

The Missing Mechanical  
by Chad Marriott

CAST:

Player 1- Pat

Player 2- Quince, Philostrate

Player 3- Bottom, Macdeath, Other Pat

Player 4- Flute, Macbuff

Player 5- Starveling, Viola

Player 6- Snug, Rosalind

*The **Five Rude Mechanicals** enter stage right while speaking these lines...  
They should exit stage left by the end of Quince's line.  
This is the traffic pattern for the rest of the play. Like a merry-go-round.*

**BOTTOM**

Are we all met?

**QUINCE**

*Asked as if there is a person named Pat*

Pat?! Pat?!

*Flute looks about and shakes his head.*

**BOTTOM:**

Peter Quince?

**QUINCE:**

Yes, Bully Bottom?

**BOTTOM:**

Who is Pat?

**QUINCE:**

Pat is a heel cobbler I have invited to audition.

**BOTTOM:**

Another part?! Another actor?! Why? We could, and by "we" I mean me, play the part for him! I could audition for this part. Let me audition. Please? PLEASE! I could bow! And I could wow!

**QUINCE:** *(Does this while saying the lines.)*

Why I've written here on my cast list, "Pat." Huh? No extra part after all.

**BOTTOM:**

Pat seems to be missing...I will play his part!

**QUINCE:**

There is no need Bottom. You must needs play Pyramus! I feel as though I cannot remember a time when we weren't having this discussion. As if it is a scene, being played over and over through the ages.

**BOTTOM:**

Pretty Please Peter?

**QUINCE:**

No. You must needs play Pyramus!

**BOTTOM:**

At least let me see the part he was to play...

**QUINCE:**

Fine, but-

**BOTTOM:** *(With extreme excitement)*

I see that his part was that of the esteemed, the irreplaceable, and the legendary-

**QUINCE:** *(Overcoming his onslaught)*

And here's a marvelous convenient place for our rehearsal...

*Exeunt Stage left.*

*Enter Pat, stage right, desperately searching for his companions. Possibly also fumbling with a makeshift script.*

**PAT**

Peter! Peter Quince! I learned all of my lines just as you asked at Bottom's behest.

*Notices audience*

Oh. Hello there. My name is Pat.

*Very grandiose*

I am an actor.

Don't laugh! I am to audition for an important part in

*Looks at script*

Pyramus and Thisbe! I may have a turn at the esteemed, the irreplaceable, and the legendary

*Looks at script*

....Dog? How did I miss that? No matter. It is a fine part. He speaks very well...But how can the dog speak?! Why is there a dog? I am certain an audience would not prefer to see a dog... Right?

*Allow audience appropriate amount of time to react. If the audience does not laugh the cast may do so back stage.*

Well then. Maybe I will take my skill elsewhere and leave this stage empty.

**Enter Philostrate** carrying a clipboard working away at a list.

Shh! A player to re-enter the play with.

Hello. Have you perchance seen some actors around?

**PHILOSTRATE**

I was about to ask you the same thing. Theseus has demanded I view several plays before the night is out. Every citizen wants to put on a play for the Duke's wedding. What an odd premise, huh?

**PAT:**

I am with one of those troupes!

**PHILOSTRATE:**

Are you?

*Looks about*

Are they arriving soon? Because I can tell you, the Duke desires not an abstraction. Nor do I. I will not tolerate one of these "one man" spectacles. He also desires not a play that requires too much thinking, but desires it not be too simple. So please, I do not want to Wait for Godot (if you can even get the rights.) It may not have excessive profanity; this is not a play for Sir Mamet. So please, do not waste my time with one of these "stylized" pieces of excrement. A normal piece of excrement is enough without "artful decoration." Do not devise your point of view for me, it will not be worthy of Bogart or Grotowski, but only grotesque and grossly garmented.

**PAT:**

Um...

**PHILOSTRATE:**

Just tell me the play and the plot. I will discern the rest for you.

**PAT:**

For the play, I can tell you it is Pyramus and Thisbe...and I am not entirely sure of the plot.

**PHILOSTRATE:**

Ah. A...serviceable play. I wish it were another.

**PAT:**

As for my friends-I actually don't know where they are...ha.

**PHILOSTRATE:** *(His attention is now on his clipboard.)*

Quite.

*Pause*

**PAT:**

Do you want to know what part I play?

**PHILOSTRATE:**

No. Not even a little.

**PAT:**

I play the dog.

**PHILOSTRATE:**

Yes. Every first-rate play has a "dog." I believe I read that in Aristotle's "Poetics."

**PAT:**

Aristotle...a smart guy that one.

**PHILOSTRATE:**

Quite. You two have that in common; of course, he's dead, so the comparison of intelligence is a little unfair.

**PAT:**

I have lines too.

**PHILOSTRATE:** *(His head rises up at this notion.)*

The dog?

**PAT:**

Yes. I am the dog.

**PHILOSTRATE:**

Yes. I understand that. My question is in regards to the dog.

**PAT:**

Yes?

**PHILOSTRATE:**

The dog... speaks?

**PAT:**

Well yes. Let me look for a line..."Woof."

**PHILOSTRATE:**

Yes. Makes sense. A part for Olivier.

**PAT**

Really? You mean it?- Is Olivier good? I feel like he might not be...

**PHILOSTRATE**

A bit of a slow speaker, but revered. Oh, yes. That reminds me; make sure your verse is not too slow. Or do. A nap is always nice.

*Pause*

***Enter stage right MACBUFF and MACDEATH***

**PAT**

Oh thank Jove.

*Stands aside*

*MACDEATH coughs until he has Philostrate's attention. This may take a while. He must force PHILOSTRATE to acknowledge him.*

**PHILOSTRATE:**

Who might you be?

*Crosses fingers in a show of hopefulness*

Not an actor?

**MACBUFF**

We are the troupe performing an "adaptation" of Macbeth.

*MACDEATH spits and does one of those old superstitious "Oh I said Macbeth in the theatre things"*

**PHILOSTRATE:**

...Right.

*To MACBUFF*

I think your odds are favorable, but this word "adaptation" concerns me-

**MACDEATH**

Yes! It's bad luck to say the real title so we dubbed it "The Tragedy of Macdeath Slain by the Heroic Macbuff."

**PHILOSTRATE:**

Ah. Sounds exhilarating I am dying to hear it; it will at least kill me to listen.

**MACBUFF**

I promise this adaptation will refresh your understanding of the play. It focuses solely on the relationship of

*Struggles to get this out.*

Mac...death and Mac...buff.

**PHILOSTRATE**

Why can't these "revolutionaries" just write new plays? Why re-work an old play? Who would do that? Who would spend their time writing an adaptation? Everyone thinks they are Sir Stoppard.

*Flips a coin.*

Heads they are not Sir Stoppard and tails they are not Sir Stoppard.

*Looks at coin.*

Would you look at that? Who knew the odds? They are not Sir Stoppard.

**MACBUFF**

Sir?

**PHILOSTRATE:**

Oh. You're still here.

**MACDEATH**

Aren't you going to ask to see our play?

**PHILOSTRATE**

No... But of course I must see it. So if this nonsense furthers the plot-Play on.

*The actors take their positions and begin to play Macbeth. MACDEATH is over the top and MACBUFF a passable player. MACBUFF has a foam sword.*

**MACDEATH**

I am MACDEATH! The FATES have DECREED that I am the KING to be! Cause my WIFE SAID SO and because the WITCHES SAID SO. It is FATE you hear me FATE! It has been WRITTEN that I MACDEATH will... hold on let me quickly check my script...

**MACBUFF**

Turn hell hound turn!

**MACDEATH**

OHHH! You interrupted MY Momentary Melancholy! HUAH!

*Pounds chest.*

Now I am a warrior again!

*Coughs on accident.*

You will DIE MACBUFF! FATE says only man not born of woman can KILL ME. HA HA HA HA! And as we know FATE IS ALL!

**MACBUFF**

Despair thy charm; And let the angel whom thou still hast served Tell thee, Macduff was from his mother's womb Untimely ripp'd.

**MACDEATH**

That's not fair! That is a terrible loophole. What's next? A bed trick?

**MACBUFF**

Have you even read the script?

**MACDEATH**

Who cares about the words? The people came to watch a spectacle! They came to watch me! Am I right or what?!

**MACBUFF**

Can we just get on with it?

**MACDEATH**

Hold on let me look at the script. I guess I am supposed to...

*Looks at script*

DIE!? That can't be right.

**MACBUFF**

You are screwing this up. Get back to the play.

**MACDEATH**

Hold on. Everyone knows the more pauses in Shakespeare the better.

*MACBUFF interrupts this "dramatic pause" and the actors begin tussling with one another. The less it looks like they know how to fight the better. MACDEATH gets MACBUFF's weapon and vanquishes himself in*

*melodramatic fashion. Philostrate picks up and exits stage left sometime during this display but clearly before its finish.*

**MACBUFF**

*To Philostrate*

Can we have another chance? Wait where did he go?

*To MACDEATH*

See what you've done!?

*To PAT*

Hey you! Yeah you guy standing in the corner. Did you see where he went?

*Pat points to the stage left exit. MACDEATH and MACBUFF exit stage left.*

**PAT:**

I have seen strange things-

*Re-enter MACDEATH and MACBUFF stage right.*

What the...?

*Pat must acknowledge this weird merry go round venture.*

**MACDEATH**

Macbeth dies. Who would have thought?

**MACBUFF**

It's called the TRAGEDY of Macbeth! And you used "slain" in your ridiculous excuse for a title. What did you think was going to happen?

**MACDEATH**

Well you don't have to be so rude...and since you're asking I thought it would end with a big song and dance! SLAY!

**MACBUFF**

I really don't understand you, man.

**MACDEATH**

You just don't understand my method. I must become MACDEATH!

**MACBUFF**

That is literally the dumbest thing I have ever heard. You sound like Lared Jetto or Deonardo Licaprio.

**MACDEATH**

Trust me it will be the way of the future. Actors will be revered not for their actual performances but for their preparation. Actors will be known for the crazy lengths they go to find "truth."

**MACBUFF**

Or you know, they could try acting.

**MACDEATH**

Ah, to be young and naïve. If you had have the artistic commitment of the likes of me-

**MACBUFF**

You know what!?

*MACBUFF retrieves his weapon and chases MACDEATH off stage.*

**PAT:**

I have seen strange things. A play in which the characters revolt from their deterministic universe. Or maybe it was just the actors trying to escape the script because they think they know better than the playwright. I understand their complaints though. Someone sets the fate of a character and forever it must remain? What if that was happening to me? What if someone was controlling my fate? What of free will? If a character has no free will, do I? Well perhaps I have free will. As an actor I mean, because we aren't characters, even though I am charismatic. Either way, the actor must perform the lines they are given...But! I have free will as to how I perform them like MACDEATH and MACBUFF, except not like them exactly because- I mean you saw it, right? Still, I would have freedom from this determinism! No one would control how I said the lines. Unless, suddenly, the actor is usurped...(Laughs) That will never happen! Could you imagine? What would they call this figure? A commander? No. An adviser? No. A direction giver?! (Laughs)

*Director stands up and redirects the last couple of lines of this passage.*

Wait a second? You agree with me, right? Mine was better, right? No matter. What matters is what is fated for me? I am an actor with no play. So I can have no "method." No playwright has writ my fate, no higher power has determined my destiny, no audience has noted me- other than you kind people of course. Why are you even here? I do envy the characters sometimes. To know what will happen must be pure joy, to know who you are, your purpose. I wish I could at least play a character. Well I must keep searching for a play to perform.

*Exit stage left.*

*Enter stage right a few Mechanicals running from BOTTOM.*

**BOTTOM**

Why do they run away? this is a knavery of them to make me afeard.

**QUINCE**

Bless thee Bottom thou art translated!

*Exeunt Stage left.*

*Enter Pat stage right.*

**PAT:**

Hmm. I swear that I just heard them.

*Enter Viola and Rosalind stage right.*

**VIOLA**

We must perform *12th Night*

**ROSALIND**

No. We should do *As You Like It*. See how we have already run into the woods? Do they ever do that in *12th Night*?

**VIOLA**

Exactly! We are performing for the court! So why not a courtly comedy?

**ROSALIND**

Well we can both dress as men if we perform *As You Like It*.

**VIOLA**

*12th Night* is How I Like It.

**ROSALIND**

Oh, you think you are so clever don't you? I will not do What You Will.

**VIOLA**

Oh no-

**ROSALIND**

I will participate in this Feste-val.

**VIOLA**

Please-

**ROSALIND**

You have Viola- lated the-

**VIOLA**

I-

**ROSALIND**

Aren't you Curio-us how long I can Maria-nate this? I know you would like me to stop but I have Topas (To pass) and I think you should turn the Aguecheek like-

**VIOLA**

Come on that's not even good.

**ROSALIND**

Don't be such a Brute-to-us.

**VIOLA**

That's not even the same play.

**ROSALIND**

Sorry, I just keep Duncan these mad puns like a bullet from a Pistol.

**VIOLA**

Will it ever end?

**ROSALIND**

Don't worry nobody is Timon.

**VIOLA**

No one will get that. Or should.

**ROSALIND**

Oh, I'm just a HAM-LET me be.

**VIOLA**

Okay, that was pretty clever.

**ROSALIND**

Toby or not Toby, that is the question.

**VIOLA**

Ah, not bad.

**ROSALIND**

You are finally respecting the Speed of this Ariel assault.

**VIOLA**

I thought the 12<sup>th</sup> Night bit would bring us full circle? No?

**ROSALIND**

You're Achilles-ing me.

**PAT:**

Please. Stop.

**VIOLA**

Thank Jove, Pat, you are finally here.

*PAT confusedly joins them.*

Now which play should we perform? Of course, you must play Orsino or Orlando.

**PAT:**

I would gladly play any part.

**ROSALIND**

Well you are the deciding vote and could be a mighty fighter and poet or-

**VIOLA**

A mighty- guy that listens to music.

**ROSALIND**

Yes! Every lover's dream! Someone who listens to music all day and sends love messages via the houseboy.

**VIOLA**

Because posting love notes on trees is better?

**ROSALIND**

I at least made an effort to show your play some merit!

**VIOLA**

Did you? Did you really?

**ROSALIND**

I mean come on. Only like 5 of their names are good puns.

**PAT**

I think you might be overshooting a bit.

**ROSALIND**

Stop Phe-being stupid.

**VIOLA**

Boo!

**ROSALIND**

Don't you mean La BOO!

**VIOLA**

No. No one ever meant that.

**ROSALIND**

Ugh. You are never any fun. I just want to puntificate.

**VIOLA**

I just want to mistake someone's identity so bad.

**ROSALIND**

Me. Too.

**PAT**

I just want to play a part.

*Enter OTHER PAT*

**OTHER PAT**

Hey gang.

**ROSALIND/VIOLA**

*Each one points at a Pat.*

Wait! This guy isn't Pat!

**VIOLA**

One face, one voice, one habit, and two persons,  
A natural perspective, that is and is not!

**PAT:**

Well technically, yes, I am Pat, but we are different people. No need to-

**OTHER PAT:**

No, I am Pat.

**PAT**

Okayyy. Well they thought I was Pat.

**VIOLA**

Finally! A mistaken identity!

**ROSALIND**

I knew this day would come. They say the stage mimics real life. Finally, real life mimics the stage. I guess you could say this is a Comedy of Errors.

**VIOLA**

I HAVE AN IDEA!

**ROSALIND**

Let me guess-

**VIOLA**

What if we do the Comedy of Errors!?

**ROSALIND**

Exactly! But who will play the twins?

**PAT:**

What about the two Pat's?

**VIOLA**

Yes!

**OTHER PAT:**

No!

*Recognizable Dramatic Pause*

I will take it upon me to play both twins!

**PAT:**

I'm sorry. What?

**OTHER PAT:**

It will be perfect! The audience will be so confused that they will leave the theatre thinking, "Wow! I understood nothing. It must have been deep."

**VIOLA**

YES!

**ROSALIND**

I guess I'll Celia later!

**VIOLA**

Ah...

*Fake laugh*

You are “figuratively” killing me.

*Exit VIOLA and ROSALIND stage left.*

**PAT:**

Aw man.

**OTHER PAT:**

The right part will come along Pat. I think of finding a part as a Comedy of Terrors.

*Throws head back in pretentious self-laughter and stops abruptly.*

Not so funny huh? Just awkward? Cause I stole your part? Yeah... Well I'm gonna-

*Exit stage left*

**PAT:**

How fluid identity is. Just now, I had an identity put upon me and then taken away. I stole an identity and then my identity was stolen! And it is all for play! For jokes! For another's amusement! It isn't funny at all- well maybe a little. I had a part though. That counts for something right? Even though I had it taken away. I had lines. I had a place. Maybe it wasn't for me. That part seemed a little confusing as to where the characters began and the actors stopped. Could you imagine watching a play and not being sure if the actor or the character was speaking? What kind of playwright would do that to his characters? This, this right here, this right here that is happening now, is a strange affair. Someone should write a play about this; Actors running wildly through the woods searching for identity. A character cannot choose their identity...and actors cannot cast themselves into a part. It seems unfair... A character cannot write their destiny and an actor cannot choose their character's destiny. Some characters are writ well, other performed well, and some have wellness thrust upon them. Luckily, I'm not a character, thus I'll find a role to play or die this day.

*Exit. Stage left.*

*Enter the Mechanicals stage right*

**QUINCE**

Let us hear, sweet Bottom.

**BOTTOM**

Not a word of me. All that I will tell you is, that the duke hath dined. Get your apparel together, good strings to your beards, new ribbons to your pumps; meet presently at the palace;

*False exit*

every man looko'er his part; for the short and the long is, our play is preferred.

*False exit*

In any case, let Thisby have clean linen; and let not him that plays the lion pair his nails, for they shall hang out for the lion's claws. And, most dear actors, eat no onions nor

garlic, for we are to utter sweet breath; and I do not doubt but to hear them say, it is a sweet comedy.

*No false exit*

No more words: away! go, away!

*Exit stage left.*

*Enter Pat stage right Chasing after them*

**PAT:**

Guys! Guys!

*Enter Philostrate stage right*

Hey! Have you seen the players presenting Pyramus and Thisbe?

**PHILOSTRATE:**

Ah. Yes. I witnessed a truly life changing performance. They were selected to perform for Theseus.

**PAT:**

Have they left already?

**PHILOSTRATE:**

Yes.

**PAT:**

Oh...I was supposed to be in that play.

**PHILOSTRATE:**

Look, whatever your name is-

*Pats him on the shoulder*

It's probably best that you did not catch them. Their play is- how shall I put it? Horrible?

No. Not quite sufficient. Ah, it is cruel to the eyes and crude to the ears. That is apt. Now

I must go pretend to spectate and feign auditing all the while thanking my lucky stars there is no "dog" to attend. Goodbye whomever.

**PAT:**

Can I go with you?

**PHILOSTRATE:**

No.

**PAT:**

Would you at least watch me perform?

**PHILOSTRATE:**

If I am to watch another piece of peasant theatre it will be at this new joint called "The Guillotine." Have you heard of it? I am sure that if you follow me I can get you a gig there. No? I did not think so.

*Exits stage left.*

**PAT:**

Well, what function do I serve now? I cannot perform. What objective can I pursue? There is nothing to do. No conflict to resolve. Why do I exist? It is as if I someone created me to be tortured. Trapped inside of something that I have no control over for others entertainment. If this were a play this is a sad and sudden ending. Is all the world truly a stage? To be or not to be? There is no question for me. I must exist without a play-- wait, is this a play? I could condemn as an improbable fiction! Are you my audience? The fault, dear auditors, lies not within the stars, but within my playwright, that I did not realize this was a play. Why this is very midsummer madness! This whole time I was but a pawn of a plot! Someone did see me perform. I did achieve my objective, but... when the characters achieve their objectives, they go away.

*Looks at exit*

Must this end? Must I exit? To be or not to be is now much simpler. Once behind that curtain I will no longer exist, if I ever did. Perhaps I only exist in the imagination of a playwright. Cowards die many times before their death-but unlike Julius Caesar, my woes will not be played for centuries, but dissolve into the ether of the momentary. Please cherish my existence, for I am ephemeral and I am afraid. Now is the moment of my discontent. Forgive me, for it was a tale told by an idiot-

*Approaches exit*

Full of sound and fury-

*Stops in front of it.*

Signifying nothing.

*Exits stage left. Enter Other Pat. Stage right*

**OTHER PAT**

If this were a play, this is a sad and sudden ending. Is all the world truly a stage? To be or not to be? There is no question for me. I must exist without a play-- wait, is this a play? I could condemn as an improbable fiction! Are you my audience? The fault, dear auditors, lies not within the stars, but within my playwright, that I did not realize this was a play. Why this is very midsummer madness!

*Enter Mechanicals (Minus Bottom)*

**QUINCE**

There you are Pat! We had to use this stuffed animal in your place.

**FLUTE**

Yeah. My stuffed animal. That I didn't give you guys permission to use.

**SNOUT**

You are a grown man. You have children.

**FLUTE**

And a stuffed animal named Pat. What's it to you?

**OTHER PAT:**

Wait. Hold on. Where is Bottom?

**QUINCE**

For Jove's sake. Another missing mechanical?

*Exit stage left.*

*Enter Pat Stage right.*

*Exit Pat stage left with simultaneous entrance of Mechanicals stage right. Then exit Mechanicals stage left with simultaneous entrance of Pat stage right. Repeat with Other Pat taking Pat's place. This may continue for as long as needed and there is no need to hide that actors are running back stage. When the desired effect is achieved have the cast, minus Pat, come out and have their curtain call. Once they have done this Pat comes out to take his bow (He has even missed the curtain call). If the audience has already started to get up that is the ideal time to send Pat out to bow.*

*End of play.*