



Arts Engagement
and Education

HELENA

“Lo, she is one of this confederacy!”

from *A Midsummer Night's Dream*

by William Shakespeare: <https://www.shakespeare.org.uk>

Gender: Female/Feminine Presenting

Style: Classical Dramatic

Age Range: 20s

Link to buy Script: www.amazon.com

Play Synopsis

Theseus, the Duke of Athens, is preparing for his marriage to Hippolyta, Queen of the Amazons, A courtier seeks the Duke's intervention because his daughter, Hermia, will not agree to his choice of Demetrius as a husband: she's in love with Lysander. The Duke tells Hermia to obey her father, or either die or accept a life as a nun in Diana's temple. Lysander and Hermia plan to elope, and they tell Helena, who is in love with Demetrius, but he hates her and loves Hermia. The lovers run away from Athens but get lost in the woods. They are followed by Demetrius, and then by Helena, who has told him of their intentions.

Oberon, king of the fairies, who lives in the woods, argues with his queen, Titania, over an Indian boy she refuses to give him. Oberon overhears Helena and Demetrius arguing and sends his mischievous servant, Puck, to get a flower whose juice has the power to make people fall in love with the first creature they see when the juice is placed on their eyelids while asleep. He instructs Puck to put some drops on Demetrius' eyes. Mistaking the Athenian, he seeks, Puck puts the flower juice on the eyes of the sleeping Lysander so that when he is woken by Helena, he immediately falls in love with her and rejects Hermia.

Before this moment:

Puck encounters Oberon and explains the outcome of his experiments with the love potion. Lysander professes his love for Helena, Demetrius wakes up and sees Helena. He instantly falls in love with her also. Helena is convinced that the two men are mocking her. Hermia enters and is completely confused and dismayed because Lysander and Demetrius are now head-over-heels in love with Helena. The two men begin fighting over Helena. Hermia becomes angry with Helena for stealing her lover. The men leave to duel, and the women run off in different directions.

Oberon and Puck watch the feuding, and Oberon is a bit annoyed with Puck for causing all the confusion. Puck claims it was an honest mistake, but he's enjoying himself anyway. Oberon tells him to prevent the duel, and he gives Puck a flower to use on Lysander to reverse the enchantment.

Oberon then says he will once again ask Titania to give him the changeling boy and then use the second flower on her, too. Puck tells him it is almost dawn, so they will need to work fast. After Puck creates a fog, he leads the Athenian men around in confusion by imitating their voices. The men become exhausted and finally lie down to sleep. Helena and Hermia also enter and fall asleep on the ground. With the four lovers all asleep on the ground near each other, Puck puts magic flower nectar on Lysander's eyelids to reverse the spell.

Monologue(Act III, Scene 2):

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 conspir'd, have you with these contriv'd,
To bait me with this foul derision?
Is all the counsel that we two have shar'd,
The sisters' vows, the hours that we have spent,
When we have chid the hasty-footed time
For parting us,--O, is 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,
Had been incorporate. So we grew together,
Like to a double cherry, seeming parted;
But yet a 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.

Helpful Links:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=M2jghaDSzoA>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JhWIZv9t8Es>