

ROBIN GOODFELLOW

My mistress with a monster is in love.
Near to her close and consecrated bower,
While she was in her dull and sleeping hour,
A crew of patches, rude mechanicals,
That work for bread upon Athenian stalls,
Were met together to rehearse a play
Intended for great Theseus' nuptial day.
The shallowest thick-skin of that barren sort,
Who Pyramus presented in their sport,
Forsook his scene, and enter'd in a brake,
When I did him at this advantage take:
An ass's noll I fixèd on his head.
Anon, his Thisbe must be answerèd,
And forth my mimic comes. When they him spy,
As wild geese that the creeping fowler eye,
Or russet-pated choughs, many in sort,
Rising and cawing at the gun's report,
Sever themselves, and madly sweep the sky
So, at his sight, away his fellows fly;
And, at our stamp, here o'er and o'er one falls;
He murder cries, and help from Athens calls.
Their sense thus weak, lost with their fears thus strong,
Made senseless things begin to do them wrong:
For briars and thorns at their apparel snatch;
Some sleeves, some hats, from yielders all things catch.
I led them on in this distracted fear,
And left sweet Pyramus translated there;
When in that moment, so it came to pass,
Titania waked, and straightway loved an ass.

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My mistress Titania is in love with a monster. While she was sleeping in her bed of flowers, a group of bumbling idiots, rough workmen from Athens, got together nearby to rehearse some play they plan to perform on Theseus's wedding day. The stupidest one, who played Pyramus in their play, finished his scene and went to sit in the bushes to wait for his next cue. I took that opportunity to stick a donkey's head on him. When it was time for him to go back onstage and talk to his Thisbe, he came out of the bushes and everyone saw him. His friends ran away as fast as ducks scatter when they hear a hunter's gunshot. One of them was so frightened when he heard my footsteps that he yelled, "Murder!" and called for help from Athens. They were all so afraid that they completely lost their common sense. They started to become scared of inanimate objects, terrified by the thorns and briars that catch at their clothing and pull off their sleeves and hats. I led them on in this frightened, distracted state, and left sweet Pyramus there, transformed into someone with a donkey's head. At that exact moment, Titania woke up and immediately fell in love with him, an ass.