

THESEUS

~~“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.

50

~~“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.

55

~~“The thrice-three Muses mourning for the death  
Of learning, late deceased in beggary.”~~

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.”

60

“Merry” and “tragical”? “Tedious” and “brief”?

That is hot ice and wondrous strange snow!

How shall we find the concord of this discord?

PHILOSTRATE

A play there is, my lord, some ten words long  
(Which is as brief as I have known a play),

65

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.

And tragical, my noble lord, it is.

70

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

What are they that do play it?

75

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.