**A Midsummer Night’s Dream (Shakespeare)**

THESEUS

I will hear that play;

For never anything can be amiss,

When simpleness and duty tender it.

Go, bring them in: and take your places, ladies.

HIPPOLYTA

I love not to see wretchedness o'er charged

And duty in his service perishing.

THESEUS

Why, gentle sweet, you shall see no such thing.

HIPPOLYTA

He says they can do nothing in this kind.

THESEUS

The kinder we, to give them thanks for nothing.

Our sport shall be to take what they mistake:

And what poor duty cannot do, noble respect

Takes it in might, not merit.

Where I have come, great clerks have purposed

To greet me with premeditated welcomes;

Where I have seen them shiver and look pale,

Make periods in the midst of sentences,

Throttle their practised accent in their fears

And in conclusion dumbly have broke off,

Not paying me a welcome. Trust me, sweet,

Out of this sI’llnce yet I pick'd a welcome;

And in the modesty of fearful duty

I read as much as from the rattling tongue

Of saucy and audacious eloquence.

Love, therefore, and tongue-tied simplicity

In least speak most, to my capacity.

*Re-enter PHILOSTRATE*

PHILOSTRATE

So please your grace, the Prologue is address'd.

THESEUS

Let him approach.

Flourish of trumpets

Enter QUINCE for the Prologue

**Prologue**

If we offend, it is with our good will.

That you should think, we come not to offend,

But with good will. To show our simple skill,

That is the true beginning of our end.

Consider then we come but in despite.

We do not come as minding to contest you,

Our true intent is. All for your delight

We are not here. That you should here repent you,

The actors are at hand and by their show

You shall know all that you are like to know.

THESEUS

This fellow doth not stand upon points.

LYSANDER

He hath rid his prologue like a rough colt; he knows not the stop. A good moral, my lord: it is not

enough to speak, but to speak true.

HIPPOLYTA

Indeed he hath played on his prologue like a child on a recorder; a sound, but not in government.

THESEUS

His speech, was like a tangled chain; nothing impaired, but all disordered. Who is next?

*Enter Pyramus and Thisbe, Wall, Moonshine, and Lion*

**Prologue**

Gentles, perchance you wonder at this show;

But wonder on, till truth make all things plain.

This man is Pyramus, if you would know;

This beauteous lady Thisby is certain.

This man, with lime and rough-cast, doth present

Wall, that vI’ll Wall which did these lovers sunder;

And through Wall's chink, poor souls, they are content

To whisper. At the which let no man wonder.

This man, with lanthorn, dog, and bush of thorn,

Presenteth Moonshine; for, if you will know,

By moonshine did these lovers think no scorn

To meet at Ninus' tomb, there, there to woo.

This grisly beast, which Lion hight by name,

The trusty Thisby, coming first by night,

Did scare away, or rather did affright;

And, as she fled, her mantle she did fall,

Which Lion vI’ll with bloody mouth did stain.

Anon comes Pyramus, sweet youth and tall,

And finds his trusty Thisby's mantle slain:

Whereat, with blade, with bloody blameful blade,

He bravely broach'd is boiling bloody breast;

And Thisby, tarrying in mulberry shade,

His dagger drew, and died. For all the rest,

Let Lion, Moonshine, Wall, and lovers twain

At large discourse, whI’ll here they do remain.

*Exeunt Prologue, Thisbe, Lion, and Moonshine*

THESEUS

I wonder if the lion be to speak.

DEMETRIUS

No wonder, my lord: one lion may, when many asses do.

**Wall**

In this same interlude it doth befall

That I, one Snout by name, present a wall;

And such a wall, as I would have you think,

That had in it a crannied hole or chink,

Through which the lovers, Pyramus and Thisby,

Did whisper often very secretly.

This loam, this rough-cast and this stone doth show

That I am that same wall; the truth is so:

And this the cranny is, right and sinister,

Through which the fearful lovers are to whisper.

THESEUS

Would you desire lime and hair to speak better?

DEMETRIUS

It is the wittiest partition that ever I heard

discourse, my lord.

*Enter Pyramus*

THESEUS

Pyramus draws near the wall: sI’llnce!

Pyramus

O grim-look'd night! O night with hue so black!

O night, which ever art when day is not!

O night, O night! alack, alack, alack,

I fear my Thisby's promise is forgot!

And thou, O wall, O sweet, O lovely wall,

That stand'st between her father's ground and mine!

Thou wall, O wall, O sweet and lovely wall,

Show me thy chink, to blink through with mine eyne!

Wall holds up his fingers

Thanks, courteous wall: Jove shield thee well for this!

But what see I? No Thisby do I see.

O wicked wall, through whom I see no bliss!

Cursed be thy stones for thus deceiving me!

THESEUS

The wall, methinks, being sensible, should curse again.

**Pyramus**

No, in truth, sir, he should not. 'Deceiving me' is Thisby's cue: she is to enter now, and I am to

spy her through the wall. You shall see, it will fall pat as I told you. Yonder she comes.

**All is True (aka Henry VIII) by Shakespeare**

SCENE IV. The palace yard.

*Noise and tumult within. Enter Porter and his Man*

**Porter**

You'll leave your noise anon, ye rascals: do you take the court for Paris-garden? ye rude slaves, leave your gaping.

*Within*

Good master porter, I belong to the larder.

**Porter**

Belong to the gallows, and be hanged, ye rogue! Is this a place to roar in? Fetch me a dozen crab-tree staves, and strong ones: these are but switches to 'em. I'll scratch your heads: you must be seeing christenings? do you look for ale and cakes here, you rude rascals?

**Man**

Pray, sir, be patient: 'tis as much impossible--Unless we sweep 'em from the door with cannons--To scatter 'em, as 'tis to make 'em sleepOn May-day morning; which will never be: We may as well push against Powle's, as stir em.

**Porter**

How got they in, and be hang'd?

**Man**

Alas, I know not; how gets the tide in? As much as one sound cudgel of four foot--You see the poor remainder--could distribute,I made no spare, sir.

**Porter**

You did nothing, sir.

**Man**

I am not Samson, nor Sir Guy, nor Colbrand, To mow 'em down before me: but if I spared any That had a head to hit, either young or old, He or she, cuckold or cuckold-maker, Let me ne'er hope to see a chine again And that I would not for a cow, God save her!

*Within*

Do you hear, master porter?

**Porter**

I shall be with you presently, good master puppy. Keep the door close, sirrah.

**Man**

What would you have me do?

**Porter**

What should you do, but knock 'em down by the dozens? Is this Moorfields to muster in? or have we some strange Indian with the great tool come to court, the women so besiege us? Bless me, what a fry of fornication is at door! On my Christian conscience, this one christening will beget a thousand; here will be father, godfather, and all together.

**Man**

The spoons will be the bigger, sir. There is a fellow somewhat near the door, he should be a brazier by his face, for, o' my conscience, twenty of the dog-days now reign in's nose; all that stand about him are under the line, they need no other penance: that fire-drake did I hit three times on the head, and three times was his nose discharged against me; he stands there, like a mortar-piece, to blow us. There was a haberdasher's wife of small wit near him, that raI’lld upon me till her pinked porringer fell off her head, for kindling such a combustion in the state. I missed the meteor once, and hit that woman; who cried out 'Clubs!' when I might see from far some forty truncheoners draw to her succor, which were the hope o' the Strand, where she was quartered. They fell on; I made good my place: at length they came to the broom-staff to me; I defied 'em still: when suddenly a fI’ll of boys behind 'em, loose shot, delivered such a shower of pebbles, that I was fain to draw mine honour in, and let 'em win the work: the devil was amongst 'em, I think, surely.

**Porter**

These are the youths that thunder at a playhouse, and fight for bitten apples; that no audience, but the tribulation of Tower-hill, or the limbs of Limehouse, their dear brothers, are able to endure. I have some of 'em in Limbo Patrum, and there they are like to dance these three days; besides the running banquet of two beadles that is to come.

*Enter Chamberlain*

**Chamberlain**

Mercy o' me, what a multitude are here! They grow still too; from all parts they are coming, As if we kept a fair here! Where are these porters, These lazy knaves? Ye have made a fine hand, fellows: There's a trim rabble let in: are all these Your faithful friends o' the suburbs? We shall have Great store of room, no doubt, left for the ladies, When they pass back from the christening.

**Porter**

An't please your honour, We are but men; and what so many may do, Not being torn a-pieces, we have done: An army cannot rule 'em.

**Chamberlain**

As I live, If the king blame me for't, I'll lay ye all By the heels, and suddenly; and on your heads Clap round fines for neglect: ye are lazy knaves; And here ye lie baiting of bombards, when Ye should do service. Hark! the trumpets sound; They're come already from the christening: Go, break among the press, and find a way out To let the troop pass fairly; or I'll find a Marshalsea shall hold ye play these two months.

**Porter**

Make way there for the princess.

**Man**

You great fellow, Stand close up, or I'll make your head ache.

**Porter**

You i' the camlet, get up o' the rail; I'll peck you o'er the pales else.

*Exeunt*

**The Knight of the Burning Pestle (Francis Beaumont)**

**Induction.**

*Several Gentlemen sitting on Stools upon the Stage. The Citizen, his Wife, and Ralph sitting below among the audience*.

*Enter Speaker of the Prologue.*

S. of Prol. "From all that's near the court, from all that's great,

 Within the compass of the city-walls,

 We now have brought our scene——"

*Citizen leaps on the Stage.*

Cit. Hold your peace, goodman boy!

S. of Prol. What do you mean, sir?

Cit. That you have no good meaning: this seven years there hath been plays at this house, I have observed it, you have still girds at citizens; and now you call your play "The London Merchant." Down with your title, boy! down with your title!

S. of Prol. Are you a member of the noble city?

Cit. I am.

S. of Prol. And a freeman?

Cit. Yea, and a grocer.

S. of Prol. So, grocer, then, by your sweet favour, we intend no abuse to the city.

Cit. No, sir! yes, sir: if you were not resolved to play the Jacks, what need you study for new subjects, purposely to abuse your betters? why could not you be contented, as well as others, with "The legend of Whittington," or "The Life and Death of Sir Thomas Gresham, with the building of the Royal Exchange," or "The story of Queen Eleanor, with the rearing of London Bridge upon woolsacks?"

S. of Prol. You seem to be an understanding man: what would you have us do, sir?

Cit. Why, present something notably in honour of the commons of the city.

S. of Prol. Why, what do you say to "The Life and Death of fat Drake, or the Repairing of Fleet-privies?"

Cit. I do not like that; but I will have a citizen, and he shall be of my own trade.

S. of Prol. Oh, you should have told us your mind a month since; our play is ready to begin now.

Cit. 'Tis all one for that; I will have a grocer, and

 he shall do admirable things.

S. of Prol. What will you have him do?

Cit. Marry, I will have him——

Wife. *[below.]* Husband, husband!

Ralph. [*below.]* Peace, mistress.

Wife. [below.] Hold thy peace, Ralph; I know what I do, I warrant ye.—Husband, husband!

Cit. What sayest thou, cony?

Wife. [below.] Let him kill a lion with a pestle, husband! let him kill a lion with a pestle!

Cit. So he shall.—I'll have him kill a lion with a pestle.

Wife. [below.] Husband! shall I come up, husband?

Cit. Ay, cony.—Ralph, help your mistress this way.—Pray, gentlemen, make her a little room.

 —I pray you, sir, lend me your hand to help up my wife: I thank you, sir.—So.

*[Wife comes on the Stage.]*

Wife. By your leave, gentlemen all; I'm something troublesome: I'm a stranger here; I was

 ne'er at one of these plays, as they say, before; but I should have seen "Jane Shore" once; and my husband hath promised me, any time this twelvemonth, to carry me to "The Bold Beauchamps," but in truth he did not. I pray you, bear with me.

Cit. Boy, let my wife and I have a couple of stools and then begin; and let the grocer do rare things.

[Stools are brought.

S. of Prol. But, sir, we have never a boy to play him: every one hath a part already.

Wife. Husband, husband, for God's sake, let Ralph play him! beshrew me, if I do not think he will go beyond them all.

Cit. Well remembered, wife.—Come up, Ralph.— I'll tell you, gentlemen; let them but lend him a suit of reparel and necessaries, and, by gad, if any of them all blow wind in the tail on him, I'll be hanged.

[Ralph comes on the Stage.

Wife. I pray you, youth, let him have a suit of reparel!—I'll be sworn, gentlemen, my husband tells you true: he will act you sometimes at our house, that all the neighbours cry out on him; he will fetch you up a couraging part so in the garret, that we are all as feared, I warrant you, that we quake again: we'll

 fear our children with him; if they be never so unruly, do but cry, "Ralph comes, Ralph comes!" to them, and they'll be as quiet as lambs.—Hold up thy head, Ralph; show the gentlemen what thou canst do; speak a huffing part; I warrant you, the gentlemen will accept of it.

Cit. Do, Ralph, do.

Ralph. "By Heaven, methinks, it were an easy leap

 To pluck bright honour from the pale-faced moon;

 Or dive into the bottom of the sea,

 Where never fathom-line touched any ground,

 And pluck up drowned honour from the lake of hell." [approx. lines from Shakespeare’s Henry IV]

Cit. How say you, gentlemen, is it not as I told you?

Wife. Nay, gentlemen, he hath played before, my husband says, Mucedorus, before the wardens

 of our company.

Cit. Ay, and he should have played Jeronimo with a shoemaker for a wager.

S. of Prol. He shall have a suit of apparel, if he will go in.

Cit. In, Ralph, in, Ralph; and set out the grocery in their kind, if thou lovest me.

*[Exit Ralph.]*

Wife. I warrant, our Ralph will look finely when he's dressed.

S. of Prol. But what will you have it called?

Cit. "The Grocer's Honour."

S. of Prol. Methinks "The Knight of the Burning Pestle" were better.

Wife. I'll be sworn, husband, that's as good a name as can be.

Cit. Let it be so.—Begin, begin; my wife and I will sit down.

S. of Prol. I pray you, do.

Cit. What stately music have you? you have shawms? [flutes]

S. of Prol. Shawms! no.

Cit. No! I'm a thief, if my mind did not give me so. Ralph plays a stately part, and he must

 needs have shawms: I'll be at the charge of them myself, rather than we'll be without

 them.

S. of Prol. So you are like to be.

Cit. Why, and so I will be: there's two shillings;—[Gives money.]—let's have the waits of Southwark; they are as rare fellows as any are in England; and that will fetch them all o'er the water with a vengeance, as if they were mad.

S. of Prol. You shall have them. Will you sit down, then?

Cit. Ay.—Come, wife.

Wife. Sit you merry all, gentlemen; I'm bold to it amongst you for my ease.

*[Citizen and Wife sit down.]*

S. of Prol. "From all that's near the court, from all that's great,

 Within the compass of the city-walls,

 We now have brought our scene. Fly far from hence

 All private taxes, immodest phrases,

 Whatever may but show like vicious!

 For wicked mirth never true pleasure brings,

 But honest minds are pleased with honest things."—

 Thus much for that we do; but for Ralph's part you must answer for yourself.

Cit. Take you no care for Ralph; he'll discharge himself, I warrant you.

*[Exit Speaker of Prologue.]*

Wife. I'faith, gentlemen, I'll give my word for Ralph.

**THE INDUCTION TO THE MALECONTENT, AND the additions acted by the Kings Majesty’s servants. Written by John Webster.**

Enter W. Sly, a Tyre-man following him with a stool.

**Tyer-man.**

SIR, the Gentlemen will be angry if you sit here.

**Sly**

Why? we may sit upon the stage at the private house: you do not take me for a country gentleman, do you? Do you think I fear hissing? I’ll hold my life thou took'st me for one of the players.

**Tyre:**

No sir.

**Sly**

By gods eyelid if you had, I would have given you but six pence for your stool: Let them that have stale suits, sit in the galleries, hiss at me: he that will be laughed out of a Tavern or an Ordinary, shall seldom feed well or be drunk in good company. Where's Harry Cundale, D: Burbidge, and W: Sly, let me speak with some of them.

**Tyre:**

And it please you to go in sir, you may.

**Sly:**

I tell you no; I am one that hath seen this play often, & can give them intelligence for their action: I have most of the jests here in my table-book [prompt-book].

*Enter Sinkclow.*

**Sink:**

Save you Cousin.

**Sly:**

O Cousin, come you shall sit between my legs here.

**Sink:**

No indeed cousin, the audience then will take me for a viol de gamba, and think that you play upon me.

**Sly:**

Nay, [...]her that I work upon you cousin.

**Sink:**

We stayed for you at supper last night at my cousin Honeymoons the woolen Draper: After supper we drew cuts for a score of Apricots, the longest cut still to draw an Apricot: by this light t'was Mistress Franke Honeymoon’s fortune, still to have the longest cut: I did measure for the women. What be these cousin?

*Enter Dick Burbidge, H. Cundale, I. Lewin.*

**Sly:**

The Players. God save you.

**Bur:**

You are very welcome.

**Sly:**

I pray you know this Gentleman my cousin, t'is Master Doomsday’s son the usurer.

**Cun:**

I beseech you sir be covered.

**Sly:**

No in good faith for mine ease, look you my hat's the handle to this fan: Gods so, what a beast was I, I did not leave my father at home. Well, but I’ll take an order with you.

*Puts his feather in his pocket.*

**Bur:**

Why do you conceal your feather sir?

**Sly:**

Why? do you think I’ll have jests broken upon me in the play to be laught at: this play hath beaten all your gallants out of the feathers: Blackfriars hath almost spoiled blackfriars for feathers.

*Sink:*

Gods so, I thought t'was for somewhat our gentlewomen at home counseled me to wear my feather to the play, yet I am loth to spoil it.

**Sly:**

Why cousin?

**Sink:**

Because I got it in the tilt-yard: there was a Herald broke my pate for taking it up: but I have worn it up & down the strand, and met him forty times since, and yet he dares not challenge it.

**Sly:**

Do you hear sir, this play is a bitter play.

**Cun:**

Why sir, tis neither Satire nor Moral, but the mean passage of a history: Yet there are a sort of discontented creatures that bear a stingless [...]e envy to great ones, and these [Page] will wrest the doings of any man to their base malicious appliment: but should their interpretation come to the test, like your marmoset, they presently turn their teeth to their tail & eat it.

**Sly:**

I will not go so far with you, but I say, any man that hath wit, may censure (if he sit in the twelve-penny room:) and I say again, the play is bitter.

**Bur:**

Sir you are like a Patron that presenting a poor scholar to a benefice, enjoins him not to rail against any thing that stands within compass of his Patron’s folly: Why should not we enjoy the ancient freedom of poesy? Shall we protest to the Ladies that their painting makes them Angels, or to my young gallant, that his expense in the brothel shall gain him reputation? No sir, such vices as stand not accountable to law, should be cured as men heal tetters [skin disease], by casting ink upon them. Would you be satisfied in anything else sir?

**Sly:**

Aye, marry would I. I would know how you came by this play?

**Cun:**

Faith sir the book was lost, a [...]d because t’was pity so good a play should be lost, we found it and play it.

**Sly:**

I wonder you would play it, another company having interest in it?

**Cun:**

Why not Malevole in folio with us, as Hieronimo [character from Kyd’s *Spanish Tragedy*] character is in Decimo sexto with them. They taught us a name for our play, we call it *One for Another*.

**Sly:**

What are your additions?

**Bur:**

Sooth not greatly needful, only as your salad (?)to your great feast, to entertain a little more time, and to abridge the not received custom of music in our Theater. I must leave you sir.

*Exit Burbidge.*

Sink:

Does he play the Malcontent?

Cun:

Yes sir.

**Sink:**

I durst lay four of mine ears, the play is not so well acted as it hath been.

**Cun:**

O no sir, nothing *Ad Parminonis Suem* [Compared to Parmeno’s Pig—Imitation better than real].

**Lew:**

Have you lost your ears sir, that you are so prodigal of laying them?

**Sink:**

Why did you ask that friend?

**Lew:**

Marry sir because I have heard of a fellow would offer to lay a hundred pound wager, that was not worth five bau-bees: [Page] [...] in this kind you might venture four of your elbows: yet God defend your coat should have so many.

**Sink:**

Nay truly, I am no great censurer, and yet I might have been one of the College of Critics once: my cousin here [...] an excellent memory indeed sir.

**Sly:**

Who I? I’ll tell you a strange thing of myself, and I can tell you for one that never studied the art of memory, tis very [...] strange too.

**Cun:**

What’s that sir?

**Sly:**

Why I’ll lay a hundred pound I’ll walk but once down by the gold-smiths row in Cheap, take notice of the signs, and tell you them with a breath instantly.

**Lew:**

T’is very strange.

**Sly:**

They begin as the world did, with Adam and Eve. There’s in all just five and fifty. I do use to meditate much when I come to plays too. What do you think might come into a man’s head now, seeing all this company?

**Cun:**

I know not sir.

**Sly:**

I have an excellent thought: if some fifty of the Grecians that were crammed in the horse belly had eaten garlic, do you not think the Trojans might have smelt out their knavery?

**Cun:**

Very likely.

**Sly:**

By God I would he had, for I love Hector horribly.

**Sink:**

O but cousin, cousin. Great Alexander when he came to the tomb of Achilles

Spoke with a big loud voice, O thou thrice blessed & happy.

**Sly:**

Alexander was an ass to speak so well of a filthy cullion.

**Lew:**

Good sir will you leave the stage, I’ll help you to a private room.

**Sly:**

Come cousin, let’s take some Tobacco. Have you never a prologue?

**Lew:**

Not any sir.

**Sly:**

Let me see, I will make one extempore.

Come to them and fencing of a congey with arms and legs.

Be round with them.

Gentlemen, I could wish for the women’s sakes you had all [soft laps?] and Gentlewomen, I could wish that for the men’s sakes you had all more easy standings. What would they wish more but the play now, and that they shall have instantly.