

Bottom wakes.

BOTTOM When my cue comes, call me, and I will answer. My next is
 'Most fair Pyramus'. Heigh 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, 200
 past the wit of man to say 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 man hath not heard, the ear of man hath not seen, 205
 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
 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 210
 it at her death. *Exit*

200 have had] Qq; had F
 208 ballad] F4; Ballet Qq, F

202 to expound] Q2; expound Q1
 211 SD *Exit*] Q2; not in Q1

204 a patched] F; patcht a Qq

197 Bottom waking returns to the moment before his 'translation' at 3.1.85, as if he is still rehearsing Pyramus.

198 Heigh ho! Yawning. Wells suggests there may also be a last vestige of the ass's 'Hee-haw!'

200 rare vision Echoing Titania's 'What visions have I seen!' (4.1.73), and contrasting with the 'fruitless vision' suffered by the lovers (3.2.371); see also 5.1.404.

204 a patched fool So F; Qq read 'patcht a foole', which may be correct, meaning 'shown by his patches to be a fool', but the construction is awkward, and F's transposition makes for better rhythm and sense. Fools seem to have worn parti-coloured coats rather than patched in the sense of patchwork (see Leslie Hotson, *Shakespeare's Motley*, 1952), but the visual effect was similar enough for 'Patch', the name of the famous fool of Cardinal Wolsey, to become a common term for a fool, probably assimilating at the same time an anglicisation of the Italian 'pazzo', 'a foole, a patch, a madman', as John Florio defines the word in his Italian-English dictionary, *Queen Anna's New World of Words* (1611).

205–7 The eye of man... dream was Bottom's garbled reference to 1 Cor. 2.9–10 has more point than he realises; see p. 35 above. The text in the Bishops' Bible runs: 'The eye of man hath not seene, and the eare hath not heard, neither have entred into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him. But God hath revealed them unto us by his spirit; for the spirit searcheth all things, yea the deepe things of God!' The mechanicals are given to confounding the different senses, of sight and hearing especially; compare 3.1.74, 5.1.187–8 and 312–17.

208 ballad In an age without newspapers, notable events were often commemorated in ballads, printed and issued in the form of a broadsheet.

209 hath no bottom (1) has no reality or foundation, (2) is unfathomably profound.

209–11 a play...her death Bottom, like the lovers, is confused and has double vision: he says 'a play' (not 'the play') in relation to Titania, and 'her death' with reference to Thisbe.

210 gracious graceful, appealing.