

How would this play be different if it took place in a modern-day setting? Which elements of the narrative would be affected and why?

*There would be major differences in Shakespeare's narrative if it were modernized because now-a-days the law wouldn't allow a parent to put their child to death or in a convent because they were being disobedient. There are no dukes to make those kind of decisions. Judges or juries decide if a law is being broken. The police would only act if they have reason to suspect a law is being broken. Also, now-a-days relationships aren't arranged by parents and children aren't required by law to be obedient to a parent's unreasonable demands. It would actually be considered a crime to force someone into an unwanted relationship- it's called human trafficking.*

How might these differences change what the characters do and say?

*I think a modern retelling has to show Egeus in a more sympathetic way- why does he say what he says, otherwise he's kind of a monster and his "crimes" would require a response. Same with Demetrius. He's unfaithful to Helena, so either he's a bad guy, or we have to see some other side to him that explains how he could still be a good boyfriend for Helena still, or else she needs to discard him in some satisfying way. Modern forms of communication also need to be included.*

In a creative essay, compose an updated version of a portion or all of this excerpt, transposing the central conflict into contemporary times.

Egeus was afraid. His daughter Hermia had been seeing a young man he didn't trust. Lately, Hermia had been receiving frequent loving text messages and expensive gifts from Lysander. Hermia walked around the house dreamily, imagining the two of them together, forgetting that her father existed. She was so eagerly wrapped around her cell phone, exchanging messages with "that boy!" that nothing her father said to her seemed to connect. His fear and loneliness grew even as her infatuation with Lysander increased, and it seemed to be growing in intensity with every passing day.

Demetrius was the boy next door. Egeus had known him since he was a small child. He had watched Demetrius grow up. He was a genuinely respectful young man. Yes, he had had some other romances, particularly a recent one with Hermia's best friend, Helena, but now he was showing interest in Hermia. He was willing to take his time and build a relationship slowly. That was what he had done with Helena, so it was likely that he would behave the same way with Hermia. Taking his time, slowly building a friendship that would eventually lead to love. He would spend time with both Hermia and Egeus, not shut him out and keep Egeus' daughter all to himself as Lysander was doing.

Demetrius had shown his good judgement by preferring his daughter over her friend. Helena was far too intense, obsessive and jealous.

Egeus didn't know what to do. How could he wrest his daughter from the increasingly firm hold Lysander had on her heart?

Then an idea came to him. What if he took her to the local police station? Could the police give him some way to stop Lysander from ruining their happy life together? He had heard about restraining orders. Could he convince them that Lysander was a threat? With Lysander out of the way, Demetrius would be free to come and go, and would no doubt be able to chase away Hermia's crush and replace it

with something suitable to build a family with. All the secretive giggling and closed doors would go away, and life would be as it had been. Hermia and her father would be friends again.

The police, however, didn't see the situation quite the same way. They recognized the law and parental rights, but they wanted more information in order to convince a judge to issue a restraining order. Egeus showed them his daughter's cell phone messages. "If your father loves Demetrius so much, he should marry him himself!" was the worst of the mostly sentimental, poetry type stuff Lysander was writing. The police didn't consider it threatening at all, but as the judge was a friend of Egeus', he suggested another strategy.

Difficult children could be sent away to boarding schools and their technology taken away from them. If Egeus were willing, he could threaten to send Hermia away. The judge was even willing to set a four day deadline by which time, Hermia could voluntarily give up her obsession with her boyfriend Lysander and avoid being sent away, which wasn't at all what Egeus really wanted, anyway.

Although it sounded like a good plan to the older men, younger hearts were not quite ready to comply. Lysander and Hermia immediately began making plans to run away together.

Hermia called her friend, Helena, to tell her the good news. She and Lysander would soon be gone and that would mean Demetrius would come back to her. As she gushed on and on about how perfect it all would be, all Helena could think about was how pretty and perfect Hermia was, and how unfair it was that she could be so happy when Helena was feeling so miserable.

After Hermia hung up, she determined to call Demetrius and tell him everything. Maybe then he would see how little Hermia was interested and give up on her.