

A Midsummer Night's Dream

A text from the University of Texas UTOPIA "Shakespeare Kids" website, created by the UT Shakespeare at Winedale Outreach program; for more information, visit this "knowledge gateway" site at <http://utopia.utexas.edu>.

This text has been edited slightly for students in grades 5-8.

DUELING BOTTOMS! (FROM SCENE NINE, OR ACT 5, SCENE 1)

Enter Bottom #1 and Bottom #2 as Pyramus in the "Pyramus and Thisbe" play at the end. Each has a wooden or plastic sword tucked into a sheath or belt. They approach the stage from opposite sides... strains of "Dueling Banjos" plays over speakers for a moment (if you can find that music – not critical by any means!) – each a position and gets ready for the "Battle of the Bottoms"....

You can add the character of Moonshine, as in the actual play, or they can gesture up at the moon.

BOTTOM #1:

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 Thisby sight.

BOTTOM #2:

But stay, O spite!
But mark, poor knight,
What dreadful dole is here!
Eyes, do you see?
How can it be?
O dainty duck! O dear!

BOTTOM #1:

Thy mantle good,
What, stained with blood!
Approach, ye Furies fell!
O Fates, come, come,
Cut thread and thrum;
Quail, crush, conclude, and quell!

BOTTOM #2:

O wherefore, Nature, didst thou lions frame?
Since lion vile hath here deflower'd my dear:
Which is--no, no--which was the fairest dame
That lived, that loved, that liked, that look'd with cheer.

BOTTOM #1:

Come, tears, confound;

BOTTOM #2:

Out, sword, and wound

BOTTOM #1:

The pap of Pyramus;

BOTTOM #2:

Ay, that left pap,
Where heart doth hop:
Both stab simultaneously

BOTTOM #1:

Thus die I, thus –

BOTTOM #2:

–Thus! --

BOTTOM #1:

Thus!

BOTTOM #2:

Now am I dead...

BOTTOM #1:

Now am I fled;

BOTTOM #2:

My soul is in the sky:

BOTTOM #1:

Tongue, lose thy light;

BOTTOM #2:

Moon take thy flight:
Exit Moonshine

BOTTOM #1:

Now... die!

BOTTOM #2:

Die!

BOTTOM #1:

Die!

BOTTOM #2:

Die!

The Bottoms pause, both staggering on opposite ends of the stage; they look at each other, back at the audience, then at each other again, silently; then they stagger towards each other, clasp hands like Olympic champions, raise them high together, and say the final line together:

BOTH:

...DIE!!!

Then they fall straight back together, at the same time, and kick their feet into the air in unison, then collapse for good.