

Scene 1 – The Lovers

DEMETRIUS

O Helena, goddess, nymph, perfect, divine!
To what, my love, shall I compare thine eye?

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

I will none – I want nothing (to do with her)

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!

confederacy - alliance

HERMIA

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

amazed - dumbfounded

LYSANDER

Helena, 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.

withdraw – this is a duel challenge

DEMETRIUS

Quick, come!

HERMIA

Lysander, whereto tends all this?

LYSANDER

Away!

HERMIA

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

LYSANDER

Thy love! Out, loathed medicine! Hated potion, hence!

HERMIA

Hate me! Wherefore? O me! What news, my love!
Am not I Hermia? Are not you Lysander?

wherefore - why

LYSANDER

Be certain, nothing truer; 'tis no jest
That I do hate thee and love Helena.

HERMIA

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

juggler - trickster
cankerblossom - worm

HELENA

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

counterfeit - fraud

HERMIA

Puppet? Why so? Ay, that way goes the game.
Because I am so dwarfish and so low?
How low am I? I am not yet so low
But that my nails can reach unto thine eyes.

HELENA

O, when she's angry, she is keen and shrewd!
And though she be but little, she is fierce.

Scene 2 – The Rude Mechanicals

BOTTOM

Are we all met?

QUINCE

Pat, pat; and here's a marvelous convenient place for our rehearsal. Come, sit down, and rehearse your parts. Pyramus, you begin: when you have spoken your speech, enter into that brake: and so every one according to his cue.

Enter PUCK behind

PUCK

What hempen home-spuns have we swaggering here,
So near the cradle of the fairy queen?
What, a play toward! I'll be an auditor;
An actor too, perhaps, if I see cause.

cradle - bed
auditor - audience

QUINCE

Speak, Pyramus. Thisby, stand forth.

BOTTOM

Thisby, the flowers of odious savours sweet,--

QUINCE

Odours, odours.

BOTTOM

--odours savours sweet:

So hath thy breath, my dearest Thisby dear.
But hark, a voice! Stay thou but here awhile,
And by and by I will to thee appear.

Exit

PUCK

A stranger Pyramus than e'er played here.

Exit

FLUTE

Must I speak now?

QUINCE

Ay, marry, must you; for you must understand he goes but to see a noise that he heard, and is to come again.

FLUTE

Most radiant Pyramus, most lily-white of hue,
As true as truest horse that yet would never tire,
I'll meet thee, Pyramus, at Ninny's tomb.

QUINCE

'Ninus' tomb,' man! Why, you must not speak that yet; that you answer to Pyramus: you speak all your part at once, cues and all. Pyramus enter: your cue is past; it is, 'never tire.'

FLUTE

O,--As true as truest horse, that yet would never tire.
Re-enter PUCK, and BOTTOM with a donkey's head

BOTTOM

If I were fair, Thisby, I were only thine.

QUINCE

O monstrous! O strange! We are haunted. Pray, masters! Fly, masters! Help!
Exit QUINCE, SNUG, FLUTE, SNOUT, and STARVELING

PUCK

I'll follow you, I'll lead you about a round,
Sometime a horse I'll be, sometime a hound,
And neigh, and bark, and grunt, and roar, and burn,
Like horse, hound, hog, bear, fire, at every turn.
Exit

BOTTOM

Why do they run away? This is a knavery of them to make me afeard.