

Name: _____

An ancient love story

Pyramus was the most handsome boy in all of Babylon and Thisbe the most beautiful girl. They lived next door to each other. Gradually they grew fond of each other and, in the end, they fell in love. They wanted
 5▶ to get married, but their parents were completely opposed to the idea and didn't even let them see each other. However, the young lovers found a way round this: there was a tiny hole in the wall that separated their two houses. So every day they whispered their
 10▶ love to each other, as they longed to be together.

In the end they could stand it no longer and they decided to escape. They arranged to meet in the middle of the night under a tall mulberry tree, which was covered with snow-white fruit. Nobody would be able to
 15▶ see them there. Thisbe left first. While she was waiting, a huge lion with blood on its face appeared. Thisbe was terrified and ran away. In the process, her veil fell to the ground, but she didn't pick it up because she was too scared. The lion saw her veil, tried to eat it and stained
 20▶ it with the blood on its mouth.

Pyramus then arrived. 'Where is Thisbe?' he thought. Suddenly, he saw the lion's footprints and Thisbe's veil covered with blood. He feared the worst and began to blame himself bitterly: 'I destroyed you! I asked you
 25▶ to come to this lonely spot in the middle of the night,

and I wasn't here waiting for you.' Then he picked up Thisbe's veil, kissed it and said, 'My kisses and tears are yours; now receive my blood as well.' He took his sword and plunged it deep into his stomach. Then he
 30▶ fell down and died. His blood went into the earth and reached the roots of the tree. And as the roots absorbed his blood, the fruit turned purple.

Thisbe then came back to the mulberry tree. She saw the fruit with its dark colour and the body
 35▶ of Pyramus lying dead on the ground. She was overcome with grief. All of a sudden she caught sight of her veil and of Pyramus' sword, and she understood everything. She declared: 'Your own hand and your great love for me have destroyed you!
 40▶ And me? My hand will be as brave as yours. I will follow you to eternity. I ask our parents, who were so cruel to us in life, to bury us together when we are dead. And I ask the gods that, from now on, the fruit of this tree will always be dark, in memory of our
 45▶ blood. No more!' she gasped, as she fell on the sword, still warm with Pyramus' blood.

Thisbe's prayers were answered. She was placed in the same grave as her love, Pyramus; and the fruit of the mulberry tree, which used to be snow-white, is now
 50▶ blood-red.

Adapted from Ovid's *Metamorphoses*

1 Put the events of the story in the correct order.

- Pyramus makes a tragic mistake.
- Pyramus and Thisbe – together for ever.
- Escape. A lion appears.
- Thisbe follows Pyramus' example.
- Pyramus and Thisbe fall in love.

2 Answer the questions in your own words.

- How did Pyramus and Thisbe communicate?
- What does 'he feared the worst' (line 23) mean in the context of the story?
- What does 'my hand will be as brave as yours' (line 40) mean in the context of the story?

3 Find words in the text that mean the opposite of:

- shouted (paragraph 1)
- cleaned (paragraph 2)
- joyfully (paragraph 3)
- happiness (paragraph 4)

4 Choose the correct option according to the text.

- Pyramus' and Thisbe's parents ...
 - were against their marriage.
 - were in favour of their marriage.
 - didn't know about their marriage.
 - didn't know each other.
- The lion ...
 - attacked Thisbe.
 - was hungry.
 - hadn't eaten for a long time.
 - lived near the mulberry tree.
- Pyramus ...
 - saw the lion.
 - was attacked by someone with a sword.
 - arrived at the correct conclusion.
 - arrived late.
- How many of Thisbe's requests were answered?

a) 0	b) 1
c) 2	d) 3