

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

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,  
Slow in pursuit, but matched in mouth like bells,  
Each under each. A cry more tunable  
Was never holloed to, nor cheered with horn,  
Judge when you hear.—But soft! What nymphs are  
these?

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.

HIPPOLYTA

But all the story of the night told over,  
And all their minds transfigured so together, 25  
More witnesseth than fancy's images  
And grows to something of great constancy,  
But, howsoever, strange and admirable.