

**REVISION QUIZ: THE ANSWERS**

**Act Five, Scene 1 - The most lamentable comedy, and most cruel death of  
Pyramus and Thisbe**

Re-read pages 86-93 of A Midsummer Night's Dream (The Global Shakespeare Series edition) and then answer the following questions.

1. Pick out five aspects of the play of Pyramus and Thisbe that make it amusing.  
Bottom overacts. The audience shout out. Quince gets his punctuation in a muddle. A wall and moonshine speak. The Lion tells the audience not to be afraid. Pyramus rises from the dead. Thisbe is unintentionally funny about her lover.
2. List five things that Bottom (Pyramus) does which makes his acting funny.  
He is over-dramatic, "O night, O night!". He speaks to the audience when he thinks they do not understand. The use of rhyme renders his tragic speech ridiculous. He mistakenly refers to "Ninny's tomb" instead of "Ninus' tomb". He rises from the dead.
3. What does Quince (as the Prologue) do that makes his first speech amusing?  
He puts all the full stops in the wrong place.
4. What is the effect of his mistake?  
It makes a nonsense of his speech and it suggests that the actors intend to offend the audience, "If we offend, it is with our good will."
5. What is amusing about Prologue's second speech? There are two elements you should be able to identify.  
The over-use of rhyme and alliteration make the speech sound silly.
6. What two things speak in the play that you would not normally expect to have a voice?  
Wall and Moonshine.
7. Which character plays these parts?  
Snout and Starveling.
8. One of these objects does something else which makes the play farcical, what is it?  
The Wall holds up his fingers to represent the chink of light through which Pyramus and Thisbe can look.

## A Midsummer Night's Dream

9. Pyramus gets the senses muddled up when he is referring to Thisbe. Write down his mistakes.

“I see a voice.” And “I can hear my Thisbe’s face.”

10. Both Pyramus and Thisbe refer to other tragic lovers; write down who they refer to and to whom they mean to refer.

Limander and Helen meaning Leander and Hero.

Shafalus and Procrus meaning Cephalus and Procrus.

11. Who plays the part of the Lion?

Snug.

12. What is amusing about the Lion’s speech?

He tells the ladies not to be afraid of him because he isn’t really a lion.

13. What happens when the Moonshine starts to recite his lines?

He is interrupted by Theseus and Demetrius who tell him he should be inside the lantern, not holding it. Hippolyta then complains and Lysander asks him to proceed with his speech. Moonshine then merely tells the audience what he is supposed to say.

14. What is the effect of the short lines of Pyramus’s speech on page 91, lines 272-283?

It gives the speech a sing-song effect and makes it like a nursery rhyme.

15. Why does Pyramus’s death appear ridiculous?

Because he takes so long to die, keeps repeating that he is going to die and then apparently rises from the dead when he thinks the audience has misunderstood the ending of the play.

16. What is unusual about Thisbe’s description of her lover?

It is not very flattering. She refers to him as having, “lily lips”, a “cherry nose”, “yellow cowslip cheeks” and eyes which are as “green as leeks”.

17. Why does the end of the play amuse the audience when it should be tragic?

The actors do a bawdy mask dance which is a farcical dance.

## A Midsummer Night's Dream

18. Several times whilst the play is being performed the audience discuss what they are watching. What is particularly amusing about Demetrius's comments on line 156 and Theseus's on lines 306-307?

They refer to Bottom being an ass which the audience of A Midsummer Night's Dream know he has been.

19. What does the audience think of the play? Comment on some of the characters' reactions to what they are seeing.

They find it amusing and join in by shouting out encouragement. Hippolyta grows impatient but Theseus is in good humour on his wedding day.

20. Overall, why is the play unsuitable for celebrating a wedding?

Because it is a tragic tale about the death of two lovers through a misunderstanding.