

SIDE 12 – Mechanicals

BOTTOM Are we all met?

QUINCE Pat, pat. And here's a marvels convenient
place for our rehearsal. This green plot shall be
our stage, this hawthorn brake our tiring-house,
and we will do it in action as we will do it before 5
the Duke.

BOTTOM Peter Quince?

QUINCE What sayest thou, bully Bottom?

BOTTOM There are things in this comedy of Pyramus
and Thisbe that will never please. First, Pyramus 10
must draw a sword to kill himself, which the ladies
cannot abide. How answer you that?

SNOUT By 'r lakin, a parlous fear.

STARVELING I believe we must leave the killing out,
when all is done. 15

BOTTOM Not a whit! I have a device to make all well.
Write me a prologue, and let the prologue seem to
say we will do no harm with our swords and that
Pyramus is not killed indeed. And, for the more
better assurance, tell them that I, Pyramus, am not 20
Pyramus, but Bottom the weaver. This will put them
out of fear.

QUINCE Well, we will have such a prologue, and it shall
be written in eight and six.

BOTTOM No, make it two more. Let it be written in 25
eight and eight.

SNOUT Will not the ladies be afeard of the lion?

STARVELING I fear it, I promise you.

BOTTOM Masters, you ought to consider with yourself,
to bring in (God shield us!) a lion among ladies is a 30
most dreadful thing. For there is not a more fearful
wildfowl than your lion living, and we ought to look
to 't.

SNOUT Therefore another prologue must tell he is not
a lion. 35

BOTTOM Nay, you must name his name, and half his
face must be seen through the lion's neck, and he
himself must speak through, saying thus, or to the
same defect: "Ladies," or "Fair ladies, I would
wish you," or "I would request you," or "I would 40
entreat you not to fear, not to tremble! My life for
yours. If you think I come hither as a lion, it were
pity of my life. No, I am no such thing. I am a man as
other men are." And there indeed let him name his
name and tell them plainly he is Snug the joiner. 45

QUINCE Well, it shall be so. But there is two hard
things: that is, to bring the moonlight into a chamber,
for you know Pyramus and Thisbe meet by
moonlight.

SNOUT Doth the moon shine that night we play our 50
play?

BOTTOM A calendar, a calendar! Look in the almanac.
Find out moonshine, find out moonshine.

Quince takes out a book.

QUINCE Yes, it doth shine that night.

BOTTOM Why, then, may you leave a casement of the 55
great chamber window, where we play, open, and
the moon may shine in at the casement.

QUINCE Ay, or else one must come in with a bush of
thorns and a lantern and say he comes to disfigure
or to present the person of Moonshine. Then there 60
is another thing: we must have a wall in the great
chamber, for Pyramus and Thisbe, says the story,
did talk through the chink of a wall.

SNOUT You can never bring in a wall. What say you,
Bottom? 65

BOTTOM Some man or other must present Wall. And
let him have some plaster, or some loam, or some
roughcast about him to signify wall, or let him
hold his fingers thus, and through that cranny shall
Pyramus and Thisbe whisper. 70

QUINCE If that may be, then all is well. Come, sit down,
every mother's son, and rehearse your parts. Pyramus,
you begin. When you have spoken your
speech, enter into that brake, and so everyone
according to his cue.