



Arts Engagement  
and Education

## HELENA

"O, I am out of breath in this fond chase!"

from *A Midsummer Night's Dream*

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

Gender: Female/Feminine Presenting

Style: Classical Comedic

Age Range: 20s

**Link to Buy Script:** [www.amazon.com](http://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:**

Demetrius and Helena pass through the glade. Oberon makes himself invisible so that he can watch and hear them. Demetrius addresses Helena, saying that he does not love her, does not want to see her, and wishes that she would stop following him immediately. He curses Lysander and Hermia, whom he is pursuing, hoping to prevent their marriage and slay Lysander.

Helena repeatedly declares her adoration for, and loyalty to, Demetrius, who repeatedly insults her. They exit the grove, with Helena following closely behind Demetrius, and Oberon materializes. He declares that before the night is out, Demetrius will be the one chasing Helena.

**Monologue (Act II Scene II)**

O, I am out of breath in this fond chase!  
The more my prayer, the lesser is my grace.  
Happy is Hermia, wheresoe'er she lies;  
For she hath blessed and attractive eyes.  
How came her eyes so bright? Not with salt tears:  
If so, my eyes are oftener wash'd than hers.  
No, no, I am as ugly as a bear;  
For beasts that meet me run away for fear:  
Therefore no marvel though Demetrius  
Do, as a monster fly my presence thus.  
What wicked and dissembling glass of mine  
Made me compare with Hermia's sphery eyne?  
But who is here? Lysander! on the ground!  
Dead? or asleep? I see no blood, no wound.  
Lysander if you live, good sir, awake!

**Helpful Links: <https://www.tiffanycarlsonmonologueblog.com/blog-1/2019/6/1/midsummer-act-2-scene-2-classical-monologue>**

**<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZZM0LffSM4>**