



SHAKESPEARE/RIENCE!

Midsummer Night's Dream

Duke Theseus Act V, scene 1

More strange than true: I never may believe these antique fables, nor these fairy toys.

Lovers and madmen have such seething brains, such shaping fantasies, that apprehend more than cool reason ever comprehends.

The lunatic, the lover and the poet are of imagination all compact:

One sees more devils than vast hell can hold,

That is, the madman:

The lover, all as frantic, sees Helen's beauty in a brow of Egypt:

The poet's eye, in fine frenzy rolling, doth glance from heaven to earth, from earth to heaven;

And as imagination bodies forth, the forms of things unknown, the poet's pen turns them to shapes and gives to airy nothing a local habitation and a name.

Such tricks hath strong imagination, that if it would be apprehend some joy, it comprehends some bringer of that joy;

Or in the night, imagining some fear,

How easy is a bush supposed a bear!

Yes, strange—and totally made up too. I'll never believe any of these old legends or fairy tales. Lovers and madmen hallucinate about things that sane people just can't understand. Lunatics, lovers, and poets all are ruled by their overactive imaginations. Some people think they see devils and monsters everywhere—and they're lunatics. Lovers are just as crazy, and think a dark-skinned gypsy is the most gorgeous woman in the world. Poets are always looking around like they're having a fit, confusing the mundane with the otherworldly, and describing things in their writing that simply don't exist. All these people have such strong imaginations that, when they feel happy, they assume a god or some other supernatural being is bringing that happiness to them. Or if they're afraid of something at night, they look at the shrubbery and imagine it's a wild bear!