

SIDE 15 – Bottom’s dream, Mechanicals

BOTTOM, *waking up* When my cue comes, call me, 210  
and I will answer. My next is “Most fair Pyramus.”  
Hey-ho! Peter Quince! Flute the bellows-mender!  
Snout the tinker! Starveling! God’s my life! Stolen  
hence and left me asleep! I have had a most rare  
vision. I have had a dream past the wit of man to say 215  
what dream it was. Man is but an ass if he go about  
to expound this dream. Methought I was—there  
is no man can tell what. Methought I was and  
methought I had—but man is but a patched fool if  
he will offer to say what methought I had. The eye of 220  
man hath not heard, the ear of man hath not seen,  
man’s hand is not able to taste, his tongue to  
conceive, nor his heart to report what my dream  
was. I will get Peter Quince to write a ballad of this  
dream. It shall be called “Bottom’s Dream” because 225  
it hath no bottom; and I will sing it in the  
latter end of a play, before the Duke. Peradventure,  
to make it the more gracious, I shall sing it at her  
death. *Exit.*

Scene 2

*Enter Quince, Flute, Snout, and Starveling.*

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

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

FLUTE If he come not, then the play is marred. It goes 5  
not forward, doth it?

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

FLUTE No, he hath simply the best wit of any handicraftman  
in Athens. 10

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 the joiner.*

SNUG Masters, the Duke is coming from the temple, 15  
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 20  
'scaped sixpence a day. An the Duke had not given  
him sixpence a day for playing Pyramus, I'll be  
hanged. He would have deserved it. Sixpence a day  
in Pyramus, or nothing!

*Enter Bottom.*

BOTTOM Where are these lads? Where are these 25  
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 not true 30  
Athenian. I will tell you everything right as it fell  
out.

QUINCE Let us hear, sweet Bottom.

BOTTOM Not a word of me. All that I will tell you is that  
the Duke hath dined. Get your apparel together, 35  
good 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 pare his 40  
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!