

QUINCE Francis Flute, the bellows-mender.

FLUTE Here, Peter Quince.

QUINCE Flute, you must take Thisbe on you.

FLUTE What is Thisbe—a wand'ring knight?

QUINCE It is the lady that Pyramus must love.

FLUTE Nay, faith, let not me play a woman. I have a beard coming.

QUINCE That's all one. You shall play it in a mask, and you may speak as small as you will.

BOTTOM An I may hide my face, let me play Thisbe too. I'll speak in a monstrous little voice: "Thisne, Thisne!"—"Ah Pyramus, my lover dear! Thy Thisbe dear and lady dear!"

QUINCE No, no, you must play Pyramus—and, Flute, you Thisbe.

BOTTOM Well, proceed.

QUINCE Robin Starveling, the tailor.

STARVELING Here, Peter Quince.

QUINCE Robin Starveling, you must play Thisbe's mother.—Tom Snout, the tinker.

SNOUT Here, Peter Quince.

QUINCE You, Pyramus' father.—Myself, Thisbe's father.—Snug the joiner, you the lion's part.—And I hope here is a play fitted.

SNUG Have you the lion's part written? Pray you, if it be, give it me, for I am slow of study.

QUINCE You may do it extempore, for it is nothing but roaring.

BOTTOM Let me play the lion too. I will roar that I will do any man's heart good to hear me. I will roar that I will make the Duke say "Let him roar again. Let him roar again!"

QUINCE An you should do it too terribly, you would fright the Duchess and the ladies that they would shriek, and that were enough to hang us all.

ALL That would hang us, every mother's son.

BOTTOM I grant you, friends, if you should fright the ladies out of their wits, they would have no more discretion but to hang us. But I will aggravate my voice so that I will roar you as gently as any sucking dove. I will roar you an 'twere any nightingale.

QUINCE You can play no part but Pyramus, for Pyramus is a sweet-faced man, a proper man as one shall see in a summer's day, a most lovely gentlemanlike man. Therefore you must needs play Pyramus.

BOTTOM Well, I will undertake it. What beard were I best to play it in?

QUINCE Why, what you will.

BOTTOM I will discharge it in either your straw-color beard, your orange-tawny beard, your purple-in-grain beard, or your French-crown-color beard, your perfit yellow.

QUINCE Some of your French crowns have no hair at all, and then you will play barefaced. But, masters, here are your parts, <sup>lawson</sup> *giving out the parts,* and I am to entreat you, request you, and desire you to con them by tomorrow night and meet me in the palace wood, a mile without the town, by moonlight. There will we rehearse, ~~for if we meet in the city, we shall be dogged with company and our devices known.~~ In the meantime I will draw a bill of properties such as our play wants. I pray you fail me not.

BOTTOM We will meet, and there we may rehearse