



Read Amy's Notes on the excerpt from *A Midsummer Night's Dream*.

PUCK

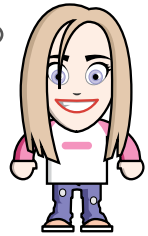
Captain of our fairy band,
Helena is here at hand;
And the youth, mistook by me,
Pleading for a lover's fee.
Shall we their fond pageant see?
Lord, what fools these mortals be!

"Captain"... Oberon must be like a leader of the fairies.

"Lord, What Fools..." That's the name of the last play I read.

Oberon and Puck are watching over people while they sleep.

Note: I reworded speeches in bold font. I inserted my own comments in italics.



OBERON

Stand aside: the noise they make
Will cause Demetrius to awake.

PUCK

Then will two at once woo one;
That must needs be sport alone;
And those things do best please me
That befall preposterously.
(Enter *LYSANDER* and *HELENA*)

Two people are going to try to date the same person.

"Preposterously"... Puck enjoys it when people suffer. Sort of like Punk in the other play.

LYSANDER

Why should you think that I should woo in scorn?
Scorn and derision never come in tears:
Look, when I vow, I weep; and vows so born,
In their nativity all truth appears.
How can these things in me seem scorn to you,
Bearing the badge of faith, to prove them true?

Lysander is trying to woo Helena? I'm confused...

HELENA

You do advance your cunning more and more.
When truth kills truth, O devilish-holy fray!
These vows are Hermia's: will you give her o'er?
Weigh oath with oath, and you will nothing weigh:
Your vows to her and me, put in two scales,
Will even weigh, and both as light as tales.

*He's definitely trying to woo Helena. She doesn't believe him though. **She** says that all this love talk is really how he feels about Hermia...*

LYSANDER

I had no judgment when to her I swore.

When I said I loved her, I didn't know better. Nice try, Lover Boy. She's not going to buy it...

HELENA

Nor none, in my mind, now you give her o'er.

Why should I believe you now? Go, girl! She thinks he's full of it.

LYSANDER

Demetrius loves her, and he loves not you.

Demetrius loves Hermia, not you. I don't quite get this part. Who's Demetrius?

DEMETRIUS

[Awaking] O Helena, goddess, nymph, perfect, divine!
To what, my love, shall I compare thine eyne?
Crystal is muddy. O, how ripe in show
Thy lips, those kissing cherries, tempting grow!
That pure congealed white, high Taurus snow,
Fann'd with the eastern wind, turns to a crow
When thou hold'st up thy hand: 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.
Can you not hate me, as I know you do,
But you must join in souls to mock me too?
If you were men, as men you are in show,
You would not use a gentle lady so;
To vow, and swear, and superpraise my parts,
When I am sure you hate me with your hearts.
You both are rivals, and love Hermia;
And now both rivals, to mock Helena:
A trim exploit, a manly enterprise,
To conjure tears up in a poor maid's eyes
With your derision! none of noble sort
Would so offend a virgin, and extort
A poor soul's patience, all to make you sport.

LYSANDER

You are unkind, Demetrius; be not so;
For you love Hermia; this you know I know:
And here, with all good will, with all my heart,
In Hermia's love I yield you up my part;
And yours of Helena to me bequeath,
Whom I do love and will do till my death.

HELENA

Never did mockers waste more idle breath.

DEMETRIUS

Lysander, keep thy Hermia; I will none:
If e'er I loved her, all that love is gone.
My heart to her but as guest-wise sojourn'd,
And now to Helen is it home return'd,
There to remain.

LYSANDER

Helen, it is not so.

Now Demetrius is in love with Helena too? This is what Puck said would happen at the beginning.

Demetrius is basically telling Helena that she is too beautiful for words. Everything pales in comparison.

He seems like more of a romantic than Lysander, but that's just a hunch.

Now she's really angry! She thinks that Demetrius and Lysander are making fun of her. She doesn't believe anything they are saying. She finds their comments hateful, the opposite of what they are saying.

I wasn't sure why she's react so strongly, but she refers to how both guys loved Hermia in the past. This explains why she doesn't believe them.

Lysander's trying to capitalize on Helena's anger at Demetrius. He insists that Demetrius loves Hermia, almost as much as he loves Helena. 'Will do till my death' sounds pretty serious . . .

They're wasting their breath.

She's not falling for Lysander's move here.

Demetrius passes on Hermia (Who IS Hermia?). Apparently, she's history for him too. All that love he now feels for Helena ('to remain').

He's lying, Helena.

DEMETRIUS

Disparage not the faith thou dost not know,
Lest, to thy peril, thou aby it dear.
Look, where thy love comes; yonder is thy dear.
(Re-enter HERMIA)

*You know you still love Hermia,
Lysander. Look, here she comes.*

HERMIA

Dark night, that from the eye his function takes,
The ear more quick of apprehension makes;
Wherein it doth impair the seeing sense,
It pays the hearing double recompense.
Thou art not by mine eye, Lysander, found;
Mine ear, I thank it, brought me to thy sound
But why unkindly didst thou leave me so?

*This part's pretty confusing.
Shakespeare really juggled the words
so the lines would rhyme!*

*I think Hermia was worried that she
couldn't see or hear Lysander. It
seems that she loves Lysander.*

LYSANDER

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

Love made me.

HERMIA

What love could press Lysander from my side?

*How could loving me make you leave
me?*

*Uh oh, I think she's going to be
pretty upset . . .*

LYSANDER

Lysander's love, that would not let him bide,
Fair Helena, who more engilds the night
Than all you fiery oes and eyes of light.
Why seek'st thou me? could not this make thee know,
The hate I bear thee made me leave thee so?

*My love for Helena made me leave
you. Why are you following me?
How do I tell you that I don't love
you anymore? He even says "hate"!
Harsh.*

HERMIA

You speak not as you think: it cannot be.

What? She's totally shocked!

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?
Is all the counsel that we two have shared,
The sisters' vows, the hours that we have spent,
When we have chid the hasty-footed time
For parting us,--O, is it all forgot?
All school-days' friendship, childhood innocence?
We, Hermia, like two artificial gods,
Have with our needles created both one flower,
Both on one sampler, sitting on one cushion,
Both warbling of one song, both in one key,
As if our hands, our sides, voices and minds.

*Now Helena believes that Hermia
is in on the joke. She rages at
Hermia, referring to the fact that
they were like sisters, growing up
together. She says, at the very
least, women should stick up for
each other!*

*Helena has some serious issues, I
think. She seems really paranoid.
She says that she 'alone' is suffering.
We just saw Hermia rejected by her
love on stage. I don't quite think that
Helena suffers 'alone'.*

Had been incorporate. So we grow together,
Like to a double cherry, seeming parted,
But yet an union in partition;
Two lovely berries moulded on one stem;
So, with two seeming bodies, but one heart;
Two of the first, like coats in heraldry,
Due but to one and crowned with one crest.
And will you rent our ancient love asunder,
To join with men in scorning your poor friend?
It is not friendly, 'tis not maidenly:
Our sex, as well as I, may chide you for it,
Though I alone do feel the injury.

HERMIA

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

Why are you angry at ME? I haven't done anything to you!

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.

Are you saying it is only a coincidence that the two men who loved you, now pretend to love me? You must have put them up to it.

You know me better. You should have pitied me, rather than joined in with them.

HERMIA

I understand not what you mean by this.

I have no idea what you're talking about.

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.

You're making fun of me behind my back. No doubt you will all have a good laugh about this later. I gotta get out of here.

She says "which death or absence soon shall remedy". Is she saying she wishes she were dead?

LYSANDER

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

Please stay, Helena! You are everything to me!

HELENA

O excellent!

Hah!

HERMIA

Sweet, do not scorn her so.

Honey, stop teasing her!

DEMETRIUS

If she cannot entreat, I can compel.

*If her words won't stop you, I will.
(threat)*

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.

*There's nothing to stop. I mean
what I say. I love you, Helena. I
swear on my life that I love you.*

DEMETRIUS

I say I love thee more than he can do.

Prove it!

LYSANDER

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

Bring it on!

DEMETRIUS

Quick, come!

Lysander, what are you doing?

HERMIA

Lysander, whereto tends all this?

Get lost, Hermia!

LYSANDER

Away, you Ethiopie!