

Original Text

Modern Text

Act 5, Scene 1

*Enter THESEUS, HIPPOLYTA, and PHILOSTRATE,
with other attendant lords*

*THESEUS, HIPPOLYTA,
and PHILOSTRATE enter, with a number of lords
and servants.*

HIPPOLYTA

'Tis strange, my Theseus, that these lovers speak of.

HIPPOLYTA

These lovers are saying some strange things,
Theseus.

THESEUS

- More strange than true. I never may believe
These antique fables nor these fairy toys.
Lovers and madmen have such seething brains,
5 Such shaping fantasies, that apprehend
More than cool reason ever comprehends.
The lunatic, the lover, and the poet
Are of imagination all compact.
One sees more devils than vast hell can hold—
10 That is the madman. The lover, all as frantic,
Sees Helen's beauty in a brow of Egypt.
The poet's eye, in fine frenzy rolling,
Doth glance from heaven to Earth, from Earth to
heaven.
15 And as imagination bodies forth
The forms of things unknown, the poet's pen
Turns them to shapes and gives to airy nothing
A local habitation and a name.
Such tricks hath strong imagination,
20 That if it would but apprehend some joy,
It comprehends some bringer of that joy.
Or in the night, imagining some fear,
How easy is a bush supposed a bear!

THESEUS

Yes, strange—and totally made up too. I'll never
believe any of these old legends or fairy tales.
Lovers and madmen hallucinate about things that
sane people just can't understand. Lunatics,
lovers, and poets all are ruled by their overactive
imagination. Some people think they see devils
and monsters everywhere—and they're lunatics.
Lovers are just as crazy, and think a dark-skinned
gypsy is the most gorgeous woman in the world.
Poets are always looking around like they're
having a fit, confusing the mundane with the
otherworldly, and describing things in their writing
that simply don't exist. All these people have such
strong imaginations that, when they feel happy,
they assume a god or some other supernatural
being is bringing that happiness to them. Or if
they're afraid of something at night, they look at
the shrubbery and imagine it's a wild bear!

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.

HIPPOLYTA

But the story that these lovers are telling, and the
fact that they all saw and heard exactly the same
things, make me think there's more going on here
than imaginary fantasies. Their story is bizarre
and astounding, but it's solid and consistent.

Original Text

Modern Text

*Enter lovers: LYSANDER, DEMETRIUS, HELENA,
and HERMIA*

*The lovers—
LYSANDER, DEMETRIUS, HELENA,
and HERMIA—enter.*

THESEUS

Here come the lovers, full of joy and mirth.—
Joy, gentle friends! Joy and fresh days of love
30 Accompany your hearts!

LYSANDER

More than to us
Wait in your royal walks, your board, your bed!

THESEUS

Come now, what masques, what dances shall we
have
To wear away this long age of three hours
35 Between our after-supper and bedtime?
Where is our usual manager of mirth?
What revels are in hand? Is there no play,
To ease the anguish of a torturing hour?
Call Philostrate.

PHILOSTRATE

Here, mighty Theseus.

THESEUS

Say, what abridgement have you for this evening?
40 What masque, what music? How shall we beguile
The lazy time if not with some delight?

PHILOSTRATE

(giving THESEUS a document)
There is a brief, how many sports are ripe.
Make choice of which your highness will see first.

THESEUS

45 *(reads)*
"The battle with the Centaurs, to be sung
By an Athenian eunuch to the harp."
We'll none of that. That have I told my love,
In glory of my kinsman Hercules.
"The riot of the tipsy Bacchanals,
Tearing the Thracian singer in their rage."
That is an old device, and it was played
When I from Thebes came last a conqueror.

THESEUS

Here come the lovers, laughing happily.—I wish
you joy, my friends! I hope the days ahead are full
of joy for you.

LYSANDER

We wish you even more joy, and hope joy comes
to you in your royal walks, at your table, and in
your royal bed!

THESEUS

Now, what kind of entertainment do we have to fill
up the long three hours between dinner and
bedtime? Where is our entertainment director?
What performances have been prepared? Aren't
there any plays for us to enjoy while we wait in
torture for bedtime to come? Let me see
Philostrate.

PHILOSTRATE

Here I am, Theseus.

THESEUS

Tell us what entertainment you've prepared for
the evening. Which plays, what music? How will
we pass the time without some entertainment?

PHILOSTRATE

(giving THESEUS a piece of paper) Here's a list
of all of the acts that have been prepared.
Choose which one you want to see first.

THESEUS

(reading) "The battle between Hercules and the
Centaurs, to be sung by an Athenian eunuch,
accompanied by a harp." No, we won't see that.
I've already told that story to Hippolyta, while
praising my cousin Hercules. What else? "The riot
of the drunk Bacchanals who rip the singer
Orpheus to shreds." That's an old show, and I
saw it the last time I came back from conquering

Act 5, Scene 1, Page 3

"The thrice three Muses mourning for the death
Of learning, late deceased in beggary."
50 That is some satire, keen and critical,
Not sorting with a nuptial ceremony.
"A tedious brief scene of young Pyramus
And his love Thisbe. Very tragical mirth."
"Merry" and "tragical"? "Tedious" and "brief"?
That is hot ice and wondrous strange snow.
How shall we find the concord of this discord?

PHILOSTRATE

Thebes. "The nine Muses mourning the death of
learning and scholarship." That's some sharp,
critical satire, and it's not appropriate for a
wedding. "A tedious short drama about young
Pyramus and his love Thisbe, a very sad and
tragic comedy." A sad comedy? Short but still
tedious? That's like hot ice and strange snow.
How can this drama be so many contradictory
things?

PHILOSTRATE

Original Text

- 55 A play there is, my lord, some ten words long,
Which is as brief as I have known a play.
But by ten words, my lord, it is too long,
Which makes it tedious. For in all the play
There is not one word apt, one player fitted.
- 60 And tragical, my noble lord, it is.
For Pyramus therein doth kill himself.
Which, when I saw rehearsed, I must confess,
Made mine eyes water—but more merry tears
The passion of loud laughter never shed.

THESEUS

- 65 What are they that do play it?

PHILOSTRATE

Hard-handed men that work in Athens here,
Which never labored in their minds till now,
And now have toiled their unbreathed memories
With this same play against your nuptial.

THESEUS

- 70 And we will hear it.

PHILOSTRATE

No, my noble lord.
It is not for you. I have heard it over,
And it is nothing, nothing in the world—
Unless you can find sport in their intents,
Extremely stretched and conned with cru 'l pain

- 75 To do you service.

Act 5, Scene 1, Page 4**THESEUS**

I will hear that play.
For never anything can be amiss
When simpleness and duty tender it.
Go, bring them in.—And take your places, ladies.

Exit PHILOSTRATE

HIPPOLYTA

- I love not to see wretchedness o'er charged
80 And duty in his service perishing.

THESEUS

Why, gentle sweet, you shall see no such thing.

HIPPOLYTA

He says they can do nothing in this kind.

THESEUS

- The kinder we, to give them thanks for nothing.
Our sport shall be to take what they mistake.
85 And what poor duty cannot do, noble respect
Takes it in might, not merit.
Where I have come, great clerks have purposed
To greet me with premeditated welcomes,
Where I have seen them shiver and look pale,
90 Make periods in the midst of sentences,
Throttle their practiced accent in their fears,

Modern Text

It's a play about ten words long, which is the shortest play I've ever heard of. But in my opinion, it's about ten words too long. That's why it's tedious. In the entire play, not one word is well-written, and not one of the actors is right for his part. It's tragic because Pyramus kills himself. I have to admit that when I saw his suicide during rehearsal, I had tears in my eyes—but they were tears of laughter.

THESEUS

Who are the actors?

PHILOSTRATE

Rough workmen from Athens who never spent much time thinking. Now they've worn out their out-of-shape brains to put on this play for your wedding.

THESEUS

So let's see it.

PHILOSTRATE

No, my noble lord. This play isn't right for you. I've seen the whole thing, and it's completely worthless—unless you think their bad acting and their misremembered lines—which they memorized so painfully—are funny.

THESEUS

I'll watch this play. Nothing can really be bad when it's created by simple people who try hard. Come on, bring them in. And sit down, ladies.

PHILOSTRATE exits.

HIPPOLYTA

I don't like seeing poor people overburdened or looking bad when they're trying to do something good.

THESEUS

You won't see anything like that, sweetheart.

HIPPOLYTA

He just said that they're no good at acting.

THESEUS

Then we're even kinder people for thanking them for something that they're not good at. We'll entertain ourselves by accepting their mistakes. When poor dutiful people can't do certain things well, generous people can consider the effort they put into it rather than the effect that they produce. In my travels, great scholars have come up to me, meaning to greet me with well-rehearsed welcoming speeches, and I have seen them

Original Text

And in conclusion dumbly have broke off,
 Not paying me a welcome. Trust me, sweet,
 Out of this silence yet I picked a welcome,
 95 And in the modesty of fearful duty
 I read as much as from the rattling tongue
 Of saucy and audacious eloquence.
 Love, therefore, and tongue-tied simplicity
 In least speak most, to my capacity.

Enter PHILOSTRATE

Modern Text

tremble and turn pale, and pause inappropriately
 in the middle of their sentences, and botch their
 well-rehearsed tones of voice because they're so
 nervous, and then break off abruptly at the end,
 without actually welcoming me. Trust me, my
 sweet, I figured out that they were trying to
 welcome me even though they were silent, and
 that message was as clear from someone who
 was modest and nervously dutiful as it is from
 someone who is loud and audacious and
 eloquent. Therefore, love and tongue-tied
 simplicity can say the most even when they're
 saying the least, in my opinion.

PHILOSTRATE enters.

Act 5, Scene 1, Page 5

PHILOSTRATE

100 So please your grace, the Prologue is addressed.

THESEUS

Let him approach.

Enter QUINCE as the PROLOGUE

PROLOGUE

(delivered by QUINCE)

If we offend, it is with our good will.
 That you should think we come not to offend,
 105 But with good will. 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 contest you,
 Our true intent is. All for your delight
 110 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.

THESEUS

This fellow doth not stand upon points.

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 his prologue like a child on
 a recorder—a sound, but not in government.

PHILOSTRATE

Your grace, the person who is going to deliver
 the prologue is ready.

THESEUS

Let him come forward.

The PROLOGUE (QUINCE) enters.

PROLOGUE

If we happen to offend you, it's because we want
 to. We don't want you to think we came here to
 offend you, except that we want to offend you
 with our good intentions. Our plan to show off our
 little bit of talent will wind up getting us executed.
 Please keep in mind we're only here out of spite.
 We don't come here with the intention of making
 you happy. We're absolutely not here to delight
 you. The actors are ready to come out and make
 you sorry. By watching their show, you'll find out
 everything you're likely to know.

THESEUS

This guy doesn't pay much attention to
 punctuation.

LYSANDER

He rode that prologue like a wild horse. He didn't
 know how to stop it. The moral of this story is
 that it's not enough to speak; you have to speak
 grammatically.

HIPPOLYTA

Yes, he performed his prologue like a child plays
 a recorder—he can make sounds, but they're out
 of control.

Act 5, Scene 1, Page 6

THESEUS

His speech was like a tangled
 chain. Nothing impaired, but all

THESEUS

His speech was like a tangled chain. It went on and on and was a total
 mess. Who's next?

Original Text

Modern Text

disordered. Who is next?

Enter **BOTTOM** as **PYRAMUS**,
and **FLUTE** as **THISBE**,
and **SNOUT** as **WALL**,
and **STARVELING** as **MOONSHIN**
E, and **SNUG** as **LION**

PROLOGUE

(delivered by QUINCE)

Gentles, perchance you wonder at this show.

But wonder on, till truth make all things plain.

5 This man is Pyramus, if you would know.

This beauteous lady Thisbe is certain.

13 This man, with lime and roughcast, doth present

0 Wall, that vile wall which did these lovers sunder.

And through Wall's chink, poor souls, they are content

13 To whisper. At the which let no man wonder.

5 This man, with lantern, dog, and bush of thorn,
Presenteth Moonshine. For, if you will know,

14 By moonshine did these lovers think no scorn

0 To meet at Ninus' tomb—there, there to woo.

This grisly beast, which "Lion" hight by name,

14 The trusty Thisbe, coming first by night,

5 Did scare away, or rather did affright.

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,

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

BOTTOM enters as PYRAMUS, with FLUTE as THISBE, SNOUT as WALL, STARVELING as MOONSHINE, and SNUG as LION.

PROLOGUE

(delivered by QUINCE) Ladies and gentlemen, perhaps you are

wondering what is going on. Well, keep wondering, until the truth makes everything clear. This man is Pyramus, if you want to know. This

beautiful lady is definitely Thisbe. This man with the limestone and cement is portraying Wall, that horrible wall that kept these lovers apart.

They are content to whisper through Wall's little hole, the poor souls, and no one should be surprised. This man, with his lantern, dog, and

thornbush, portrays Moonshine, because, if you want to know, the lovers were not ashamed to meet each other by moonshine at Ninus's

tomb in order to carry on their courtship. This grisly beast, which is called "Lion," scared away, or rather frightened, the faithful Thisbe

when she arrived at the meeting place at night. As she ran away from him, she dropped her cloak, which the horrible Lion stained with his

bloody mouth. Soon Pyramus comes along, a tall and handsome young man, and finds his faithful Thisbe's cloak to be dead. At this point, he

takes his sword, his bloody blameful blade, and bravely breaks open his boiling bloody breast. And Thisbe, hiding in the shade of the

mulberry bushes, took his dagger and killed herself. For the rest of the story, let Lion, Moonshine, Wall, and the two lovers talk more about it, since they're standing here.

Original Text

Modern Text

lovers twain
At large discourse, while here they
do remain.

Act 5, Scene 1, Page 7

THESEUS

I wonder if the lion be to speak.

DEMETRIUS

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

*Exeunt PROLOGUE, PYRAMUS, THISBE, LION,
and MOONSHINE*

WALL

(played by SNOOT) In this same interlude it doth
150 befall
That I, one Snout by name, present a wall.
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,
155 Did whisper often very secretly.
This loam, this roughcast, and this stone doth show
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?

DEMETRIUS

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

Enter PYRAMUS

THESEUS

Pyramus draws near the wall. Silence!

PYRAMUS

(played by BOTTOM)
O grim-looking night! O night with hue so black!
165 O night, which ever art when day is not!
O night, O night! Alack, alack, alack,

THESEUS

I wonder if the lion's going to talk.

DEMETRIUS

It wouldn't surprise me, my lord. If these asses
can speak, a lion should be able to.

*PROLOGUE, THISBE, LION,
and MOONSHINE exit.*

WALL

(played by SNOOT) At this point I, Snout, play a
wall. But not just any wall. I want you to
understand that I'm pretending to be a kind of
wall that has a little hole in it. The lovers
Pyramus and Thisbe often whispered very
secretly through that hole. This clay, this cement,
and this stone that I'm carrying around show that
I'm that wall. It's the truth. And this is the crack,
right side and left side *(points with two fingers)*,
through which the frightened lovers will be
whispering.

THESEUS

Can you imagine cement and stone talking
better?

DEMETRIUS

It's the smartest partition I've ever heard speak,
my lord.

PYRAMUS enters.

THESEUS

Pyramus is coming up to the wall. Be quiet!

PYRAMUS

(played by BOTTOM) Oh, grim-looking night!
Oh, night that is so black in color! Oh night,
which is always there when it is not day! Oh
night! Oh night! So sad, sad, sad,

Act 5, Scene 1, Page 8

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.
170 Thou Wall, O Wall, O sweet and lovely Wall,
Show me thy chink to blink through with mine eyne!

WALL holds up fingers as chink

Thanks, courteous Wall. Jove shield thee well for
this!
But what see I? No Thisbe do I see.
175 O wicked Wall through whom I see no bliss!

I'm afraid my Thisbe has forgotten her
promise!—And you, oh Wall, oh sweet, oh lovely
Wall, you stand between her father's property
and mine, you Wall, oh Wall, oh sweet and lovely
Wall. Show me your hole to stick my eye up
against!

WALL holds up two fingers

Thank you, you're such a polite wall. God bless
you for doing this. But what's this I see? I don't
see any Thisbe. Oh wicked wall, through which I
don't see any happiness! Damn your stones for

Original Text

Cursed be thy stones for thus deceiving me!

THESEUS

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

BOTTOM

(out of character) 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

THISBE

(played by FLUTE)

O Wall, full often hast thou heard my moans,
For parting my fair Pyramus and me!

My cherry lips have often kissed thy stones,
185 Thy stones with lime and hair knit up in thee.

PYRAMUS

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

THISBE

My love thou art, my love, I think.

Act 5, Scene 1, Page 9

PYRAMUS

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

THISBE

And I like Helen, till the Fates me kill.

PYRAMUS

Not Shafalus to Procrus was so true.

THISBE

As Shafalus to Procrus, I to you.

PYRAMUS

Oh, kiss me through the hole of this vile wall!

THISBE

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

PYRAMUS

Wilt thou at Ninny's tomb meet me straightway?

THISBE

Tide life, tide death, I come without delay.

Exeunt PYRAMUS and THISBE

WALL

Thus have I, Wall, my part discharged so.
And, being done, thus Wall away doth go.

Exit WALL

Modern Text

disappointing me like this!

THESEUS

Since the wall is conscious, it should curse back at him.

BOTTOM

(out of character) No, actually, sir, he shouldn't say anything. It's not his turn, it's Thisbe's.

"Disappointing me like this" is Thisbe's cue.

She's supposed to enter now, and I'll see her through the wall. You'll see, it'll happen exactly like I say. Here she comes.

THISBE enters.

THISBE

(played by FLUTE) Oh wall, you've often heard me moaning because you keep me separated from my handsome Pyramus! My cherry lips have often kissed your bricks, which are stuck together with cement.

PYRAMUS

I see a voice! I'll go to the hole to see if I can hear my Thisbe's face. Thisbe?

THISBE

You are my love, my love, I think.

PYRAMUS

I'm your love, no matter what you think. And I'm still faithful to you, just like the famous [Limander](#).

THISBE

And I'll be as faithful to you as [Helen of Troy](#), until the day I die.

PYRAMUS

Not even Shafalus was as faithful to his lover Procrus as I am to you.

THISBE

Me too, I'm as faithful as [Shafalus to Procrus](#).

PYRAMUS

Oh, kiss me through the hole in this nasty wall.

THISBE

But I'm only kissing the wall's hole, not your lips at all.

PYRAMUS

Will you meet me right away at Ninny's grave?

THISBE

Neither death nor life will stop me from coming.

PYRAMUS and THISBE exit.

WALL

I, Wall, have done my part. Now that I'm done, Wall can go away.

WALL exits.

Original Text

Modern Text

Act 5, Scene 1, Page 10

THESEUS

200 Now is the mural down between the two neighbors.

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 them.

HIPPOLYTA

It must be your imagination then, and not theirs.

THESEUS

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

Enter LION and MOONSHINE

LION

(played by SNUG)

You, ladies, you whose gentle hearts do fear

210 The smallest monstrous mouse that creeps on floor,
May now perchance both quake and tremble here,
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.

215 For if I should as lion come in strife
Into this place, 'twere pity on my life.

THESEUS

A very gentle beast, of a good conscience.

DEMETRIUS

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

THESEUS

The lovers should've waited around a little longer—the wall between them is down now.

DEMETRIUS

What can you do? That's what happens with talking walls.

HIPPOLYTA

This is the silliest thing I've ever seen.

THESEUS

The best plays are still only illusions, and the worst are just as good, if you just use your imagination to fill them in.

HIPPOLYTA

In that case it's your imagination that's interesting, not the play.

THESEUS

If we imagine these guys as they imagine themselves, then they're first-class actors. Look, here come two noble animals, a man and a lion.

LION and MOONSHINE enter.

LION

(played by SNUG) You, ladies, whose gentle hearts make you afraid of the smallest monstrous mouse that crawls around on the floor, might quake and tremble now when the wild lion roars in his most violent rage. You should know that I, Snug the carpenter, am not a fierce lion or a lioness, because if I were a lion and I showed up here to cause trouble, I'd be taking my life in my hands.

THESEUS

Ah, it's a sensitive animal, with a good conscience.

DEMETRIUS

He's the best actor I've ever seen play a lion.

Act 5, Scene 1, Page 11

LYSANDER

This lion is a very fox, for his valor.

THESEUS

220 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. Leave it to his discretion, and let us listen to the moon.

MOONSHINE**LYSANDER**

He's as brave as a fox.

THESEUS

True. And as wise as a goose.

DEMETRIUS

Oh, that's not true, my lord. He's not brave enough to be wise.

THESEUS

He's not wise enough to be brave. Anyway, he is what he is. Let's listen to the moon.

MOONSHINE

Original Text

(played by STARVELING)

This lanthorn doth the hornèd moon present—

DEMETRIUS

He should have worn the horns on his head.

THESEUS

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

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

235 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.

Modern Text

This lantern represents the **horned moon**—

DEMETRIUS

He should have worn the **horns on his head**.

THESEUS

He's not a crescent moon, so his horns must be invisible inside the circle.

MOONSHINE

This lantern represents the moon. I myself am playing the man in the moon—

THESEUS

Well then, that's the biggest mistake of all. The man should be inside the lantern. How else is he the “man in the moon”?

DEMETRIUS

He can't go in there because of the candle. It's too hot.

HIPPOLYTA

I'm tired of this moon. I wish he'd wax or wane off the stage.

THESEUS

It seems like he's waning, but out of politeness we'll have to wait and see.

Act 5, Scene 1, Page 12

LYSANDER

Proceed, Moon.

MOONSHINE

All that I have to say is to tell you that the lanthorn is the moon; I, the man in the moon; this thornbush, my thornbush; and this dog, my dog.

DEMETRIUS

245 Why, all these should be in the lanthorn, for all these are in the moon.—But silence! Here comes Thisbe.

Enter **THISBE**

THISBE

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

LION

(roaring) Oh!

THISBE runs off, dropping her mantle

DEMETRIUS

Well roared, Lion!

THESEUS

250 Well run, Thisbe!

HIPPOLYTA

Well shone, Moon!—Truly, the moon shines with a good grace.

LION bloodies **THISBE**'s mantle

LYSANDER

Go ahead, Moon.

MOONSHINE

All I wanted to tell you is that the lantern is the moon, I'm the man in the moon, this thornbush is my thornbush, and this dog is my dog.

DEMETRIUS

Well, all of these should be in the lantern, because they're all in the moon. But be quiet, here comes Thisbe.

THISBE enters.

THISBE

This is old Ninny's tomb. But where is my love?

LION

(roaring) Hey!

THISBE runs off, dropping her cloak.

DEMETRIUS

Good roaring, Lion!

THESEUS

Good running, Thisbe!

HIPPOLYTA

Good shining, Moon!—Really, the Moon shines very well.

LION shakes **THISBE**'s cloak around and stains

Original Text

Modern Text

THESEUS

Well moused, Lion!

THESEUS

That's good, Lion! Shake it around like a cat with a mouse.

Enter PYRAMUS

PYRAMUS enters.

Act 5, Scene 1, Page 13

DEMETRIUS

And then came Pyramus.

DEMETRIUS

And then Pyramus showed up.

Exit LION

LION exits.

LYSANDER

And so the lion vanished.

LYSANDER

So the lion disappeared.

PYRAMUS

255 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.—
But stay, O spite!

260 But mark, poor knight,
What dreadful dole is here!
Eyes, do you see?
How can it be?

O dainty duck! O dear!
265 Thy mantle good,
What, stained with blood?
Approach, ye Furies fell!
O Fates, come, come,
Cut thread and thrum.

270 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.

PYRAMUS

O wherefore, Nature, didst thou lions frame?
275 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.
Come, tears, confound!
280 Out, sword, and wound!
The pap of Pyramus—

PYRAMUS

Sweet Moon, I thank you for your sunny beams. I thank you, Moon, for shining now so bright, because by the light of your gracious, golden, glittering gleams, I hope to be able to see my faithful Thisbe.—But wait. Oh no! But, look, poor me, what a terrible tragedy is here! Eyes, do you see? How can it be? Oh, dainty duck! Oh, dear! Your cloak so good, what, stained with blood? Come, terrible Furies, and punish whoever has hurt her! Oh, Fate, come and cut the thread of my life. Conquer, crush, conclude, and kill!

THESEUS

You could get sad watching this actor's passionate lament—if one of your good friends happened to die right at the same time.

HIPPOLYTA

Damned if I don't feel sorry for him.

PYRAMUS

Oh, Mother Nature, why did you create lions? A mean and awful lion has **deflowered** my darling, who is—no, no, who was the most beautiful lady who ever lived, or loved, or liked, or looked. Come on, tears, pour over me! Come on out, sword, and wound Pyramus in the chest—yes, right here on the left side where his heart is. (PYRAMUS *stabs himself*)

Act 5, Scene 1, Page 14

Ay, that left pap
Where heart doth hop. (*stabs himself*)
Thus die I, thus, thus, thus.
Now am I dead.
285 Now am I fled.

And so I'm dying. Here I go, here I go. Okay, now I'm dead. My soul has fled to the sky. My tongue shall see no more, It's time for the moon to go away.

Original Text

My soul is in the sky.
Tongue, lose thy light.
Moon, take thy flight.

Exit MOONSHINE

290 Now die, die, die, die, die.
(*dies*)

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.

THESEUS

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

HIPPOLYTA

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

THESEUS

She will find him by starlight. Here she comes, and her passion ends the play.

Enter THISBE

HIPPOLYTA

300 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 Pyramus, which Thisbe, is the better. He for a man, God warrant us, she for a woman, God bless us.

Modern Text

MOONSHINE *exits.*

Now die, die, die, die, die. (*PYRAMUS dies*)

DEMETRIUS

Is someone throwing dice? I guess it's "die," not dice, since there's only one of him.

LYSANDER

Actually he's a die with no dots, since he's nothing—he's dead.

THESEUS

With a doctor's help he might recover and become an ass again.

HIPPOLYTA

If Moonshine's gone before Thisbe comes back, how will she be able to see in the dark to find her lover dead?

THESEUS

She'll see him by starlight. Here she comes. Her moaning and groaning will end the play.

THISBE *enters.*

HIPPOLYTA

I don't think a ridiculous Pyramus like that one deserves much moaning. I hope she keeps it short.

DEMETRIUS

I can't decide whether Pyramus or Thisbe is better. God help us if he's a better man. But God help us if she's a better woman.

Act 5, Scene 1, Page 15

LYSANDER

305 She hath spied him already with those sweet eyes.

DEMETRIUS

And thus she means, videlicet—

THISBE

Asleep, my love?

What, dead, my dove?

O Pyramus, arise!

310 Speak, speak. Quite dumb?

Dead, dead? A tomb

Must cover thy sweet eyes.

These lily lips,

This cherry nose,

315 These yellow cowslip cheeks

Are gone, are gone.

Lovers, make moan.

His eyes were green as leeks.

LYSANDER

Look, she's spotted him with those sweet eyes of hers.

DEMETRIUS

And now she'll start moaning, of course—

THISBE

Are you asleep, my love? What, are you dead, my dove? Oh, Pyramus, get up! Speak, speak. Can't you talk? Dead, dead? The dirt of a grave must cover your sweet eyes! Your lily-white lips, your cherry-red nose, and your buttercup-yellow cheeks are gone, gone forever. Lovers, moan and weep. His eyes were as green as leeks. Oh, Fate, come, come to me, with hands as pale as milk. Soak your hands in blood and gore, since you have cut the thread of his life with scissors. Tongue, do not speak. Come, trusty sword. Come, blade, drench my breast with blood. (*she*

Original Text

O Sisters three,
 320 Come, come to me
 With hands as pale as milk.
 Lay them in gore,
 Since you have shore
 With shears his thread of silk.
 325 Tongue, not a word.
 Come, trusty sword.
 Come, blade, my breast imbrue. (*stabs herself*)
 And, farewell, friends.
 Thus Thisbe ends.
 330 Adieu, adieu, adieu.
 (*dies*)

THESEUS

Moonshine and Lion are left to bury the dead.

DEMETRIUS

Ay, and Wall too.

Modern Text

stabs herself) Goodbye, friends! This is how
 Thisbe comes to an end. Goodbye, goodbye,
 goodbye. (*THISBE dies*)

THESEUS

Moonshine and Lion are left to bury the dead.

DEMETRIUS

Yes, and Wall too.

Act 5, Scene 1, Page 16

BOTTOM

(*out of character*) No, 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
 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 needs none to be blamed. Marry, if he
 that writ it had played Pyramus and hanged himself
 in Thisbe's garter, it would have been a fine tragedy.
 And so it is, truly, and very notably discharged. But
 come, your Bergomask. Let your epilogue alone.

Bergomask dance
Exeunt **BOTTOM** and **FLUTE**

The iron tongue of midnight hath told twelve.
 Lovers, to bed. 'Tis almost fairy time.
 345 I fear we shall outsleep the coming morn
 As much as we this night have overwatched.
 This palpable-gross play hath well beguiled
 The heavy gait of night. Sweet friends, to bed.
 A fortnight hold we this solemnity,
 350 In nightly revels and new jollity.

Exeunt
Enter **ROBIN**

ROBIN

Now the hungry lion roars
 And the wolf howls the moon,
 Whilst the heavy ploughman snores,
 All with weary task fordone.
 Now the wasted brands do glow,

BOTTOM

(*out of character*) No, I assure you. The wall that
 kept their fathers apart has been taken down.
 Would you like to see the epilogue or hear a
 country dance between two of us?

THESEUS

No epilogue, please. Your play doesn't need to
 be excused afterward with an epilogue. Never
 apologize—when the actors are all dead, no one
 can be blamed. As a matter of fact, if the
 playwright had played Pyramus and hanged
 himself with Thisbe's belt, it would have been a
 very good tragedy. It's a good tragedy, very well
 done. But come on, let's see you do your dance.
 Forget your epilogue.

The actors dance, and **BOTTOM** and **FLUTE** *exit.*

The clock has chimed midnight. Lovers, it's time
 to go to bed. It's almost fairy time. I'm afraid
 we're going to oversleep in the morning as late
 as we've stayed up tonight. This blatantly stupid
 play helped us kill the time until bed. Dear
 friends, let's go to bed. We'll continue this
 celebration for two weeks, with nightly parties
 and new fun.

They all exit.
ROBIN *enters.*

ROBIN

Now the hungry lion roars and the wolf howls at
 the moon. The farmer snores, exhausted from
 his work. The charred logs glow in the fireplace,
 and the owl's hoot makes the sick man think
 about his own death. Now is the time of night

Original Text

Whilst the screech-owl, screeching loud,
 Puts the wretch that lies in woe
 In remembrance of a shroud.
 Now it is the time of night
 That the graves all gaping wide,
 Every one lets forth his sprite,
 In the churchway paths to glide.

Modern Text

when graves open wide and release spirits to
 glide over the graveyard paths.

Act 5, Scene 1, Page 17

And we fairies, that do run
 By the triple Hecate's team
 From the presence of the sun,
 Following darkness like a dream,
 Now are frolic. Not a mouse
 Shall disturb this hallowed house.
 I am sent with broom before
 To sweep the dust behind the door.

*Enter OBERON and TITANIA, King and Queen of
 Fairies, with all their train*

OBERON

Through the house give glimmering light,
 By the dead and drowsy fire.
 Every elf and fairy sprite
 Hop as light as bird from brier.
 355 And this ditty, after me,
 Sing and dance it trippingly.

TITANIA

First, rehearse your song by rote,
 To each word a warbling note.
 Hand in hand with fairy grace
 360 Will we sing and bless this place.

*OBERON, TITANIA, and the FAIRIES sing and
 dance*

OBERON

(sings)

*Now until the break of day,
 Through this house each fairy stray.
 To the best bride bed will we,
 Which by us shall blessèd be.
 And the issue there create
 Ever shall be fortunate.
 So shall all the couples three
 Ever true in loving be.
 And the blots of Nature's hand
 Shall not in their issue stand.*

And we fairies, who run away from the sun just
 like the goddess of the night, following darkness
 like a dream, are getting antsy. But I'm here to
 make sure that not even a mouse disturbs this
 blessed house. I've been sent to clean house a
 bit before the fairies come.

*OBERON and TITANIA enter with their servants
 and followers.*

OBERON

Let the dying fire shine a glimmering light
 throughout the house. I want every elf and fairy
 to hop lightly, like a bird on a twig, and to sing
 and dance this song along with me.

TITANIA

First rehearse your song from memory, and
 make sure each note is pretty. We'll all join
 hands and sing, and bless this place with our
 fairy grace.

*OBERON and TITANIA lead the FAIRIES in
 song and dance.*

OBERON

(singing)

*Now, until morning, each fairy should walk
 through this house. Titania and I will go to the
 royal marriage bed to bless it, and the children
 conceived in that bed will always have good luck.
 Each of the three couples will always be faithful
 and in love, and their children will have no
 deformities.*

Act 5, Scene 1, Page 18

*Never mole, harelip, nor scar,
 Nor mark prodigious, such as are
 Despisèd in nativity,
 Shall upon their children be.
 With this field dew consecrate,*

*They won't have moles, or harelips, or scars, or
 abnormal markings, or anything else that might
 alarm someone if their baby was born with it. Use
 this blessed dew from the fields to bless each
 room in the palace with sweet peace. And the*

Original Text

*Every fairy take his gait.
And each several chamber bless
Through this palace with sweet peace.
And the owner of it blessed
Ever shall in safety rest.
Trip away. Make no stay.
Meet me all by break of day.*

*Exeunt all but **ROBIN***

ROBIN

If we shadows have offended,
Think but this, and all is mended—
That you have but slumbered here
While these visions did appear.
And this weak and idle theme,
No more yielding but a dream,
Gentles, do not reprehend.
If you pardon, we will mend.
And, as I am an honest Puck,
If we have unearnèd luck
Now to 'scape the serpent's tongue,
We will make amends ere long.
Else the Puck a liar call.
So good night unto you all.
Give me your hands if we be friends,
And Robin shall restore amends.

Exit

Modern Text

*blessed owner will always be safe. Run along.
Don't stay long. Meet me at dawn.*

*They all exit except for **ROBIN**.*

ROBIN

If we actors have offended you, just think of it this way and everything will be all right—you were asleep when you saw these visions, and this silly and pathetic story was no more real than a dream. Ladies and gentlemen, don't get upset with me. If you forgive us, we'll make everything all right. I'm an honest Puck, and I swear that if we're lucky enough not to get hissed at, we'll make it up to you soon. If not, then I'm a liar. So good night to everyone. Give me some applause, if we're friends, and Robin will make everything up to you.

He exits.