

The "Mechanicals": Bottom, Quince, Flute,
Snout, Snug, Starveling

151

A Midsummer Night's Dream ACT 5. SC. 1

Love, therefore, and tongue-tied simplicity 110
In least speak most, to my capacity.

⌈Enter Philostrate.⌋

PHILOSTRATE

So please your Grace, the Prologue is addressed.

THESEUS Let him approach.

Enter the Prologue.

PROLOGUE

(Quince)

If we offend, it is with our goodwill.

That you should think we come not to offend, 115
But with goodwill. To show our simple skill,

That is the true beginning of our end.

Consider, then, we come but in despite.

We do not come, as minding to content you,
Our true intent is. All for your delight 120

We are not here. That you should here repent
you,

The actors are at hand, and, by their show,
You shall know all that you are like to know.

⌈Prologue exits.⌋

THESEUS This fellow doth not stand upon points. 125

LYSANDER He hath rid his prologue like a rough colt;
he knows not the stop. A good moral, my lord: it is
not enough to speak, but to speak true.

HIPPOLYTA Indeed he hath played on this prologue like
a child on a recorder—a sound, but not in govern- 130
ment.

THESEUS His speech was like a tangled chain—noth-
ing impaired, but all disordered. Who is next?

Enter Pyramus ⌈(Bottom),⌋ *and Thisbe* ⌈(Flute),⌋ *and*
Wall ⌈(Snout),⌋ *and Moonshine* ⌈(Starveling),⌋ *and Lion*
⌈(Snug),⌋ *and Prologue* (Quince).⌋

QUINCE, as Prologue

Gentles, perchance you wonder at this show.

But wonder on, till truth make all things plain. 135
This man is Pyramus, if you would know.

This beauteous lady Thisbe is certain.
This man with lime and roughcast doth present
"Wall," that vile wall which did these lovers
sunder; 140
And through Wall's chink, poor souls, they are
content

To whisper, at the which let no man wonder.
This man, with lantern, dog, and bush of thorn,
Presenteth "Moonshine," for, if you will know, 145
By moonshine did these lovers think no scorn

To meet at Ninus' tomb, there, there to woo.
This grisly beast (which "Lion" hight by name)
The trusty Thisbe coming first by night
Did "scare" away or rather did affright; 150
And, as she fled, her mantle she did fall,

Which Lion vile with bloody mouth did stain.
Anon comes Pyramus, sweet youth and tall,
And finds his trusty Thisbe's mantle slain.
Whereat, with blade, with bloody blameful blade, 155
He bravely broached his boiling bloody breast.
And Thisbe, tarrying in mulberry shade,

His dagger drew, and died. For all the rest,
Let Lion, Moonshine, Wall, and lovers twain
At large discourse, while here they do remain. 160

THESEUS I wonder if the lion be to speak.

DEMETRIUS No wonder, my lord. One lion may when
many asses do.

Lion, Thisbe, Moonshine, "and Prologue" exit.

SNOUT, as Wall

In this same interlude it doth befall
That I, one "Snout" by name, present a wall; 165
And such a wall as I would have you think
That had in it a crannied hole or chink,
Through which the lovers, Pyramus and Thisbe,

Did whisper often, very secretly.

This loam, this roughcast, and this stone doth show 170

That I am that same wall. The truth is so.

And this the cranny is, right and sinister,

Through which the fearful lovers are to whisper.

THESEUS Would you desire lime and hair to speak
better? 175

DEMETRIUS It is the wittiest partition that ever I heard
discourse, my lord.

THESEUS Pyramus draws near the wall. Silence.

BOTTOM, *as Pyramus*

O grim-looking night! O night with hue so black!

O night, which ever art when day is not! 180

O night! O night! Alack, alack, alack!

I fear my Thisbe's promise is forgot.

And thou, O wall, O sweet, O lovely wall,

That stand'st between her father's ground and
mine, 185

Thou wall, O wall, O sweet and lovely wall,

Show me thy chink to blink through with mine
eyne.

Thanks, courteous wall. Jove shield thee well for
this. 190

But what see I? No Thisbe do I see.

O wicked wall, through whom I see no bliss,

Cursed be thy stones for thus deceiving me!

THESEUS The wall, methinks, being sensible, should
curse again. 195

BOTTOM No, in truth, sir, he should not. "Deceiving
me" is Thisbe's cue. She is to enter now, and I am
to spy her through the wall. You shall see it will fall
pat as I told you. Yonder she comes.

Enter Thisbe 「(Flute).」

FLUTE, *as Thisbe*

O wall, full often hast thou heard my moans 200

For parting my fair Pyramus and me.
 My cherry lips have often kissed thy stones,
 Thy stones with lime and hair knit ¹up in thee.¹

BOTTOM, *as Pyramus*

I see a voice! Now will I to the chink
 To spy an I can hear my Thisbe's face. 205
 Thisbe?

FLUTE, *as Thisbe*

My love! Thou art my love, I think.

BOTTOM, *as Pyramus*

Think what thou wilt, I am thy lover's grace,
 And, like Limander, am I trusty still.

FLUTE, *as Thisbe*

And I like Helen, till the Fates me kill. 210

BOTTOM, *as Pyramus*

Not Shafalus to Procrus was so true.

FLUTE, *as Thisbe*

As Shafalus to Procrus, I to you.

BOTTOM, *as Pyramus*

O kiss me through the hole of this vile wall.

FLUTE, *as Thisbe*

I kiss the wall's hole, not your lips at all.

BOTTOM, *as Pyramus*

Wilt thou at Ninny's tomb meet me straightway? 215

FLUTE, *as Thisbe*

'Tide life, 'tide death, I come without delay.

¹*Bottom and Flute exit.*¹

SNOUT, *as Wall*

Thus have I, Wall, my part dischargèd so,

And, being done, thus Wall away doth go. ¹*He exits.*¹

THESEUS Now is the ¹wall down¹ between the two
 neighbors. 220

DEMETRIUS No remedy, my lord, when walls are so
 willful to hear without warning.

HIPPOLYTA This is the silliest stuff that ever I heard.

THESEUS The best in this kind are but shadows, and

the worst are no worse, if imagination amend 225
them.

HIPPOLYTA It must be your imagination, then, and not
theirs.

THESEUS If we imagine no worse of them than they of
themselves, they may pass for excellent men. Here 230
come two noble beasts in, a man and a lion.

Enter Lion 「(Snug)」 and *Moonshine* 「(Starveling)」.

SNUG, as *Lion*

You ladies, you whose gentle hearts do fear
The smallest monstrous mouse that creeps on
floor,
May now perchance both quake and tremble here, 235
When lion rough in wildest rage doth roar.
Then know that I, as Snug the joiner, am
A lion fell, nor else no lion's dam;
For if I should as lion come in strife
Into this place, 'twere pity on my life. 240

THESEUS A very gentle beast, and of a good con-
science.

DEMETRIUS The very best at a beast, my lord, that e'er I
saw.

LYSANDER This lion is a very fox for his valor. 245

THESEUS True, and a goose for his discretion.

DEMETRIUS Not so, my lord, for his valor cannot carry
his discretion, and the fox carries the goose.

THESEUS His discretion, I am sure, cannot carry his
valor, for the goose carries not the fox. It is well. 250
Leave it to his discretion, and let us listen to the
Moon.

STARVELING, as *Moonshine*

This lanthorn doth the hornèd moon present.

DEMETRIUS He should have worn the horns on his
head. 255

THESEUS He is no crescent, and his horns are invisible
within the circumference.

STARVELING, *as Moonshine*

This lanthorn doth the hornèd moon present.

Myself the man i' th' moon do seem to be.

THESEUS This is the greatest error of all the rest; the
man should be put into the lanthorn. How is it else
"the man i' th' moon"?

DEMETRIUS He dares not come there for the candle,
for you see, it is already in snuff.

HIPPOLYTA I am aweary of this moon. Would he would
change.

THESEUS It appears by his small light of discretion that
he is in the wane; but yet, in courtesy, in all reason,
we must stay the time.

LYSANDER Proceed, Moon. 270

STARVELING, *as Moonshine* All that I have to say is to tell
you that the lanthorn is the moon, I the man i' th'
moon, this thornbush my thornbush, and this dog
my dog.

DEMETRIUS Why, all these should be in the lanthorn, 275
for all these are in the moon. But silence. Here
comes Thisbe.

Enter Thisbe 「(Flute).」

FLUTE, *as Thisbe*

This is old Ninny's tomb. Where is my love?

SNUG, *as Lion* O!

「The Lion roars. Thisbe runs off,
dropping her mantle.」

DEMETRIUS Well roared, Lion. 280

THESEUS Well run, Thisbe.

HIPPOLYTA Well shone, Moon. Truly, the Moon shines
with a good grace.

「Lion worries the mantle.」

THESEUS Well moused, Lion.

Enter Pyramus 「(Bottom).」

DÉMETRIUS And then came Pyramus.

285

「*Lion exits.*」

LYSANDER And so the lion vanished.

BOTTOM, *as Pyramus*

Sweet Moon, I thank thee for thy sunny beams.

I thank thee, Moon, for shining now so bright,
For by thy gracious, golden, glittering 「gleams,」

I trust to take of truest Thisbe sight.—

290

But stay! O spite!

But mark, poor knight,
What dreadful dole is here!

Eyes, do you see!

How can it be!

295

O dainty duck! O dear!

Thy mantle good—

What, stained with blood?

Approach, ye Furies fell!

O Fates, come, come,

300

Cut thread and thrum,

Quail, crush, conclude, and quell!

THESEUS This passion, and the death of a dear friend,
would go near to make a man look sad.

HIPPOLYTA Beshrew my heart but I pity the man.

305

BOTTOM, *as Pyramus*

O, wherefore, Nature, didst thou lions frame,

Since lion vile hath here deflowered my dear,

Which is—no, no—which was the fairest dame

That lived, that loved, that liked, that looked with
cheer?

310

Come, tears, confound!

Out, sword, and wound

The pap of Pyramus;

Ay, that left pap,

Where heart doth hop. 「*Pyramus stabs himself.*」

315

Thus die I, thus, thus, thus.

Now am I dead;

Now am I fled;
My soul is in the sky.

Tongue, lose thy light!

320

Moon, take thy flight!

「Moonshine exits.」

Now die, die, die, die, die.

「Pyramus falls.」

DEMETRIUS No die, but an ace for him, for he is but
one.

LYSANDER Less than an ace, man, for he is dead, he is
nothing. 325

THESEUS With the help of a surgeon he might yet
recover and yet prove an ass.

HIPPOLYTA How chance Moonshine is gone before
Thisbe comes back and finds her lover? 330

THESEUS She will find him by starlight.

「Enter Thisbe (Flute).」

Here she comes, and her passion ends the play.

HIPPOLYTA Methinks she should not use a long one for
such a Pyramus. I hope she will be brief.

DEMETRIUS A mote will turn the balance, which Pyra- 335
mus, which Thisbe, is the better: he for a man, God
warrant us; she for a woman, God bless us.

LYSANDER She hath spied him already with those
sweet eyes.

DEMETRIUS And thus she means, *videlicet*— 340

FLUTE, as *Thisbe*

Asleep, my love?

What, dead, my dove?

O Pyramus, arise!

Speak, speak. Quite dumb?

Dead? Dead? A tomb 345

Must cover thy sweet eyes.

These lily lips,

This cherry nose,

These yellow cowslip cheeks

Are gone, are gone! 350

Lovers, make moan;
 His eyes were green as leeks.
 O Sisters Three,
 Come, come to me
 With hands as pale as milk. 355
 Lay them in gore,
 Since you have shore
 With shears his thread of silk.
 Tongue, not a word!
 Come, trusty sword, 360
 Come, blade, my breast imbrue!

['Thisbe stabs herself.]

And farewell, friends.

Thus Thisbe ends.

Adieu, adieu, adieu. *['Thisbe falls.]*

THESEUS Moonshine and Lion are left to bury the 365
 dead.

DEMETRIUS Ay, and Wall too.

['Bottom and Flute arise.]

['BOTTOM'] No, I assure you, the wall is down that
 parted their fathers. Will it please you to see the
 Epilogue or to hear a Bergomask dance between 370
 two of our company?

THESEUS No epilogue, I pray you. For your play needs
 no excuse. Never excuse. For when the players are
 all dead, there need none to be blamed. Marry, if
 he that writ it had played Pyramus and hanged 375
 himself in Thisbe's garter, it would have been a fine
 tragedy; and so it is, truly, and very notably dis-
 charged. But, come, your Bergomask. Let your
 epilogue alone.

['Dance, and the players exit.]

The iron tongue of midnight hath told twelve. 380

Lovers, to bed! 'Tis almost fairy time.

I fear we shall outsleep the coming morn

As much as we this night have overwatched.

End