

SIDE 1 - Theseus / Hippolyta / (Egeus)

1.

THESEUS

Now, fair Hippolyta, our nuptial hour
Draws on apace. Four happy days bring in
Another moon. But, O, methinks how slow
This old moon wanes! She lingers my desires
Like to a stepdame or a dowager 5
Long withering out a young man's revenue.

HIPPOLYTA

Four days will quickly steep themselves in night;
Four nights will quickly dream away the time;
And then the moon, like to a silver bow
New-bent in heaven, shall behold the night 10
Of our solemnities.

THESEUS

Hippolyta, I wooed thee with my sword
And won thy love doing thee injuries,
But I will wed thee in another key,
With pomp, with triumph, and with reveling. 20

2.

*Wind horn. Enter Theseus and all his train,
Hippolyta, Egeus.*

THESEUS

Go, one of you, find out the Forester.
For now our observation is performed,
And, since we have the vaward of the day,
My love shall hear the music of my hounds. 110
Uncouple in the western valley; let them go.
Dispatch, I say, and find the Forester.

A Servant exits.

We will, fair queen, up to the mountain's top
And mark the musical confusion
Of hounds and echo in conjunction. 115

HIPPOLYTA

I was with Hercules and Cadmus once,
When in a wood of Crete they bayed the bear
With hounds of Sparta. Never did I hear
Such gallant chiding, for, besides the groves,
The skies, the fountains, every region near 120
Seemed all one mutual cry. I never heard
So musical a discord, such sweet thunder.

THESEUS

My hounds are bred out of the Spartan kind,
So flewed, so sanded; and their heads are hung
With ears that sweep away the morning dew; 125
Crook-kneed, and dewlapped like Thessalian bulls;
Slow in pursuit, but matched in mouth like bells,
Each under each. A cry more tunable
Was never holloed to, nor cheered with horn,
In Crete, in Sparta, nor in Thessaly. 130
Judge when you hear.—But soft! What nymphs are
these?

EGEUS

My lord, this is my daughter here asleep,
And this Lysander; this Demetrius is,
This Helena, old Nedar's Helena. 135
I wonder of their being here together.

HIPPOLYTA

No doubt they rose up early to observe
The rite of May.

THESEUS

and hearing our intent,
Came here in grace of our solemnity.
But speak, Egeus. Is not this the day 140
That Hermia should give answer of her choice?

3.

THESEUS

Fair lovers, you are fortunately met.
Of this discourse we more will hear anon.— 185
Egeus, I will overbear your will,
For in the temple by and by, with us,
These couples shall eternally be knit.—
And, for the morning now is something worn,
Our purposed hunting shall be set aside. 190
Away with us to Athens. Three and three,
We'll hold a feast in great solemnity.
Come, Hippolyta.

HIPPOLYTA

'Tis strange, my Theseus, that these lovers speak of.

THESEUS

More strange than true. I never may believe
These antique fables nor these fairy toys.
Lovers and madmen have such seething brains,
Such shaping fantasies, that apprehend 5
More than cool reason ever comprehends.
The lunatic, the lover, and the poet
Are of imagination all compact.
One sees more devils than vast hell can hold:
That is the madman. The lover, all as frantic, 10
Sees Helen's beauty in a brow of Egypt.
The poet's eye, in a fine frenzy rolling,
Doth glance from heaven to Earth, from Earth to
heaven,
And as imagination bodies forth 15
The forms of things unknown, the poet's pen
Turns them to shapes and gives to airy nothing
A local habitation and a name.
Such tricks hath strong imagination
That, if it would but apprehend some joy, 20
It comprehends some bringer of that joy.
Or in the night, imagining some fear,
How easy is a bush supposed a bear!

HIPPOLYTA

But all the story of the night told over,
And all their minds transfigured so together —
More witnesseth than fancy's images
And grows to something of great constancy,
But, howsoever, strange and admirable.