MURMURE BLANDITIAE: Teaching Ovid's Pyramus and Thisbe Through Annotation

by

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(Under the Direction of Christine L. Albright)

ABSTRACT

This thesis presents a curriculum based on the original Latin of Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, specifically the story of Pyramus and Thisbe. It is designed for high school students in advanced Latin courses ready to take on the challenge of reading poetry. It includes footnotes of the Latin text, literal translations, and suggestions for teachers to extend the curriculum with the following goals: to encourage students to apply their basic Latin knowledge to a complex work of Latin poetry, independently engage with Latin literature to expand their confidence in reading an unedited passage of Latin poetry with minimal external support, and to expand their knowledge of mythological stories and draw meaningful connections to similar stories in contemporary literature.

INDEX WORDS: Latin, Ovid, Pyramus and Thisbe, pedagogy, teaching methods, education

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CHAPTER 1
INTRODUCTION

Design and Reading Guide

Chapter one of this thesis serves as an explanation of the methodology used and includes background information on the author's life to aid in teaching the curriculum. It is intended to be read by the teacher, but students will also benefit from reading Ovid's biographical information. Chapter two is the curriculum itself, which is designed to help students read through the poem without additional help. Chapter three is a literal English translation to assist both the teacher and the student to check their work after reading through the Latin. Chapter four is to be read by the teacher for suggestions on how to extend this curriculum to benefit the student.

Meter

It is essential that students have a firm grasp of Latin meter before attempting to read Latin poetry. Poetic meter is determined by the number and length of a line's subcomponents, or "feet." In the *Metamorphoses*, Ovid uses dactylic hexameter. A 'dactyl' is defined as a metrical foot consisting of one long and two short syllables or of one stressed and two unstressed syllables. 'Hexameter' is defined as a line of verse consisting of six feet. Within Ovid's lines of poetry, a reader will find six feet made up of this construction. Students may need to employ the use of scansion (an analysis of verse to show its meter) when reading poetry, because it will enable them to distinguish between cases of nouns or identify an alternative third-person plural verb form, among other useful translation skills. Understanding how Ovid crafted each line of verse will permit students to correctly translate and appreciate the artistry of the Latin.

Latin poetic meter is determined by the length of the vowels in a line of poetry. These vowel lengths will determine how the six feet are broken up. In dactylic hexameter, spondees (two long syllables or vowels) and dactyls (one long with two short syllables or vowels) are primarily used. The first four feet are either dactyls or spondees, with the fifth foot usually comprising a dactyl, and the sixth foot can be either a trochee (one long and one short vowel) or a spondee. In poetry, a vowel at the end of a word will usually 'elide' (or combine) with a vowel at the beginning of the next word and act as one vowel when marking or scanning vowel length. An '-m' at the end of a word is weak, so it would elide if followed by a vowel. The same happens with the letter 'h-' at the beginning of a word, so it would elide if preceded by a vowel. A vowel at the end of one word will elide before a word starting with 'h-' + vowel, just as if the 'h' weren't there. Some vowels are long by nature, meaning they are naturally long by case or are inherently long. Diphthongs are also long by nature. Vowels can also be long by position. This happens when two or more consonants follow the vowel.

There are also some other aspects to remember when scanning a line of Latin poetry. The digraphs (two-letter combinations) 'ch', 'ph', and 'th' count as single consonants, so the letter 'h' here never makes any vowels before it long. The letter 'x' is considered a 'ks' sound, so it counts as two consonants, which will make a vowel before it long by position. The digraphs 'qu' (and sometimes 'gu' and 'su') count as single consonants, and the 'u' accompanying these consonants does not count as a vowel. The letters 'b', 'c', 'd', 'g', 'p', or 't' are 'mutes' and when followed by a 'liquid' ('l' or 'r') sometimes count as a single consonant when they are found in the same word. Lastly, the letter 'i' at the beginning of a word or in front of a vowel could be a consonantal 'i' (so it is actually the letter 'j') and therefore is not a vowel.

Vowels that are not long by nature or long by position are short. Most of the interior vowels can be figured out by logic once the vowels that are long by nature or position are marked when scanning a line. The order in which a number ofteachers have found is easiest to scan a line of poetry is: (1) change the ‘i’ at the beginning of words and when followed by a vowel to a ‘j’, (2) mark out the ‘h’ at beginning of words, (3) check for elisions, and remember they are not always long, (4) mark vowels that are long by nature, (5) mark vowels that are long by position, and (6) mark your metrical feet by the dactyls and spondees beginning from the end of the line.

The examples below illustrate metrical scansion in dactylic hexameter of the first four lines of *Pyramus and Thisbe*.

– ◡ ◡ | – – | – ◡ ◡ | – ◡ ◡ | – ◡ ◡ | – –
Pyramus et Thisbe, iuvenum pulcherrimus alter

– ◡ ◡ | – ◡ ◡ | – ◡ ◡ | – – | – ◡ ◡ | – –
altera, quas Oriens habuit, praelata puellis

– ◡ ◡ | – ◡ ◡ | – ◡ ◡ |– ◡ ◡ |– ◡ ◡ | – –
contiguas tenuere domos, ubi dicitur altam

– ◡ ◡ | – – | – – | – ◡ ◡ | – ◡ ◡ | – –
coctilibus muris cinxisse Semiramis urbem.

This is an essential lesson for students when attempting to read Latin poetry for the first time. Scansion will be useful when students are confronted with a particularly challenging line in their attempt to translate the poem.

A Note on Ovid’s Life and Works

On March 20, 43 BCE, in the quiet town of Sulmo, roughly a hundred miles east of Rome, Publius Ovidius Naso was born. His family was made up of Roman citizens of equestrian

rank, so it is safe to assume they were locally prominent and relatively wealthy. As a young man, Ovid was sent to be educated in Rome, seemingly seeking a career in politics. However, after briefly holding a few minor public offices, Ovid abandoned his political career altogether and began to pursue his passion for composing poetry.

While in Rome, Ovid composed several of his famous works. The first of these were his famous pieces of love poetry including the *Amores*, *Ars Amatoria*, and *Remedia Amoris* in which he writes of the love affairs of men and women. Ovid also wrote the *Heroides*, within which he composed a series of twenty-one letters written by notable women found in mythology, including Penelope, Dido, Ariadne, and Medea to their respective heroic lovers. Perhaps the *Heroides* was his inspiration to craft his next epic poem: *Metamorphoses*. Ovid's *Metamorphoses* is an exploration of transformation and creation. Comprehensively crafted, it is an episodic work of over 250 stories of mythology and legends expertly woven together throughout fifteen books into one fabulous body of work. The collection took him six years to complete and was published in 8 CE. The epic is considered his *magnum opus* by various scholars. It has inspired many artists and authors, as it is one of Western culture's most influential works of literature.

Ovid's last piece of poetry composed in Rome, was the *Fasti*, a poem in which each book focused on a different month of the Roman calendar. He only wrote six of these books before he was exiled to the ancient port city of Tomis (modern day Constanta) on the eastern coast of the Black Sea by Emperor Augustus in 8 CE—the same year he published *Metamorphoses*. The Emperor's motives for Ovid's banishment are unclear because it was not explicitly included in the imperial edict; however, most scholars speculate that his expulsion must have been due to the scandalous nature of his poetry. When Augustus came to power, he attempted to restore the conservative morals of Roman citizens, and scholars argue that Ovid's *Ars Amatoria* is a guide to

adultery and seduction, exploits quite contrary to modest Roman standards. According to numerous sources, Ovid vehemently disclaimed an intention of teaching adultery, even though it is argued that his teachings could undoubtedly be applied to the seduction of married women. He did, however, refer cryptically to a 'carmen et error' in his *Tristia* as the reason for his banishment.

While living in Tomis, a city on the fringes of the Roman Empire, far from the luxuries of civilization in which Ovid was accustomed to indulging when living in Rome, he wrote his final two pieces of poetry. Both the *Tristia* (8-11 CE) and the *Epistulae ex Ponto* (12-13 CE) are lachrymose in tone. In the *Tristia*, while reflecting on his life in exile, Ovid explored—albeit too late—the dangers of public reception of poetry. His *Epistulae ex Ponto* were four books consisting of letters addressed to the emperor as well as his wife and friends, in which he writes about his bleak exile, the decline of his health, and the future of his poetry. In Ovid's letters to Emperor Augustus and his successor, Emperor Tiberius, he pleaded to be restored to Rome, but to no avail. He eventually resigned to his fate and, although there is no definitive record of how he passed, in 17 CE at the age of sixty, he died in exile in the city of Tomis.

Curriculum Goals

This curriculum aims to cultivate independent Latin translation skills and strengthen reading proficiency through close examination of Ovid's *Pyramus and Thisbe*, relying primarily on footnotes to minimize external support. The goals of this curriculum are:

1) To encourage students to apply their knowledge of basic Latin vocabulary and grammar to a complex and original work of Latin poetry.

2) To promote independent engagement with authentic Latin literature to allow students to prepare for further classical study or research.
3) To expand confidence in reading and interpreting an unedited Latin text with minimal external assistance.
4) To increase knowledge of mythological stories used as inspiration for well-known stories in modern literature.

Teaching Methodology: Translations

I am including a translation as a reference for student and teacher understanding in this methodology. It is my hope that the translation I have provided is literal and succinct enough to help students and teachers capture the truest essence of the pictures Ovid is painting with his Latin as closely as possible into English. I have written the translation to reinforce the grammar and syntax to facilitate student and teacher engagement with Ovid's language, style, and poetic technique.

This translation should be used as a tool to check student work. I encourage students to read and translate the story on their own first, as literally as possible, using the footnotes provided to focus on accurately rendering the syntax and vocabulary Ovid uses. Once students have translated the text literally, teachers should encourage a more interpretive understanding of the story's meaning and compare their work to that of each other along with the provided translation. Student success will be made known when their translations are close to the provided translation. In evaluating student translations, the most successful students will demonstrate an understanding of the meaning of the text without outside help and will most closely capture Ovid's tone in their translations. These students will also demonstrate proficiency in capturing

and understanding Ovid's use of poetic features such as metaphors, imagery, irony, suspense, and foreshadowing through the use of poetic devices and word order.

Teaching Methodology: Annotated Text

I have included footnotes that provide targeted support for students working through an initial translation of the text on their own. Students will be able to tackle difficult constructions and less familiar vocabulary using these footnotes. My hope is to encourage them to solve problems that arise in understanding the meaning of the text by using the provided footnotes before looking to additional outside resources. Instead of offering exact translations, the footnotes I have included highlight grammatical constructions and provide brief explanations of some of the grammar to help students through the challenging word order of Latin poetry. I have also included suggested meanings for more ambiguous or less common vocabulary that fit within the context of the story.

Introduction to Ovid's Style in *Metamorphoses*

Ovid's *Metamorphoses* is a masterpiece in its highly crafted episodic style. It is written in dactylic hexameter (see 'a note on meter'), and emotion shines through in Ovid's storytelling throughout the epic. He blends the genre of epic with elegy by including elegiac themes, such as love, longing, and tragic separation, which is also typical of his earlier poetry. In terms of length, he models the *Metamorphoses* on the traditional epic poetry of Homer and Virgil, but he is unique in his tone, language, and technique. Ovid focuses on emotion and irony instead of simply telling the tales of heroes. In *Pyramus and Thisbe*, Ovid blends this style of poetry with dramatic tragedy.

The themes in Ovid's *Metamorphoses* include (but are not limited to) transformation and change; the power of the gods; love, violence and suffering; mortality versus immortality; storytelling and legacy; hubris and divine retribution; and aetiology. In the Pyramus and Thisbe story, we are confronted with the themes of love, separation, miscommunication, and fate. Ovid transitions from the lovers' romantic backstory to the dramatic climax of their death, keeping his readers on their toes with the intensity of the emotional pictures he paints. His use of poetic devices immerses his readers in the story. For example, alliteration and assonance create a musicality of the narrative and highlight emotional moments in the story. At the same time, his use of word order heightens the suspense and focuses the reader's attention on dramatic details.

Transformation is the central theme of Ovid's *Metamorphoses*. These transformations can range from physical, emotional, psychological, and metaphorical to punitive, accidental, and cyclical. In *Pyramus and Thisbe*, Ovid provides a symbolic and sentimental metamorphosis in the lovers' tragedy by allowing them to become a permanent natural marker through the transformation of the white berries of the mulberry tree to the dark red or purple color typically seen today. This transformation, like many others in the *Metamorphoses*, is both natural and aetiological.

Ovid often defines his characters through their action rather than dialogue. Pyramus and Thisbe do speak in their story, but not much. It is their impulsive choices, and the symbolic features included in their myth that make it memorable. The deaths of the lovers are dramatic and stylized in a way that makes it difficult for readers to decide whether to mourn them or celebrate them, which is an excellent opportunity to invite students to explore Ovid's purpose of including them by further exploring the story's themes of forbidden love, miscommunication, the power of impulsive young love, and the role of fate in a modern context.

CHAPTER 2

PYRAMUS ET THISBE (MET. 4.55-166) ANNOTATED TEXT

The mythological story of Pyramus and Thisbe is a classic tale of two young, ill-fated lovers in ancient Babylon. The pair are raised as neighbors in adjacent houses, whose parents do not get along and thus forbid them to marry. They furtively speak to each other through a crack in a shared wall, and one day decide to boldly meet in a designated location near a mulberry tree. Thisbe arrives first and encounters a lioness whose jaws are bloody with recent slaughter. She runs away to hide, losing her veil in the process. The lion stalks over to investigate the veil, as most cats might play with string, staining it with the blood dripping from its mouth. When Pyramus arrives, he sees the bloody veil and, assuming the worst, decides to follow his beloved into death. Thisbe returns to the scene and discovers Pyramus' body alongside the bloodied veil and realizes the tragedy that has occurred. She picks up Pyramus' sword and falls on it as he did. Their blood turns the mulberry tree's white berries to dark red, explaining the color of the fruit more commonly seen today. Moved by their tragic death, the gods and their parents bury them together in a single urn.

The story of Pyramus and Thisbe is significant for a few reasons. Within the framework of the *Metamorphoses*, Ovid places this story in Book 4, among similar episodes of emotional intensity and violent outcomes. Their story offers a powerful demonstration of love and loss, reinforcing Book 4's family, secrecy, and transformation themes. This story has also influenced Western literature for centuries. This tragic narrative served as William Shakespeare's inspiration for *Romeo and Juliet*, which is read by high schoolers and scholars worldwide and was also

comically retold in his *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. The double suicide of a pair of lovers is also found in the more modern retelling *Westside Story.* The enduring legacy of *Pyramus and Thisbe* lies in its timeless exploration of passionate love and tragic fate, resonating across cultures and artistic expressions.

It is no surprise that this poignant episode from Ovid resonates with international audiences as well. Massimo Colella, a distinguished Italian scholar specializing in the reception and rewriting of Ovidian myths, wrote *Riscrivere il mito ovidiano. Piramo e Tisbe nella letteratura italiana*, where he explores the multifaceted reception of Pyramus and Thisbe within Italian culture from the Middle Ages to the Early Modern period. In Colella's introduction, he states, "The 'fabula' of Pyramus and Thisbe … over the centuries has been at the center of a rich series of reworkings, rewritings, and transcodifications of various kinds, which have highlighted—and indeed celebrated in diverse ways—the eternal universality of its narrative pattern and anthropological substance." He describes Ovid's *Pyramus and Thisbe* as a "cultural nucleus" that is continuously reshaped to reflect differing historical, spiritual, and artistic contexts. With each retelling of the story, authors emphasize different aspects—including love, tragedy, death, and the story's moral purpose—to serve their particular audience or era. The myth's universal themes continue to resonate in cultures throughout the world and have had a lasting impact throughout history.

Pyramus and Thisbe: Annotated Text (Met. 4.55-166)

Pyramus et Thisbe, iuvenum pulcherrimus alter,
altera, quas Oriens habuit, praelata puellis,
contiguas tenuere domos, ubi dicitur altam
coctilibus muris cinxisse Semiramis urbem.
notitiam primosque gradus vicinia fecit,
tempore crevit amor; taedae quoque iure coissent,
sed vetuere patres: quod non potuere vetare,
ex aequo captis ardebant mentibus ambo.
conscius omnis abest; nutu signisque loquuntur,
quoque magis tegitur, tectus magis aestuat ignis.
fissus erat tenui rima, quam duxerat olim,
cum fieret, paries domui communis utrique.

56-praelata (*praefero, -ferre, -tuli, -latus* — to bear before) translate "give preference to" or "prefer"
56-quas – relative pronoun with *puellis* as its antecedent
57-contiguas (*contiguus, -a, -um* – neighboring)
57-tenuere (*teneo, tenere, tenui, tentus* — hold) alternative third person plural ending: *tenuerunt*
58-coctilibus (*coctilis, -e* – brick, made of brick)
58-cinxisse (*cingo, cingere, cinxi, cinctus* – encircle)
58- Semiramis – (nom.) legendary Babylonian queen
59-notitiam (*notitia, -ae, f.* – acquaintance)
59-vicinia (*vicinia, -ae, f.* – vicinity, proximity)
60-taedae (*taeda, taedae, f.* – pine torch) lit. 'pine torch' meaning 'marriage' by metonymy; genitive with *iure*
60-coissent (*coeo, -ire, -ii, -itus* – come together) pluperfect subjunctive
61-vetuere (*veto, vetare, vetui, vetitus* – forbid) alternative third person plural: *vetuerunt*
61-potuere (*possum, posse, potui* – be able) alternative third person plural: *potuerunt*
62-ex aequo - lit. 'from an equal [place]'; 'equally'
63-conscius (*conscius, -i, m./f.* – confidante, accomplice) translate 'witness'
63-nutu (*nutus, -us, m.* – nod)
64-tegitur (*tego, tegere, texi, tectus* – cover, hide)
64-aestuat (*aestuo, aestuare, aestuavi, aestuatus* – burn)
65-fissus (*findo, findere, fidi, fissus* – split, divide)
65-tenui (*tenuis, -e* – thin, slender, fine)
65-rima (*rima, -ae, f.* - crack)
66-fieret (*fio, fieri, factus sum* – is made, happen) translate with *cum* as 'After it was built…'
66-paries (*paries, -etis, m.* – wall, house wall)

Pyramus and Thisbe: Annotated Text (Met. 4.55-166)

id vitium nulli per saecula longa notatum -

quid non sentit amor? - primi vidistis amantes

et vocis fecistis iter, tutaeque per illud

murmure blanditiae minimo transire solebant.

saepe, ubi constiterant hinc Thisbe, Pyramus illinc,

inque vices fuerat captatus anhelitus oris,

"invide" dicebant "paries, quid amantibus obstas?

quantum erat, ut sineres toto nos corpore iungi

aut, hoc si nimium est, vel ad oscula danda pateres?

nec sumus ingrati: tibi nos debere fatemur,

quod datus est verbis ad amicas transitus aures."

talia diversa nequiquam sede locuti

sub noctem dixere "vale" partique dedere

oscula quisque suae non pervenientia contra.

67-vitium (*vitium, -i, n.* – defect)
67-nulli – dative of agent with *notatum vitium*
68-amantes – translate as a noun: 'the lovers'
69-vocis – genitive with *iter*
70-murmure – use English to guess the meaning
70-blanditiae (*blanditia, -ae, f.* – flattery, compliment) translate here 'sweet talk'
72-vices (*vicis, -is, f.* – turn, change, succession)
72-captatus (*capto, captare, captavi, captatus* – try to catch)
72-anhelitus (*anhelitus, -us, m.* – breath, panting)
72-oris – (*os, oris, n.*) genitive singular; refers to both of their mouths, so can be translated as plural
73-invide (*invidus, -a, -um* – jealous) vocative form
73-quid – can also translate as *cur* does
75-quantum erat – 'How great [a thing] was it' (lit.); translate: 'How great would it be' as a result clause
74-sineres (*sino, -ere, -ivi, -itus – allow)*
75-vel – translate as 'at least'
76-ingrati (*ingratus, -a, -um* – ungrateful)
76-fatemur (*fateor, fateri, fassus sum* – confess)
77-quod – 'the fact that'
78-diversa (*diversus, -a, -um* – opposite)
78-nequiquam – same meaning as *frustra*
79-sub noctem – 'at nightfall'
79-parti(que) – translate 'side [of the wall]'

Pyramus and Thisbe: Annotated Text (Met. 4.55-166)

postera nocturnos Aurora removerat ignes,
solque pruinosas radiis siccaverat herbas:
ad solitum coiere locum. tum murmure parvo
multa prius questi statuunt, ut nocte silenti
fallere custodes foribusque excedere temptent,
cumque domo exierint, urbis quoque tecta relinquant,
neve sit errandum lato spatiantibus arvo,
conveniant ad busta Nini lateantque sub umbra
arboris: arbor ibi niveis uberrima pomis,
ardua morus, erat, gelido contermina fonti.

81-postera (*posterus, -a, -um* – following, next)
81-Aurora – Roman goddess of the dawn who brings the first light of day; translate 'Dawn' with *postera*
82-pruinosas (*pruinosas, -a, -um* – frosty)
82-radii (*radius, -i, m.* – ray of the sun)
82-siccaverat (*sicco, siccare, siccavi, siccatus* – dry)
82-herbas (*herba, -ae, f.* – grass)
83-ad – translate 'at'
83-solitum (*solitus, -a, -um* – usual, customary)
83-coiere (*cum + eo, -ire, -ii -itus* – come together, meet)
84-questi (*queror, queri, questus sum* – complain [about])
84-statuunt (*statuo, -uere, -ui, -utus* – decide)
84-ut – introduces various clauses explaining what the lovers decided (*statuunt*)
85-fallere (*fallo, fallere, fefelli, falsus* – deceive)
85-foribusque (*foris, -is, f.* – doors)
85-excedere – (*excedo, -cedere, -cessi, -cessus* – leave)
86-tecta – by metonomy: *domus* (acc. neut. pl.)
87-neve…errandum – negative gerund of purpose; translate: 'and so that there would not be a wandering'
87-spatiantibus – (*spatior, spatiari, spatus sum* – walk, promenade) refers to the lovers
87-arvo (*arvum, -i, n.* – field)
88-busta Nini (*bustum, -i, n.* – tomb [of Ninus])
89-niveis (*niveus, -a, -um* – white)
89-uberrima (*uber, uber, uber* – abundant, plentiful)
89-pomis (*pomum, -i, n.* – fruit)
90-ardua (*arduus, -a, -um* – tall)
90-morus (*morus, -i, f.* – mulberry tree)
90-gelido (*gelidus, -a, -um* – icy, ice cold)
90-contermina – (*conterminus, -a, -um* – nearby)

Pyramus and Thisbe: Annotated Text (Met. 4.55-166)

pacta placent; et lux, tarde discedere visa,
praecipitatur aquis, et aquis nox exit ab isdem.
"Callida per tenebras versato cardine Thisbe
egreditur fallitque suos adopertaque vultum
pervenit ad tumulum dictaque sub arbore sedit.
audacem faciebat amor. venit ecce recenti
caede leaena boum spumantes oblita rictus
depositura sitim vicini fontis in unda;
quam procul ad lunae radios Babylonia Thisbe
vidit et obscurum timido pede fugit in antrum,
dumque fugit, tergo velamina lapsa reliquit.

91-visa (*video, videre, vidi, visus* – see)
92-praecipitatur (*praecipito, -cipitare, -cipitavi, -cipitatus* – throw, throw headlong, cast down)
93-versato (*verso, versare, versavi, versatus* – turn)
93-cardine (*cardo, cardinis, m.* – hinge) ablative absolute with *versato*
94-suos (*suus, -a, -um* – his/her own) 'her own' refers to Thisbe's parents
94-adoperta (*adoperio, adoperire, adoperui, adopertus* – cover)
94-vultum (*vultus, -us, f.* – face) accusative of respect with *adoperta*
95-tumulum (*tumulus, -i, m.* – tomb)
95-dicta (*dico, dicere, dixi, dictus* – speak, appoint) translate 'designated' with *arbore*
97-caede (*caede, -is, f.* – slaughter)
97-leaena (*leaena, -ae, f.* – lioness)
97-boum (*bos, bovis, m./f.* – cow) syncopated genitive plural; translate as if '*bovum*'
97-spumantes (*spumo, spumare, spumavi, spumatus* – foaming) translate with *rictus*
97-oblita (*oblino, oblinere, oblevi, oblitus* – smeared)
97-rictus (*rictus, -us, m.* – jaws) accusative of respect
98-depositura (*depono, -ponere, -posui, -positus* – put down) future active participle modifying *leaena*; translate 'satisfy'
98-sitim (*sitis, -is, f.* – thirst) accusative; the ***-im*** ending is typical for certain third decl. i-stem nouns
98-vicini (*vicinus, -a, -um* – nearby, neighboring)
98-unda (*unda, -ae, f.*– wave) by synecdoche 'water'
99-quam – antecedent is *leaena*
99-ad – translate as if *sub*
99-Babylonia (*Babylonius, -a, -um* – Babylonian) modifies Thisbe
100-obscurum (*obscurus, -a, -um* – dark)
100-antrum (*antrum, -i, n.* – cave)
101-tergo (*tergum, -i, -n.* – back)
101-velamina (*velamen, -is, -n.* – veil)
101-lapsa (*labor, labi, lapsus sum* – slip)

Pyramus and Thisbe: Annotated Text (Met. 4.55-166)

ut lea saeva sitim multa conpescuit unda,
dum redit in silvas, inventos forte sine ipsa
ore cruentato tenues laniavit amictus.
serius egressus vestigia vidit in alto
pulvere certa ferae totoque expalluit ore
Pyramus; ut vero vestem quoque sanguine tinctam
repperit, "una duos" inquit "nox perdet amantes,
e quibus illa fuit longa dignissima vita;
nostra nocens anima est. ego te, miseranda, peremi,
in loca plena metus qui iussi nocte venires
nec prior huc veni. nostrum divellite corpus
et scelerata fero consumite viscera morsu,
o quicumque sub hac habitatis rupe leones!

102-lea (*lea, -ae, f.* – lioness) feminine *of leo, leonis, m.*; a synonym of *leana, leaenae, f.*
102-conpescuit (*conpesco, -ere, -cui* – quench)
102-unda (*unda, -ae, f.* – wave) synecdoche; translate 'water' as she is drinking (*vicini fontis*)
103-ipsa (*ipse, ipsa, ipsud* – himself, herself, itself) refers to Thisbe; translate 'the girl herself' with *sine*
104-cruentato (*cruentatus, -a, -um* – bloody)
104-laniavit (*lanio,-are, -avi, -atus* – tear apart)
104-amictus (*amictus, -us, m.* – garment) refers to Thisbe's veil; modified by *inventos* and the adjective *tenues*; the poetic plural is used, translate singularly
105-serius (*serus, -a, -um* – late) comparative form
105-vestigia (*vestigium, -i, n.* – track)
106-pulvere (*pulvis, pulveris, m.* – sand)
106-ferae (*fera, -ae, f.* – wild animal)
106-expalluit (*expallesco, expallescere, expallui* – turn pale, grow pale, go white as a ghost)
107-ut –translate temporally as 'when'
107-vestem (*vestis, -is, f.* – garment) synonym for *amictus* and *velamen*; refers to Thisbe's veil
107-tinctam (*tingo, tingere, tinxi, tinctus* – stain)
108-perdet (*perdo, -ere, -idi, -itus* – destroy)
109-illa (*ille, illa, illud* – that) the feminine is used to refer to Thisbe; translate 'she'
109-dignissima (*dignus, -a, -um* – worthy) takes the ablative case; use 'of' to translate with *longa vita*
112-divellite (*divello, -ellere, -elli, -ulsus* –tear apart)
113-viscera (*viscer, -is, n.* – entrails)
113-morsu (*morsus, -us, m.* – bite)
114-quicumque (*qui* + *cumque* – whoever) subject of *habitatis*; renames the vocative *leones*
114-rupe (*rupes, -is, f.* – rock, cliff)

Pyramus and Thisbe: Annotated Text (Met. 4.55-166)

sed timidi est optare necem." velamina Thisbes
tollit et ad pactae secum fert arboris umbram,
utque dedit notae lacrimas, dedit oscula vesti,
"accipe nunc" inquit "nostri quoque sanguinis haustus!"
quoque erat accinctus, demisit in ilia ferrum,
nec mora, ferventi moriens e vulnere traxit.
ut iacuit resupinus humo, cruor emicat alte,
non aliter quam cum vitiato fistula plumbo
scinditur et tenui stridente foramine longas
eiaculatur aquas atque ictibus aera rumpit.

115-timidi (*timidus, -a, -um* – fearful, timid) genitive of description; translate 'it is [characteristic] of a fearful [person]' with *optare* as an objective infinitive
115-necem (*nex, necis, f.* – death)
115-Thisbes – Greek genitive of *Thisbe*; translate with *velamina*
116-pactae (*pactus, -a, -um* – designated)
117-notae (*notus, -a, -um* – familiar) translate with *vesti*
118-nostri – first person pronouns are often interchangeable; translate as if *mei*
118-haustus (*haustus, -us, m.* – drink)
119-quoque (*quo* + *que* – 'and with [that] which') ablative of instrument, refers to Pyramus' *ferrum*
119-accinctus (*accingo, -cingere, -cinxi, -cinctus* – gird, equip)
119-demisit (*demitto, demittere, demisi, demissus* – send down, sink) translate here as 'plunge'
119-ilia (*ile, ilis, n.* – grion, side of body from hips to groin, guts) translate here as 'stomach'
120-mora (*mora, -ae, f.* – delay)
120-ferventi (*fervens, fervens, fervens* – hot, boiling)
121-resupinus (*resupinus, -a, -um* – lying on one's back) translate 'on his back'
121-cruor (*cruor, -is, m.* – blood)
121-emicat (*emico, -micare, -micui, -micatus* – spring up)
121-alte – high, loftily (adv.)
122-aliter – differently (adv.)
122-vitiato (*vitio, vitiare, vitiavi, vitiatus* – faulty)
122-fistula (*fistula, -ae, f.* – waterpipe)
122-plumbo (*plumbum, -i, n.* – lead)
123-scinditur (*scindo, scindere, scicidi, scisus* – split)
123-stridente (*strido, stridere, stridi* – hiss) modifying *foramine*
123-foramine (*foramen, -is, n.* – fissure, hole) ablative of place from which with *eiaculatur*
124-eiaculatur (*eiaculor, eiaculari, eiaculatus sum* – shoot forth)
124-aquas (*aqua, -ae, f.* – water) poetic plural; translate 'jets' to preserve the effect of the plural
124-ictibus (*ictus, -us, m.* – blow) translate 'spurts'
124-aera (*aer, -is, m.* – air) this comes from a Greek word; masculine singular accusative form

Pyramus and Thisbe: Annotated Text (Met. 4.55-166)

arborei fetus adspergine caedis in atram
vertuntur faciem, madefactaque sanguine radix
purpureo tinguit pendentia mora colore.
ecce metu nondum posito, ne fallat amantem,
illa redit iuvenemque oculis animoque requirit,
quantaque vitarit narrare pericula gestit.
utque locum et visa cognoscit in arbore formam,
sic facit incertam pomi color: haeret, an haec sit.

125-arborei (*arboreus, -a, -um* – arboreal, treelike)
125-fetus (*fetus, -us, m.* – fruit)
125-adspergine (*adspergo, -is, f.* – spray, sprinkling)
125-caedis (*caedis, -is, f.* – slaughter)
125-antram (*antrus, -a, -um* – dark)
126-faciem (*facies, -ei, f.* – appearance)
126-madefacta (*madefacio, madefacere, madefeci, madefactus* – drench, make wet)
126-radix (*radix, -is, f.* – root)
127-pendentia (*pendeo, pendere, pependi* – hang)
127-mora (*morum, -i, n.* – mulberry, fruit of the black mulberry)
128-ne – introduces negative purpose clause
128-fallat (*fallo, fallere, fefelli, falsus* – deceive) translate here as 'disappoints'
128-amantem (*amo, amare, amavi, amatus* – love) literally 'the one loving [her]'; translate as '[her] lover'
129-illa (*ille, illa, illud* – that) feminine form refers to Thisbe; translate 'she'
129-animo (*animus, -i, m.* – soul, spirit, breath) translate here as 'heart'; ablative of means with *oculis*
129-requirit (*requiro, requirere, requisivi, requisitus* – seek, pine for)
130-quanta (*quantus, -a, -um* – what great, how great) interrogative adjective; modifies *pericula* as the object of *vitarit* (syncopated *vitaverit* perfect subjunctive verb in an indirect question)
130-gestit (*gestio, gestire, gestivi, gestitus* – be eager, wish passionately, yearn)
131-utque (*ut* + *que* – and as) translate temporally as 'and when'
132-sic – usually 'thus' or 'in this way', but here translate as 'at the same time'
132-incertam (*incertus, -a, -um* – uncertain) the feminine accusative form here refers to Thisbe; translate as '[her] uncertain'
132-pomi (*pomus, -i, f.* – fruit)
132-haeret (*haereo, haerere, haesi, haesus* – stick, cling) translate here as 'hesitate'
132-an – 'whether' (conj.); introduces indirect question
132-sit (sum, esse, fui, futurus – be, exist) present active subjunctive form; verb in indirect question

Pyramus and Thisbe: Annotated Text (Met. 4.55-166)

dum dubitat, tremebunda videt pulsare cruentum
membra solum, retroque pedem tulit, oraque buxo
pallidiora gerens exhorruit aequoris instar,
quod tremit, exigua cum summum stringitur aura.
sed postquam remorata suos cognovit amores,
percutit indignos claro plangore lacertos,
et laniata comas amplexaque corpus amatum
vulnera supplevit lacrimis fletumque cruori
miscuit et gelidis in vultibus oscula figens
"Pyrame" clamavit "quis te mihi casus ademit?

133-tremebunda (*tremebundus, -a, -um* – trembling) modifies *membra*
133-cruentum (*cruentus, -a, -um* – bloody, bleeding)
134-membra (*membrum, -i, n.* – limb)
134-retro – 'backwards' (adv.)
134-ora (*os, oris, n.* – mouth) synechdoche translate as 'face'; accusative of *gerens*
134-buxo (*buxus, -i, f.* – boxwood) ablative of comparison with *pallidiora* and *ora*
135-exhorruit (*exhorresco, -exhorrescere, exhorrui* – shudder)
135-aequoris (aequor, -is, n. – sea)
135-instar – (undeclined) 'like' with the genitive *aequoris*
136-exigua (*exiguus, -a, -um* – small) translate 'light' with *aura*
136-summum (*summus, -a, -um* – top) refers to the top of the sea; translate as 'surface'
136-stringitur (*stringo, stringere, strinxi, strictus* – graze, touch lightly)
136-aura (*aura, -ae, f.* – breeze)
137-remorata (*remoror, remorari, remoratus sum – delay*) feminine modifying Thisbe
137-amores (*amor, -is, m.* – lover) poetic plural
138-percutit (*percutio, percutere, percussi, percussus* – beat, strike)
138-indignos (*indignus, -a, um* – unworthy)
138-plangore (*plangor, -is, m.* – shriek)
138-lacertos (*lacertus, -i, m.* – arm)
139-laniata (*lanio, laniare, laniavi, laniatus* – tear, mangle) perfect passive participle
139-comas (*coma, -ae, f.* – hair) accusative of respect; translate with *laniata*
139-amatum (*amatus, -a, -um* – loved)
140-supplevit (*suppleo, supplere, supplevi, suppletus* – fill up)
141-gelidis (*gelidus, -a, -um* –cold) plural; translate with *vultibus*
142-ademit (*adimo, -imere, -emi, -emptus* – take away)

Pyramus and Thisbe: Annotated Text (Met. 4.55-166)

Pyrame, responde: tua te carissima Thisbe
nominat: exaudi vultusque attolle iacentes!”
ad nomen Thisbes oculos iam morte gravatos
Pyramus erexit, visaque recondidit illa.
quae postquam vestemque suam cognovit et ense
vidit ebur vacuum, “tua te manus” inquit “amorque
perdidit, infelix. est et mihi fortis in unum
hoc manus, est et amor: dabit hic in vulnera vires.
persequar exstinctum letique miserrima dicar
causa comesque tui; quique a me morte revelli
heu sola poteras, poteris nec morte revelli.

144-exaudi (*exaudio, -audire, -audivi, -auditus* **–** hear clearly) imperative form
144-attolle (*attollo, attollere* – lift up)
145-gravatos (*gravatus, -a, -um* – heavy)
146-erexit (*erigo, erigere, erexi, erectus* – raise, lift)
146-recondidit (*recondo, -condere, -condidi, -conditus* – close again)
147-quae (*qui, quae, quod* – who) translate as if *illa* or *ea*, as the subject of *inquit*
147-vestem (*vestis, -is, f.* – clothing) refers to her veil
147-ense (*ensis, -is, m.* – sword) ablative of separation with *ebur vacuum*
148-ebur (*ebur, -is, n.* – ivory) refers to his sheath
149-perdidit (*perdo, perdere, perdidi, perditus* – destroy)
149-mihi – dative of possession with *manus*
150-amor (*amor, -is, m.* – love) the preceding clause is understood to be used again, this time with *amor* in place of *manus*; translate ‘as is my love’
150-hic – refers to *amor*
150-vires (*vis, viris, f.*– power) in the plural, as is here, translate ‘strength’
151-persequar (*persequor, persequi, persecutus sum* – pursue) either future indicative or present subjunctive
151-exstinctum (*exstinguo, -stinguere, -stinxi, -stinctus* – extinguish) refers to Pyramus; accusative of *persequar*
151-leti (*letum, -i, n.* – death)
151-miserrima (*miser, -a, -um* – miserable, wretched) Thisbe referring to herself
152-quique (*qui* + *-que*)
153-revelli (*revello, revellere, revelli, revulsus – tear away*) passive complementary infinitive

Pyramus and Thisbe: Annotated Text (Met. 4.55-166)

hoc tamen amborum verbis estote rogati,
o multum miseri meus illiusque parentes,
ut quos certus amor, quos hora novissima iunxit,
conponi tumulo non invideatis eodem.
at tu quae ramis arbor miserabile corpus
nunc tegis unius, mox es tectura duorum,
signa tene caedis pullosque et luctibus aptos
semper habe fetus, gemini monimenta cruoris."
dixit, et aptato pectus mucrone sub imum
incubuit ferro, quod adhuc a caede tepebat.
vota tamen tetigere deos, tetigere parentes:
nam color in pomo est, ubi permaturuit, ater,
quodque rogis superest, una requiescit in urna.

154-amborum (*ambo* – both) translate with *verbis*
154-estote (*sum, esse, fui, futurum* – *be*) future imperative; translate with *rogati* as "Be asked", addressing her parents in the next line
155-multum – 'very' (adv.)
156-ut – introduces negative indirect command with *non invideatis*
156-quos – translate with understood *nos*
156-novissima (*novus, -a, -um* – new) translate here as 'most recent' modifying *hora*
157-componi (*compono, componere, composui, compositus* – place together, bury)
157-invideatis (*invideo, invidere, invidi, invisus* – begrudge)
158-ramis (*ramus, -i, m.* – branch)
160-pullos (*pullus, -a, -um* – dark colored) modifying *fetus* alongside *aptos*
160-luctibus (*luctus, -us, m.* – grief, mourning) dative; translate with *aptos*
161-monimenta (*monimentum, -i, n.* – monument)
161-cruoris (*cruor, -is, m.* – bloodshed, slaughter)
162-aptato (*apto, aptare, aptavi, aptatus* – fit) ablative absolute with *mucrone*
162-pectus (*pectus, pectoris, n.* – breast, chest)
162-mucrone (*mucro, mucronis, m.* – sword point)
162-imum (*imus, -a, -um* – deepest, inmost, lowest)
163-adhuc – 'still' (adv.)
163-tepebat (*tepeo, tepere, tepui* – be warm)
164-vota (*votum, -i, n.* – prayer, wish)
165-permaturuit (*permaturesco, permaturescere, permaturui* – to become thoroughly ripe, mature)
165-ater (*ater, atra, atrum* – dark)
166-quodque – (*quod* + *-que* – 'and that which'
166-rogis (*rogus, -i, m.* – funeral pyre)

CHAPTER 3

PYRAMUS ET THISBE (MET. 4.55-166) TRANSLATION

Pyramus and Thisbe, one (m.) the most of handsome boys,

the other (f.) preferred to girls whom the East held,

held neighboring homes, where Semiramis is said

to have encircled the high city with brick walls.

Proximity made acquaintance and first steps,

love grew in time; they also would have come together in an oath of marriage,

but their fathers forbade it: which they were not able to forbid,

both were burning equally with captive minds.

Every witness was absent; they talk with a nod and signs,

the more it is hidden, the more the hidden fire burns.

The wall common to each house had been split by a thin crack,

which had developed once after it was built.

That defect noticed by no one through long age –

what does love not notice? – (You) lovers saw it first

and you made [it] a path of your voice, and sweet talk

was accustomed to cross through it safe with the smallest murmur.

Often, when Thisbe had stood here, and Pyramus there,

and in turn the breath of their mouths had been captured,

“They were saying, “Envious wall, why do you block (those) loving?

Would it be so much it be, that you allow us to be joined in whole body

or, if this is too much, would you at least lie open for kisses being given?

And we are not ungrateful: We confess that we owe it to you,

the fact that a passage has been given to words towards friendly ears."

Having spoken such things in vain from opposite seats

they said "goodnight" at nightfall and to his/her own

side each one gave kisses not reaching the opposite (side).

The following Dawn had removed nocturnal fires,

and the sun had dried the frosty grass with its rays.

They met at the usual place. Then in a small murmur

having complained many things earlier they decided, that on a silent night

they would try to deceive the guards and leave from their doors,

and after they had left their home, they would also leave behind the roofs of their city,

and so that there may not be a wandering for (the lovers) walking in a wide field,

they would meet at the tomb of Nisus and lie hidden under the shade

of a tree: the tree there was very abundant with white fruit,

it was a tall mulberry tree, with an ice-cold fountain nearby.

The agreements are pleasing; and the sun, having seemed to depart slowly,

is thrown into the waters and night came out from the same waters.

"Clever Thisbe left through the darkness with the hinge having been turned

and deceived her own (parents) and covered with respect to her face

she arrived at the tomb and sat under the designated tree.

Love was making her bold. Look(!) a lioness is coming

Smeared with respect to her jaws foaming with recent slaughter of cattle

to satisfy her thirst in the water of the nearby spring;

[this lion] which under the rays of the moon Babylonian Thisbe

saw far off and fled into a dark cave with timid foot,

and while she fled, she left behind her veil having slipped from her back.

When the savage lioness quenched her thirst with much water,

while she returns into the woods, she tore apart the thin garment found

by chance without the girl herself with her bloody mouth.

Having left later Pyramus saw the certain tracks of the wild animal

in the deep sand and grew pale in his whole face;

when indeed he also discovered the garment stained

with blood, “One night” he said “will destroy two lovers,

out of whom she was most worthy of a long life;

My soul is guilty. I destroyed you, pitiable girl,

I who ordered that you, full of fear, come into the place

at night and I did not come here first. Tear apart my body

and consume my wicked entrails with your feral bite,

oh lions, you whoever live under this cliff!

But it is [characteristic] of a timid [person] to wish for death.” He raises the veil

of Thisbe and carries it with himself to the shade of the designated tree,

and as he gave tears to the familiar garment, he gave kisses,

“Take now,” he says, “drinks of my blood also!”

And with [that] which he was equipped, he plunged his sword into his stomach,

and there was no delay, (while) dying he withdrew it from his hot wound.

As he lay on his back on the ground, the blood springs up high,

not differently than when a waterpipe is split, with faulty lead

and from a thin hissing fissure it shoots out long jets and breaks the air in spurts.

The arboreal fruits are turned into a dark appearance by the spray

of slaughter, and the root having been made wet with blood

dyes the hanging mulberries with a purple color.

Behold, with fear not yet placed aside, so that she did not disappoint [her] lover,

she returns and looks for her young man with her eyes and her heart,

and she yearns to tell [him] what great dangers she avoided.

And when she recognizes both the place and the shape of the tree having been seen,

at the same time the color of the fruit makes her uncertain: she hesitates, whether this is it.

While she doubts, she sees his trembling limbs hit the bloody ground,

and she brought a foot backwards, and wearing a face

paler than boxwood she shuddered like the sea,

which trembles, when it is grazed by a light breeze.

But having delayed after she recognized her lover,

she beats her unworthy arms with a clear shriek,

and her hair having been torn and having embraced the loved body

she filled his wounds with tears and mixed weeping with his

blood and fixing kisses on his cold features she shouted

“Pyramus, what misfortune has taken you from me?

Pyramus, respond: your dearest Thisbe names you:

hear [me] and lift your face laying [there]!”

At the name Thisbe Pyramus lifted his eyes now heavy with death,

and with her having been seen he closed [them] again.

And she, after she recognize her veil and saw his sheath

empty of its sword, she said “your hand and unluck love

has destroyed you. There is for me a hand brave [enough] in this one [thing],

and there is love [brave enough]: this [love] will give [me] strength for my wounds.

I shall follow [you] having been extinguished and I, most miserable, shall be

called the cause and companion of your death; You who were able to be wrenched away

from me by death alone, you will not be able to be wrenched away in death.

However be asked this by the words of both [of us],

oh my very wretched parents and [the parents] of that one,

that you do not begrudge us whom certain love, whom the most recent

hour has joined, to be placed together in the same tomb.

But you, tree, which now cover the wretched body of one

with your branches, soon are going to cover [the bodies] of two,

keep the signs of bloodshed and always have the fruit

dark and suitable for mourning, [as] monuments of twin bloodshed.”

She spoke, and with the sword point having been fitted under the lowest [part of her]

chest she lay on the sword, which was still warm with bloodshed.

The prayers however touched the gods, touched her parents:

For the color in the fruit is dark when it has matured,

and that which remains from the funeral pyre, rests in one urn.

CHAPTER 4

CONCLUSION

Although there are numerous reading guides for Ovid's *Pyramus and Thisbe* already published, these guides do not address problems modern readers face in reading through an original Latin text, as opposed to Latin written by modern textbook authors, such as the *Metamorphoses*. For example, my students do not encounter alternative third-person plural verbs that have endings similar to infinitives, and therefore may struggle to differentiate the two. They also would not have experience with interchangeable first-person pronouns, or nouns that are expected to be singular appearing in the plural. All of these aspects of authentic Latin literature will need to be addressed when students are first confronted with such nuances.

In my experience, modern English Language Arts teachers no longer dedicate ample instruction time to explanation of grammatical terms and structures, focusing instead on reading comprehension and essay writing. Today's Latin students are more likely to learn English grammar in World Language classes, where terms such as 'adjectives' and 'participles' are more commonly discussed. Because of this, students may struggle with the mixed word order that appears in Latin poetry and often have trouble distinguishing which adjectives modify which nouns. Students will need a firm grasp of noun endings to successfully read Latin poetry such as Ovid's. It may be helpful for teachers to practice this skill using specific selections from the text.

There is ambiguity that arises when translating Latin poetry due to various interpretations in differing translations of the text. Sometimes this ambiguity is intentionally imposed by the poet, but sometimes it is due to the reader's lack of contextual knowledge, as modern readers are not ancient Romans themselves. Many modern Latin students do not have the extensive background knowledge of mythology or societal norms and values of the ancient Romans, which ancient readers would have inherently understood when reading a story such as *Pyramus and Thisbe*. In some instances, teachers may need to encourage students to research independently when questions arise. For example, when first reading through *Pyramus and Thisbe*, many students may not know what a mulberry tree is or where Babylon was located.

Students will no doubt see similarities to William Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet* while reading Ovid's *Pyramus and Thisbe*, so teachers need to be prepared to make those connections as well. Assigning additional tasks would help deepen students' understanding of the connection between these two works. Most high school students today read *Romeo and Juliet* as part of their literature curriculum, so they should have a good idea of the story but should be encouraged to do additional research if needed. For example, students will benefit from being prompted to identify the similarities and differences between the original mythological story and Shakespeare's more modern retelling through a theme comparison essay. It would be useful to host a Socratic seminar to have students identify the aspects of Ovid's story that Shakespeare changed or enhanced and explain how these alterations affected the audience of the time. Teachers may also ask students to compare the differences between Ovid's audience and Shakespeare's along with their own modern readers today, as well as how these respective audiences influenced each author's writing. Students may also be given an opportunity to compare these themes of tragic love and fate to other modern

stories that appear in popular culture. These activities not only deepen literary understanding but also help students recognize how classical myths continue to shape modern storytelling.

There are countless assignments and activities teachers can assign to help students engage more deeply with the story of *Pyramus and Thisbe*. Teachers may even choose to go as far as having students write their own modern version of the story, while adhering to Ovid's style in a contemporary way and preserving the myth's core themes to ensure they have grasped the significance of the meaning of the myth as Ovid tells it. There are several ways they might go about doing so, for example, they may wish to explore possible modern alterations of the story due to smartphones, social media, open communication with parents, or other cultural norms of today. Teachers may choose to encourage students to compose a poem, create a diary entry, or produce a video reel from the perspective of either Pyramus or Thisbe so they can take a closer look at these characters. This story has inspired numerous artists throughout history, so students could select a piece of art (or create their own) and present it to the class, explaining its significance and relevance. By engaging creatively with the myth, students not only develop a deeper understanding of Ovid's storytelling but also gain insight into how timeless themes can be reimagined in today's world.

Additionally, teachers should have students engage with the story through critical thinking and discussion questions. Below are some examples of possible questions to explore:

- How do barriers (literal or symbolic) function in the story? How do they shape love, identity, or fate?

- Is Pyramus's impulsive action understandable, or does it reveal his immaturity?
- Do you think the tragic end of Pyramus and Thisbe is inevitable?
- How might Pyramus and Thisbe's extreme reactions to miscommunication relate to modern understandings of emotional distress or romantic attachment?
- How does Ovid use mythology to explain natural phenomena?
- How does Ovid's portrayal of love in this story compare to others he has written or other ancient depictions of love?
- Is Ovid mocking tragic love or genuinely portraying a profoundly emotional narrative?
- How does Ovid portray love, risk, and sacrifice from each gendered perspective? How does Thisbe's final speech (and death) alter our view of her?
- How might the themes of the story resonate with modern audiences? What lessons can we take from it today?
- How do current viewpoints interpret the story's tragic elements, miscommunication, or narrative structure? How might future readers interpret these elements?

However a teacher may decide to further students' understanding of *Pyramus and Thisbe*, it is crucial to encourage them to think critically about mythological story in addition to simply translating it. Although it is enjoyable to read these stories, critically examining

mythology offers valuable insights not only into the stories themselves but also into the human experience, cultural contexts, and literary techniques. Mythological stories are often reflections on human behavior, emotions, and dilemmas that transcend culture. By analyzing them, students can gain insights into the complexities of human emotions they are currently learning about themselves, universal themes of the myth that center around their own experience, and human flaws or virtues they may encounter in their own lives. Analysis of mythological stories can also shed light on the context of the time, reflecting the ancient civilization's values and beliefs about their history and societal norms through a cultural and historical lens, which are often mirrored in society today. Ultimately, it is the educator's responsibility to facilitate students' exploration of the myth's layered meanings, historical context, and enduring relevance—equipping them with the analytical tools necessary to draw informed and lasting connections between the ancient world and their own.

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