

**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** (*Holding Lysander*)

Lysander, whereto tends all this?

**LYSANDER**, *to Hermia*

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**

Thy love? Out, tawny Tartar, out!  
Out, loathed 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?  
I am as fair now as I was erewhile.

Since night you loved me; yet since night you left me.  
Why, then, you left me—O, the gods forbid!—  
In earnest, shall I say?

**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** *To Helena.*

O me! You juggler, you cankerblossom,  
You thief of love! What, have you come by night  
And stol'n my love's heart from him?

**HELENA**

Fine, i' faith.

Have you no modesty, no maiden shame,  
No touch of bashfulness? What, will you tear  
Impatient answers from my gentle tongue?  
Fie, fie, you counterfeit, you puppet, you!

**HERMIA**

“Puppet”? Why so? Ay, that way goes the game.  
Now I perceive that she hath made compare  
Between our statures; she hath urged her height,  
And with her personage, her tall personage,  
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. I was never curst;  
I have no gift at all in shrewishness.  
Let her not strike me. You perhaps may think,  
Because she is something lower than myself,

That I can match her.

**HERMIA**

“Lower”? Hark, again!

**HELENA**

Good Hermia, do not be so bitter with me.  
I evermore did love you, Hermia,  
Did ever keep your counsels, never wronged you—  
Save that, in love unto Demetrius,  
I told him of your stealth unto this wood.  
He followed you; for love, I followed him.  
But he hath chid me hence and threatened me  
To strike me, spurn me, nay, to kill me too.  
And now, so you will let me quiet go,  
To Athens will I bear my folly back  
And follow you no further. Let me go.  
You see how simple and how fond I am.

**HERMIA**

Why, get you gone. Who is 't that hinders you?

**HELENA**

A foolish heart that I leave here behind.

**HERMIA**

What, with Lysander?

**HELENA**

With Demetrius.

**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 is 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 knotgrass made,

You bead, you acorn—