

Original Text

Modern Text

Act 4, Scene 2

Enter QUINCE, FLUTE, SNOUT, and STARVELING

QUINCE

Have you sent to Bottom's house? Is he come home yet?

STARVELING

*QUINCE, FLUTE, SNOUT,
and STARVELING enter.*

QUINCE

Have you sent anyone to Bottom's house? Has he come home yet?

STARVELING

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He cannot be heard of. Out of doubt he is transported.

FLUTE

If he come not, then the play is marred. It goes not forward. Doth it?

QUINCE

It is not possible. You have not a man in all Athens able to discharge Pyramus but he.

FLUTE

5 No, he hath simply the best wit of any handicraft man in Athens.

QUINCE

Yea, and the best person too. And he is a very paramour for a sweet voice.

FLUTE

You must say "paragon." A "paramour" is, God bless us, a thing of naught.

Enter SNUG

SNUG

Masters, the duke is coming from the temple, and there is two or three lords and ladies more married. If our sport had gone forward, we had all been made men.

FLUTE

O sweet bully Bottom! Thus hath he lost sixpence a day during his life. He could not have 'scaped sixpence a day. An the duke had not given him sixpence a day for playing Pyramus, I'll be hanged.

No one's heard from him. I'm sure he's been kidnapped.

FLUTE

If he doesn't show up, the play is ruined. It won't go on. Will it?

QUINCE

No, it would be impossible. He's the only person in Athens who can play Pyramus.

FLUTE

Definitely. He's quite simply the smartest working-man in Athens.

QUINCE

Yes, and the best looking too. And his voice is the paramour of sweetness.

FLUTE

You mean "paragon." A "paramour" is something bad.

SNUG enters.

SNUG

The duke's leaving the temple. Two or three more lords and ladies have been married too. If we'd been able to put on our play, we would have had it made.

FLUTE

Oh that great, funny guy, Bottom! He would have gotten a pension of six pence a day for his whole life. Six pence a day would've been forced on him. I'll be damned if the duke wouldn't have given him six pence a day for playing Pyramus.

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10 He would have deserved it. Sixpence a day in Pyramus, or nothing.

Enter BOTTOM

BOTTOM

Where are these lads? Where are these hearts?

QUINCE

Bottom! O most courageous day! O most happy hour!

BOTTOM

Masters, I am to discourse wonders—but ask me not what, for if I tell you I am no true Athenian. I will tell you everything, right as it fell out.

QUINCE

Let us hear, sweet Bottom.

BOTTOM

15 Not a word of me. All that I will tell you is that the duke hath dined. Get your apparel together, good

And he would have deserved it too. Pyramus is worth **six pence a day**, or it's worth nothing!

BOTTOM enters.

BOTTOM

Where are my guys? Where are my good fellows?

QUINCE

Bottom! Oh, how wonderful to see you! Oh, what a relief!

BOTTOM

My friends, I've got some amazing things to tell you—but don't ask me to tell you what. I swear by my Athenian citizenship that I won't tell you anything. I'll tell you everything exactly as it happened.

QUINCE

Tell us, Bottom.

BOTTOM

No, you won't get a word out of me. All I'll tell you is that the duke has had dinner already. Now it's

Original Text

strings to your beards, new ribbons to your pumps. Meet presently at the palace. Every man look o'er his part. For the short and the long is, our play is preferred. In any case, let Thisbe have clean linen. And let not him that plays the lion pair his nails, for they shall hang out for the lion's claws. And most dear actors, eat no onions nor garlic, for we are to utter sweet breath. And I do not doubt but to hear them say, "It is a sweet comedy." No more words. Away, go away!

Exeunt

Modern Text

time to get your costumes together. Find some good strings for tying on your false beards, and grab new ribbons to decorate your shoes. Meet me at the palace as soon as possible. Look over your lines again. Our play's going to be performed for the duke! So make sure Thisbe's wearing clean underwear, and make sure whoever's playing the lion doesn't cut his nails, because he needs them long to look like lion's claws. And no one eat any onions or garlic. If we have sweet-smelling breath, I'm sure they'll say "it's a sweet play." Now no more talking. Get busy, go!

They all exit.