

6: THE LOVERS' QUARREL

Adapted by Julia Cranney

SCENE 8: ANOTHER PART OF THE WOODS

PUCK So, there are more Athenians in these woods than I thought and that means more problems...

[HELENA IS MOMENTARILY RELEASED FROM PUCK'S SPELL]

HELENA Where am I?

[PUCK CASTS A SPELL AGAIN]

PUCK Woops! This is Helena. You remember her, right? The one who was in love with Demetrius? And who Lysander then fell in love with, thanks to a - ahem - slight mix-up with a magic flower? Oberon was pretty angry about that! So now I'm leading Helena to Demetrius, so that he can fall in love with her like Oberon wanted.

[LYSANDER APPEARS FROM THE BUSHES]

LYSANDER Sweet Helena... You've returned!

PUCK Oh no... Not this guy again.

HELENA Stop it Lysander, it's not funny.

LYSANDER You think I'm joking? Look, when I tell you that I love you, I'm crying. How could you confuse real tears for lying?

HELENA Because you are lying. You love Hermia!

LYSANDER No I don't. Demetrius loves Hermia, I love you!

[OBERON'S SPELL TAKES EFFECT ON DEMETRIUS]

DEMETRIUS O Helena, goddess, perfect, divine! To what, my love, shall I compare your eyes? Crystal is too muddy... O let me kiss you!

HELENA I see, you have both decided to make fun of me. First you're rivals in love for Hermia and now you're rivals in mocking me.

A Midsummer Night's Dream

LYSANDER You are unkind Demetrius, be not so. For you love Hermia and this you know I know.

DEMETRIUS Lysander, keep your Hermia, I want none. If I ever loved her, all that love is gone. Now my love is returned to Helena!

HELENA Argh!

PUCK Oh-oh... Look who's coming now. It's Hermia.

HERMIA Lysander! My love is found! My ear, I thank it, brought me to your sound. But why unkindly did you leave me so?

LYSANDER Why should I stay when love made me go?

HERMIA Love? What love could lead you from my side?

LYSANDER My love for the beautiful Helena, of course. Why are you here?

HERMIA I've been looking everywhere for you. Now stop being silly, this isn't funny anymore.

HELENA "Any more"? Oh, I see. You too are part of this conspiracy. Cruel Hermia! How could you join in with the boys to scorn your poor old friend?

HERMIA I'm not scorning you, it seems you are scorning me.

HELENA Have you not set Lysander to follow me and praise my eyes and face? And made your other love Demetrius do the same?

HERMIA You're not making sense Helena -

HELENA Ah yes, pretend to make sad looks and cry, but wink and laugh when I turn my back. No more of this. I'm leaving.

LYSANDER Stay, gentle Helena, my love, my life, my soul!

HERMIA Sweet, do not scorn her so.

DEMETRIUS Yes, leave Helena alone Lysander.

LYSANDER Or what?

DEMETRIUS Or I'll make you!

- LYSANDER You can't make me do anything!
- HERMIA Lysander, come on.
- LYSANDER Out of my way Hermia, or I will shake you from me like a serpent!
- HERMIA I see. You juggler Helena! You canker-blossom! You thief of love!
What, did you come by night and steal my love's heart from him?
- HELENA How is it possible that you're angry with me? Fie! You puppet
you!
- HERMIA Puppet?! So, you have decided to compare our statures. I see, with
your great height you have wooed my Lysander. Are you grown so
high in his esteem because I am so little and so low? How low am I,
you painted maypole! I am not yet so low that my nails can't reach
up to your eyes!
- DEMETRIUS Fear not, sweet Helena, I will protect you!
- LYSANDER No, I will!
- HELENA O, when she is angry she is mean and cruel and though she be but
little she is fierce!
- HERMIA "Little"! Again! Nothing but "low" and "little"! Let me come to her -
- LYSANDER Get you gone, you bead, you acorn!
- HERMIA Acorn?!
- [A MAGIC FLASH AND RUMBLE AS OBERON ENTERS]*
- OBERON This is your negligence Puck! First, you get the wrong Athenian,
then I tell you to make it right, but now I find they're at each other's
throats!
- PUCK Believe me, king of shadows, it was a mistake!
- OBERON Well it's time to undo that mistake! Lead these lovers deep within the
woods, and keep them apart until they fall asleep.
- PUCK Yes my lord.