

A ShakeFest for Book Clubs

Introduction

I'm in a book club officially called, "The Less-than-Literary Book Club." Most of the members have no particular training in literature but just enjoy reading and partying. When my fellow-members discovered I'd studied Shakespeare's plays off and on since my college days, they asked me to put together a miniature festival in which they could perform some of the most famous or important scenes.

It was suggested I emcee and appear in "cap and gown"; so I wore a black mortarboard and ballgown. Family and friends helped fill in the cast, and we prepared and consumed seven courses of food and wine. T.S. as the water-spirit, Ariel, wore inflatable water-wings, and Tom as Henry V cheered his troops into battle somewhat nervously from atop a live horse. We've since performed the ShakeFest thrice again (losing the horse but gaining dry ice for the witches' cauldron), which has enabled me to improve the Festival based on actual experience.

I now want to share the ShakeFest with you. My hope is to help make Shakespeare's plays as easy and fun as possible for as many people as possible. I know no better way to do this than to help others take part in the sport.

The greatest challenge in selecting excerpts was that so many wonderful passages must be excluded. Scenes are included from eleven plays. The excerpts I've chosen were selected not only to include some of the most beloved speeches, but also to help *build* an understanding of some of the images and themes that run through Shakespeare's works. Another consideration was whether passages could be excerpted intelligibly without long introduction. I also chose to include a little more of at least one play, *Macbeth*, so as to let it develop a bit. (*Macbeth* is the shortest of the plays, and if your group ever wants to read or perform just one play, it would be a good one to use.)

I've written an introduction for each of the scenes included in the ShakeFest, in which I've tried to give a bit of the context within the plot and to point out some of the significant themes or images. I wanted to try to help even novices begin to see how to analyze the plays and the rewards of doing so. The actual passages selected from the plays are set out right in this text, together with brief notes explaining the language where it gets archaic; so you won't need anything other than this little book and a few props in order to prepare for and perform your own ShakeFest.

You should probably choose *at least* one person in your group to serve as introducer or emcee to read aloud the introductions before the scenes. (If you have more than one introducer, each will find it much easier to also participate as a performer.)

You'll notice some portions of the introductions appear in **turquoise or cyan**. While I hope that in preparing for the Festival, you'll read the entire text including the complete introductions, when you actually perform the Festival, the introducers can read aloud *just* those portions of the introductions that appear bolded and in black, skipping over the turquoise portions.

I recommend you cast the roles based on the *personalities* of your group members, rather than on looks or gender. I say this not out of concern for "political correctness," but out of compassion for your audience. Just ask any good director about the importance of casting in accordance with personality type; it's the surest route to good performances. Also, there are many more male roles in the plays than female (probably because in Shakespeare's time, all actors were male); and there's not a male role in the Festival that *this* girl, for one, wouldn't be delighted to play. Since some characters, such as Macbeth, have a number of good speeches, you could also let more than one person share one role.

I'm also providing two supplemental sections. One is on the historical background of the plays, particularly focussing on the lines of kings and queens during the periods important for understanding the history plays, which can be very confusing to us moderns. The other section contains information on Shakespeare's own life. I've tried to include many interesting facts that seem to me to shed light on Shakespeare's works. A brief bibliography is also provided (which includes recommendations regarding movie versions of the plays).

I hope that, in addition to helping to make the plays more accessible to novices, this ShakeFest and the supplements I've provided may remain useful as a reference for intermediate readers. For example, next time you're about to see *Richard II*, here you can quickly find something by way of a synopsis, a favorite, climactic passage, and insights into the imagery and deeper meanings; and in the history supplement, you can even get help sorting out the Wars of the Roses.

Many of the most important things to know about life have already been written down somewhere, and vast quantities of them are in Shakespeare's plays. He was keenly interested in humankind and all its troubles and triumphs. His depictions of our emotions, cognition, imagination, identity, personal and social relationships, and government are so rich that writers and artists around the world still mine them three-and-a-half centuries later. His language is so beautiful and full of meaning that to this day, it powerfully shapes not only our own language but our thought.

Because the English language has changed so much since Shakespeare's time, however, his works are in danger of being lost to most of us. By sharing this ShakeFest, I hope to help as many people as possible discover and share the timeless truths and pleasures of the plays.

In the text below, I've also included some photos from my book club's last performance of the Festival. I hope they help inspire you to HAM IT UP AS MUCH AS POSSIBLE!

Acknowledgments

I gratefully acknowledge the help of my dear friend, Larkin Tom, and my beloved sister, Robin Sortor Lofquist, who read and commented on the supplements, and of Steve Townley, who provided invaluable assistance with regard to the historical supplement. I'd also like to thank Bart Weiss and Ben Britt for shooting the video of my book club's most recent performance of the Festival, from which I captured the stills included in the text below, as well as my fellow book club members and friends for helping to "test" the ShakeFest.

Note on the Excerpted Texts

The passages from the plays included in this text are from the *Complete Moby™ Shakespeare*, which as of this writing is freely available on the internet at <http://the-tech.mit.edu/Shakespeare>. I have made minor emendations to the text, mostly to correct typographical errors, punctuation and the like. The English spellings in the Moby edition have been retained. The Moby Shakespeare does not provide line numbers, which vary considerably among the various editions of the plays. I have accordingly included references to the act, scene, and line numbers from *The Riverside Shakespeare*, second edition (1977), which I also consulted in preparing my notes to the text.

A ShakeFest for Book Clubs

PROGRAMME

Cast _____ **(For You to Fill In)**

[Note: Performers should also check their actual scenes below to determine whether they will need any extra off-stage screamers, props, etc.]

As You Like It *Jacques* - _____
Jacques' Boxes

Romeo and Juliet *Romeo* - _____
Words, Words, Words: Reading the World
Juliet - _____

A Midsummer Night's Dream *Peter Quince* - _____
The Play Within the Play: Bottom Wants All the Parts
Bottom - _____
Snug - _____
Flute - _____
Snout - _____
Starveling - _____



Julius Caesar *Cassius* - _____
“There is a tide in the affairs of men . . .”

Brutus - _____

Marc Antony - _____

Richard II *Richard II* - _____
The Need for Mirrors; a Poet-King Deposes Himself

Henry Bolingbroke - _____

Duke of York - _____

Northumberland - _____

Midsummer Night’s Dream *Flute* - _____
Revisited — Beginnings and Ends (the Mechanicals’ Prologue):
the Importance of Time and Place

First Intermission

First Part of Henry IV *Falstaff* - _____
More on Mirrors and Choosing One’s Companions;
Playing Parts

Prince Hal - _____

Henry V *Henry V* - _____
More on Choosing One’s Companions



Macbeth *Three Witches* - _____,
A Way to Meaninglessness: Killing Time

_____ ,
and _____

Macbeth - _____

Lady Macbeth - _____

Angus - _____

Much Ado About Nothing *Beatrice* - _____
Air as a Weapon

Benedick - _____

Leonato - _____

Don Pedro - _____

Second Intermission

Hamlet *Hamlet* - _____
Inversions of Meaning

King Claudius - _____

Queen Gertrude - _____

Guildenstern - _____

Rosencrantz - _____



The Tempest
New I's Through New Eyes; Rebirth Through Art

Prospero - _____

Ariel - _____

Miranda - _____

Ferdinand - _____

Caliban - _____

Trinculo - _____

Stephano - _____



EXPECTANT AIR

THE FESTIVAL

As You Like It — Jacques' Boxes

[NOTE TO INTRODUCERS: You'll probably want to read aloud only those portions of the introductions that appear in bolded black. The portions in turquoise are intended as background information for people to read on their own in preparing for the Festival.]



OUR FIRST INTRODUCER, ROBERT LONG

INTRODUCTION: Our first scene is from *As You Like It*. As the play begins, a good Duke has been usurped and banished by his brother. The good Duke and his followers have taken refuge in the Forest of Arden (Shakespeare's mother's maiden name was "Arden" and her family came from a forested region near Stratford known by that name).

As in other Shakespeare plays, this play begins at a point when government has gone awry, and characters are leaving the city for the forest, a magical place where new ways of seeing and being can be tried out. This play draws on a literary tradition going back to classical Greek texts, which likens a republic (e.g., Plato's *Republic*) to an individual mind and associates the more civilized *city* with the faculties of logic and *reason*, while associating the country, especially the *forest*, with more primitive urges and the *imagination*.

The good Duke's followers include a professional court jester or "fool", and also the character, Jacques (say "Zhà'-kwèz"), a self-proclaimed "melancholic" fool with pretensions to profundity. It is

Jacques who speaks in our first passage, in which he observes that "all the world's a stage" and proceeds to divide all of humankind into seven described roles. The "all the world's a stage" motif occurs often in Shakespeare's plays, and as you may know, he named his own theater, "The Globe." But Jacques seems to have brought with him into the forest a "city" way of seeing, for he uses the metaphor in a reductionist way, suggesting that we are literally no more than the sum of our "parts" (in both senses of the word). His descriptions impose order on our unruly lives but also make us caricatures of ourselves, limiting our possibilities, rather than helping to create new ones.

Act II, scene vii, lines 139 - 166.

Cast: JACQUES.

JAQUES: All the world's a stage,
And all the men and women merely players:
They have their exits and their entrances;
And one man in his time plays many parts,
His acts being seven ages. At first the infant,
Mewling and puking in the nurse's arms.
And then the whining school-boy, with his satchel
And shining morning face, creeping like snail
Unwillingly to school. And then the lover,
Sighing like furnace, with a woeful ballad
Made to his mistress' eyebrow. Then a soldier,
Full of strange oaths and bearded like the pard,
Jealous in honour, sudden and quick in quarrel,
Seeking the bubble reputation
Even in the cannon's mouth. And then the justice,
In fair round belly with good capon lined,
With eyes severe and beard of formal cut,
Full of wise saws and modern instances;
And so he plays his part. The sixth age shifts
Into the lean and slippered pantaloon,
With spectacles on nose and pouch on side,
His youthful hose, well saved, a world too wide
For his shrunk shank; and his big manly voice,
Turning again toward childish treble, pipes
And whistles in his sound. Last scene of all,
That ends this strange eventful history,
Is second childishness and mere oblivion,
Sans teeth, sans eyes, sans taste, sans everything.

“Mewling”: crying.

“Pard”: leopard or panther.

“Capon”: chicken; perhaps suggesting bribes.

“Saws”: maxims.

“Pantaloons”: here, foolish old man.

“Sans”: (Fr.) without.

Romeo and Juliet — Words, Words, Words: Reading the World

INTRODUCTION: As written in the King James Bible, “In the beginning was the WORD . . . And the Word was God.” Our next play, *Romeo and Juliet*, concerns, among other things, the crucial role that *words* play in shaping our reality. In *Genesis*, God *created* by speaking: He said, “Let there be light”—and there it *was*. Chaucer called writing poetry, “*makyng*.” *Romeo and Juliet* elaborates on the literary tradition that recognizes that words, though they be mere breath (air, wind, or spirit), can nonetheless either create or destroy.

The play also continues a related tradition that sees the world as a *book* to be *read*, its phenomena as symbols to be interpreted.

At the beginning of *Romeo and Juliet*, we find the young Romeo Montague ripe for a fall: he’s groaning with love—not for Juliet, but for someone named Rosaline! (Perhaps he was just practicing his “part.”) Fast and hard, he falls out of love and back in again, this time with Juliet Capulet—despite the dire enmity otherwise prevailing between Capulets and Montagues. Juliet is not yet fourteen years old. Note Juliet’s remark at the end of the scene, after she’s “read” Romeo’s lips.

Act I, scene v, lines 93 - 110.

Cast: ROMEO, JULIET, both on stage.

ROMEO: If I profane with my unworhiest hand
This holy shrine, the gentle fine is this:
My lips, two blushing pilgrims, ready stand
To smooth that rough touch with a tender kiss.

“Shrine”: image (touching her face or hand).

JULIET: Good pilgrim, you do wrong your hand too much,
Which mannerly devotion shows in this;
For saints have hands that pilgrims’ hands do touch,
And palm to palm is holy palmers’ kiss.

“Pilgrim”: one who journeys to a holy site.

ROMEO: Have not saints lips, and holy palmers too?

“Palmers”: pilgrims.

JULIET: Ay, pilgrim, lips that they must use in prayer.

ROMEO: O, then, dear saint, let lips do what hands do;
They pray, grant thou, lest faith turn to despair.

JULIET: Saints do not move, though grant for prayers' sake.

“Move”: institute a legal action.

ROMEO: Then move not, while my prayer's effect I take.

[Kisses her.]

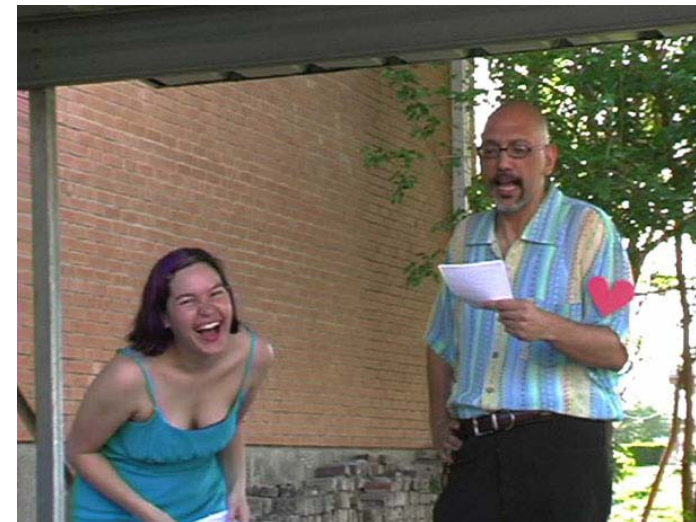
Thus from my lips, by yours, my sin is purged.

JULIET: Then have my lips the sin that they have took.

ROMEO: Sin from thy lips? O trespass sweetly urged!
Give me my sin again.

[Kisses her again.]

JULIET: You kiss by the book.



DANETTE TORRES AND MANNY MENDOZA
(Yes, her hair is purple)

INTRODUCTION: Next we'll see perhaps the most famous love scene in the history of literature. It poses the question: What, after all, is in a name? The play will answer: Being or nothingness, and sometimes, life or death.

Act II, scene ii, lines 2 - 61; then skip to lines 85 - 148.

Cast: ROMEO, JULIET, and a NURSE to call from within Juliet's house. .

[ROMEO and JULIET on stage, with Juliet in a “balcony,” above. Also need a “Nurse” to call Juliet from off-stage. JULIET might want a rose as a prop.]

ROMEO: But soft! What light through yonder window breaks?
It is the east, and Juliet is the sun.
Arise, fair sun, and kill the envious moon,
Who is already sick and pale with grief,
That thou her maid art far more fair than she;

“Soft”: hush!

Be not her maid, since she is envious;
Her vestal livery is but sick and green
And none but fools do wear it; cast it off.
It is my lady, O, it is my love!
O, that she knew she were!
She speaks yet she says nothing: what of that?
Her eye discourses; I will answer it.
I am too bold, 'tis not to me she speaks:
Two of the fairest stars in all the heaven,
Having some business, do entreat her eyes
To twinkle in their spheres till they return.
What if her eyes were there, they in her head?
The brightness of her cheek would shame those stars,
As daylight doth a lamp; her eyes in heaven
Would through the airy region stream so bright
That birds would sing and think it were not night.
See, how she leans her cheek upon her hand!
O, that I were a glove upon that hand,
That I might touch that cheek!

JULIET: Ay me!

ROMEO: She speaks;
O, speak again, bright angel! for thou art
As glorious to this night, being o'er my head
As is a winged messenger of heaven
Unto the white-upturned wondering eyes
Of mortals that fall back to gaze on him
When he bestrides the lazy-pacing clouds
And sails upon the bosom of the air.

JULIET: O Romeo, Romeo! Wherefore art thou "Romeo"?
Deny thy father and refuse thy name;
Or, if thou wilt not, be but sworn my love,
And I'll no longer be a Capulet.

“Vestal livery”: distinctive clothing of a consecrated virgin.

I.e., two stars ask her eyes to take their places.

I.e., Mercury or Hermes, god of communication.

I.e., why or in what way are you your name?

ROMEO [Aside]: Shall I hear more, or shall I speak at this?

JULIET: 'Tis but thy name that is my enemy;
Thou art thyself, though not a Montague.
What's Montague? It is nor hand, nor foot,
Nor arm, nor face, nor any other part
Belonging to a man. O, be some other name!
What's in a name? That which we call a rose
By any other name would smell as sweet;
So Romeo would, were he not Romeo called,
Retain that dear perfection which he owes,
Without that title. Romeo, doff thy name,
And for that name, which is no part of thee,
Take all myself.

ROMEO: I take thee at thy word:
Call me but love, and I'll be new baptized;
Henceforth I never will be Romeo.

JULIET: What man art thou that thus bescreened in night
So stumblest on my counsel?

ROMEO: By a name
I know not how to tell thee who I am;
My name, dear saint, is hateful to myself,
Because it is an enemy to thee;
Had I it written, I would tear the word.

JULIET: My ears have not yet drunk a hundred words
Of that tongue's utterance, yet I know the sound;
Art thou not Romeo and a Montague?

ROMEO: Neither, fair saint, if either thee dislike.



WHAT'S IN A NAME?

“New baptized”: re-named.

* * * * *

JULIET: Thou know'st the mask of night is on my face,
Else would a maiden blush bepaint my cheek
For that which thou hast heard me speak to-night.
Fain would I dwell on form, fain, fain deny
What I have spoke; but farewell compliment!
Dost thou love me? I know thou wilt say 'Ay,'
And I will take thy word; yet if thou swear'st,
Thou mayst prove false; at lovers' perjuries
Then say, Jove laughs. O gentle Romeo,
If thou dost love, pronounce it faithfully;
Or if thou think'st I am too quickly won,
I'll frown and be perverse and say thee nay,
So thou wilt woo; but else, not for the world.
In truth, fair Montague, I am too fond,
And therefore thou mayst think my 'havior light;
But trust me, gentleman, I'll prove more true
Than those that have more cunning to be strange.
I should have been more strange, I must confess,
But that thou overheard'st, ere I was 'ware,
My true love's passion; therefore pardon me,
And not impute this yielding to light love,
Which the dark night hath so discovered.

ROMEO: Lady, by yonder blessed moon I swear,
That tips with silver all these fruit-tree tops—

JULIET: O, swear not by the moon, the inconstant moon,
That monthly changes in her circled orb,
Lest that thy love prove likewise variable.

ROMEO: What shall I swear by?

“Fain”: gladly.

“Compliment”: here, social convention.

“Jove”: Chief of the Roman gods.

I.e., I'll say “no” to induce you to woo me.

“Light”: here, promiscuous.

“Strange”: here, to pretend not to care.

JULIET: Do not swear at all;
Or, if thou wilt, swear by thy gracious self,
Which is the god of my idolatry,
And I'll believe thee.

ROMEO: If my heart's dear love—

JULIET: Well, do not swear. Although I joy in thee,
I have no joy of this contract to-night:
It is too rash, too unadvised, too sudden;
Too like the lightning, which doth cease to be
Ere one can say 'It lightens.' Sweet, good night!
This bud of love, by summer's ripening breath,
May prove a beauteous flower when next we meet.
Good night, good night! As sweet repose and rest
Come to thy heart as that within my breast!

ROMEO: O, wilt thou leave me so unsatisfied?

JULIET: What satisfaction canst thou have to-night?

ROMEO: The exchange of thy love's faithful vow for mine.

JULIET: I gave thee mine before thou didst request it:
And yet I would it were to give again.

ROMEO: Wouldst thou withdraw it? For what purpose, love?

JULIET: But to be frank, and give it thee again.
And yet I wish but for the thing I have:
My bounty is as boundless as the sea,
My love as deep; the more I give to thee,
The more I have, for both are infinite.

[NURSE calls to Juliet from within]



THIS BUD OF LOVE

“Frank”: here, generous.

JULIET: I hear some noise within; dear love, adieu!
Anon, good nurse! Sweet Montague, be true.
Stay but a little, I will come again.

[JULIET exits, above]

ROMEO: O blessed, blessed night! I am afeard.
Being in night, all this is but a dream,
Too flattering-sweet to be substantial.

[Re-enter JULIET, above]

JULIET: Three words, dear Romeo, and good night indeed.
If that thy bent of love be honourable,
Thy purpose marriage, send me word to-morrow,
By one that I'll procure to come to thee,
Where and what time thou wilt perform the rite;
And all my fortunes at thy foot I'll lay
And follow thee my lord throughout the world.

I.e., I'll find someone to send for your message.

***A Midsummer Night's Dream* — The Play Within the Play: Bottom Wants All the Parts**

INTRODUCTION: *Midsummer Night's Dream* draws on the same dialectic found in *As You Like It*, between the city as a place of reason, on one hand, and the forest on the other hand, where passion, imagination, and even madness give rise to a chaos from which a new, more vital order can sometimes emerge.

The play takes place in and near the city of Athens (named for Athena, goddess of wisdom). Theseus, the ruler, has recently conquered the Amazons and is soon to marry their queen, Hippolyta. A father and his daughter ask Theseus to resolve their conflict: the father wants his daughter to marry a young man she does not love. In fact, there are two young men and two young women, the daughter being one of them, whose loves are at cross-purposes. Theseus decrees that Hermia must either marry the man her father has chosen or become the Greek equivalent of a nun.

The four young people will flee to the forest, where their own conflicts become entangled in a battle-of-the-sexes between the king and queen of the fairies. A servant fairy, Puck, will help resolve the various conflicts by using the juice of a magic flower that literally *transforms* how the characters *see* things—but only after Puck has made the confusion worse than ever.

Some Athenians of humbler rank, called “mechanicals,” have decided to put on a play for Theseus’s wedding. One of them, named *Bottom*, wants to play *all* the “parts.” But although the fairy Puck will later *transform* Bottom quite *literally*, giving him the head of a jackass; Bottom will somehow remain true to his lovable, histrionic self.

The mechanicals’ play-within-the-play is about Pyramus and Thisbe, lovers separated by a wall with a small chink through which they whisper their love. Shakespeare uses the device of a play-within-the-play in several plays. The device points outward to the audience, not only suggesting with Jacques in *As You Like It* that we are all players, but also that our lives proceed within one level or another of fiction.

In the scene we’re about to see, the mechanicals have met to organize the play.

[Casting Note: “Bottom” should be someone with a sense of humor who’ll really “ham it up.”]

Act I, scene ii, 1 - 99.

Cast: PETER QUINCE, BOTTOM, and several minor roles: SNUG, FLUTE, SNOUT, STARVELING.

[Enter QUINCE, BOTTOM, SNUG, FLUTE, SNOUT, and STARVELING.]

QUINCE: Is all our company here?

BOTTOM: You were best to call them generally,
man by man, according to the scrip.

QUINCE: Here is the scroll of every man’s name, which



IS ALL OUR COMPANY HERE?
LARKIN TOM, FAR LEFT, AS PETER QUINCE;
BETTY WHITLOCK, NEXT LEFT, AS BOTTOM

“Generally”: Bottom means the opposite,
i.e., individually. “Scrip”: written list.

is thought fit, through all Athens, to play in our interlude before the Duke and the Duchess, on his wedding-day at night.

BOTTOM: First, good Peter Quince, say what the play treats on, then read the names of the actors, and so grow to a point.

“Treats”: what its subject-matter is.

QUINCE: Marry, our play is, “The most lamentable comedy, and most cruel death of Pyramus and Thisby.”

BOTTOM: A very good piece of work, I assure you, and a merry. Now, good Peter Quince, call forth your actors by the scroll. Masters, spread yourselves.

QUINCE: Answer as I call you. Nick Bottom, the weaver.

BOTTOM: Ready. Name what part I am for, and proceed.

QUINCE: You, Nick Bottom, are set down for Pyramus.

BOTTOM: What is Pyramus? A lover, or a tyrant?

QUINCE: A lover, that kills himself most gallant for love.

BOTTOM: That will ask some tears in the true performing of it. If I do it, let the audience look to their eyes; I will move storms, I will condole in some measure.

“Condole”: another misusage.

[Continued on next page]

To the rest—yet my chief humour is for a tyrant:
I could play Ercles rarely, or a part to tear a cat in,
to make all split.

‘The raging rocks
And shivering shocks
Shall break the locks
Of prison gates;
And Phibbus’ car
Shall shine from far
And make and mar
The foolish Fates.’

This was lofty! Now name the rest of the players.
This is Ercles’ vein, a tyrant’s vein; a lover is more
condoling.

QUINCE: Francis Flute, the bellows-mender.

FLUTE: Here, Peter Quince.

QUINCE: Flute, you must take Thisby on you.

FLUTE: What is Thisby? A wandering knight?

QUINCE: It is the lady that Pyramus must love.

FLUTE: Nay, faith, let me not play a woman; I have
a beard coming.

QUINCE: That’s all one: you shall play it in a mask,
and you may speak as small as you will.

BOTTOM: An I may hide my face, let me play Thisby too,
I’ll speak in a monstrous little voice.

“Ercles”: Hercules.

“Phibbus’ car”: chariot of Phoebus Apollo, god of
the sun.

“Mar”: ruin or disfigure.

“Bellows”: a lung-like device to fan fire.

I.e., you must play the role of Thisby.

Flute is evidently a teenage boy.

“Small”: in a little (feminine) voice.

[Lisping] ‘Thisne, Thisne;’ ‘Ah, Pyramus, lover dear!
thy Thisne dear, and lady dear!’

QUINCE: No, no; you must play Pyramus; and, Flute, you Thisby.

BOTTOM: Well, proceed.

QUINCE: Robin Starveling, the tailor.

STARVELING: Here, Peter Quince.

QUINCE: Robin Starveling, you must play Thisby’s mother.
Tom Snout, the tinker.

SNOUT: Here, Peter Quince.

QUINCE: You, Pyramus’ father; myself, Thisby’s father;
Snug, the joiner, you, the lion’s part;
and, I hope, here is a play fitted.

SNUG: Have you the lion’s part written? Pray you,
if it be, give it me, for I am slow of study.

“Tinker”: one who mends household utensils,
usually metal.

“Joiner”: one whose trade is to join wooden
pieces. “Fitted”: refers on the cast members’ skills
in mending or fitting parts.



SNUG EXTEMPORIZES
CAROLYN SORTOR AND SOROSH AHMED



QUINCE: You may do it extempore, for it is nothing but roaring.

Extemporaneously, without lines to memorize.

BOTTOM: Let me play the lion too: I will roar, that I will do any man's heart good to hear me; I will roar, that I will make the Duke say 'Let him roar again, let him roar again.'

QUINCE: An you should do it too terribly, you would fright the Duchess and the ladies, that they would shriek; and that were enough to hang us all.

"An you should": if you.

ALL: That would hang us, every mother's son.

BOTTOM: I grant you, friends, if that you should fright the ladies out of their wits, they would have no more discretion but to hang us; but I will aggravate my voice so that I will roar you as gently as any sucking dove; I will roar you an 'twere any nightingale.

"Aggravate": another misusage.

QUINCE: You can play no part but Pyramus; for Pyramus is a sweet-faced man; a proper man, as one shall see in a summer's day; a most lovely gentleman-like man; therefore you must needs play Pyramus.

BOTTOM: Well, I will undertake it. What beard were I best to play it in?

QUINCE: Why, what you will.

BOTTOM: I will discharge it in either your straw-colour beard, your orange-tawny beard, your purple-in-grain beard, or your French-crown-colour beard, your perfect yellow.

"French crown": a golden coin.

QUINCE: Some of your French crowns have no hair at all,
and then you will play bare-faced. But, masters,
here are your parts; and I am to entreat you, request you
and desire you, to con them by to-morrow night,
and meet me in the palace wood, a mile without the town,
by moonlight; there will we rehearse, for if we meet
in the city, we shall be dogged with company,
and our devices known. In the meantime I will draw
a bill of properties, such as our play wants.
I pray you, fail me not.

“Con”: learn.

“Properties”: props.

BOTTOM: We will meet; and there we may rehearse
most obscenely and courageously.
Take pains; be perfect: adieu.

“Obscenely”: another misusage.

“Perfect”: know your lines perfectly.

* * * * *

[Exit ALL]

Julius Caesar — “There is a tide in the affairs of men . . .”

INTRODUCTION: Next, in *Julius Caesar*, we’ll see Cassius solicit Brutus to join a plot to assassinate Caesar. In the background, the Roman populace roars as Caesar is offered a crown; they seem happy to give up their democratic republic to confer godlike powers on Caesar. This play raises themes of fate vs. personal responsibility and the importance of self-knowledge, among other themes. Note Brutus’s comment that Cassius would have Brutus seek into himself “for that which is not there”, which is referred to as his “shadow.” Although the meaning of “shadow” as used here is ostensibly that of a reflection or image, consider whether it might in fact be Brutus’s failure to *recognize* his own shadow side that leads to his ultimate downfall.

For this scene, we’ll *all* play the part of the Plebian crowd, so please follow along in your copies of the text and shout out at lines 78 and 131!

Act I, scene ii, lines 51 - 167 (abridged as indicated by elisions).

Cast: CASSIUS, BRUTUS, both on stage, and CROWD, the Festival audience.

CASSIUS: Tell me, good Brutus, can you see your face?

BRUTUS: No, Cassius; for the eye sees not itself,
But by reflection, by some other thing.

CASSIUS: 'Tis just;
And it is very much lamented, Brutus,
That you have no such mirrors as will turn
Your hidden worthiness into your eye,
That you might see your shadow. I have heard,
Where many of the best respect in Rome,
Except immortal Caesar, speaking of Brutus
And groaning underneath this age's yoke,
Have wished that noble Brutus had his eyes.

BRUTUS: Into what dangers would you lead me, Cassius,
That you would have me seek into myself
For that which is not in me?

CASSIUS: Therefore, good Brutus, be prepared to hear:
And since you know you cannot see yourself
So well as by reflection, I, your glass,
Will modestly discover to yourself
That of yourself which you yet know not of.
And be not jealous on me, gentle Brutus:
Were I a common laugher, or did use
To stale with ordinary oaths my love
To every new protester; if you know
That I do fawn on men and hug them hard
And after scandal them, or if you know

I.e., respected people discontent with the current regime wish Brutus saw himself with their eyes.

“Glass”: mirror.

“Discover”: reveal.

“Jealous on”: suspicious of.

I.e., if I promiscuously swore my love to every new purported friend.

“Scandal”: gossip about.

That I profess myself in banqueting
To all the rout, then hold me dangerous.

[CROWD roars]

BRUTUS: What means this shouting? I do fear, the people
Choose Caesar for their king.

CASSIUS: Ay, do you fear it?
Then must I think you would not have it so.

BRUTUS: I would not, Cassius; yet I love him well.
But wherefore do you hold me here so long?
What is it that you would impart to me?
If it be aught toward the general good,
Set honour in one eye and death i' the other,
And I will look on both indifferently,
For let the gods so speed me as I love
The name of honour more than I fear death.

CASSIUS: I know that virtue to be in you, Brutus,
As well as I do know your outward favour.
Well, honour is the subject of my story.
I cannot tell what you and other men
Think of this life; but, for my single self,
I had as lief not be as live to be
In awe of such a thing as I myself.
I was born free as Caesar; so were you;
We both have fed as well, and we can both
Endure the winter's cold as well as he:
For once, upon a raw and gusty day,
The troubled Tiber chafing with her shores,
Caesar said to me 'Darest thou, Cassius, now
Leap in with me into this angry flood,
And swim to yonder point?' Upon the word,

I.e., at banquets, claim friendship toward the
whole crowd.


I.e., by acclamation. Caesar's supporters are
trying to rally the crowd to offer Caesar a crown.

"Aught": anything. "General": in common with
others.

I.e., I know the love of honor to be within you
as well as I know your face.

I.e., I'd rather not live at all than live in awe of
another as human as I.

"Tiber": river in Italy.



Accoutred as I was, I plunged in
And bade him follow; so indeed he did.
The torrent roared, and we did buffet it
With lusty sinews, throwing it aside
And stemming it with hearts of controversy;
But ere we could arrive the point proposed,
Caesar cried 'Help me, Cassius, or I sink!'
I, as Aeneas, our great ancestor,
Did from the flames of Troy upon his shoulder
The old Anchises bear, so from the waves of Tiber
Did I the tired Caesar. And this man
Is now become a god, and Cassius is
A wretched creature and must bend his body,
If Caesar carelessly but nod on him.

* * * * *

Ye gods, it doth amaze me
A man of such a feeble temper should
So get the start of the majestic world
And bear the palm alone.

[CROWD roars]

BRUTUS: Another general shout!
I do believe that these applauses are
For some new honours that are heaped on Caesar.

CASSIUS: Why, man, he doth bestride the narrow world
Like a Colossus, and we petty men
Walk under his huge legs and peep about
To find ourselves dishonourable graves.
Men at some time are masters of their fates.
The fault, dear Brutus, is not in our stars,
But in ourselves, that we are underlings.
Brutus and Caesar: what should be in that 'Caesar'?
Why should that name be sounded more than yours?


“Accoutred”: clothed or equipped.

“Hearts of controversy”: excited by the contest.

The legend was that Rome was founded by Aeneas, a Trojan who carried his father on his back during his escape as Troy fell to the Greeks.

“Get the start of”: outstrip.

“Colossus”: a giant.



Write them together, yours is as fair a name;
Sound them, it doth become the mouth as well;
Weigh them, it is as heavy; conjure with 'em,
Brutus will start a spirit as soon as Caesar.
Now, in the names of all the gods at once,
Upon what meat doth this our Caesar feed,
That he is grown so great? Age, thou art shamed!
Rome, thou hast lost the breed of noble bloods!
When went there by an age, since the great flood,
But it was famed with more than with one man?
When could they say till now, that talked of Rome,
That her wide walls encompassed but one man?
Now is it Rome indeed and room enough,
When there is in it but one only man.
O, you and I have heard our fathers say,
There was a Brutus once that would have brooked
The eternal devil to keep his state in Rome
As easily as a king.

BRUTUS: That you do love me, I am nothing jealous;
What you would work me to, I have some aim;
How I have thought of this and of these times,
I shall recount hereafter; for this present,
I would not, so with love I might entreat you,
Be any further moved.

[CROWD roars]

INTRODUCTION: After the assassination, Brutus gives the well-known “Friends, Romans, countrymen” speech, explaining to the crowd his genuine concern to save the Roman republic from Caesar’s ambition. He then leaves, imploring them to give full hearing to **Marc Antony**, who was not involved in the plot. Antony delivers a brilliant eulogy of Caesar. Antony says, “But Brutus says [Caesar] was *ambitious*, and Brutus is an *honorable* man” repeatedly, until it sounds absurd.

I.e., when since all men but Noah died in the great flood has there been a time when one man’s fame eclipsed all others’?

I.e., there was a time Brutus would no more have submitted to a king than he’d have allowed the devil to hold court Rome.

“Am nothing jealous”: I do not doubt. I have some idea what you’d like me to do.

He concludes by reading aloud Caesar's will, in which Caesar left much of his wealth to the Roman people. The people's anger is aroused against the assassins, and the result is civil war between Brutus's faction and that of Octavius Caesar and Marc Antony.

In our next scene, Brutus's beloved wife has just died, and dissension and distrust have escalated among his officers. Brutus and his officers debate whether to hang back and wait for the opposition to find them, or to march forward to face their opponents at Philippi. Cassius thinks they should hang back; Brutus argues they should take the initiative, based on the importance of *timing*.

Act IV, scene iii, lines 212 - 225.

Cast: CASSIUS, BRUTUS, both on stage.

CASSIUS: Hear me, good brother.

BRUTUS: Under your pardon. You must note beside,
That we have tried the utmost of our friends,
Our legions are brim-full, our cause is ripe:
The enemy increaseth every day;
We, at the height, are ready to decline.
There is a tide in the affairs of men,
Which, taken at the flood, leads on to fortune;
Omitted, all the voyage of their life
Is bound in shallows and in miseries.
On such a full sea are we now afloat;
And we must take the current when it serves,
Or lose our ventures.

I.e., we've received from our allies all the help we can expect from them.

I.e., if one omits to take advantage of the tide, one is stranded or trapped in the shallows.

CASSIUS: Then, with your will, go on;
We'll along ourselves, and meet them at Philippi.

"Along ourselves": also go.

INTRODUCTION: Brutus's faction loses, Brutus and his companions commit suicide. In the next passage, Marc Antony, whose eulogy of Caesar ignited the war, now eulogizes the dead Brutus, whose virtues shone despite his flaws.

Act V, scene v, lines 68 - 75.

Cast: MARC ANTONY, BRUTUS (although he has no lines).

[ANTONY center stage, with BRUTUS'S body laid before or beside him.]

ANTONY: This was the noblest Roman of them all.
All the conspirators, save only he,
Did that they did in envy of great Caesar;
He only, in a general honest thought
And common good to all, made one of them.
His life was gentle, and the elements
So mixed in him that Nature might stand up
And say to all the world 'This was a man!'

“Made one of them”: made himself one of the conspirators.

Richard II — The Need for Mirrors; a Poet-King Deposes Himself

INTRODUCTION: Our next scene is from one of Shakespeare's history plays, which are rather loosely based on English history. This play portrays the downfall of King Richard II, of the York family, and his deposition by Henry Bolingbroke, of the Lancaster family, who then becomes King Henry IV. Shakespeare was deeply concerned with the question of what it takes to be a good ruler and addressed this question in many of his tragedies and comedies as well as in the history plays. As a king, Richard II was seriously flawed, but his usurpation could be seen as a disruption of the natural order that gave rise to the long, bloody Wars of the Roses between the Houses of York and Lancaster. Those wars were finally resolved only with the marriage of the grandparents of Elizabeth I, who reigned during much of Shakespeare's career.

The story opens with King Richard's attempt to resolve a dispute between Henry Bolingbroke and another noble, each of whom accuses the other of treason. After Richard's lackluster effort to reconcile them fails, he banishes both men, extracting promises that they'll never reconcile with one another to join forces against Richard.

Shakespeare portrays Richard II as highly articulate and imaginative—rather a dramatist or poet—as well as capricious and self-indulgent, making unworthy sycophants his favored companions. Henry Bolingbroke's father, on his deathbed, offers advice to Richard, but Richard is merely angered, and appropriates Henry Bolingbroke's inheritance. It is this act that gives Bolingbroke cause to flout his banishment and return to England in force against Richard, ultimately deposing him.

In the next scene, after Henry Bolingbroke has captured Richard, Richard has been brought before before

Henry and his supporters. The transfer of the crown from Richard to Henry is narrated by Richard himself, with considerable flair. Note again the role of a *mirror*, here accompanied by images of water; remember the Greek myth in which Narcissus drowned while admiring his own reflection in a pool. This play continues the inquiry we began with *Julius Caesar* earlier, regarding how we learn to recognize our true selves.

Act IV, scene i, lines 162 - 291 (abridged as indicated).

Cast: KING RICHARD II and several lesser characters: BOLINGBROKE, THE DUKE OF YORK, NORTHUMBERLAND, and an ATTENDANT.

[ALL on stage. In this scene, Richard is handed a crown, Northumberland presents Richard with a list of his “crimes,” and Richard throws down a mirror; you might want props handy for these purposes.]

KING RICHARD: Alack, why am I sent for to a king,
Before I have shook off the regal thoughts
Wherewith I reigned? I hardly yet have learned
To insinuate, flatter, bow, and bend my limbs;
Give sorrow leave awhile to tutor me
To this submission. Yet I well remember
The favours of these men; were they not mine?
Did they not sometime cry, ‘all hail!’ to me?
So Judas did to Christ; but he, in twelve,
Found truth in all but one; I, in twelve thousand, none.
God save the king! Will no man say, “amen”?
Am I both priest and clerk? Well then, amen.
God save the king! although I be not he;
And yet amen, if heaven do think him me.
To do what service am I sent for hither?

I.e., give some time for sorrow to teach me how to submit.

“Favours”: countenances (faces), as well as favors.

DUKE OF YORK: To do that office of thine own good will
Which tired majesty did make thee offer,
The resignation of thy state and crown
To Henry Bolingbroke.

York implicitly proposes a face-saving pretext for the usurpation.

KING RICHARD: Give me the crown. Here, cousin, seize the crown.
Here cousin:
On this side my hand, and on that side yours.
Now is this golden crown like a deep well
That owes two buckets, filling one another,
The emptier ever dancing in the air,
The other down, unseen and full of water;
That bucket down and full of tears am I,
Drinking my griefs, whilst you mount up on high.

HENRY BOLINGBROKE: I thought you had been willing to resign.

KING RICHARD: My crown I am; but still my griefs are mine;
You may my glories and my state depose,
But not my griefs; still am I king of those.

* * * * *

HENRY BOLINGBROKE: Are you contented to resign the crown?

KING RICHARD: Ay, no; no, ay; for I must nothing be;
Therefore, no, no, for I resign to thee.
Now mark me, how I will undo myself;
I give this heavy weight from off my head
And this unwieldy sceptre from my hand,
The pride of kingly sway from out my heart;

[Continued]

(Someone probably hands it to him. During the next 20 lines or so, Richard probably shifts it back and forth between his two hands, then perhaps puts it on his own head, and then removes it himself, before Henry actually takes the crown from him.)

I.e., I'm willing to resign my crown.

I.e., he can't be contented, if he's nothing. Note, "ay" puns on "I." English monarchs traditionally believed they ruled by divine right. God made Richard king; if he is no longer king, is he nothing?

Containing the deposing of a king
And cracking the strong warrant of an oath,
Marked with a blot, damned in the book of heaven;
Nay, all of you that stand and look upon,
Whilst that my wretchedness doth bait myself,
Though some of you with Pilate wash your hands
Showing an outward pity; yet you Pilates
Have here delivered me to my sour cross,
And water cannot wash away your sin.

NORTHUMBERLAND: My lord, dispatch; read o'er these articles.

“Dispatch”: here, leave off digressing.

KING RICHARD: Mine eyes are full of tears, I cannot see;
And yet salt water blinds them not so much
But they can see a sort of traitors here.
Nay, if I turn mine eyes upon myself,
I find myself a traitor with the rest;
For I have given here my soul's consent
To undeck the pompous body of a king;
Made glory base and sovereignty a slave,
Proud majesty a subject, state a peasant.

NORTHUMBERLAND: My lord,—

KING RICHARD: No lord of thine, thou haught, insulting man,
Nor no man's lord; I have no name, no title,
No, not that name was given me at the font,
But 'tis usurped; alack the heavy day,
That I have worn so many winters out,
And know not now what name to call myself!
O, that I were a mockery king of snow,
Standing before the sun of Bolingbroke,
To melt myself away in water-drops!
Good king, great king, and yet not greatly good,
And if my word be sterling yet in England,

“Haught”: here, presumptuous.

“Sterling”: here, valid coinage.

Let it command a mirror hither straight,
That it may show me what a face I have,
Since it is bankrupt of his majesty.

HENRY BOLINGBROKE: Go some of you and fetch a looking-glass.

[Exit ATTENDANT]

NORTHUMBERLAND: Read o'er this paper while the glass doth come.

KING RICHARD: Fiend, thou torment'st me ere I come to hell!

HENRY BOLINGBROKE: Urge it no more, my Lord Northumberland.

NORTHUMBERLAND: The commons will not then be satisfied.

KING RICHARD: They shall be satisfied; I'll read enough,
When I do see the very book indeed
Where all my sins are writ, and that's myself.

[Re-enter ATTENDANT, with mirror]

KING RICHARD: Give me the glass, and therein will I read.
No deeper wrinkles yet? hath sorrow struck
So many blows upon this face of mine,
And made no deeper wounds? O flattering glass,
Like to my followers in prosperity,
Thou dost beguile me! Was this face the face
That every day under his household roof
Did keep ten thousand men? Was this the face
That, like the sun, did make beholders wink?
Was this the face that faced so many follies,
And was at last out-faced by Bolingbroke?
A brittle glory shineth in this face;
As brittle as the glory is the face,

While Richard had power, he was surrounded by flatterers who did not “mirror” the truth to him.

[Dashes the mirror against the ground]

For there it is, cracked in a hundred shivers.
Mark, silent king, the moral of this sport,
How soon my sorrow hath destroyed my face.

***Midsummer Night's Dream Revisited* — Beginnings and Ends (the Mechanicals' Prologue):
the Importance of Time and Place**

INTRODUCTION: As we've begun to see, appearances can be deceiving, and many factors affect how successful are our readings or interpretations of the book of the world (including ourselves)—among other things, whether we listen to others' points of view, how willing or able others are to mirror back to us what they see, and whether we accept responsibility for our interpretations and for changing them when we encounter their limitations. Another important factor has to do with *where we view ourselves in time*, including where we choose to locate our beginnings and our "ends" (in both senses). As Macbeth says after murdering his king, "Had I but died an hour before this chance/ I had lived a blessed time"; depending *where* in time you place an end (or what *goal* or "end" you choose), you can convert a tragedy to a comedy, or vice versa.

This factor is embodied in our next scene in a most *literal* way. At the end of *Midsummer Night's Dream*, the mechanicals finally perform their play-within-the-play, which we saw them organizing earlier in this Festival. The next passage is their prologue for their play. The punctuation of this passage shows that the poor fellow speaking it starts and stops at all the wrong times, so that it sounds like the *ends* of his sentences fall in their *middles*, and their *middles* become their *ends*. The effect is that he makes his lines seem to say the *opposite* of what he was *intended* to say. It is up to his audience—and to us—to have the *grace* to interpret his words better than he himself does. (To understand what he was really meant to say, as a rough guide, just switch the periods with the commas; but in performing the scene, go ahead and speak the lines with the punctuation as shown below.)

Act V, scene i, lines 108 - 117.

Cast: FLUTE, center stage.

PROLOGUE: If we offend, it is with our good will.
That you should think, we come not to offend,
But with good will. To show our simple skill,

That is the true beginning of our end.
Consider then we come but in despite.
We do not come as minding to content you,
Our true intent is. All for your delight
We are not here. That you should here repent you,
The actors are at hand and by their show
You shall know all that you are like to know.

“End”: here, purpose or goal.

“Content”: here, please.

“Repent you”: regret your attendance.

“Show”: performance.

Because you’re not going to learn much from their words! and because their efforts show what matters most, their good intent.

FIRST INTERMISSION

INTERMISSION



First Part of Henry IV — More on Mirrors and Choosing One’s Companions; Playing Parts

INTRODUCTION: There are two *Henry IV* plays, the “First Part” and the “Second Part.” As the *First Part of Henry IV* begins, King Henry IV’s son, Hal, seems an almost unsalvageably dissolute young man. But in our next scene, we find Prince Hal beginning to think about the power and the burdens he must soon shoulder. In this scene, Prince Hal and his rotund, elder drinking buddy, Jack Falstaff, take turns playing the roles of the Prince himself and of his father, Henry IV. This scene shows one of several instances in which Shakespeare’s characters learn through *role-playing*: by *pretending* to be a certain kind of person, they learn something about how to *be* such a person in reality.

Later in the *Henry* plays, in a literal demonstration of the idea of feigning as a way of life, Falstaff will *pretend*

to be dead in order to avoid the risk of harm in a battle, rationalizing his conduct by arguing that the word, “honor,” is mere air or nothing.

[Casting Note: “Falstaff” should seem jolly yet shrewd.]

Act II, scene iv, lines 396 - 481.

Cast: FALSTAFF, PRINCE HAL.

FALSTAFF: Peace, good pint-pot; peace, good tickle-brain.

Harry, I do not only marvel where thou spendest thy time, but also how thou art accompanied; for though the chamomile, the more it is trodden on the faster it grows, yet youth, the more it is wasted the sooner it wears. That thou art my son, I have partly thy mother’s word, partly my own opinion, but chiefly a villainous trick of thine eye and a foolish-hanging of thy nether lip, that doth warrant me. If then thou be son to me, here lies the point; why, being son to me, art thou so pointed at? Shall the blessed sun of heaven prove a micher and eat blackberries? a question not to be asked. Shall the sun of England prove a thief and take purses? a question to be asked. There is a thing, Harry, which thou hast often heard of and it is known to many in our land by the name of pitch. This pitch, as ancient writers do report, doth defile; so doth the company thou keepest; for, Harry, now I do not speak to thee in drink but in tears, not in pleasure but in passion, not in words only, but in woes also. And yet, there is a virtuous man whom I have often noted in thy company; but I know not his name.

PRINCE HAL: What manner of man, an it like your majesty?

FALSTAFF: A goodly portly man, i’ faith, and a corpulent; of a cheerful look, a pleasing eye and a most noble carriage; and, as I think, his age some fifty, or, by’r lady, inclining to three score; and now I remember me, his name is Falstaff!

I.e., you resemble the fool I, the king, am.

“Micher”: truant.

A black substance derived from tar or resin.

“An”: here, “if.”

“Carriage”: demeanor.

If that man should be lewdly given, he deceiveth me; for, Harry, I see virtue in his looks. If then the tree may be known by the fruit, as the fruit by the tree, then, peremptorily I speak it, there is virtue in that Falstaff; him keep with, the rest banish. And tell me now, thou naughty varlet, tell me, where hast thou been this month?

“Peremptorily”: decisively.

“Varlet”: low fellow.

PRINCE HAL: Dost thou speak like a king? Do thou stand for me, and I’ll play my father.

I.e., you think that’s how a king would speak? Then let’s trade roles, and let me speak for my father.

FALSTAFF: Depose me? If thou dost it half so gravely, so majestically, both in word and matter, hang me up by the heels for a rabbit-sucker or a poulter’s hare.

A baby (unweaned) rabbit.

PRINCE HAL: Well, here I am set.

FALSTAFF: And here I stand: judge, my masters.

PRINCE HAL: Now, Harry, whence come you?

FALSTAFF: My noble lord, from Eastcheap.

PRINCE HAL: The complaints I hear of thee are grievous.

FALSTAFF: ‘Sblood, my lord, they are false
(nay, I’ll tickle ye for a young prince, i’ faith).

I.e., my imitation of you, Prince, will tickle.

PRINCE HAL: Swearst thou, ungracious boy? Henceforth ne’er look on me. Thou art violently carried away from grace: there is a devil haunts thee in the likeness of an old fat man; a tun of man is thy companion. Why dost thou converse with that trunk of humours, that bolting-hutch of beastliness, that swollen parcel of dropsies, that huge bombard of sack,

“Tun”: a large wine cask, ca. 252 gallons.

“Humours”: blood, phlegm, cholera, and black bile.

“Bolting-hutch”: miller’s bin.

“Dropsies”: edemas, bloatedness.

“Bombard”: leather container of wine.

that stuffed cloak-bag of guts, that roasted Manningtree ox
with the pudding in his belly, that reverend vice, that grey
iniquity, that father ruffian, that vanity in years?
Wherein is he good, but to taste sack and drink it?
Wherein neat and cleanly, but to carve a capon and eat it?
Wherein cunning, but in craft? Wherein crafty,
but in villainy? Wherein villainous, but in all things?
Wherein worthy, but in nothing?

FALSTAFF: I would your grace would take me with you;
whom means your grace?

PRINCE HAL: That villainous, abominable misleader of youth,
Falstaff! that old white-bearded Satan.

FALSTAFF: My lord, the man I know.

PRINCE HAL: I know thou dost.

FALSTAFF: But to say I know more harm in him than in myself,
were to say more than I know. That he is old, the more
the pity, his white hairs do witness it; but that he is, saving
your reverence, a whoremaster, that I utterly deny. If sack
and sugar be a fault, God help the wicked! If to be old and
merry be a sin, then many an old host that I know is damned;
if to be fat be to be hated, then Pharaoh's lean kine are
to be loved. No, my good lord; banish Peto, banish
Bardolph, banish Poins; but for sweet Jack Falstaff,
kind Jack Falstaff, true Jack Falstaff, valiant Jack Falstaff,
and therefore more valiant, being, as he is, old Jack Falstaff,
banish not him thy Harry's company, banish not him
thy Harry's company! Banish plump Jack, and banish
all the world!

PRINCE HAL: I do; I will.

“Grey”: here, gray-haired.

“Capon”: chicken.

“Kine”: cows.

Peto, Bardolph, and Poins are other of their
drinking buddies.

INTRODUCTION (or rather, epilogue): When Hal eventually becomes king in fact, he will spurn his old companion Falstaff, some people think rather heartlessly.

Henry V — More on Choosing One's Companions

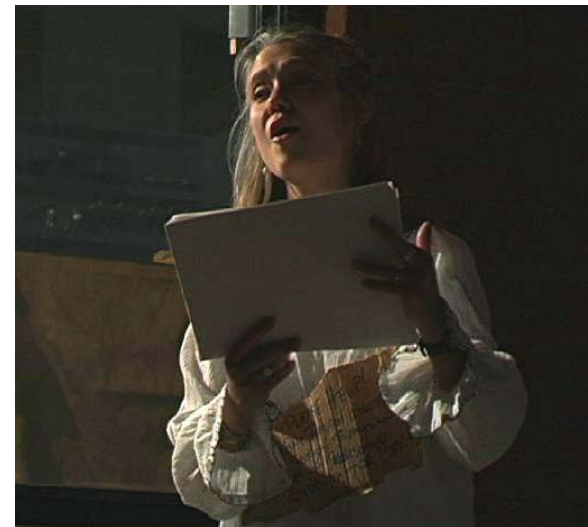
INTRODUCTION: Next we'll have *Henry V's* "Saint Crispin's Day" speech, one of the most thrilling speeches ever written to inspire troops going into battle.

In this play, Prince Hal has become a very sober King Henry V. The scene opens at dawn before a key battle in Henry's campaign against the French. The English forces are exhausted and outnumbered five-to-one by fresh French troops. One of Henry's earls exclaims, "O that we now had here/ But one ten thousand of those men in England/ That do no work today!" Henry overhears him, and our next scene, answers that he'd rather be among "we happy few."

Act IV, scene iii, lines 18 - 67.

Cast: HENRY V [Note: "Henry's" tone as he begins this speech should be gentle but should gradually intensify, reaching passionate triumph by the end.]

HENRY V: What's he that wishes so?
 My cousin Westmoreland? No, my fair cousin;
 If we are marked to die, we are enough
 To do our country loss; and if to live,
 The fewer men, the greater share of honour.
 God's will! I pray thee, wish not one man more.
 By Jove, I am not covetous for gold,
 Nor care I who doth feed upon my cost;
 It yearns me not if men my garments wear;
 Such outward things dwell not in my desires;
 But if it be a sin to covet honour,
 I am the most offending soul alive.



OUR SECOND INTRODUCER, LAURA NEITZEL

I.e., if we're to die, better that no more than we be lost.

"Yearns": here, grieves.

No, faith, my coz, wish not a man from England.
God's peace! I would not lose so great an honour
As one man more, methinks, would share from me
For the best hope I have. O, do not wish one more!
Rather proclaim it, Westmoreland, through my host,
That he which hath no stomach to this fight,
Let him depart; his passport shall be made
And crowns for convoy put into his purse.
We would not die in that man's company
That fears his fellowship to die with us.
This day is called the feast of Crispian.
He that outlives this day, and comes safe home,
Will stand a tip-toe when the day is named,
And rouse him at the name of Crispian.
He that shall live this day, and see old age,
Will yearly on the vigil feast his neighbours,
And say 'To-morrow is Saint Crispian';
Then will he strip his sleeve and show his scars,
And say 'These wounds I had on Crispin's day.'
Old men forget; yet all shall be forgot,
But he'll remember with advantages
What feats he did that day; then shall our names
Familiar in his mouth as household words
Harry the king, Bedford and Exeter,
Warwick and Talbot, Salisbury and Gloucester,
Be in their flowing cups freshly remembered.
This story shall the good man teach his son;
And Crispin Crispian shall ne'er go by,
From this day to the ending of the world,
But we in it shall be remembered;
We few, we happy few, we band of brothers;
For he to-day that sheds his blood with me
Shall be my brother; be he ne'er so vile,
This day shall gentle his condition;
And gentlemen in England now a-bed

“Coz”: cousin.

“Crowns”: gold coins; “convoy”: transport.

I.e., St. Crispian's Day, October 25. Crispin and Crispinian were early Christian martyrs.

“Vigil”: here, eve; “feast”: give a feast for.

“Advantages”: embellishments.



WE HAPPY
FEW

LARKIN AS
HENRY V

Shall think themselves accursed they were not here,
And hold their manhoods cheap whiles any speaks
That fought with us upon Saint Crispin's day.

Macbeth — A Way to Meaninglessness: Killing Time

INTRODUCTION: As *Macbeth* opens, Scotland is engulfed in civil war. The Thane of Cawdor has led a rebellion against the good King Duncan. (A “thane” was a kind of Scottish noble.) Macbeth, who is Thane of Glamis, is a fierce and courageous soldier fighting valiantly for his king against the rebels.

This play carries an atmosphere of evil so intense that some theater people believe it's bad luck even to say the name of the play and instead refer to it as “the Scottish play.” The three witches who appear in the opening scene are referred to as the “weird sisters.” The word “weird” originally meant, having to do with fate; the word is also related to “wayward.”

The first scene of the play introduces the theme that whether things are fair or foul depends on your point of view, and from some points of view, they're equivalent.

Act I, scene i, lines 1 - 12.

Cast: WITCHES 1, 2, and 3.

[Thunder and lightning (with dim light or fog if possible). Three WITCHES on stage.]

FIRST WITCH: When shall we three meet again
In thunder, lightning, or in rain?

SECOND WITCH: When the hurlyburly's done;
When the battle's lost and won.



FAIR IS FOUL
PAULA WEATHERBIE, CAROLYN,
AND DANETTE AS THE WITCHES

“Hurlyburly”: *i.e.*, the civil war.

THIRD WITCH: That will be ere the set of sun.

FIRST WITCH: Where the place?

SECOND WITCH: Upon the heath.

“Heath”: an ill-drained field with poor soil and little growth except shrubby evergreens and peat.

THIRD WITCH: There to meet with Macbeth.

FIRST WITCH: I come, Graymalkin!

Graymalkin, a gray cat, and Paddock, a toad, are “familiars” or spirits who attend and serve the witches.

SECOND WITCH: Paddock calls.

THIRD WITCH: Anon.

ALL: Fair is foul, and foul is fair:
Hover through the fog and filthy air.

[Exit ALL]

INTRODUCTION: After the rebellion is put down, Macbeth is rightly credited for his key role in defeating the traitorous Thane of Cawdor, and King Duncan rewards Macbeth with the title and lands of the executed traitor. Before Macbeth is told the news, however, he and his friend Banquo encounter the three witches, who hail Macbeth not only as Thane of Glamis *and* Thane of Cawdor, but *also* as future king. The witches also foretell that Banquo’s heirs will be kings. In the beginning of our next scene, Lady Macbeth reads a letter from Macbeth about the day’s exciting news. Note her determination that, in order to fulfill their ambitions, she and Macbeth must cut themselves off from parts of their own natures.

[Casting Note: “Lady Macbeth” should be someone who can deliver high intensity.]

Act I, scene v, lines 1 - 54.

Cast: LADY MACBETH, a MESSENGER.

[LADY MACBETH alone on stage, holding a letter. If possible, present this scene by candlelight.]

LADY MACBETH [reading aloud]: ‘They met me in the day of success; and I have learned by the perfectest report, they have more in them than mortal knowledge. When I burned in desire to question them further, they made themselves air, into which they vanished. Whiles I stood rapt in the wonder of it, came missives from the king, who all-hailed me ‘Thane of Cawdor;’ by which title, before, these weird sisters saluted me, and referred me to the coming on of time, with ‘Hail, king that shalt be!’ This have I thought good to deliver thee, my dearest partner of greatness, that thou mightst not lose the dues of rejoicing, by being ignorant of what greatness is promised thee. Lay it to thy heart, and farewell.’

Glamis thou art, and Cawdor; and shalt be
What thou art promised; yet do I fear thy nature;
It is too full o’ the milk of human kindness
To catch the nearest way; thou wouldst be great;
Art not without ambition, but without
The illness should attend it; what thou wouldst highly,
That wouldst thou holily; wouldst not play false,
And yet wouldst wrongly win; thou’ldst have, great Glamis,
That which cries ‘Thus thou must do, if thou have it;
And that which rather thou dost fear to do
Than wishest should be undone.’ Hie thee hither,
That I may pour my spirits in thine ear;
And chastise with the valour of my tongue
All that impedes thee from the golden round,
Which fate and metaphysical aid doth seem
To have thee crowned withal.

[Enter MESSENGER]

What is your tidings?

MESSENGER: The king comes here to-night.

LADY MACBETH: Thou’rt mad to say it;
Is not thy master with him? who, were’t so,
Would have informed for preparation.

“Illness”: here, wrongness.

“Hie thee hither”: bring yourself here.



INTO
THINE EAR

KATHRYN
ALLEN AS
LADY
MACBETH

“Thy master,” “our thane”: Macbeth.

MESSENGER: So please you, it is true: our thane is coming;
One of my fellows had the speed of him,
Who, almost dead for breath, had scarcely more
Than would make up his message.

I.e., the messenger who brought this news exhausted himself to beat Macbeth home.

LADY MACBETH: Give him tending;
He brings great news.

[Exit MESSENGER]

The raven himself is hoarse
That croaks the fatal entrance of Duncan
Under my battlements. Come, you spirits
That tend on mortal thoughts, unsex me here,
And fill me from the crown to the toe top-full
Of direst cruelty! Make thick my blood;
Stop up the access and passage to remorse,
That no compunctious visitings of nature
Shake my fell purpose, nor keep peace between
The effect and it! Come to my woman's breasts,
And take my milk for gall, you murdering ministers,
Wherever in your sightless substances
You wait on nature's mischief! Come, thick night,
And pall thee in the dunkest smoke of hell,
That my keen knife see not the wound it makes,
Nor heaven peep through the blanket of the dark,
To cry 'Hold, hold!'

“Mortal”: as distinguished from immortal; or alternatively, murderous.

“Fell”: fierce; *“keep peace”*: intervene. She wants to block her own conscience and empathy so they won't interfere with either her cruel intentions or their effects.

“Pall”: shroud; *“dunkest”*: darkest.

“Keen knife”: among other things, Macbeth. She also wants to block perception by either Macbeth or heaven.

INTRODUCTION: The Macbeths agree that *now* is their chance to murder King Duncan in order make the witches' prophecy come true. As our next scene begins, however, Macbeth's resolve is wavering. It had already occurred to him that “If chance will have me king, why, chance may crown me,/ Without my stir”; now he worries that “Bloody instructions . . . return to plague th' inventor”. Besides, since Duncan has been a good king, Macbeth has,

as he says, “no spur/ To prick the sides of [his] intent, but only/ Vaulting ambition”. At this point, Lady Macbeth comes to find Macbeth and make sure he doesn’t waver.

Act I, scene vii, lines 28 - 59.

Cast: MACBETH, LADY MACBETH.

[MACBETH alone on stage. Enter LADY MACBETH.]

MACBETH [His brooding interrupted]: How now! What news?

LADY MACBETH: He has almost supp’d: why have you left the chamber?

I.e., Duncan has almost finished eating.

MACBETH: Hath he asked for me?

LADY MACBETH: Know you not he has?

MACBETH: We will proceed no further in this business.
He hath honoured me of late; and I have bought
Golden opinions from all sorts of people,
Which would be worn now in their newest gloss,
Not cast aside so soon.

LADY MACBETH: Was the hope drunk
Wherein you dressed yourself? Hath it slept since?
And wakes it now, to look so green and pale
At what it did so freely? From this time
Such I account thy love. Art thou afeard
To be the same in thine own act and valour
As thou art in desire? Wouldst thou have that
Which thou esteem’st the ornament of life,
And live a coward in thine own esteem,
Letting ‘I dare not’ wait upon ‘I would,’
Like the poor cat i’ the adage?

I.e., at what his hope “did” in his imagination.

The adage: “The cat would eat fish, and would not wet her feet.”

MACBETH: Prithee, peace;
I dare do all that may become a man;
Who dares do more is none.

LADY MACBETH: What beast was't, then,
That made you break this enterprise to me?
When you durst do it, then you were a man;
And, to be more than what you were, you would
Be so much more the man. Nor time nor place
Did then adhere, and yet you would make both.
They have made themselves; and that, their fitness now,
Does unmake you. I have given suck, and know
How tender 'tis to love the babe that milks me:
I would, while it was smiling in my face,
Have plucked my nipple from his boneless gums,
And dashed the brains out, had I so sworn as you
Have done to this.

*I.e., if you're not a man if you dare to do more,
was it some beast that made you propose to do
more?*

*I.e., when you first proposed this murder, it wasn't
clear where or when the opportunity would arise,
yet you said you'd make the opportunity yourself;
but now that the perfect time and place have made
themselves, your resolve withers.*

INTRODUCTION: Macbeth has spoken of jumping the “life to come.” Although in the previous scene, Lady Macbeth urged that the time for action is now, note that at this point, both of the Macbeths are in fact fixated on the future, rather than enjoying the real rewards of the present.

Macbeth proceeds to murder King Duncan, whose son Malcolm flees Scotland to get out of harm's way. Macbeth becomes king, but then starts worrying about the witches' prophecy that Banquo's sons will be kings—note that as soon as Duncan was murdered, the Macbeths' desire to accelerate the future reversed, and the future became their foe. Macbeth hires murderers to kill Banquo and Banquo's son (notwithstanding that the Macbeths themselves apparently have no surviving children). Banquo's son escapes. Macbeth determines “By the worst means [to know] the worst”, and in the next scene, he seeks out the witches for further prophecies.



Act IV, scene i, lines 1 - 38; 44 - 68.

Cast: MACBETH, the three WITCHES.

[If possible, a boiling cauldron center stage, in relative darkness. Thunder. Enter the three WITCHES (Macbeth enters later).]

FIRST WITCH: Thrice the brinded cat hath mewed.

SECOND WITCH: Thrice and once the hedge-pig whined.

THIRD WITCH: Harpier cries 'Tis time, 'tis time.

FIRST WITCH: Round about the cauldron go;
In the poisoned entrails throw.
Toad, that under cold stone
Days and nights has thirty-one
Sweltered venom sleeping got,
Boil thou first i' the charmed pot.

ALL WITCHES: Double, double toil and trouble;
Fire burn, and cauldron bubble.

SECOND WITCH: Fillet of a fenny snake,
In the cauldron boil and bake;
Eye of newt and toe of frog,



BOIL THOU FIRST

“Brinded”: dark-streaked.

“Harpier”: the third witch’s familiar, a harpy.

“Sweltered”: sweated.

“Fenny”: from a fen, or swamp.

“Newt”: a type of small salamander.

Wool of bat and tongue of dog,
Adder's fork and blind-worm's sting,
Lizard's leg and owlet's wing,
For a charm of powerful trouble,
Like a hell-broth, boil and bubble.

ALL WITCHES: Double, double toil and trouble;
Fire burn and cauldron bubble.

THIRD WITCH: Scale of dragon, tooth of wolf,
Witches' mummy, maw and gulf
Of the ravin'd salt-sea shark,
Root of hemlock digg'd i' the dark,
Liver of blaspheming Jew,
Gall of goat, and slips of yew
Slivered in the moon's eclipse,
Nose of Turk and Tartar's lips,
Finger of birth-strangled babe
Ditch-delivered by a drab,
Make the gruel thick and slab;
Add thereto a tiger's chaudron,
For the ingredients of our cauldron.

ALL WITCHES: Double, double toil and trouble;
Fire burn and cauldron bubble.

SECOND WITCH: Cool it with a baboon's blood,
Then the charm is firm and good.

* * * * *

SECOND WITCH: By the pricking of my thumbs,
Something wicked this way comes.
Open, locks,
Whoever knocks!

“Adder”: a poisonous snake; “fork”: its tongue.

I.e., substance made from a mummy; “maw and gulf”: stomach and gullet.

“Root of hemlock”: a poisonous herb.

Yew, an evergreen with poisonous needles and berries, is also sometimes associated with burial sites.

“Drab”: whore.

“Slab”: sticky.

“Chaudron”: entrails.



DOUBLE,
DOUBLE



[Enter MACBETH]

MACBETH: How now, you secret, black, and midnight hags!
What is't you do?

ALL WITCHES: A deed without a name.

MACBETH: I conjure you, by that which you profess,
Howe'er you come to know it, answer me;
Though you untie the winds and let them fight
Against the churches; though the yesty waves
Confound and swallow navigation up;
Though bladed corn be lodged and trees blown down;
Though castles topple on their warders' heads;
Though palaces and pyramids do slope
Their heads to their foundations; though the treasure
Of nature's germens tumble all together,
Even till destruction sicken; answer me
To what I ask you!

FIRST WITCH: Speak.

SECOND WITCH: Demand.

THIRD WITCH: We'll answer.

FIRST WITCH: Say if thou'dst rather hear it from our mouths,
Or from our masters?

MACBETH: Call 'em; let me see 'em.



A DEED WITHOUT NAME

“Yesty”: yeasty, foamy or swelling.

“Bladed corn”: ripe wheat; “lodged”: beaten down.
“Warders”’: caretakers’.

“Nature’s germens”: the seeds of all things
(including humanity).

FIRST WITCH: Pour in sow's blood, that hath eaten
Her nine farrow; grease that's sweaten
From the murderer's gibbet, throw
Into the flame.

“Nine farrow”: litter of nine; “sweaten”: sweated.
“Gibbet”: gallows.

ALL WITCHES: Come, high or low;
Thyself and office deftly show!

[Thunder; lights go out; with puff of smoke if possible.]

INTRODUCTION: The witches conjure four apparitions for Macbeth. Each one portrays *visually* the key to the *true* interpretation of the apparition's *words*, some of which, taken alone, are misleading.

The first apparition is an armed head that warns Macbeth to beware Macduff, one of Macbeth's nobles, whose family Macbeth then determines to murder. The second apparition, a bloody infant, advises Macbeth to “laugh to scorn/ The power of man, for none of woman born/ Shall harm Macbeth.” The third apparition, a child crowned and holding a tree branch, tells Macbeth he'll never be vanquished “until/ Great Birnam Wood to high Dunsinane Hill/ Shall come against him” (Dunsinane being the site of Macbeth's castle). Macbeth feels reassured by the first three apparitions; but then a fourth shows him still the line of kings issuing from Banquo. (Note that when this play was first performed, England's ruler was James I, who was interested in witchcraft and was believed to have descended from Banquo.)

Macbeth remarks to one of the apparitions, “Had I three ears, I'd hear thee.” But in fact, Macbeth *fails* to fully comprehend the apparitions, *not* because he lacks a third ear, but because he focusses on the literal meaning of the words, using his ears but not his eyes and imagination. (In a scene we've skipped over, compare Macbeth's comment about a dagger he hallucinates shortly before murdering Duncan: “Mine eyes are made the fools o' the other senses/ Or else worth all the rest.”) The Macbeths have failed to understand that they could not cut themselves off selectively from communication with some of their senses and feelings, from their natural, whole selves, and still remain vital, effective human beings. Similarly, Macbeth has failed to realize that he cannot survive as king while alienating his nobles, and that the viability of his government depends on good relations with them.

Duncan's son Malcolm returns to Scotland, gathering forces as he approaches Dunsinane Castle to oust Macbeth. As they pass through Birnam Wood, Malcolm directs his men to bear tree branches before them to camouflage their advance on the castle.



ANSWER ME!
CHRIS VOGNAR AS MACBETH

Macbeth begins our last scenes by spurning communication altogether. Also note Macbeth's great soliloquies near the end of these scenes, in which we see, among other things, that for the Macbeths, the future has ripened only into the "yellow leaf" and meaninglessness, at best.

Act V, scene iii, lines 1 - 36 (abridged as indicated).

Cast: MACBETH, SEYTON (an attendant), a SERVANT, an off-stage SCREAMER, a MESSENGER.

[Enter MACBETH.]

MACBETH: Bring me no more reports; let them fly all!
Till Birnam Wood remove to Dunsinane,
I cannot taint with fear. What's the boy Malcolm?
Was he not born of woman? The spirits that know
All mortal consequences have pronounced me thus:
'Fear not, Macbeth; no man that's born of woman
Shall e'er have power upon thee.' Then fly, false thanes,
And mingle with the English epicures;
The mind I sway by and the heart I bear
Shall never sag with doubt nor shake with fear.

The reports have been of desertion by Macbeth's soldiers to the other side.

"Mortal consequences": *i.e.*, the future.

"English epicures": Malcolm's English allies, imputed to prefer soft living.

[Enter SERVANT]

MACBETH: The devil damn thee black, thou cream-faced loon!
Where got'st thou that goose look?

"Loon": idler or simpleton; or a type of fish-diving bird.

SERVANT: There is ten thousand—

MACBETH: Geese, villain?

SERVANT: Soldiers, sir.

MACBETH: Go prick thy face, and over-red thy fear,
Thou lily-livered boy. What soldiers, patch?
Death of thy soul! Those linen cheeks of thine

I.e., get some color into your face to disguise your fear. "Patch": clown, fool.

Are counsellors to fear. What soldiers, whey-face?

SERVANT: The English force, so please you.

MACBETH: Take thy face hence.

[Exit SERVANT]

Seyton!—I am sick at heart,
When I behold—Seyton, I say!—This push
Will cheer me ever, or disseat me now.
I have lived long enough; my way of life
Is fall'n into the sear, the yellow leaf;
And that which should accompany old age,
As honour, love, obedience, troops of friends,
I must not look to have; but, in their stead,
Curses, not loud but deep, mouth-honour, breath,
Which the poor heart would fain deny, and dare not. Seyton!

“Sear”: here, that which is withered.

[Enter SEYTON]

* * * * *

MACBETH: I'll fight till from my bones my flesh be hacked.
Give me my armour.

SEYTON: 'Tis not needed yet.

MACBETH: I'll put it on.
Send out more horses; skirt the country round;
Hang those that talk of fear. Give me mine armour.

“Skirt”: here, circle. A variant reads “skirr”,
meaning search.

* * * * *

SCREAMER: [Scream from offstage, evincing discovery of Lady Macbeth's suicide]



[Continue with Act V, scene v, lines 7 - 43.]

MACBETH: What is that noise?

SEYTON: It is the cry of women, my good lord.

[Exit]

MACBETH: I have almost forgot the taste of fears;
 The time has been, my senses would have cooled
 To hear a night-shriek; and my fell of hair
 Would at a dismal treatise rouse and stir
 As life were in't. I have supp'd full with horrors;
 Direness, familiar to my slaughterous thoughts
 Cannot once start me.

[Re-enter SEYTON]

MACBETH: Wherefore was that cry?

SEYTON: The queen, my lord, is dead.

MACBETH: She should have died hereafter;
 There would have been a time for such a word.
 To-morrow, and to-morrow, and to-morrow,
 Creeps in this petty pace from day to day
 To the last syllable of recorded time,
 And all our yesterdays have lighted fools
 The way to dusty death. Out, out, brief candle!
 Life's but a walking shadow, a poor player
 That struts and frets his hour upon the stage
 And then is heard no more. It is a tale
 Told by an idiot, full of sound and fury,
 Signifying nothing.

“Fell of hair”: the hair on my skin.

“Dismal treatise”: such as a horror story.

“Start me”: make me jump.

He might mean that she should have lived longer,
or that she was certain to die sooner or later.

[Enter MESSENGER]

MACBETH: Thou comest to use thy tongue; thy story quickly.

MESSENGER: Gracious my lord,
I should report that which I say I saw,
But know not how to do it.

MACBETH: Well, say, sir.

MESSENGER: As I did stand my watch upon the hill,
I looked toward Birnam, and anon, methought,
The wood began to move.

MACBETH: Liar and slave!

MESSENGER: Let me endure your wrath, if't be not so;
Within this three mile may you see it coming:
I say, a moving grove.

I.e., I submit myself to your wrath, if it's not true.

MACBETH: If thou speak'st false,
Upon the next tree shalt thou hang alive,
Till famine cling thee; if thy speech be sooth,
I care not if thou dost for me as much.
I pull in resolution, and begin
To doubt the equivocation of the fiend
That lies like truth.

INTRODUCTION: Toward the beginning of the play, King Duncan remarked of the traitor Cawdor that “There’s no art/ To find the mind’s construction in the face.” In one scene we’ve skipped over, Shakespeare *shows* us how Duncan’s son Malcolm, more clever than his father, *invents* an art to help “find the mind’s construction”. When Macduff solicited Malcolm to return to Scotland to fight Macbeth, Malcolm tested Macduff’s motives by *pretending* to have a character so vicious that Scotland would be better off with even Macbeth as king. After Macduff’s motives tested true, Malcolm apologized for the

deception, saying, “Angels are bright still, though the brightest fell/
Though all things foul would wear the brows of grace,/ Yet grace
must still look so.”

Remember the witches’ mantra equating “fair” and “foul”. Macbeth has complained of the “equivocation of the fiend,” but with every choice Macbeth made, he devoted himself to such equivocation, to meaninglessness. As a porter says in a scene we’ve had to skip over, “here’s an equivocator, that could swear in both the scales against either scale . . . yet could not equivocate to heaven.”

Much Ado About Nothing — Air as a Weapon

INTRODUCTION: In *Much Ado About Nothing*, old Leonato has learned that the men of his country, under the command of Don Pedro, have won their war and are expected to return at any moment. Among Don Pedro’s officers is a young man, Benedick Mountanto (say “Mount-**àhnt’ -oh**”). Apparently, Benedick and a young woman, Beatrice, have been acquainted for some time, but any warm feelings they might have felt toward one another have been diverted into a war of words and wit. Our next scene opens their banter. Later in the play, their friends will trick them into falling in love.

[Casting Note: Beatrice and Benedick should be played by people with a good sense of humor.]

Act I, scene i, lines 30 - 145.

Cast: BEATRICE, BENEDICK, and several minor roles: HERO (female), LEONATO, DON PEDRO, a MESSENGER.

[BEATRICE, HERO, and LEONATO are on stage. Enter MESSENGER.]



MUCH MOBILIZING

BEATRICE: I pray you, is Signior Mountanto returned from the wars or no?

MESSENGER: I know none of that name, lady; there was none such in the army of any sort.

LEONATO: What is he that you ask for, niece?

HERO: My cousin means Signior Benedick of Padua.



TWO ROSES

MESSENGER: O, he's returned; and as pleasant as ever he was.

“Pleasant”: jocular (he likes to joke).

BEATRICE: He set up his bills here in Messina and challenged Cupid at the flight; and my uncle's fool, reading the challenge, subscribed for Cupid, and challenged him at the bird-bolt. I pray you, how many hath he killed and eaten in these wars? But how many hath he killed? for indeed I promised to eat all of his killing.

“Set up his bills”: published notice.
I.e., claimed to be immune to love.

“Bird-bolt”: a blunt, less lethal arrow allowed to children and attributed to Cupid.
She now suggests Benedick killed no one in the wars, implying he lacks valor.

LEONATO: Faith, niece, you tax Signior Benedick too much; but he'll be meet with you, I doubt it not.

I.e., Benedick will match her in mockery.

MESSENGER: He hath done good service, lady, in these wars.

BEATRICE: You had musty victual, and he hath helped to eat it; he is a very valiant trencherman; he hath an excellent stomach.

His “service” was in eating their left-overs.

MESSENGER: And a good soldier too, lady.

BEATRICE: And a good soldier to a lady; but what is he to a lord?

He might be able to overcome a woman, but what if he were matched against a man?

MESSENGER: A lord to a lord, a man to a man;
stuffed with all honourable virtues.

BEATRICE: It is so, indeed; he is no less than a stuffed man;
but for the stuffing,—well, we are all mortal.

LEONATO: You must not, sir, mistake my niece. There is a kind
of merry war betwixt Signior Benedick and her; they
never meet but there's a skirmish of wit between them.

BEATRICE: Alas! he gets nothing by that.
In our last conflict four of his five wits went halting off,
and now is the whole man governed with one;
so that if he have wit enough to keep himself warm,
let him bear it for a difference between himself and his horse;
for it is all the wealth that he hath left,
to be known as a reasonable creature.
Who is his companion now?
He hath every month a new sworn brother.

He wins nothing in their war of wits.
“Halting”: limping.

I.e., his remaining wit is all that distinguishes him from his horse, or as a creature capable of reason.

MESSENGER: Is't possible?

BEATRICE: Very easily possible: he wears his faith but as
the fashion of his hat; it ever changes with the next block.

I.e., as the shape of a hat is changed when dried on a differently-shaped block.
I.e., not in your favor.

MESSENGER: I see, lady, the gentleman is not in your books.

BEATRICE: No; an he were, I would burn my study. But,
I pray you, who is his companion? Is there no young
squarer now that will make a voyage with him to the devil?

“Squarer”: quareller.

MESSENGER: He is most in the company of the right noble
Claudio.

BEATRICE: O Lord, he will hang upon him like a disease: he is sooner caught than the pestilence, and the taker runs presently mad. God help the noble Claudio! If he have caught the Benedick, it will cost him a thousand pound ere a' be cured.

Implying that various expenses are incurred in having Benedick as a friend.

MESSENGER: I will hold friends with you, lady.

I wouldn't want to be in your disfavor.

BEATRICE: Do, good friend.

LEONATO: You will never run mad, niece.

She'll never "catch" the "disease," Benedick; she's a skeptic.

BEATRICE: No, not till a hot January.

MESSENGER: Don Pedro is approached.

[Enter DON PEDRO and BENEDICK]

DON PEDRO: Good Signior Leonato, you are come to meet your trouble; the fashion of the world is to avoid cost, and you encounter it.

LEONATO: Never came trouble to my house in the likeness of your grace: for trouble being gone, comfort should remain; but when you depart from me, sorrow abides and happiness takes his leave.

DON PEDRO: You embrace your charge too willingly. I think this is your daughter.

LEONATO: Her mother hath many times told me so.

BENEDICK: Were you in doubt, sir, that you asked her?

LEONATO: Signior Benedick, no; for then were you a child.

I.e., the other person I might have feared had fathered her is you, and you were too young.

DON PEDRO: You have it full, Benedick; we may guess by this what you are, being a man. Truly, the lady fathers herself. Be happy, lady; for you are like an honourable father.

“Have it full”: you are well-answered. Beatrice’s resemblance to her father shows who he is.

BENEDICK: If Signior Leonato be her father, she would not have his head on her shoulders for all Messina, as like him as she is.

“His head”: *i.e.,* with Leonato’s marks of age.

BEATRICE: I wonder that you will still be talking, Signior Benedick; nobody marks you.

“I wonder”: I’m surprised.
“Marks”: pays attention to.

BENEDICK: What, my dear Lady Disdain! Are you yet living?

Implying she’s too old and stale still to live.



ARE YOU
YET LIVING?

BOBBY BLAIR AS
BENEDICK, BART
WEISS AS DON
PEDRO, AND AMY
MCMAHAN AS
BEATRICE

BEATRICE: Is it possible disdain should die while she hath such meet food to feed it as Signior Benedick? Courtesy itself must convert to disdain, if you come in her presence.

BENEDICK: Then is courtesy a turncoat. But it is certain I am loved of all ladies, only you excepted; and I would I could find in my heart that I had not a hard heart; for, truly, I love none.

BEATRICE: A dear happiness to women; they would else have been troubled with a pernicious suitor. I thank God and my cold blood, I am of your humour for that: I had rather hear my dog bark at a crow than a man swear he loves me.

BENEDICK: God keep your ladyship still in that mind! So some gentleman or other shall 'scape a predestinate scratched face.

BEATRICE: Scratching could not make it worse, an 'twere such a face as yours were.

BENEDICK: Well, you are a rare parrot-teacher.

BEATRICE: A bird of my tongue is better than a beast of yours.

BENEDICK: I would my horse had the speed of your tongue, and so good a continuer. But keep your way, i' God's name; I have done.

BEATRICE: You always end with a jade's trick: I know you of old.

I.e., it's a good thing for women that you don't love any of them.
I'm glad I, too, am not susceptible to love.

I.e., if any man were destined to wed her, he'd be doomed to be scratched.

"Parrot-teacher": one who says the same thing over and over.

"Continuer": *i.e.*, had such stamina.

"Jade": here, an ill-trained horse (likely to drop out of a race before the end).



IT
BUBBLES;



YOU
BUBBLE;

SECOND INTERMISSION

Hamlet: Inversions of Meaning

INTRODUCTION: In *Macbeth*, we saw how words and lives can be deprived of meaning; in *Hamlet*, we'll see how meanings can be *inverted*.

A few months before the play opens, Hamlet's father (*also* named Hamlet) died. Hamlet, Sr. was the king of Denmark and, like Macbeth, had been a valiant soldier. Hamlet, Sr. had previously made successful conquest over the king of Norway, Fortinbras, Sr. This war was concluded on the very day that Hamlet, Jr. was born. In the background of the play, Fortinbras, Jr. is now leading a force to redeem Norway's sovereignty. Hamlet, Jr., however, is no soldier, but a college student.



WE ALL
BUBBLE

Young Hamlet probably should have succeeded his father to the Danish throne, but at the time of his father's death, he was at school in Germany. In Hamlet's absence, his father's brother, Claudius, successfully usurped the throne, solidifying his position by marrying Hamlet's mother, Gertrude, within months after Hamlet's father's death. Hamlet is popular with the people but apparently has no political base among the nobles and moreover could not now claim the throne without opposing his mother. In the next scene we find Hamlet not just in mourning for his father, but probably in deep depression, musing on suicide.

By the way, Shakespeare was an actor in his own theater company, and in *Hamlet* he played one of the only two roles that he's known to have played, that of Hamlet's father's ghost. In real life, Shakespeare had an only son, named Hamzet, who died at the age of eleven, a few years before this play was written. Thus, Shakespeare "corrected" his own history, in which the father outlived his own son, by *inverting* that reality in this play, in which the fictive son, Hamlet, survived Shakespeare playing the role of the dead father.

Within the play itself, however, inversions occur that are *corruptive* rather than *corrective*. In the following scene, we find imagery suggesting that Claudius's acts have resulted in an inversion of the usual meanings of high and low, light and dark. Hamlet, rather than enjoying the position of a *son* of his true father, finds himself "too much in the sun" (that is, s-U-n), as his uncle proffers himself as a pretended "father". Claudius has usurped the nation's bright crown; now, deception and intrigue prevail at court, which should be a stratum of clearness and illumination. Hamlet and his real father, the rightful rulers, have accordingly been relegated to "nighted" black and a dark underworld, and the only courses of action remaining to Hamlet necessarily constitute subversion.

[Casting Note: "Hamlet" should be played by someone complex and charming.]

Act I, scene ii, lines 64 - 159.

Cast: HAMLET, KING CLAUDIUS, QUEEN GERTRUDE.

[ALL on stage. CLAUDIUS and GERTRUDE are seated on thrones.]

CLAUDIUS: But now, my cousin Hamlet, and my son,—

HAMLET [Aside]: A little more than kin, and less than kind.

I.e., our relationship is both too close, since you married your brother's wife, my mother, and not close enough, since I'm not really your son and there's no love between us.

CLAUDIUS: How is it that the clouds still hang on you?

I.e., why do you still seem sad?

HAMLET: Not so, my lord; I am too much i' the sun.

I resent the inappropriate brightness of your court;

GERTRUDE: Good Hamlet, cast thy nighted colour off,
And let thine eye look like a friend on Denmark.
Do not for ever with thy veiled lids
Seek for thy noble father in the dust;
Thou know'st 'tis common: all that lives must die,
Passing through nature to eternity.

HAMLET: Ay, madam, it is common.

GERTRUDE: If it be,
Why seems it so particular with thee?

HAMLET: Seems, madam! Nay it is; I know not 'seems.'
'Tis not alone my inky cloak, good mother,
Nor customary suits of solemn black,
Nor windy suspiration of forced breath,
No, nor the fruitful river in the eye,
Nor the dejected 'havior of the visage,
Together with all forms, moods, shapes of grief,
That can denote me truly; these indeed seem,
For they are actions that a man might play;
But I have that within which passeth show;
These, but the trappings and the suits of woe.

I'd rather you didn't pretend to regard me as your son; I wish I weren't in the position of the son who should have succeeded my father.

"Veiled lids": *i.e.*, with eyes downcast.

"Common": *i.e.*, we all have in common that we'll die.

I don't just *seem* sad, I AM sad.

"Visage": face.

"Denote me truly": here, represent all I feel and am. For these appearances can be faked.

TOO MUCH I'
THE SUN

MANNY AS
CLAUDIUS;
KEVIN NASH
AS HAMLET



CLAUDIUS: 'Tis sweet and commendable in your nature, Hamlet,
To give these mourning duties to your father;
But, you must know, your father lost a father;
That father lost, lost his, and the survivor bound
In filial obligation for some term
To do obsequious sorrow; but to persever
In obstinate condolement is a course
Of impious stubbornness; 'tis unmanly grief;
It shows a will most incorrect to heaven,
A heart unfortified, a mind impatient,
An understanding simple and unschooled;
For what we know must be and is as common
As any the most vulgar thing to sense,
Why should we in our peevish opposition
Take it to heart? Fie! 'Tis a fault to heaven,
A fault against the dead, a fault to nature,
To reason most absurd, whose common theme
Is death of fathers, and who still hath cried,
From the first corse till he that died to-day,
'This must be so.' We pray you, throw to earth
This unprevailing woe, and think of us
As of a father; for let the world take note:
You are the most immediate to our throne;
And with no less nobility of love
Than that which dearest father bears his son,
Do I impart toward you. For your intent
In going back to school in Wittenberg,
It is most retrograde to our desire,
And we beseech you, bend you to remain
Here, in the cheer and comfort of our eye,
Our chiefest courtier, cousin, and our son.

“Corse”: corpse.

Claudius probably wants Hamlet to stay where
Claudius can keep an eye on him.

GERTRUDE: Let not thy mother lose her prayers, Hamlet;
I pray thee, stay with us; go not to Wittenberg.

HAMLET: I shall in all my best obey you, madam.

CLAUDIUS: Why, 'tis a loving and a fair reply;
Be as ourself in Denmark. Madam, come;
This gentle and unforced accord of Hamlet
Sits smiling to my heart; in grace whereof,
No jocund health that Denmark drinks to-day,
But the great cannon to the clouds shall tell,
And the king's rouse the heavens all bruit again,
Re-speaking earthly thunder. Come away.

[Exit all but HAMLET]

HAMLET: O, that this too, too solid flesh would melt
Thaw and resolve itself into a dew!
Or that the Everlasting had not fixed
His canon 'gainst self-slaughter! O God! God!
How weary, stale, flat and unprofitable,
Seem to me all the uses of this world!
Fie on't! ah fie! 'tis an unweeded garden,
That grows to seed; things rank and gross in nature
Possess it merely. That it should come to this!
But two months dead; nay, not so much, not two;
So excellent a king; that was, to this,
Hyperion to a satyr; so loving to my mother
That he might not beteem the winds of heaven
Visit her face too roughly. Heaven and earth!
Must I remember? Why, she would hang on him,
As if increase of appetite had grown
By what it fed on; and yet, within a month—
Let me not think on't—Frailty, thy name is woman!—
A little month, or ere those shoes were old
With which she followed my poor father's body,
Like Niobe, all tears;—why she, even she—
O, God! A beast, that wants discourse of reason,

I.e., in thanks for Hamlet's agreement to stay, Claudius is ordering that every toast he drinks today should be accompanied by cannon fire, which the heavens will echo.

“Sullied” and “sallied” are variant readings for “solid.”

I.e., only things rank and gross predominate.

*I.e., how could my mother go from my father, who was like the sun-god, to the low satyr, my uncle.
“Beteem”: allow.*

I.e., the more she had of him, the more she wanted.

“Niobe”: In Greek mythology, she continued to weep for her slain children even after she was

Would have mourned longer—married with my uncle,
My father's brother; but no more like my father
Than I to Hercules; within a month,
Ere yet the salt of most unrighteous tears
Had left the flushing in her galled eyes,
She married. O, most wicked speed, to post
With such dexterity to incestuous sheets!
It is not nor it cannot come to good;
But break, my heart; for I must hold my tongue.

turned to stone.

“Galled”: inflamed.

“Post”: ride in haste, at a trot.

INTRODUCTION: At night, on the castle battlements, Hamlet's father's ghost appears to Hamlet. The apparition tells him that Hamlet, Sr. did not die naturally but was murdered by Hamlet's uncle; Claudius poured poison into Hamlet, Sr.'s ear. The ghost urges vengeance on Claudius, which Hamlet swears to accomplish. Afterward, Hamlet (who was already depressed and who might now really wonder about his own sanity) decides to pretend to be mad, to give himself cover (another instance of feigning to survive). In the next scene, we find Hamlet plying his considerable intellect on the subject of suicide, again. At the end of this passage, Hamlet spies Ophelia, with whom he was probably in love.


Act III, scene i, lines 55 - 89.

Cast: HAMLET.

HAMLET: To be, or not to be; that is the question:
Whether 'tis nobler in the mind to suffer
The slings and arrows of outrageous fortune,
Or to take arms against a sea of troubles,
And by opposing end them? To die: to sleep;
No more; and by a sleep to say we end
The heart-ache and the thousand natural shocks
That flesh is heir to, 'tis a consummation
Devoutly to be wished. To die, to sleep;
To sleep, perchance to dream—ay, there's the rub;
For in that sleep of death, what dreams may come
When we have shuffled off this mortal coil

Is it nobler to suffer and endure misfortunes, or to take the initiative to end them through suicide?

I.e., if death is like sleep, the dead may have bad dreams (“coil”: here, the troubles and tumult we



Must give us pause; there's the respect
That makes calamity of so long life;
For who would bear the whips and scorns of time,
The oppressor's wrong, the proud man's contumely,
The pangs of despised love, the law's delay,
The insolence of office and the spurns
That patient merit of the unworthy takes,
When he himself might his quietus make
With a bare bodkin? Who would fardels bear,
To grunt and sweat under a weary life,
But that the dread of something after death,
The undiscovered country from whose bourn
No traveller returns, puzzles the will
And makes us rather bear those ills we have
Than fly to others that we know not of?
Thus conscience does make cowards of us all,
And thus the native hue of resolution
Is sicklied o'er with the pale cast of thought;
And enterprises of great pith and moment,
With this regard, their currents turn awry
And lose the name of action. —Soft you now!
The fair Ophelia! Nymph, in thy orisons
Be all my sins remembered.

endure while alive); that's the consideration that dissuades us from ending our lives early.

“Contumely”: contemptuous treatment.

“Quietus”: final settlement.

“Bodkin”: dagger; “fardels”: burdens.

“Bourn”: stream or boundary.

“Conscience”: understanding, as well as conscience in the modern sense; “native hue”: natural color.

“Pith”: significance. A variant reading is “pitch.”

“Orisons”: prayers.

INTRODUCTION: Claudius summons to court two of Hamlet's former schoolmates, Rosencrantz and Guildenstern, to spy on Hamlet. Meanwhile, Hamlet, hoping for corroboration of the ghost's story, arranges for the performance at court of a play-within-the-play, with a plot that resembles the murder of his father as described by the ghost. While watching the performance, Claudius shows great alarm, although he does not volunteer a confession.

Our next scene occurs shortly after that play-within-the-play. Hamlet is at least for now feeling triumphant and pleased with his own cleverness in eliciting some *corroboration* for the apparition's story. In high gear, he slices and dices Rosencrantz and Guildenstern. At the end of the scene, Hamlet uses a recorder (similar to a flute) as a metaphor for himself: there may *appear* to be *nothing* inside it, yet the nothingness of breath blown through it can emerge as beautiful music—but only when played by those who “can command [the stops] to [the] utterance of harmony.”

Act III, scene ii, 296 - 373.

Cast: HAMLET, GUILDENSTERN, ROSENCRANTZ, and a PLAYER, a minor character.

[HAMLET, GUILDENSTERN and ROSENCRANTZ on stage.]

GUILDENSTERN: Good my lord, vouchsafe me a word with you.

HAMLET: Sir, a whole history.

GUILDENSTERN: The king, sir,—

HAMLET: Ay, sir, what of him?

GUILDENSTERN: Is in his retirement marvellous distempered.

HAMLET: With drink, sir?

GUILDENSTERN: No, my lord, rather with choler.

“Choler”: the “humour” or fluid associated with anger.

HAMLET: Your wisdom should show itself more richer
to signify this to his doctor; for, for me to put him to
his purgation would perhaps plunge him into far more choler.

I.e., if it were left to me to drain him of
his excess fluid, I might make too large an
incision.

GUILDENSTERN: Good my lord, put your discourse into some
frame and start not so wildly from my affair.

HAMLET: I am tame, sir: pronounce.

GUILDENSTERN: The queen, your mother, in most great
affliction of spirit, hath sent me to you.

HAMLET: You are welcome.

GUILDENSTERN: Nay, good my lord, this courtesy is not of the

right breed. If it shall please you to make me a wholesome answer, I will do your mother's commandment: if not, your pardon and my return shall be the end of my business.

HAMLET: Sir, I cannot.

GUILDENSTERN: What, my lord?

HAMLET: Make you a wholesome answer; for my wit's diseased. But, sir, such answer as I can make, you shall command; or, rather, as you say, my mother; therefore no more, but to the matter: my mother, you say,—

ROSENCRANTZ: Then thus she says: your behavior hath struck her into amazement and admiration.

HAMLET: O wonderful son, that can so astonish a mother! But is there no sequel at the heels of this mother's admiration? Impart.

ROSENCRANTZ: She desires to speak with you in her closet, ere you go to bed.

HAMLET: We shall obey, were she ten times our mother. Have you any further trade with us?

ROSENCRANTZ: My lord, you once did love me.

HAMLET: So I do still, by these pickers and stealers.

“Pickers and stealers”: hands.

ROSENCRANTZ: Good my lord, what is your cause of distemper? You do, surely, bar the door upon your own liberty, if you deny your griefs to your friend.

HAMLET: Sir, I lack advancement.

Note, “matter” and “mother” come from the same root, “mater.”

“Admiration”: wonder.

ROSENCRANTZ: How can that be, when you have the voice of
the king himself for your succession in Denmark?

HAMLET: Ay, but sir, 'While the grass grows,'—
the proverb is something musty.

*I.e., his uncle forestalled him from ascending when
his father died.*

[Enter PLAYER, carrying a recorder or flute]

O, the recorders! Let me see one.

[Player hands the recorder to Hamlet]

To withdraw with you:—why do you
go about to recover the wind of me, as if you would drive
me into a toil?

*I.e., why do you keep trying to get down
wind from me, as if you want to drive me
into a snare?*

GUILDENSTERN: O, my lord, if my duty be too bold, my love
is too unmannerly.

HAMLET: I do not well understand that. Will you play upon
this pipe?

GUILDENSTERN: My lord, I cannot.

HAMLET: I pray you.

GUILDENSTERN: Believe me, I cannot.

HAMLET: I do beseech you.

GUILDENSTERN: I know no touch of it, my lord.

HAMLET: 'Tis as easy as lying: govern these ventages with your

“Ventages”: the stops or holes in the pipe.

fingers and thumb, give it breath with your mouth, and it will discourse most eloquent music. Look you, these are the stops.

GUILDENSTERN: But these cannot I command to any utterance of harmony; I have not the skill.

HAMLET: Why, look you now, how unworthy a thing you make of me! You would play upon me, you would seem to know my stops, you would pluck out the heart of my mystery; you would sound me from my lowest note to the top of my compass; and there is much music, excellent voice, in this little organ; yet cannot you make it speak. 'Sblood, do you think I am easier to be played on than a pipe? Call me what instrument you will, though you can fret me, yet you cannot play upon me.

[EPILOGUE: At the end of *Hamlet*, most of the characters including Prince Hamlet have died. Fortinbras, Jr. comes on stage and bids his men give Hamlet a soldier's rites, "For he was likely, had he been put on,/ To have proved most royal".]

The Tempest — New I's Through New Eyes; Rebirth Through Art

INTRODUCTION: Our last play is *The Tempest*. Many people see the central character in this play, the magician Prospero, as representing Shakespeare himself. *The Tempest* is believed to be the last play wholly written by Shakespeare, and might be viewed as his "swan song."

In the beginning of the play, we learn that long ago, Prospero was the Duke of Milan. But like Hamlet, Prospero had been a scholar, not a soldier or politician. He'd buried himself in his books, trusting his brother Antonio to rule. That excessive trust or neglect tempted Antonio to evil. Antonio usurped Prospero's dukedom and set Prospero adrift at sea, together with his books and his infant daughter, Miranda. They landed on the island they now inhabit together with its creatures, including the spirit, Ariel, and the beast, Caliban.

As the play opens, a ship had been passing near the isle that carried Prospero's usurping brother Antonio, as well as Prince Ferdinand, among others. Prospero, using magic from one of his beloved books, and with the help of

Ariel, raised a terrible storm in which the ship was caught, in order to bring its passengers to the island. There, during the course of the play, Prospero will put them through a process through which they can all be transformed and rescued from the isle.

[Casting Note: Prospero should be played by someone who can seem authoritative and majestic.]

Act I, scene ii, lines 189 - 224; 240 - 299.

Cast: ARIEL, PROSPERO, MIRANDA (although she has no lines in this scene).

[ALL on stage.]

ARIEL: All hail, great master! Grave sir, hail! I come
To answer thy best pleasure; be't to fly,
To swim, to dive into the fire, to ride
On the curled clouds, to thy strong bidding
Task Ariel and all his quality.

PROSPERO: Hast thou, spirit, performed to point
The tempest that I bade thee?

ARIEL: To every article.
I boarded the king's ship; now on the beak,
Now in the waist, the deck, in every cabin,
I flamed amazement. Sometime I'd divide,
And burn in many places: on the topmast,
The yards and bowsprit, would I flame distinctly;
Then meet and join. Jove's lightnings, the precursors
O' the dreadful thunder-claps, more momentary
And sight-outrunning were not; the fire and cracks
Of sulphurous roaring the most mighty Neptune
Seem to besiege and make his bold waves tremble,
Yea, his dread trident shake.

PROSPERO: My brave spirit!
Who was so firm, so constant, that this coil

I.e., have you raised the tempest exactly as I instructed?

Ariel seems to think of the ship as a creature.

Ariel imitated St. Elmo's fire.

"Jove": Chief of the Roman gods.

"Neptune": Roman god of the sea.

"Trident": Neptune's three-pronged spear.

"Coil": here, tumult.

Would not infect his reason?

ARIEL: Not a soul
But felt a fever of the mad and played
Some tricks of desperation. All but mariners
Plunged in the foaming brine and quit the vessel,
Then all afire with me; the king's son, Ferdinand,
With hair up-staring,—then like reeds, not hair,—
Was the first man that leaped; cried, 'Hell is empty
And all the devils are here!'

PROSPERO: Why, that's my spirit!
But was not this nigh shore?

ARIEL: Close by, my master.

PROSPERO: But are they, Ariel, safe?

ARIEL: Not a hair perished;
On their sustaining garments not a blemish,
But fresher than before; and, as thou badest me,
In troops I have dispersed them 'bout the isle.
The king's son have I landed by himself,
Whom I left cooling of the air with sighs,
In an odd angle of the isle and sitting,
His arms in this sad knot.

* * * * *

PROSPERO: The time 'twixt six and now
Must by us both be spent most precious.

ARIEL: Is there more toil? Since thou dost give me pains,
Let me remember thee what thou hast promised,
Which is not yet performed me.

“Badest”: directed.

I.e., with his arms folded in a fashion Ariel now demonstrates.



PROSPERO: How now? Moody?
What is't thou canst demand?

ARIEL: My liberty.

PROSPERO: Before the time be out? No more!

ARIEL: I prithee,
Remember I have done thee worthy service;
Told thee no lies, made thee no mistakings, served
Without or grudge or grumblings; thou didst promise
To bate me a full year.

PROSPERO: Dost thou forget
From what a torment I did free thee?

ARIEL: No.

PROSPERO: Thou dost, and think'st it much
To tread the ooze of the salt deep,
To run upon the sharp wind of the north,
To do me business in the veins o' the earth
When it is baked with frost.

ARIEL: I do not, sir.

PROSPERO: Thou liest, malignant thing! Hast thou forgot
The foul witch Sycorax, who with age and envy
Was grown into a hoop? Hast thou forgot her?

ARIEL: No, sir.

PROSPERO: Thou hast. Where was she born? Speak; tell me.

I.e., to free me a year early.



THOU HAST PROMISED
DAVID AND PAULA WEATHERBIE

ARIEL: Sir, in Argier.

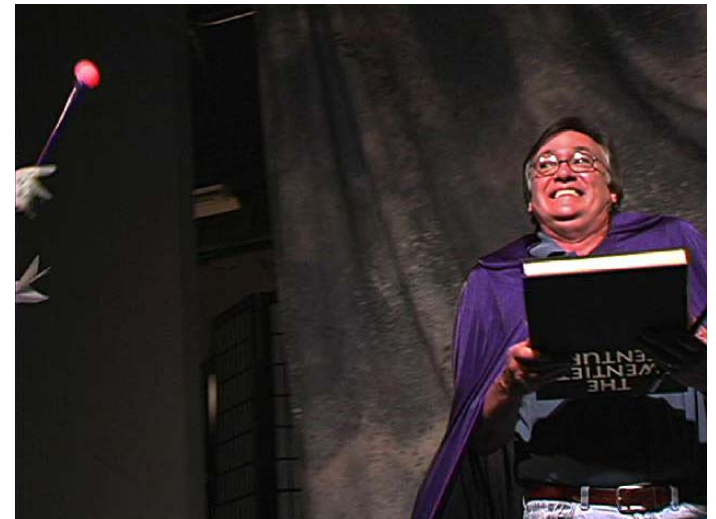
PROSPERO: O, was she so? I must
Once in a month recount what thou hast been,
Which thou forget'st. This damned witch Sycorax,
For mischiefs manifold and sorceries terrible
To enter human hearing, from Argier,
Thou know'st, was banished. For one thing she did
They would not take her life. Is not this true?

ARIEL: Ay, sir.

PROSPERO: This blue-eyed hag was hither brought with child
And here was left by the sailors. Thou, my slave,
As thou report'st thyself, wast then her servant;
And, for thou wast a spirit too delicate
To act her earthy and abhorred commands,
Refusing her grand hests, she did confine thee,
By help of her more potent ministers
And in her most unmitigable rage,
Into a cloven pine; within which rift
Imprisoned thou didst painfully remain
A dozen years; within which space she died
And left thee there; where thou didst vent thy groans
As fast as mill-wheels strike. Then was this island—
Save for the son that she did litter here,
A freckled whelp hag-born—not honoured with
A human shape.

ARIEL: Yes, Caliban her son.

PROSPERO: Dull thing, I say so; he, that Caliban



I.e., the only thing she did that stayed them from executing her was to get pregnant.

Because Ariel was too squeamish or scrupulous to carry out Sycorax's horrible commands, she imprisoned him within a split pine tree.

“Whelp”: puppy or other carnivorous young.

Whom now I keep in service. Thou best know'st
What torment I did find thee in: thy groans
Did make wolves howl and penetrate the breasts
Of ever angry bears; it was a torment
To lay upon the damned, which Sycorax
Could not again undo. It was mine art,
When I arrived and heard thee, that made gape
The pine and let thee out.

ARIEL: I thank thee, master.

PROSPERO: If thou more murmur'st, I will rend an oak
And peg thee in his knotty entrails till
Thou hast howled away twelve winters.

ARIEL: Pardon, master;
I will be correspondent to command
And do my spiriting gently.

“Correspondent to”: responsive in accordance with.

PROSPERO: Do so, and after two days
I will discharge thee.

ARIEL: That's my noble master!

INTRODUCTION: Ariel next finds Prince Ferdinand and beckons him with what is perhaps the most beloved song from Shakespeare's plays, which contains the famous phrase, “sea-change”, and which misleadingly suggests his father drowned in the storm. Miranda, now full-grown, will for the first time in her memory see a man other than her elderly father and Caliban—and she likes what she sees.

Act I, scene ii, lines 397 - 420.

Cast: ARIEL, FERDINAND, PROSPERO, MIRANDA.

[Enter ARIEL, singing, with FERDINAND following. PROSPERO and MIRANDA should enter from or be at the far end of the stage.]

ARIEL [Singing]: Full fathom five thy father lies;
Of his bones are coral made;
Those are pearls that were his eyes:
Nothing of him that doth fade,
But doth suffer a sea-change
Into something rich and strange.
Sea-nymphs hourly ring his knell

[If possible, have a bell ring]

Hark! now I hear them,—Ding-dong, bell.

FERDINAND: The ditty does remember my drowned father.
This is no mortal business, nor no sound
That the earth owes. I hear it now above me.

I.e., these sounds are supernatural.

PROSPERO: The fringed curtains of thine eye advance
And say what thou seest yond.

MIRANDA: What is't? A spirit?
Lord, how it looks about! Believe me, sir,
It carries a brave form. But 'tis a spirit.

PROSPERO: No, wench; it eats and sleeps and hath such senses
As we have, such. This gallant which thou seest
Was in the wreck; and, but he's something stained
With grief that's beauty's canker, thou mightst call him
A goodly person: he hath lost his fellows
And strays about to find 'em.

I.e., his looks are marred by his grief at the loss of his father.

MIRANDA: I might call him
A thing divine, for nothing natural
I ever saw so noble.

INTRODUCTION: The ship also carried, among others, a jester named Trinculo and a drunken butler named Stephano. Stephano managed to salvage a bottle of liquor, which he calls “the Book” and which is as valuable to the characters in our next scene as Prospero’s book of magic is to him.

[Casting Note: If Caliban, Trinculo, and Stephano are played by people with a good sense of humor, this scene can be very funny.]

Act II, scene ii, lines 1 - 187 (abridged).

Cast: CALIBAN, TRINCULO, STEPHANO.

[Enter CALIBAN, wearing a blanket and carrying a burden of wood. Thunder is heard.]

CALIBAN: All the infections that the sun sucks up
From bogs, fens, flats, on Prosper fall and make him
By inch-meal a disease! His spirits hear me
And yet I needs must curse. But they’ll nor pinch,
Fright me with urchin-shows, pitch me i’ the mire,
Nor lead me, like a firebrand, in the dark
Out of my way, unless he bid ‘em; but
For every trifle are they set upon me;
Sometime like apes that mow and chatter at me
And after bite me, then like hedgehogs which
Lie tumbling in my barefoot way and mount
Their pricks at my footfall; sometime am I
All wound with adders who with cloven tongues
Do hiss me into madness.

“Fens”: swamps.

“Mow”: make faces.

“Adder”: a poisonous snake.

[Enter TRINCULO]

CALIBAN: Lo, now, lo!
Here comes a spirit of his, and to torment me
For bringing wood in slowly. I'll fall flat;
Perchance he will not mind me.

“Mind”: notice.

[CALIBAN falls flat under blanket, with bits of arms and legs showing]

TRINCULO [spying Caliban]: Here's neither bush nor shrub, to
bear off any weather at all, and another storm brewing; I
hear it sing i' the wind; yond same black cloud, yond huge
one, looks like a foul bombard that would shed his liquor.
If it should thunder as it did before, I know not where to
hide my head; yond same cloud cannot choose but fall by
pailfuls. What have we here? A man or a fish? Dead or
alive? A fish: he smells like a fish; a very ancient and fish-
like smell; a kind of not-of-the-newest Poor-John. A strange
fish! Were I in England now, as once I was, and had but
this fish painted, not a holiday fool there but would give a
piece of silver. There would this monster make a man; any
strange beast there makes a man; when they will not give a
doit to relieve a lame beggar, they will lazy out ten to see a
dead Indian. Legged like a man and his fins like arms!
Warm o' my troth! I do now let loose my opinion; hold it
no longer; this is no fish, but an islander, that hath lately
suffered by a thunderbolt.

“Bombard”: a leather container for wine.

“Poor-John”: cheap dried fish.

I.e., every fool there would pay to see this
creature.

“Doit”: coin of very small value.

“Lately”: recently.

[Thunder]

Alas, the storm is come again! My best way is to creep
under his gaberdine; there is no other shelter
hereabouts; misery acquaints a man with strange
bed-fellows. I will here shroud till the dregs of
the storm be past.

[TRINCULO crawls under blanket with CALIBAN; four legs now protrude. Enter STEPHANO, singing, with a bottle in his hand.]

STEPHANO [Singing]: I shall no more to sea, to sea,
Here shall I die ashore—

This is a very scurvy tune to sing at a man's funeral;
well, here's my comfort.

[Drinks, then sings]

The master, the swabber, the boatswain and I,
The gunner and his mate
Loved Moll, Meg and Marian and Margerie,
But none of us cared for Kate;
For she had a tongue with a tang,
Would cry to a sailor, Go hang!
She loved not the savour of tar nor of pitch,
Yet a tailor might scratch her where'er she did itch;
Then to sea, boys, and let her go hang!

This is a scurvy tune too; but here's my comfort.

[Drinks]

CALIBAN: Do not torment me; oh!

STEPHANO: What's the matter? Have we devils here? Do you put tricks upon's with savages and men of Ind, ha? I have not 'scaped drowning to be afeard now of your four legs; for it hath been said, "As proper a man as ever went on four



STRANGE BED-FELLOWS
BART AS CALIBAN; RON AS TRINCULO

“Savour”: taste.

He notices the blanket with four legs sticking out from under it, and assumes they belong to one monster.

legs cannot make him give ground”; and it shall be said so again while Stephano breathes at’s nostrils.

CALIBAN: The spirit torments me; oh!

STEPHANO: This is some monster of the isle with four legs, who hath got, as I take it, an ague. Where the devil should he learn our language? I will give him some relief, if it be but for that. If I can recover him and keep him tame and get to Naples with him, he’s a present for any emperor that ever trod on neat’s leather.

CALIBAN: Do not torment me, prithee; I’ll bring my wood home faster!

STEPHANO: He’s in his fit now and does not talk after the wisest. He shall taste of my bottle; if he have never drunk wine afore, it will go near to remove his fit. If I can recover him and keep him tame, I will not take too much for him; he shall pay for him that hath him, and that soundly.

CALIBAN: Thou dost me yet but little hurt; thou wilt anon, I know it by thy trembling: now Prosper works upon thee.

STEPHANO: Come on your ways; open your mouth; here is that which will give language to you, cat; open your mouth; this will shake your shaking, I can tell you, and that soundly. You cannot tell who’s your friend; open your chaps again.

TRINCULO: I should know that voice: it should be—but he is drowned; and these are devils! O, defend me!

STEPHANO: Four legs and two voices: a most delicate monster! His forward voice now is to speak well of his friend; his backward voice is to utter foul speeches and to detract. If

“Ague”: fever.

“Neat’s leather”: cowhide. (Shakespeare’s father was a tanner.)

“Recover”: here, cure.
I.e., I won’t charge a high price to sell him.

all the wine in my bottle will recover him, I will help his
ague. Come. Amen! I will pour some in thy other mouth.

TRINCULO: Stephano!

STEPHANO: Doth thy other mouth call me? Mercy, mercy! This
is a devil, and no monster; I will leave him; I have no long
spoon.

TRINCULO: Stephano! If thou beest Stephano, touch me and
speak to me; for I am Trinculo—be not afeard—thy good
friend Trinculo.

STEPHANO: If thou beest Trinculo, come forth; I'll pull thee by
the lesser legs; if any be Trinculo's legs, these are they.
Thou art very Trinculo indeed! How camest thou to be the
siege of this moon-calf? Can he vent Trinculos?

“Vent”: here, fart.

TRINCULO: I took him to be killed with a thunder-stroke. But art
thou not drowned, Stephano? I hope now thou art not
drowned. Is the storm overblown? I hid me under the dead
moon-calf's gaberdine for fear of the storm. And art thou
living, Stephano? O Stephano, two Neapolitans 'scaped!

“Neapolitans”: persons from Naples.

STEPHANO: Prithee, do not turn me about; my stomach is not
constant.

CALIBAN [Aside]: These be fine things, an if they be not sprites.
That's a brave god and bears celestial liquor.
I will kneel to him.

STEPHANO: How didst thou 'scape? How camest thou hither?
Swear by this bottle how thou camest hither. I escaped upon
a butt of sack which the sailors heaved o'erboard, by this

“Butt of sack”: cask of wine.

bottle, which I made of the bark of a tree with mine own hands since I was cast ashore.

CALIBAN: I'll swear upon that bottle to be thy true subject; for the liquor is not earthly.

STEPHANO: Here; swear then how thou escapedst.

TRINCULO: Swum ashore, man, like a duck; I can swim like a duck, I'll be sworn.

STEPHANO: Here, kiss the book. Though thou canst swim like a duck, thou art made like a goose.

TRINCULO: O Stephano, hast any more of this?

STEPHANO: The whole butt, man; my cellar is in a rock by the sea-side where my wine is hid. How now, moon-calf! How does thine ague?

CALIBAN: Hast thou not dropped from heaven?

STEPHANO: Out o' the moon, I do assure thee; I was the man i' the moon when time was.

CALIBAN: I have seen thee in her and I do adore thee. My mistress showed me thee and thy dog and thy bush.

STEPHANO: Come, swear to that; kiss the book; I will furnish it anon with new contents; swear.

TRINCULO: By this good light, this is a very shallow monster! I afraid of him! A very weak monster! The man i' the moon!

They treat the bottle as their bible.

In Shakespeare's time, the fable was that the man on the moon was sent there as punishment for gathering wood on Sunday.

A most poor credulous monster! Well drawn, monster, in good sooth!

CALIBAN: I'll show thee every fertile inch o' th' island; and I will kiss thy foot. I prithee, be my god.

TRINCULO: By this light, a most perfidious and drunken monster! When 's god's asleep, he'll rob his bottle.

CALIBAN: I'll kiss thy foot; I'll swear myself thy subject.

STEPHANO: Come on then; down, and swear.

TRINCULO: I shall laugh myself to death at this puppy-headed monster. A most scurvy monster! I could find in my heart to beat him,—

STEPHANO: Come, kiss.

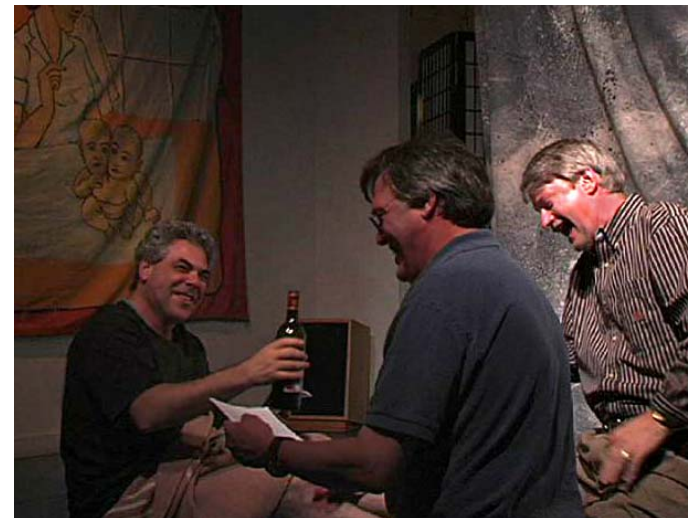
TRINCULO: —But that the poor monster's in drink; an abominable monster!

CALIBAN: I'll show thee the best springs; I'll pluck thee berries; I'll fish for thee and get thee wood enough. A plague upon the tyrant that I serve! I'll bear him no more sticks, but follow thee, Thou wondrous man.

TRINCULO: A most ridiculous monster, to make a wonder of a poor drunkard!

CALIBAN: I prithee, let me bring thee where crabs grow; And I with my long nails will dig thee pignuts; Show thee a jay's nest and instruct thee how To snare the nimble marmoset; I'll bring thee

“Well drawn”: *i.e.*, Caliban took a long drink.



BE MY GOD

To clustering filberts and sometimes I'll get thee
Young scamels from the rock. Wilt thou go with me?

“Scamels”: meaning unknown.

STEPHANO: I prithee now, lead the way without any more
talking. Trinculo, the king and all our company else being
drowned, we will inherit here. Here; bear my bottle, fellow
Trinculo; we'll fill him by and by again.

CALIBAN [Sings drunkenly]: Farewell master; farewell, farewell!

TRINCULO: A howling monster; a drunken monster!

CALIBAN: No more dams I'll make for fish,
Nor fetch in firing at requiring,
Nor scrape trencher, nor wash dish.
'Ban, 'Ban, Ca-Caliban,
Has a new master, get a new man.

“Trencher”: wooden plate.

Free-dom, hey-day! hey-day,
Freedom, freedom! Hey-day, freedom!

STEPHANO: O brave monster! Lead the way.

INTRODUCTION: After Miranda's and Ferdinand's romance is well-commenced under Prospero's careful supervision, Prospero conjures the island spirits to perform a musical pageant to entertain them. Our next scene takes place as the performance draws to an end. (Remember that the main theater in which Shakespeare's company performed was called “The Globe.”)

Act IV, scene i, lines 139 - 163.

Cast: PROSPERO, FERDINAND, MIRANDA.

PROSPERO [Aside]: I had forgot that foul conspiracy
Of the beast Caliban and his confederates

Against my life; the minute of their plot
Is almost come.

[To the Spirits, peremptorily] Well done! Avoid; no more!

FERDINAND: This is strange; your father's in some passion
That works him strongly.

MIRANDA: Never till this day
Saw I him touched with anger so distempered.

PROSPERO: You do look, my son, in a moved sort,
As if you were dismayed. Be cheerful, sir.
Our revels now are ended. These our actors,
As I foretold you, were all spirits and
Are melted into air, into thin air;
And, like the baseless fabric of this vision,
The cloud-capped towers, the gorgeous palaces,
The solemn temples, the great globe itself,
Ye all which it inherit, shall dissolve
And, like this insubstantial pageant faded,
Leave not a rack behind. We are such stuff
As dreams are made on, and our little life
Is rounded with a sleep. Sir, I am vexed;
Bear with my weakness; my brain is troubled.
Be not disturbed with my infirmity;
If you be pleased, retire into my cell
And there repose. A turn or two I'll walk,
To still my beating mind.

“Rack”: wisp of cloud.

“Rounded”: *i.e.*, begins and ends.

INTRODUCTION: Only after Prospero has put the shipwrecked troupe—that is, in effect, his “audience”—through sufficient tribulations, spectacles, and amazement to shake up their old conceptions of themselves and of the world, will Prospero reveal himself to them and them to one another, to begin the reconciliation he hoped for. But before doing so, he'll now abjure all further magic and drown his book.

The play, and our ShakeFest, ends with Prospero's final Epilogue.

Act V, Epilogue.

Cast: PROSPERO, center stage.

PROSPERO: Now my charms are all o'erthrown,
And what strength I have's mine own,
Which is most faint. Now 'tis true
I must be here confined by you,
Or sent to Naples. Let me not,
Since I have my dukedom got
And pardoned the deceiver, dwell
In this bare island by your spell;
But release me from my bands
With the help of your good hands.
Gentle breath of yours my sails
Must fill, or else my project fails,
Which was to please. Now I want
Spirits to enforce, art to enchant;
And my ending is despair,
Unless I be relieved by prayer,
Which pierces so that it assaults
Mercy itself and frees all faults.
As you from crimes would pardoned be,
Let your indulgence set me free.

The End

Prospero has regained his dukedom in Naples, but since he has abjured his magic, he'll remain stranded on the isle unless the audience fills his sails with the wind of their gracious applause.

“Prayer”: literally, and also referring to putting hands together by clapping.



(Danette made the Witches' t-shirts: "SEA HAGS DO IT BETTER.")