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Midsummer Night's Dream

Helena, Hermia, Lysander, Demetrius-HAND TO HAND

LYSANDER

Why should you think that I should woo in scorn?

HELENA

These vows are Hermia's: will you give her o'er?

LYSANDER

Demetrius loves her, and he loves not you.

DEMETRIUS

[Awaking] O *Helena*, goddess, nymph, perfect, divine!

To what, my love, shall I compare thine eyne?

O, let me kiss

This princess of pure white, this seal of bliss!

HELENA

O spite! O hell! I see you all are bent

To set against me for your merriment:

If you were civil and knew courtesy,

You would not do me thus much injury.

LYSANDER

You are unkind, Demetrius; be not so;

For you love Hermia; this you know I know...

DEMETRIUS

If e'er I loved her, all that love is gone.

LYSANDER

Helen, it is not so.

DEMETRIUS

Look, where thy love comes; yonder is thy dear.

[Enter HERMIA]

HERMIA

Lysander, why unkindly didst thou leave me so?

LYSANDER

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

HERMIA

What love could press Lysander from my side?

LYSANDER

Why seek'st thou me? could not this make thee know,

The hate I bear thee made me leave thee so?

HERMIA

You speak not as you think: it cannot be.

HELENA

Lo, she is one of this confederacy!

Now I perceive they have conjoin'd 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,
To call me goddess, nymph, divine and rare?
Wherefore speaks he this to her he hates?

HERMIA

I understand not what you mean by this.

HELENA

Oh, fare ye well: 'tis partly my own fault;
Which death or absence soon shall remedy.

LYSANDER [he holds Helena]

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

HELENA

O excellent!

LYSANDER

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 [she attaches herself to Lysander]

Lysander, whereto tends all this?

LYSANDER [to Hermia]

Away, you Ethiopie!

DEMETRIUS

You are a tame man, go!

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! 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'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.

[back to Hermia] Ay, 'tis no jest

That I do hate thee and love Helena.

HERMIA [to Helena]

O me! you juggler! you canker-blossom!

You thief of love!

HELENA

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

HERMIA

Puppet? why so? ay, that way goes the game.
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!
And though she be but little, she is fierce.

HERMIA

'Little' again! nothing but 'low' and 'little'!
Let me come to her.

LYSANDER

Get you gone, you dwarf;
You minimus, You bead, you acorn.

DEMETRIUS

Let her alone: speak not of Helena;
Take not her part; for, if thou dost intend
Never so little show of love to her,
Thou shalt aby it.

LYSANDER

Now follow, if thou darest, to try whose right,
Of thine or mine, is most in Helena.

DEMETRIUS

Follow! nay, I'll go with thee, cheek by jole.
[Exeunt LYSANDER and DEMETRIUS]

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]