

SIDE 5 – Helena & Hermia

HERMIA

You juggler, you cankerblossom,
You thief of love! What, have you come by night
And stol'n my love's heart from him?

HELENA Fine, i' faith.

Have you no modesty, no maiden shame, 300
No touch of bashfulness? What, will you tear
Impatient answers from my gentle tongue?
Fie, fie, you counterfeit, you puppet, you!

HERMIA

“Puppet”? Why so? Ay, that way goes the game.
Now I perceive that she hath made compare 305
Between our statures; she hath urged her height,
And with her personage, her tall personage,
Her height, forsooth, she hath prevailed with him.
And are you grown so high in his esteem
Because I am so dwarfish and so low? 310
How low am I, thou painted maypole? Speak!
How low am I? I am not yet so low
But that my nails can reach unto thine eyes.

HELENA

I pray you, though you mock me, gentlemen,
Let her not hurt me. I was never curst; 315
I have no gift at all in shrewishness.
I am a right maid for my cowardice.
Let her not strike me. You perhaps may think,
Because she is something lower than myself,
That I can match her. 320

HERMIA “Lower”? Hark, again!

HELENA

Good Hermia, do not be so bitter with me.
I evermore did love you, Hermia,
Did ever keep your counsels, never wronged you—
Save that, in love unto Demetrius, 325
I told him of your stealth unto this wood.
He followed you; for love, I followed him.
But he hath chid me hence and threatened me
To strike me, spurn me, nay, to kill me too.
And now, so you will let me quiet go, 330
To Athens will I bear my folly back
And follow you no further. Let me go.
You see how simple and how fond I am.

HERMIA

Why, get you gone. Who is 't that hinders you?

HELENA

A foolish heart that I leave here behind.

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HERMIA

What, with Lysander?

HELENA

With Demetrius.

HELENA

(to audience) O, when she is angry, she is keen and shrewd.
She was a vixen when she went to school,
And though she be but little, she is fierce.

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HERMIA

(to audience) "Little" again? Nothing but "low" and "little"?
Why will you suffer her to flout me thus?
Let me come to her.

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