

A Midsummer Night's Dream, 3.2.227-295

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? Wherefore speaks he this
To her he hates? And wherefore doth Lysander
Deny your love (so rich within his soul)
And tender me, forsooth, affection,
But by your setting on, by your consent?
What though I be not so in grace as you,
So hung upon with love, so fortunate,
But miserable most, to love unloved?
This you should pity rather than despise.

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,
Wink each at other, hold the sweet jest up.
This sport, well carried, shall be chronicled.
If you have any pity, grace, or manners,
You would not make me such an argument.
But fare you 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: [to Lysander]
Sweet, do not scorn her so.

Demetrius: [to Lysander]
If she cannot entreat, I can compel.

Lysander: Thou canst compel no more than she entreat.
Thy threats have n more strength than her weak prayers.
Helen, I love thee. By my life, I do.
I swear by that which I will lose for thee,
To prove him false that says I love thee not.

Demetrius: I say I love thee more than he can do.

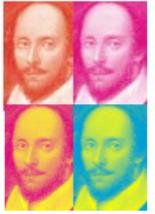
Lysander: If thou say so, withdraw and prove it too.

Demetrius: Quick, come.

Hermia: Lysander, whereto tends all this?

Lysander: Away, you Ethiop.

Demetrius: [to Hermia]
No, no. He'll
Seem to break loose. [to Lysander] Take on as you would follow
But yet come not. 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! 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*.