

SIDE TWO – Egeus. (Theseus, Hippolyta, Hermia, Lysander, Demetrius)

EGEUS

Happy be Theseus, our renowned duke!

THESEUS

Thanks, good Egeus. What's the news with thee?

EGEUS

Full of vexation come I, with complaint  
Against my child, my daughter Hermia.—  
Stand forth, Demetrius.—My noble lord, 25  
This man hath my consent to marry her.—  
Stand forth, Lysander.—And, my gracious duke,  
This man hath bewitched the bosom of my child.—  
Thou, thou, Lysander, thou hast given her rhymes  
And interchanged love tokens with my child. 30  
Thou hast by moonlight at her window sung  
With feigning voice verses of feigning love  
And stol'n the impression of her fantasy  
With bracelets of thy hair, rings, gauds, conceits,  
Knacks, trifles, nosegays, sweetmeats—messengers 35  
Of strong prevailment in unhardened youth.  
With cunning hast thou filched my daughter's heart,  
Turned her obedience (which is due to me)  
To stubborn harshness.—And, my gracious duke,  
Be it so she will not here before your Grace 40  
Consent to marry with Demetrius,  
I beg the ancient privilege of Athens:  
As she is mine, I may dispose of her,  
Which shall be either to this gentleman  
Or to her death, according to our law 45  
Immediately provided in that case.

THESEUS

What say you, Hermia? Be advised, fair maid.  
To you, your father should be as a god,  
One that composed your beauties, yea, and one  
To whom you are but as a form in wax 50  
By him imprinted, and within his power

To leave the figure or disfigure it.  
Demetrius is a worthy gentleman.

HERMIA

So is Lysander.

THESEUS In himself he is, 55

But in this kind, wanting your father's voice,  
The other must be held the worthier.

HERMIA

I would my father looked but with my eyes.

THESEUS

Rather your eyes must with his judgment look.

HERMIA

I do entreat your Grace to pardon me. 60

I know not by what power I am made bold,  
Nor how it may concern my modesty

In such a presence here to plead my thoughts;

But I beseech your Grace that I may know

The worst that may befall me in this case 65

If I refuse to wed Demetrius.

THESEUS

Either to die the death or to abjure

Forever the society of men.

Therefore, fair Hermia, question your desires,

Know of your youth, examine well your blood, 70

Whether (if you yield not to your father's choice)

You can endure the livery of a nun,

For aye to be in shady cloister mewed,

To live a barren sister all your life,

Chanting faint hymns to the cold fruitless moon. 75

Thrice-blessèd they that master so their blood

To undergo such maiden pilgrimage,

But earthlier happy is the rose distilled

Than that which, withering on the virgin thorn,

Grows, lives, and dies in single blessedness. 80

HERMIA

So will I grow, so live, so die, my lord,

Ere I will yield my virgin patent up

Unto his Lordship whose unwishèd yoke

My soul consents not to give sovereignty.

THESEUS

Take time to pause, and by the next new moon           85  
(The sealing day betwixt my love and me  
For everlasting bond of fellowship),  
Upon that day either prepare to die  
For disobedience to your father's will,  
Or else to wed Demetrius, as he would,               90  
Or on Diana's altar to protest  
For aye austerity and single life.

DEMETRIUS

Relent, sweet Hermia, and, Lysander, yield  
Thy crazèd title to my certain right.

LYSANDER

You have her father's love, Demetrius.               95  
Let me have Hermia's. Do you marry him.

EGEUS

Scornful Lysander, true, he hath my love;  
And what is mine my love shall render him.  
And she is mine, and all my right of her  
I do estate unto Demetrius.                           100

LYSANDER, *to Theseus*

I am, my lord, as well derived as he,  
As well possessed. My love is more than his;  
My fortunes every way as fairly ranked  
(If not with vantage) as Demetrius';  
And (which is more than all these boasts can be)   105  
I am beloved of beauteous Hermia.  
Why should not I then prosecute my right?  
Demetrius, I'll avouch it to his head,  
Made love to Nedar's daughter, Helena,  
And won her soul; and she, sweet lady, dotes,   110  
Devoutly dotes, dotes in idolatry,  
Upon this spotted and inconstant man.

THESEUS

I must confess that I have heard so much,  
And with Demetrius thought to have spoke thereof;  
But, being overfull of self-affairs,               115  
My mind did lose it.—But, Demetrius, come,  
And come, Egeus; you shall go with me.

I have some private schooling for you both.—  
For you, fair Hermia, look you arm yourself  
To fit your fancies to your father's will,                   120  
Or else the law of Athens yields you up  
(Which by no means we may extenuate)  
To death or to a vow of single life.—  
Come, my Hippolyta. What cheer, my love?—  
Demetrius and Egeus, go along.                               125  
I must employ you in some business  
Against our nuptial and confer with you  
Of something nearly that concerns yourselves.

EGEUS

With duty and desire we follow you.