



AP[®] Latin Literature 2002 Sample Student Responses

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Pyramus and Thisbe want nothing more than "iungi toto corpore" l4 (to join their whole bodies). They are deeply in love and desire to see each other, but the ~~wall, structure~~ "invidae paries" l3 (hateful wall), which separates their two houses, prevents them from meeting.

Ovid undercuts the seriousness of this true love by making their situation humorous to the reader. Though Thisbe is "hinc" l1 (on this side) and Pyramus is "illuc" l1 (on that side), they desire so desperately to be together that they curse the wall and even go so far as to pretend it's not even there.

The lovers are completely serious when they ask the wall ~~to~~ to allow them "iungi toto corpore" l4 (to join with their whole bodies) and to make a path "ad oscula danda" l5 (for giving kisses). They want so much to be together that they find themselves talking to a wall which obviously cannot fulfill their requests. Even though they hate the wall for blocking them, they thank it for "datus transitus verbis" l7 (having given passage for their words). They are thankful for what little of each other they can get. But all this is said "neququam" l8 (in vain) for the wall cannot hear them so this is ~~funny~~ humorous to the reader.

They are so desperate to be together that they kiss the wall wishing that they were kissing each other. "quis dedere oscula suae parti non pervenientia contra" l9-10 (each gave kisses to his or her own side which did not come through on the other side). This image of the lovers kissing the wall shows the contrast between their

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love and the obstacles that stop it. They want to kiss each other, but they can only kiss the wall.

The mental image of this is humorous to the reader as well

Ovid emphasizes this contrast between the desires of the lovers and the reality of this situation by using humor to make these situation that is so serious and desperate for them seem humorous to the readers.

In this passage, Ovid clearly shows the contrast between Pyramus and Thisbe's desire to be together and the reality of the wall that physically keeps the two lovers separate. Ovid uses chiasmus in the first line with "hinc Thisbe, Pyramus illinc" or "Thisbe on this side, Pyramus on that side," to emphasize the mirror image presented by one lover on each side of the wall. The two lovers, however, are desperate to find a way to break down the physical barrier between them so that they can be together. With an apostrophe, the lovers address the wall, complaining, "Invidiosus... paries, quid amantibus obstat?" or "Envious wall, why do you obstruct lovers?" They beg the wall to let them touch each other, "toto nos corpore iungi" or "to be joined in our whole body." The passionate young lovers want more than to just talk to each other, they want "ad oscula danda," or "to give kisses," but the wall stands in their way. However, although they would like to be together physically, Pyramus and Thisbe are grateful that they even have the opportunity to talk. They thank the wall for providing "verbis ad amicas transitus aures," or "a path for our words to friendly ears," through the wall's crack. The separation of Pyramus and Thisbe is again mirrored in the chiasmatic word order of "Talia diversa nequiquam sede locuti," or "having spoken such words, ^{in vain} on different sides," and the wall is represented by "nequiquam" literally separates the two and dashes their hope of being together. At the end of the passage, the poor lovers try to kiss each other, but their kisses "non perveniunt contra" or "do not come through on the other side." Unfortunately, while Pyramus and Thisbe

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long to be able to touch and kiss each other, they must ~~settle~~ be content to merely be able to converse because they are physically separated by the wall between them.