

**Handout #1 – *Midsummer Scenes***

*A Midsummer Night's Dream Act 1, Scene 1*

*Enter HELENA*

**HERMIA**

God speed fair Helena! whither away?

**HELENA**

Call you me fair? that fair again unsay.

Demetrius loves your fair: O happy fair!

Your eyes are lode-stars; and your tongue's sweet air

More tuneable than lark to shepherd's ear,

When wheat is green, when hawthorn buds appear.

Sickness is catching: O, were favour so,

Yours would I catch, fair Hermia, ere I go;

My ear should catch your voice, my eye your eye,

My tongue should catch your tongue's sweet melody.

Were the world mine, Demetrius being bated,

The rest I'd give to be to you translated.

O, teach me how you look, and with what art

You sway the motion of Demetrius' heart.

**HERMIA**

I frown upon him, yet he loves me still.

**HELENA**

O that your frowns would teach my smiles such skill!

**HERMIA**

I give him curses, yet he gives me love.



**HELENA**

O that my prayers could such affection move!

**HERMIA**

The more I hate, the more he follows me.

**HELENA**

The more I love, the more he hateth me.

**HERMIA**

His folly, Helena, is no fault of mine.

**HELENA**

None, but your beauty: would that fault were mine!

**HERMIA**

Take comfort: he no more shall see my face;

Lysander and myself will fly this place.

Before the time I did Lysander see,

Seem'd Athens as a paradise to me:

O, then, what graces in my love do dwell,

That he hath turn'd a heaven unto a hell!

*Act 2, Scene 1*

*Enter DEMETRIUS, HELENA, following him*

**DEMETRIUS**

I love thee not, therefore pursue me not.

Where is Lysander and fair Hermia?

The one I'll slay, the other slayeth me.

Thou told'st me they were stolen unto this wood;

And here am I, and wode within this wood,

Because I cannot meet my Hermia.

Hence, get thee gone, and follow me no more.

**HELENA**

You draw me, you hard-hearted adamant;

But yet you draw not iron, for my heart

Is true as steel: leave you your power to draw,

And I shall have no power to follow you.

**DEMETRIUS**

Do I entice you? do I speak you fair?

Or, rather, do I not in plainest truth

Tell you, I do not, nor I cannot love you?

**HELENA**

And even for that do I love you the more.

I am your spaniel; and, Demetrius,

The more you beat me, I will fawn on you:

Use me but as your spaniel, spurn me, strike me,

Neglect me, lose me; only give me leave,

Unworthy as I am, to follow you.

What worser place can I beg in your love,--

And yet a place of high respect with me,--

Than to be used as you use your dog?

**DEMETRIUS**

Tempt not too much the hatred of my spirit;

For I am sick when I do look on thee.

**HELENA**

And I am sick when I look not on you.

**DEMETRIUS**

You do impeach your modesty too much,

To leave the city and commit yourself

Into the hands of one that loves you not;

To trust the opportunity of night

And the ill counsel of a desert place

With the rich worth of your virginity.

**HELENA**

Your virtue is my privilege: for that

It is not night when I do see your face,

Therefore I think I am not in the night;

Nor doth this wood lack worlds of company,

For you in my respect are all the world:

Then how can it be said I am alone,

When all the world is here to look on me?

**DEMETRIUS**

I'll run from thee and hide me in the brakes,  
And leave thee to the mercy of wild beasts.

**HELENA**

The wildest hath not such a heart as you.  
Run when you will, the story shall be changed:  
Apollo flies, and Daphne holds the chase;  
The dove pursues the griffin; the mild hind  
Makes speed to catch the tiger; bootless speed,  
When cowardice pursues and valour flies.

**DEMETRIUS**

I will not stay thy questions; let me go:  
Or, if thou follow me, do not believe  
But I shall do thee mischief in the wood.

**HELENA**

Ay, in the temple, in the town, the field,  
You do me mischief. Fie, Demetrius!  
Your wrongs do set a scandal on my sex:  
We cannot fight for love, as men may do;  
We should be wood and were not made to woo.

*Exit DEMETRIUS*

I'll follow thee and make a heaven of hell,  
To die upon the hand I love so well.

*Exit*

*Act 2, Scene 2*

*Enter LYSANDER and HERMIA*

**LYSANDER**

Fair love, you faint with wandering in the wood;

And to speak troth, I have forgot our way:

We'll rest us, Hermia, if you think it good,

And tarry for the comfort of the day.

**HERMIA**

Be it so, Lysander: find you out a bed;

For I upon this bank will rest my head.

**LYSANDER**

One turf shall serve as pillow for us both;

One heart, one bed, two bosoms and one troth.

**HERMIA**

Nay, good Lysander; for my sake, my dear,

Lie further off yet, do not lie so near.

**LYSANDER**

O, take the sense, sweet, of my innocence!

Love takes the meaning in love's conference.

I mean, that my heart unto yours is knit

So that but one heart we can make of it;

Two bosoms interchained with an oath;

So then two bosoms and a single troth.

Then by your side no bed-room me deny;

For lying so, Hermia, I do not lie.

**HERMIA**

Lysander riddles very prettily:

Now much beshrew my manners and my pride,

If Hermia meant to say Lysander lied.

But, gentle friend, for love and courtesy

Lie further off; in human modesty,

Such separation as may well be said

Becomes a virtuous bachelor and a maid,

So far be distant; and, good night, sweet friend:

Thy love ne'er alter till thy sweet life end!

**LYSANDER**

Amen, amen, to that fair prayer, say I;

And then end life when I end loyalty!

Here is my bed: sleep give thee all his rest!

**HERMIA**

With half that wish the wisher's eyes be press'd!

*They sleep*

**Act 3, Scene 2**

**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 thought 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.

**HERNIA**

I understand not what you mean by this.

**HELENA**

Ay, do, persevere, 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 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:

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 Ethiopel!

**DEMETRIUS**

No, no; he'll [ ]

Seem to break loose; take on as you would follow,

But yet come not: you are a tame man, go!

**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**

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 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**

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**

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 prevail'd 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;  
I am a right maid for my cowardice:  
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 wrong'd you;  
Save that, in love unto Demetrius,  
I told him of your stealth unto this wood.  
He follow'd you; for love I follow'd him;

But he hath chid me hence and threaten'd 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'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 hindering knot-grass made;

You bead, you acorn.

**DEMETRIUS**

You are too officious

In her behalf that scorns your services.

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 she holds me not;

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*

**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.