

A Midsummer Night's Dream abbreviated

Act 1, Scene 1

Envy

Situation: Hermia and Helena, being the close friends they've been since childhood, face a serious dilemma. The dilemma centers on Demetrius, who, having received a strong endorsement from Hermia's father, has recently switched his love-interest from Helena to Hermia. Hermia remains committed to her boyfriend Lysander, but Helena is skeptical of Hermia's actions and intentions.

HERMIA: Godspeed, fair Helena.

HELENA: Call you me "fair?" That "fair" again unsay. Demetrius loves you fair. 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: 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.

LYSANDER: Helena, to you our minds we will unfold. Tomorrow night through Athens' gates have we devised to steal.

HERMIA: And in the wood where often you and I were wont to lie, there my Lysander and myself shall meet. Pray thou for us, and good luck grant thee thy Demetrius.

Hermia exits.

LYSANDER: Helena, adieu. As you on him, Demetrius dote on you!

Lysander exits.

HELENA: Through Athens I am thought as fair as she. But what of that? Demetrius thinks not so.

Helena to herself

Love looks not with the eyes but with the mind,
Seeing that winged Cupid is painted blind,
And wings with no eyes lead to heedless haste,
He, hailing oaths that he was only mine,
And my love's judgment showing little taste.
Love's a child, leaving us beguiled to whine,
As waggish boys in games themselves forswear,
Leaving boy Cupid perjured everywhere.
'Twas when he some heat from Hermia felt,
Her beauty a fault that I wish were mine,
That he dissolved and his oaths did melt.
Her womanly charms I wish she'd consign.
I'll go tell Demetrius of her flight,

And then pursue him I tomorrow night.