A Midsummer Night's Dream

THE GRAPHIC NOVEL

William Shakespeare
Act III Scene 1

THE FOREST
NEAR ATHENS.

ARE WE ALL MET?

PAT, PAT; AND HERE'S A MARVELLOUS CONVENIENT PLACE FOR OUR REHEARSAL.

THIS GREEN PLOT SHALL BE OUR STAGE, THIS HAWTHORN-BRANE OUR TURING HOUSE, AND WE WILL DO IT IN ACTION AS WE WILL DO IT BEFORE THE DUKE.

THERE ARE THINGS IN THIS COMEDY OF "PYRAMUS AND Thisbe" THAT WILL NEVER PLEASE. FIRST, PYRAMUS MUST DRAW A SWORD TO KILL HIMSELF; WHICH THE LADIES CANNOT ABIDE. HOW ANSWER YOU THAT?

PETER QUINCE, -

WHAT SAY'ST THOU, BULLY BOTTOM?

BY 'R LAKIN, A PARLOURS FEAR.

I BELIEVE WE MUST LEAVE THE KILLING OUT, WHEN ALL IS DONE.

NOT A WHIT: I HAVE A DEVICE TO MAKE ALL WELL.
WRITE ME A PROLOGUE; AND LET THE PROLOGUE SEEM TO SAY, WE WILL DO NO HARM WITH OUR SWORDS, AND THAT PYRAMUS IS NOT KILLED INDEED; AND, FOR THE MORE BETTER ASSURANCE, TELL THEM THAT I, PYRAMUS, AM NOT PYRAMUS, BUT BOTTOM THE WEAVER. THIS WILL PUT THEM OUT OF FEAR.

WELL, WE WILL HAVE SUCH A PROLOGUE; AND IT SHALL BE WRITTEN IN EIGHT AND SIX.

MASTERS, YOU OUGHT TO CONSIDER WITH YOURSELVES: TO BRING IN - GOD SHIELD US! - A LION AMONG LADIES, IS A MOST DREADFUL THING; FOR THERE IS NOT A MORE FEARFUL WILD-FOWL THAN YOUR LION LIVING, AND WE OUGHT TO LOOK TO IT.

NO, MAKE IT TWO MORE; LET IT BE WRITTEN IN EIGHT AND EIGHT.

WILL NOT THE LADIES BE AFRAID OF THE LION?

I FEAR IT, I PROMISE YOU.

THEREFORE, ANOTHER PROLOGUE MUST TELL HE IS NOT A LION.

NAY, YOU MUST NAME HIS NAME, AND HALF HIS FACE MUST BE SEEN THROUGH THE LION’S NECK!

AND HE HIMSELF MUST SPEAK THROUGH, SAYING THIS, OR TO THE SAME DEFECT. -

‘LADIES,’ - OR,

‘FAIR LADIES, I WOULD WISH YOU,’ - OR,

‘I WOULD REQUEST YOU,’ - OR,

‘I WOULD ENTREAT YOU, NOT TO FEAR, NOT TO TREMBLE: MY LIFE FOR YOURS.’

‘IF YOU THINK I COME HITHER AS A LION, IT WERE PITY OF MY LIFE: NO, I AM NO SUCH THING; I AM A MAN AS OTHER MEN ARE;’

AND THERE, INDEED, LET HIM NAME HIS NAME, AND TELL THEM PLAINLY, HE IS SNAK THE JOINER.

WELL, IT SHALL BE SO.
But there is two hard things: that is, to bring the moonlight into a chamber; for, you know, Pyramus and Thisbe meet by moonlight.

Doth the moon shine that night we play our play?

Yes, it doth shine that night.

Why, then may you leave a casement of the great chamber-window, where we play, open; and the moon may shine in at the casement.

Ay, or else one must come in with a bush of thorns and a lantern, and say, he comes to disfigure, or to present, the person of moonshine.

Then, there is another thing: we must have a wall in the great chamber; for Pyramus and Thisbe, say the story, did talk through the chink of a wall.

You can never bring in a wall, what say you, bottom?

Some man or other must present wall; and let him have some plaster, or some loam, or some rough-cast about him, to signify wall; and let him hold his finger thus, and through that cranyny shall Pyramus and Thisbe whisper.

If that may be, then all is well.
COME SIT DOWN, EVERY MOTHER'S SON, AND REHEARSE YOUR PARTS. PYRAMUS, YOU BEGIN.

WHEN YOU HAVE SPOKEN YOUR SPEECH, ENTER INTO THAT BRAKE;

AND SO EVERYONE ACCORDING TO HIS Cue.

WHAT HEMPEH HOME-SPUNS HAVE WE SWAGGERING HERE, SO NEAR THE CRADLE OF THE FAIRY QUEEN?

WHAT, A PLAY TOWARD? I'LL BE AN AUDITOR, AN ACTOR Too, PERHAPS, IF I SEE CAUSE.

SPEAK, PYRAMUS, THISBE, STAND FORTH.

THISBE, THE FLOWERS OF ODIOUS SAVOurs SWEET. -

OODOURS, OODOURS.

OODOURS SAVOurs SWEET:

SO HATH THY BREATH, MY DEAREST THISBE DEAR, BUT HARK, A VOICE! STAY THOU BUT HERE AWHILE, AND BY AND BY I WILL TO THEE APPEAR.

A STRANGER PYRAMUS THAN E'ER PLAY'D HERE!

MUST I SPEAK NOW?

AY, MARRY, MUST YOU, FOR YOU MUST UNDERSTAND, HE GOES BUT TO SEE A NOISE THAT HE HEARD, AND IS TO COME AGAIN.
MOST RADIANT PYRAMUS, MOST LILY-WHITE OF HUE, OF COLOUR LIKE THE RED ROSE ON TRIUMPHANT BRIMR.

MOST BRISKY JVENAL, AND EKE MOST LOVELY JEW, AS TRUE AS TRUEST HORSE, THAT YET WOULD NEVER TIRE,

I’LL MEET THEE, PYRAMUS, AT NINNY’S TOMB.

“NINUS’ TOMB,” MAN, WHY, YOU MUST NOT SPEAK THAT YET, THAT YOU ANSWER TO PYRAMUS.

YOU SPEAK ALL YOUR PART AT ONCE, CUES AND ALL.

PYRAMUS, ENTER: YOUR CUE IS PAST;

IT IS, “NEVER TIRE.”

O, - AS TRUE AS TRUEST HORSE, THAT YET WOULD NEVER TIRE.

IF I WERE FAIR, THISBE, I WERE ONLY THINE.

O MONSTRUS!

O STRANGE!

WE ARE HAUNTED. PRAY, MASTERS! FLY, MASTERS!

GASP!

HELP!

?!?
I'll follow you, I'll lead you about a round,
through bog, through bush, through brake, through briar:
sometime a horse I'll be, sometime a hound,
a hog, a headless bear, sometime a fire.

And neigh, and bark, and grunt, and roar, and burn,
like horse, hound, hog, bear, fire, at every turn.

Why do they run away? This is a knavery of them, to make me afraid.

O bottom, thou art changed! What do I see on thee?

What do you see? You see an ass-head of your own, do you?
BLESS THEE, BOTTOM! BLESS THEE! THOU ART TRANSLATED.

I SEE THEIR KNavery: THIS IS TO MAKE AN ASS OF ME; TO Fright me, if they could.

but i will not stir from this place; do what they can; i will walk up and down here, and i will sing, that they shall hear i am not afraid.

the ouzel-cock,
so black of hue,
with orange-tawny bill,

the thrrostle with his note so true,
the wren with little quill.

what angel wakes me from my flowery bed?

the finch, the swallow, and the lark,
the plain-song, puccoo grey,
whose note full many a man doth mark,
and dares not answer nay;

for, indeed, who would set his wit to so foolish a bird?

who would give a bird the lie, though he cry "cuckoo! never so?"