Year 7 WIN Task: A Midsummer Night’s Dream

**How is the character of Bottom presented in this extract from Act 1 Scene 2?**

**SCENE II. Athens. QUINCE'S house.**

**QUINCE**

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

**BOTTOM**

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**

Answer as I call you. Nick Bottom, the weaver.

**BOTTOM**

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

**QUINCE**

You, Nick Bottom, are set down for Pyramus.

**BOTTOM**

What is Pyramus? a lover, or a tyrant?

**QUINCE**

A lover, that kills himself most gallant for love.

**BOTTOM**

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 humour 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**

Francis Flute, the bellows-mender.

**FLUTE**

Here, Peter Quince.

**QUINCE**

Flute, you must take Thisby on you.

**FLUTE**

What is Thisby? a wandering knight?

**QUINCE**

It is the lady that Pyramus must love.

**FLUTE**

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

**QUINCE**

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

**BOTTOM**

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

**QUINCE**

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

**BOTTOM**

Well, proceed.

**QUINCE**

Robin Starveling, the tailor.

**STARVELING**

Here, Peter Quince.

**QUINCE**

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

**SNOUT**

Here, Peter Quince.

**QUINCE**

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

**SNUG**

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

**QUINCE**

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

**BOTTOM**

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**

An 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**

I grant you, friends, if that 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 an 'twere any  
nightingale.

**QUINCE**

You can play no part but Pyramus; for Pyramus is a  
sweet-faced 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.