

## Complete Text for the Keeper of the Book

*A Midsummer Night's Dream (3.2) (adapted from First Folio, 1623 with variant spelling regularized), lines 488-603 (with cuts)*

1. *Lys.* *Helen*, I love thee, by my life I do.
2. *Dem.* I say, I love thee more then he can do.
3. *Lys.* If thou say so, withdraw and prove it too.
4. *Dem.* Quick, come.
5. *Her.* *Lysander*, whereto tends all this?  
*[Hermia clings to Lysander]*
6. *Lys.* Hang off thou cat, thou bur; vile thing let loose,
7. Or I will shake thee from me like a serpent.
8. *Her.* Why are you grown so rude?
9. What change is this sweet Love?
10. *Lys.* Out loathed medicine! O hated potion hence!
11. Be certain, nothing truer: 'tis no jest,
12. That I do hate thee, and love *Helena*.
13. *Her.* O me! *[To Helena]* You juggler, you canker-blossom,
14. You thief of love; What, have you come by night,
15. And stolen my love's heart from him?
16. *Hel.* Have you no modesty, no maiden shame?
17. Fie, fie, you counterfeit, you puppet, you.
18. *Her.* Puppet? why so? Ay, that way goes the game.
19. And are you grown so high in his esteem,
20. Because I am so dwarfish, and so low?
21. How low am I, thou painted Maypole? Speake,
22. How low am I? I am not yet so low,
23. But that my nails can reach unto thine eyes.  
*[She runs at Helena]*
24. *Hel.* I pray you though you mock me, gentlemen,
25. Let her not strike me: you perhaps may think,
26. Because she is something lower than myself,
27. That I can match her.
28. *Her.* Lower? hark again.
29. *Hel.* Good *Hermia*, do not be so bitter with me.
30. *Lys.* Be not afraid, she shall not harm thee *Helena*.
31. *Dem.* No sir, she shall not, though you take her part.

32. *Hel.* O when she's angry, she is keen and shrewd,  
33. She was a vixen when she went to school,  
34. And though she be but little, she is fierce.

35. *Her.* Little again? Nothing but low and little?  
36. Why will you suffer her to flout me thus?  
37. Let me come to her.

38. *Lys.* Get you gone you dwarf,  
39. You *minimus*, of hindering knot-grass made,  
40. You bead, you acorn.  
41. Now follow if thou dar'st, to try whose right,  
42. Of thine or mine is most in *Helena*.

43. *Dem.* Follow? Nay, I'll go with thee cheek by jowl.  
*[Exit Lysander and Demetrius].*

44. *Hel.* I will not trust you I,  
45. Nor longer stay in your curst company.  
*[She runs off]*

46. *Her.* I am amazed, and know not what to say.  
*[She runs off]*