be but little, she is fierce.

HERMIA

'Little' again! Nothing but 'low' and 'little'?
Why will you suffer her to flout me thus?
Let me come to her.

LYSANDER

Get you gone, you dwarf,
You minimus, of hind'ring knot-grass made!
You bead, you acorn.

DEMETRIUS

You are too officious
In her behalf that scorns your services.

LYSANDER

Now she holds me not;
Now follow, if thou dar'st, to try whose right,
Of thine or mine, is most in Helena.

DEMETRIUS

Follow? Nay, I'll go with thee, cheek by jowl.

Exeunt LYSANDER and DEMETRIUS

HERMIA

You, mistress, all this coil is 'long of you.
Nay, go not back.

HELENA

I will not trust you, I,
Nor longer stay in your curst company.
Your hands than mine are quicker for a fray,
My legs are longer though, to run away.

Exit

HERMIA

I am amazed, and know not what to say.

Exit

UNIT 24

OBERON

This is thy negligence: still thou mistak'st,
Or else committ'st thy knaveries wilfully.

PUCK

Believe me, king of shadows, I mistook.
Did not you tell me I should know the man
By the Athenian garments he hath on?

OBERON

Thou see'st these lovers seek a place to fight:
(*Whispers his plan to Puck*)
Whiles I in this affair do thee employ,
I'll to my queen and beg her Indian boy;
And then I will her charmed eye release
From monster's view, and all things shall be peace.