

A MIDSUMMER NIGHT'S DREAM

Act 1, scene 2

Enter QUINCE the carpenter and SNUG the joiner and BOTTOM the weaver and FLUTE the bellows mender and SNOUT the tinker and STARVELING the tailor.

Quince 1 Is all our company here?

Bottom 1 You were best to call them generally, man by man, according to the scrip.

Quince 1 Here is the scroll of every man's name, which is thought fit, through all Athens, to play in our enterlude before the Duke and the Duchess, on his wedding day at night.

Bottom 1 First, good Peter Quince, say what the play treats on; then read the names of the actors; and so grow to a point.

Quince 1 Marry, our play is The most lamentable comedy and most cruel death of Pyramus and Thisby.

Bottom 1 A very good piece of work, I assure you, and a merry. Now, good Peter Quince, call forth your actors by the scroll. Masters, spread yourselves.

Quince 1 Answer as I call you. Nick Bottom the weaver.

Bottom 1 Ready. Name what part I am for, and proceed.

Quince 1 You, Nick Bottom, are set down for Pyramus.

Bottom 1 What is Pyramus? a lover, or a tyrant?

Quince 1 A lover, that kills himself most gallant for love.

Bottom 1 That will ask some tears in the true performing of it. If I do it, let the audience look to their eyes. I will move storms; I will condole in some measure. To the rest--yet my chief humor is for a tyrant. I could play Ercles rarely, or a part to tear a cat in, to make all split.

The raging rocks
And shivering shocks
Shall break the locks
Of prison gates;
And Phibbus' car
Shall shine from far,
And make and mar
The foolish Fates.

This was lofty! Now name the rest of the players. This is Ercles' vein, a tyrant's vein; a lover is more condoling.

Quince 2 Francis Flute the bellows mender.

Flute 2 Here, Peter Quince.

Quince 2 Flute, you must take Thisby on you.

Flute 2 What is Thisby? a wand'ring knight?

Quince 2 It is the lady that Pyramus must love.

Flute 2 Nay, faith; let not me play a woman; I have a beard coming.

Quince 2 That's all one; you shall play it in a mask, and you may speak as small as you will.

Bottom 2 And I may hide my face, let me play Thisby too. I'll speak in a monstrous little voice, "Thisne! Thisne! Ah, Pyramus, my lover dear! thy Thisby dear, and lady dear!"

Quince 2 No, no, you must play Pyramus; and, Flute, you Thisby.

Bottom 2 Well, proceed.

Quince 2 Robin Starveling the tailor.

Starveling 2 Here, Peter Quince.

Quince 2 Robin Starveling, you must play Thisby's mother. Tom Snout the tinker.

Snout 2 Here, Peter Quince.

Quince 2 You, Pyramus' father; myself, Thisby's father; Snug the joiner, you the lion's part. And I hope here is a play fitted.

Snug 2 Have you the lion's part written? Pray you, if it be, give it me, for I am slow of study.

Quince 2 You may do it extempore, for it is nothing but roaring.

Bottom 2 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 2 And 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 2 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 and 'twere any nightingale.

Quince 3 You can play no part but Pyramus; for Pyramus is a sweet fac'd man; a proper man as one shall see in a

summer's day; a most lovely gentleman like man: therefore you must needs play Pyramus.

Bottom 3 Well; I will undertake it. What beard were I best to play it in?

Quince 3 Why, what you will.

Bottom 3 I will discharge it in either your strawcolor beard, your orange tawny beard, your purple in grain beard, or your French crown color beard, your perfit yellow.

Quince 3 Some of your French crowns have no hair at all; and then you will play barefac'd. But, masters, here are your 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 dogg'd with company, and our devices known. In the mean time I will draw a bill of properties, such as our play wants. I pray you fail me not.

Bottom 3 We will meet, and there we may rehearse most obscenely and courageously. Take pains, be perfit; adieu.

Quince 3 At the Duke's oak we meet.

Bottom 3 Enough; hold, or cut bow strings.

Exeunt

3-D Shakespeare

Teacher Notes

Photocopy the group scene (10 or so parts—split roles if appropriate)

Reading 1

Choose readers (not volunteers –avoid drama types, confident readers for “good parts”)
Students are to read for sense rather than acting the part; we’re not casting a play but involving students in the text and its meanings

<i>Parts:</i>	<i>Reading 1</i>	<i>Reading 2</i>	<i>Reading 3</i>
Bottom 1			
Bottom 2			
Bottom 3			
Quince 1			
Quince 2			
Quince 3			
Flute			
Starveling			
Snout			
Snug			

Use a new Bottom and a new Quince for each page; Starveling and Snout have one line each
No real “discussion” here – answer any spontaneous questions, but don’t ask for any

Reading 2

to encourage familiarity

Tell students to watch for (1)-differences and (2)-new information

Sample Questions

1. Who are these guys? How do you know?
2. What’s going on?
3. Do these guys know each other? (hand vote; majority rules)
4. Who’s the boss? How do you know?
5. Who wants to be the boss? How do you know? [*tension*]
6. Why are they putting on the play? etc., etc., etc...

Reading 3

Again, watch for differences and new information

Circle any words or phrases you don’t understand. (or those “used in a new and unusual way”)

Questions

Now questions that will require some imagination; some “directing”

1. Who wrote this play? One character? Committee? Adapted? from...?
2. How old are these guys?
3. Are any of them related?
4. Do they want to be in the play?
5. Is Bottom a bully? loudmouth? egomaniac? good actor? a leader?
6. Why might they be so quiet during the scene?
7. Is Snug ill? nervous? slow? new to town/the group? very shy?
8. Snout... Starveling... Flute...?
9. What do Snug, Snout, Starveling, and Flute think of the play? of the tension between Bottom and Quince? Have they seen the Quince and Bottom show before and so have little reaction? Are they stunned into quiet?
10. Are any of them doing anything during the scene? (reading? sharpening a knife?....)
11. Other comments or questions
12. What words do you have circled?

about the “minor” characters:

Up on its Feet

New cast; the class will direct the scene.

“Actors”	“Directors” [class]
Read and rehearse lines	Decide on: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Setting (place/time of year/age) scenery? [what does it look like?] 2. Entrances and exits 3. Focus (“MVP”? most ‘important’?) 4. Character (for audience to understand)
Perform	Interruption? (limited or none might be best)

New class discussion of what worked, what to change

REVIEW

Students have:

- ❖ Come to understand a scene
- ❖ Acquired some Shakespearean language
- ❖ Engaged in some literary analysis
- ❖ Established a relationship with the playwright
- ❖ Come to see that the text directs some of the action and reading
- ❖ Come to see that the director has many decisions to make

based on: Michael Tolaydo, “Three-Dimensional Shakespeare” in Peggy O’Brien, *Shakespeare Set Free: Teaching Romeo & Juliet, Macbeth & Midsummer Night’s Dream*, Simon & Schuster, 2006.