

THESEUS It appears by his small light of discretion that he is in the wane; but yet in courtesy, in all reason, we must stay the time. 240

LYSANDER Proceed, Moon.

STARVELING All that I have to say is to tell you that the lanthorn is the moon, I the man i'th'moon, this thorn bush my thorn bush, and this dog my dog.

DEMETRIUS Why, all these should be in the lantern, for all these are in the moon. But silence: here comes Thisbe. 245

Enter [Flute as] Thisbe.

FLUTE (*as Thisbe*)

This is old Ninny's tomb. Where is my love?

SNUG (*as Lion*) O!

Lion roars. Thisbe runs off [dropping her mantle]

DEMETRIUS Well roared, Lion!

THESEUS Well run, Thisbe! 250

HIPPOLYTA Well shone, Moon! Truly, the moon shines with a good grace.

THESEUS Well moused, Lion!

DEMETRIUS And then came Pyramus –

LYSANDER And so the lion vanished. 255

[Lion worries Thisbe's mantle, and exit]

BEGIN

Enter [Bottom as] Pyramus.

BOTTOM (*as Pyramus*)

Sweet moon, I thank thee for thy sunny beams;

I thank thee, moon, for shining now so bright;

For by thy gracious, golden, glittering gleams

I trust to take of truest Thisbe sight.

243 i'th'] Q1 (ith); in the Q2, F 245 lantern] Qq, F (Lanthe) 246 SD] Qq, F (Enter Thisbe) 247–8 This...O! So F; one line in Qq 248 SD.2] Brooks, after F (The Lion roares, Thisbe runs off); not in Qq 255 SD.1 Lion...exit] Brooks, after Capell; not in Qq, F 255 SD.2 Enter...Pyramus] Qq, F (Enter Pyramus) 258 gleams] Staunton, conj. Knight; beames Qq, F; streams F2 259 take] Qq; taste F 259 Thisbe] Qq; Thisbies F

242–4 The gibes of his stage audience put Starveling out of his part, and he lapses into prose (so Wells).

247 Ninny's tomb The scene has changed from the wall separating the lovers to the 'tomb'; sometimes a property tomb is used here, and Thisbe can win a laugh by bringing one on, though, as Wells notes, her words give sufficient indication of the setting. Thisbe again gets 'Ninus' wrong; see 197 above and n.

253 Well moused Showing that Lion paws the mantle as a cat plays with a mouse; Theseus's comment also suggests that Lion squeaks rather

than roars, and is more pitiful than fearsome in performance. The SD, added first by Capell, for Lion's exit, is usually placed after 252, but the text suggests that Lion remains until he sees Pyramus, and then goes off at 255.

258 gleams Qq and F repeat 'beams', and it seems likely that the compositor is responsible; 'gleams' accords with Pyramus's addiction to alliteration, as at 259, 262, 270–1 and 278, and is the obvious word in this context.

259 take So Qq; 'taste' (F) could be a correction, as it adds further to Pyramus's (and Bottom's) comic habit of confounding the senses.

But stay – O spite! 260
 But mark, poor Knight,
 What dreadful dole is here?
 Eyes, do you see?
 How can it be?
 O dainty duck, O dear! 265
 Thy mantle good –
 What, stained with blood?
 Approach, ye Furies fell!
 O Fates, come, come,
 Cut thread and thrum, 270
 Quail, crush, conclude, and quell.

THESEUS This passion, and the death of a dear friend, would go near to make a man look sad.

HIPPOLYTA Beshrew my heart, but I pity the man.

BOTTOM (*as Pyramus*)

O wherefore, Nature, didst thou lions frame, 275
 Since lion vile hath here deflowered my dear?
 Which is – no, no – which was the fairest dame
 That lived, that loved, that liked, that looked with cheer.
 Come tears, confound!
 Out sword, and wound 280
 The pap of Pyramus,
 Ay, that left pap,

260–1] *So Pope; one line in QQ, F* 263–4] *So Pope; one line in QQ, F* 266–7] *So Pope; one line in QQ, F*
 268 ye] *QQ; you F* 269–70] *So Pope; one line in QQ, F* 271–3] *So QQ; two lines of verse in F, divided at friend, /*
 Would 276 vile] *Pope; vilde QQ, F* 279–80] *So Johnson; one line in QQ, F*

260–71, 279–90 Pyramus here speaks in a variant of the 'eight and six' Quince envisaged for the prologue (see 3.1.19 and n.), divided into four, four and six. Shakespeare was exaggerating for comic effect the style of I. Tomson's 'A New Sonet of Pyramus and Thisbe'; see p. 11 above.

262 dole cause for sorrow.

268 Furies The avenging goddesses sent from Tartarus to punish crime, and usually three in number (Tisiphone, Megaera, Alecto). One appears in Chaucer's *Knights Tale* (I, 2684) to cause the death of Arcite, and they feature in Seneca's tragedies and in English tragedies influenced by Seneca.

269 Fates The three goddesses Clotho, Lachesis and Atropos, supposed in Greek mythology to spin, draw and cut the thread of human life; Atropos is named in I. Tomson's 'A New Sonet of Pyramus and Thisbe' as weaving the 'fatal death' of Pyramus; see p. 11 above.

270 thread and thrum i.e. good and bad, all together. The threads (or warp) extend lengthwise in the loom to be crossed by the weft (or cross-threads) to form the web or piece of cloth. The thrum is the tufted end of the thread where it is fastened to the loom. The thrum is left unwoven when the web is cut for removal from the loom, and is worth little in relation to the thread.

271 Quail Destroy.

271 quell kill.

272 passion (1) suffering, (2) passionate outburst (*OED* sv sb 6d).

278 cheer Perhaps = 'face' as at 3.2.96, but suggesting also 'cheerfulness'.

282 pap Usually referring to a woman's breast, the word is used here to comic effect, although, as Brooks notes, it was sometimes used in a serious context in relation to a man, as in Chapman's translation of Homer's *Iliad* IV, 517 (cited *OED* sv 1c), and compare *LLL* 4.3.24.

Where heart doth hop:
 Thus die I, thus, thus, thus! [*Stabs himself.*]
 Now am I dead,
 Now am I fled;
 My soul is in the sky.
 Tongue, lose thy light;
 Moon, take thy flight;

285

[*Exit Starveling*]Now die, die, die, die, die. [*He dies.*]

END

290

DEMETRIUS No die, but an ace for him; for he is but one.

LYSANDER Less than an ace, man; for he is dead, he is nothing.

THESEUS With the help of a surgeon he might yet recover, and yet prove
 an ass.HIPPOLYTA How chance Moonshine is gone before Thisbe comes back
 and finds her lover?

295

THESEUS She will find him by starlight.

Enter [Flute as] Thisbe.

Here she comes and her passion ends the play.

HIPPOLYTA Methinks she should not use a long one for such a
 Pyramus; I hope she will be brief.

300

DEMETRIUS A mote will turn the balance, which Pyramus, which
 Thisbe is the better: he for a man, God warrant us; she for a woman,
 God bless us.

LYSANDER She hath spied him already, with those sweet eyes.

DEMETRIUS And thus she means, videlicet –

305

282–3] *So Johnson; one line in Qq, F 284 SD] Dyce; not in Qq, F 285–7] So Johnson; one line in Qq, F 288–9] So Johnson; one line in Qq, F 289 SD] So Capell (Exit Moonshine / after 290); not in Qq, F 290 SD] Theobald; not in Qq, F 293 yet prove] Q1; prove Q2, F 295–6 How...before...lover?] So Rowe; How...before?...lover, Q1; How...before? ... Lover. Q2, F 295–6 Prose in Q1; two lines of verse in Q2, F, divided at before? / Thisby 297 SD] F (Enter Thisby / after 296); not in Qq 301 mote] Steevens, conj. Heath; moth Qq, F 302–3 he...us] Qq; not in F 302 warrant] Collier; warnd Qq, F*

288 Tongue For 'eye'.

291 No die...ace A die is one of a pair of dice, and the ace is the die marked with a single spot; after the pun on 'die', there is a further quibble on 'ass' (294) and 'ace', which could be pronounced with a short 'a' (Kökeritz, p. 89).

298 passion See 272 above and n.

301 mote minute particle. 'Moth' (Qq, F) was a possible spelling, and may have been one Shakespeare used; compare *H5* 4.1.179: 'wash every

Moth ['moath', Q 1600] out of his conscience'; see also 3.1.136 and n.

302–3 he...bless us Omitted from F, presumably following the statute of 1606 forbidding profanity on the stage.

305 means (1) 'laments' (*OED* sv *v*² 1; the word, now obsolete, was cognate with 'moans'); (2) 'submits a formal complaint' (a Scottish legal term, now obsolete, but perhaps, as Wells notes, prompting 'videlicet', used much in legal documents); (3) simply 'intends' or 'signifies'.