

An Evening With The Bard

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By David Block

With help from William Shakespeare

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Background

This play was written as a project for a high school Shakespeare class. As my philosophy concludes that Shakespeare can only be learned properly when performed, this was our way of meeting that goal. Every student in the class was required to have a role, however small, in the production. Some students took on double duty as technical crew.

Set

Stage is set with two 4x8 vertical flats; one down left and the other up right. A third 8x8 flat hangs above center stage. In front of the stage left flat sits a steel drum connected to a fogging device hidden behind the flat. At center stage in $\frac{3}{4}$ view sits a small staircase with attached landing.

Slide projectors are placed to play slides on the three white flats. A video machine is used for ghost scenes.

Props

Minimal props are used. Only small personal props are needed.

Juliet solo – dagger, vial

Macbeth scene – Three claymores or hand-and-a-half swords

Mechanicals scene – fake sword, branch, orb

Costuming

Each scene may be costumed individually. Charles should be attired in modern street clothes.

Special Note

This show was originally written with a musical score in mind. The original production was accompanied by a musical score written by one of the students in the class. This musical accompaniment was played by the student live and with the help of computers also programmed by the student.

Cast

Charles a typical high school student

From "A Midsummer Night's Dream"

Puck or Robin Goodfellow; a "shrewd and knavish sprite"
Nick Bottom a weaver, Pyramus
Francis Flute a bellows-mender; Thisby
Tom Snout a tinker; Wall
Snug a joiner; Lion
Robin Starveling a tailor; Moonshine and Prologue

From "The Tragedy of Macbeth"

Macbeth a General of the Scottish Army and usurping King
Young Siward son of the Earl of Northumberland
Macduff a General of the Scottish Army
The Weird Sisters three witches
Hecate

From "The Tragedy of Romeo and Juliet"

Romeo son of Montague, hereditary enemy of the Capulets
Juliet daughter of Capulet, hereditary enemy of the Montagues

From "The Tragedy of Hamlet, Prince of Denmark"

Hamlet Prince of Denmark
Horatio friend to Hamlet
Marcellus an officer of the guard
Bernardo an officer of the guard
Ghost the ghost of Hamlet's murdered father

From "The Merchant of Venice"

Portia a rich heiress

From "The Life and Death of King Richard III"

Richard a Duke of Gloucester and usurping King
Lady Anne widow of Prince Edward and daughter-in-law of Henry VI

From "Much Ado About Nothing"

Dogberry \ two foolish
Verges / officers
A Sexton
Conrade Follower of Don John

From "The Tempest"

Prospero the rightful Duke of Milan; a magician

From "Henry V"

Henry V King of England
Chorus
Soldiers

Prologue

Chorus: O for a Muse of fire, that would ascend
The brightest heaven of invention,
A kingdom for a stage, princes to act
And monarchs to behold the swelling scene!
But pardon, gentles all,
 The flat unraised spirits that have dared
 On this unworthy scaffold to bring forth
 So great an object.
 O, pardon!
 And let us, ciphers to this great accompt,
 On your imaginary forces work.
 Piece out our imperfections with your thoughts;
 Think when we talk of horses, that you see them
 Printing their proud hoofs i' the receiving earth;
 For 'tis your thoughts that now must deck our kings,
 Carry them here and there; jumping o'er times,
 Turning the accomplishment of many years
 Into an hour-glass: for the which supply,
 Admit me Chorus to this history;
 Who prologue-like your humble patience pray,
 Gently to hear, kindly to judge, our play.

[Exit.]

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Scene 1

{Scene opens with Charles on the stairs reading from “The Complete Works of Shakespeare.”}

[Charles reads for a moment before noticing the audience]

Charles It’s late. I’ve been studying for hours. It doesn’t matter though, I’m still going to flunk. Mrs. Wright gave me one chance. I’ve skipped classes, goofed up every test. She says if I get an ‘A’ on the final, she’ll let me pass. Its all I can hope for at this point. Only I’ve got only eight hours until class starts and I still have to read a lot of... this.

Shakespeare. Blech. Sounded easy at the beginning of the semester. Especially with Michelle Carson sitting in the front row. Seven hours and fifty-eight minutes. I’ve got six plays to read. Macbeth, Romeo and Juliet, Much Ado About Nothing, Midsummer Night’s Dream, Hamlet, and – who am I kidding? I’ll never get this done.

That’s just the tip of the iceberg too. Seven hours and fifty-six minutes. I’m supposed to be able to analyze a bunch of speeches from each play. But with all these “thou’s” and “forsooth’s,” I don’t even understand what’s going on, let alone find some deep symbolism.

I’ve got little time left, a monster of a book to read, and only the stupid study guide to help me make sense of the whole idiotic thing. Seven hours fifty-five minutes. [sighs] Well, no use standing here, I might as well start reading.

Ok. Um, “Two houses both alike in dignity in fair Verona where we lay our scene –“ What the heck does that mean? I’m so sorry. Maybe if I just rest my eyes for a minute.

[He falls asleep]

Scene 2

[Scene projectors change to lightning and flame. Steel drum cauldron fog]

{Thunder. Enter the three Witches.}

First Witch: Thrice the brinded cat hath mew'd.

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 poison'd entrails throw.
Toad, that under cold stone
Days and nights has thirty-one
Swelter'd venom sleeping got,
Boil thou first i' the charmed pot.

ALL: 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,
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: 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
Silver'd in the moon's eclipse,
Nose of Turk and Tartar's lips,
Finger of birth-strangled babe
Ditch-deliver'd by a drab,
Make the gruel thick and slab:
Add thereto a tiger's chaudron,
For the ingredients of our cauldron.

ALL: 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.

{Enter HECATE to the other three Witches.}

HECATE: O well done! I commend your pains;

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And every one shall share i' the gains;
And now about the cauldron sing,
Live elves and fairies in a ring,
Enchanting all that you put in.
By the pricking of my thumbs,
Something wicked this way comes.
Open, locks,
Whoever knocks!

[Witches exit stage left]

Scene 3

[Charles enters stage right, wanders for a moment before speaking. Puck views him from hiding]

Charles Where am I?

Puck What's here? The portrait of a blinking idiot. Where didst thou come from, sirrah? Each day, this path I walk and ne'er seen your like.

Charles Well I've never seen the likes of you either. Who are you and what is this strange place?

Puck Puck I am called, or Robin Goodfellow. And this place? Why all the world's a stage and any scene may take shape upon it. This place is what you will.

Charles But what's it called? Every place has a name.

Puck Lord what fools these mortals be. A name, a name, ever a name. What's in a name? That which we call a rose by any other word would smell as sweet.

Charles This place must be a dream

Puck We are all such stuff as dreams are made on. There are more things in heaven and earth than are dreamt of in your philosophy. Trust in me, good my lord, this place is as real as you wish. But, how came you hence?

Charles Well, let me retrace my steps. I was in my room trying to study and then –

Puck Study? Thou art fortune's fool. No earthly thing may be learned from books that may not be better understood from living.

Charles How am I supposed to live something that happened 400 years ago?

Puck Perchance this servant before you may help?

Charles How can you make the plays of old come to life?

Puck Plays of old?

Charles Yes. Shakespeare. That's what I was studying.

Puck Aha! This Shakespeare I know. William of Stratford I once did call upon and helped to make short shrift of one Mid Summer Nights work. Yes, the Play's the thing!

Charles So, you can help me?

Puck Aye! Lay on! Once more unto the breach dear friend, only screw your courage to the sticking place and this Bard we will unravel.

Charles Well, um, ok. Then let's start with "Romeo and Juliet."

Puck Ah. Two star crossed lovers.

Charles Yeah. Whatever. Anyway. I don't get it. She drinks this poison and dies and then Romeo dies, but she's not really dead. I'm really confused.

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Puck Death. Wakeless sleep from which no mortal coil returns. You are mistaken lord. She was not dead, merely feigning. The Friar's tincture false death formed. But pardon gentle lord, from your face I see you know not of what I speak. Behold! My lord, upon this scaffold shall dreams take shape and you shall see what you must know!

Scene 4

JULIET: Farewell! God knows when we shall meet again.
I have a faint cold fear thrills through my veins,
That almost freezes up the heat of life:
I'll call them back again to comfort me:

Nurse! What should she do here?
My dismal scene I needs must act alone.
Come, vial.
What if this mixture do not work at all?
Shall I be married then to-morrow morning?
No, no: this shall forbid it: lie thou there.

[Laying down her dagger.]

What if it be a poison, which the friar
Subtly hath minister'd to have me dead,
Lest in this marriage he should be dishonour'd,
Because he married me before to Romeo?
I fear it is: and yet, methinks, it should not,
For he hath still been tried a holy man.
How if, when I am laid into the tomb,
I wake before the time that Romeo
Come to redeem me? there's a fearful point!
Shall I not, then, be stifled in the vault,
To whose foul mouth no healthsome air breathes in,
And there die strangled ere my Romeo comes?
Or, if I live, is it not very like,
The horrible conceit of death and night,
Together with the terror of the place,--
As in a vault, an ancient receptacle,
Where, for these many hundred years, the bones
Of all my buried ancestors are packed:
Where bloody Tybalt, yet but green in earth,
Lies festering in his shroud; where, as they say,
At some hours in the night spirits resort;--
Alack, alack, is it not like that I,
So early waking, what with loathsome smells,
And shrieks like mandrakes' torn out of the earth,
That living mortals, hearing them, run mad:--
O, if I wake, shall I not be distraught,
Environed with all these hideous fears?
And madly play with my forefather's joints?
And pluck the mangled Tybalt from his shroud?
And, in this rage, with some great kinsman's bone,
As with a club, dash out my desperate brains?
O, look! methinks I see my cousin's ghost
Seeking out Romeo, that did spit his body
Upon a rapier's point: stay, Tybalt, stay!
Romeo, I come! this do I drink to thee.

[She falls upon her bed, within the curtains.]

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Scene 5

Charles Brilliant! (claps) That was well done. Now I see. She takes this potion to fake her death. But she's not sure it will work.

Puck Aye. Now you have it.

Charles But wait. I'm still not sure why she's going through all this. It's just a guy. I mean is she in love with this Romeo so much that she would die for him? Seems a little too much to me.

Puck She hath ta'en an infection of love and now lives infatuated as does her Romeo. Their love is youthful and therefore full of the fancy and drama of youth. Look to their exchange of vows my lord.

Charles Where?

Puck: On yon balcony.

{Enter ROMEO.}

[JULIET appears above at a window.]

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:
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.

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 call'd,
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 bescreen'd 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.

JULIET: How camest thou hither, tell me, and wherefore?
The orchard walls are high and hard to climb,
And the place death, considering who thou art,
If any of my kinsmen find thee here.

ROMEO: With love's light wings did I o'er-perch these walls;
For stony limits cannot hold love out,
And what love can do that dares love attempt;
Therefore thy kinsmen are no let to me.

JULIET: If they do see thee, they will murder thee.

ROMEO: Alack, there lies more peril in thine eye
Than twenty of their swords: look thou but sweet,

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And I am proof against their enmity.

JULIET: I would not for the world they saw thee here.

ROMEO: I have night's cloak to hide me from their sight;
And but thou love me, let them find me here:
My life were better ended by their hate,
Than death prorogued, wanting of thy love.

JULIET: By whose direction found'st thou out this place?

ROMEO: By love, who first did prompt me to inquire;
He lent me counsel and I lent him eyes.
I am no pilot; yet, wert thou as far
As that vast shore wash'd with the farthest sea,
I would adventure for such merchandise.

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 an 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?

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.

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

[Exit, 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.
But if thou mean'st not well,
I do beseech thee--
To cease thy suit, and leave me to my grief:
To-morrow will I send.

ROMEO: So thrive my soul--

JULIET: A thousand times good night!

[Exit, above.]

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ROMEO: A thousand times the worse, to want thy light.
Love goes toward love, as schoolboys from
their books,
But love from love, toward school with heavy looks.

[Retiring.]

{Re-enter JULIET, above.}

JULIET: Hist! Romeo, hist! O, for a falconer's voice,
To lure this tassel-gentle back again!
Bondage is hoarse, and may not speak aloud;
Else would I tear the cave where Echo lies,
And make her airy tongue more hoarse than mine,
With repetition of my Romeo's name.

ROMEO: It is my soul that calls upon my name:
How silver-sweet sound lovers' tongues by night,
Like softest music to attending ears!

JULIET: Romeo!

ROMEO: My dear?

JULIET: At what o'clock to-morrow
Shall I send to thee?

ROMEO: At the hour of nine.

JULIET: I will not fail: 'tis twenty years till then.
I have forgot why I did call thee back.

ROMEO: Let me stand here till thou remember it.

JULIET: I shall forget, to have thee still stand there,
Remembering how I love thy company.

ROMEO: And I'll still stay, to have thee still forget,
Forgetting any other home but this.

JULIET: 'Tis almost morning; I would have thee gone:
And yet no further than a wanton's bird;
Who lets it hop a little from her hand,
Like a poor prisoner in his twisted gyves,
And with a silk thread plucks it back again,
So loving-jealous of his liberty.

ROMEO: I would I were thy bird.

JULIET: Sweet, so would I:
Yet I should kill thee with much cherishing.
Good night, good night! parting is such
sweet sorrow,
That I shall say good night till it be morrow.

[Exit above.]

ROMEO: Sleep dwell upon thine eyes, peace in thy breast!
 Would I were sleep and peace, so sweet to rest!
 Hence will I to my ghostly father's cell,
 His help to crave, and my dear hap to tell.

[Exit.]

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Scene 6

Charles The young fall in love so easily. Juliet fell in love with the sound of his voice alone.

Puck Just so. And for her falling, two families fall. Never was a story of more woe than this of Juliet and her Romeo.

Charles Woe Woe Woe! All these plays are full of woe. Doesn't anything funny ever happen?

Puck Good my Lord! The Bard wrote lines to laugh your woes to scorn.

Charles Then show me.

Puck If you will laugh yourself into stitches, follow me and witness this madcap Dogberry and his watch. Between them, but wit to keep warm, yet they unravel Don John's vengeance laid plot.

{Enter DOGBERRY, VERGES, and Sexton, in gowns; and the Watch, with CONRADE and BORACHIO.}

DOGBERRY: Is our whole dissembly appeared?

Sexton: Which be the malefactors?

DOGBERRY: Marry, that am I and my partner.

Sexton: But which are the offenders that are to be examined? let them come before master constable.

CONRADE: I am a gentleman, sir, and my name is Conrade.

DOGBERRY: Write down, master gentleman Conrade. Masters, do you serve God?

CONRADE: Yea, sir, we hope.

DOGBERRY: Write down, that they hope they serve God: and write God first; for God defend but God should go before such villains! Masters, it is proved already that you are little better than false knaves; and it will go near to be thought so shortly. How answer you for yourselves?

CONRADE: Marry, sir, we say we are none.

DOGBERRY: A marvellous witty fellow, I assure you: but I will go about with him. Come you hither, sirrah; a word in your ear: sir, I say to you, it is thought you are false knaves.

Conrade: Sir, I say to you we are none.

DOGBERRY: Well, stand aside. 'Fore God, they are both in a tale. Have you writ down, that they are none?

Sexton: Master constable, you go not the way to examine:

you must call forth the watch that are their
accusers.

DOGBERRY: Yea, marry, that's the effest way. Let the watch
come forth. Masters, I charge you, in the prince's
name, accuse these men.

Watchman: This man said, sir, that Don John, the prince's
brother, was a villain.

DOGBERRY: Write down Prince John a villain. Why, this is flat
perjury, to call a prince's brother villain.

conrade: Master constable,--

DOGBERRY: Pray thee, fellow, peace: I do not like thy look,
I promise thee.

Sexton: What heard you him say else?

Watchman: Marry, that he had received a thousand ducats of
Don John for accusing the Lady Hero wrongfully.

DOGBERRY: Flat burglary as ever was committed.

Sexton: What else, fellow?

Watchman: And that Count Claudio did mean, upon his words, to
disgrace Hero before the whole assembly. and not
marry her.

DOGBERRY: O villain! thou wilt be condemned into everlasting
redemption for this.

Sexton: What else?

Watchman: This is all.

Sexton: And this is more, masters, than you can deny.
Prince John is this morning secretly stolen away;
Hero was in this manner accused, in this very manner
refused, and upon the grief of this suddenly died.
Master constable, let these men be bound, and
brought to Leonato's: I will go before and show
him their examination.

[Exit.]

DOGBERRY: Come, let them be opinioned.

CONRADE: Off, coxcomb!

DOGBERRY: God's my life, where's the sexton? let him write
down the prince's officer coxcomb. Come, bind them.
Thou naughty varlet!

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CONRADE: Away! you are an ass, you are an ass.

DOGBERRY: Dost thou not suspect my place? dost thou not suspect my years? O that he were here to write me down an ass! But, masters, remember that I am an ass; though it be not written down, yet forget not that I am an ass. No, thou villain, thou art full of piety, as shall be proved upon thee by good witness. I am a wise fellow, and, which is more, an officer, and, which is more, a householder, and, which is more, as pretty a piece of flesh as any is in Messina, and one that knows the law, go to; and a rich fellow enough, go to; and a fellow that hath had losses, and one that hath two gowns and every thing handsome about him. Bring him away. O that I had been writ down an ass!

Scene 7

Puck Naughty varlets. Rascals. That way madness lies.

Charles Aye good Puck. Churlish knaves.

Puck My lord! Thou art honey-tongued. Thy speech plays trippingly on thy tongue.

Charles Well, I thought I'd try a little.

Puck Pray tell, good Sir Charles, Thy stage sits empty. What next shall grace the boards?

Charles Well, I'm supposed to study these soliloquys. I'm not even sure what they are but...

Puck Sigh no more, Lord. Behold, four speakers good and true. They wait on your command.

Charles (snaps fingers. All four begin speaking)

Charles Woe! One at a time! (snaps again)

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 wish'd. 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,
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 undiscover'd 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 remember'd.

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- Charles Great! A guy with more doubts than I. At least I'm not thinking about killing myself.
- Puck Aye! Truly yon Prince is full of poisonous doubt. But see, comes next one with no doubt. A man of wax, he is not. Base. Foul. An Elvish Marked, abortive, rooting Hog! See, the Boar's helm is raised; it is Richard, Duke of Gloucester.
- Gloucester: Now is the winter of our discontent
Made glorious summer by this sun of York;
And all the clouds that lour'd upon our house
In the deep bosom of the ocean buried.
Now are our brows bound with victorious wreaths;
Our bruised arms hung up for monuments;
Our stern alarums changed to merry meetings,
Our dreadful marches to delightful measures.
Grim-visaged war hath smooth'd his wrinkled front;
And now, instead of mounting barded steeds
To fright the souls of fearful adversaries,
He capers nimbly in a lady's chamber
To the lascivious pleasing of a lute.
But I, that am not shaped for sportive tricks,
Nor made to court an amorous looking-glass;
I, that am rudely stamp'd, and want love's majesty
To strut before a wanton ambling nymph;
I, that am curtail'd of this fair proportion,
Cheated of feature by dissembling nature,
Deformed, unfinish'd, sent before my time
Into this breathing world, scarce half made up,
And that so lamely and unfashionable
That dogs bark at me as I halt by them;
Why, I, in this weak piping time of peace,
Have no delight to pass away the time,
Unless to spy my shadow in the sun
And descant on mine own deformity:
And therefore, since I cannot prove a lover,
To entertain these fair well-spoken days,
I am determined to prove a villain
And hate the idle pleasures of these days.
Plots have I laid, inductions dangerous,
By drunken prophecies, libels and dreams,
To set my brother Clarence and the king
In deadly hate the one against the other:
And if King Edward be as true and just
As I am subtle, false and treacherous,
This day should Clarence closely be mew'd up,
About a prophecy, which says that G
Of Edward's heirs the murderer shall be.
Dive, thoughts, down to my soul: here
Clarence comes.
- Charles Cool. This guy is evil.
- Puck Gloucester is villainous. But see who speaks next. His wife to be and victim thereafter.

Charles (Snaps fingers)

LADY ANNE: Set down, set down your honourable load,
If honour may be shrouded in a hearse,
Whilst I awhile obsequiously lament
The untimely fall of virtuous Lancaster.
Poor key-cold figure of a holy king!
Pale ashes of the house of Lancaster!
Thou bloodless remnant of that royal blood!
Be it lawful that I invoke thy ghost,
To hear the lamentations of Poor Anne,
Wife to thy Edward, to thy slaughter'd son,
Stabb'd by the selfsame hand that made these wounds!
Lo, in these windows that let forth thy life,
I pour the helpless balm of my poor eyes.
Cursed be the hand that made these fatal holes!
Cursed be the heart that had the heart to do it!
Cursed the blood that let this blood from hence!
More direful hap betide that hated wretch,
That makes us wretched by the death of thee,
Than I can wish to adders, spiders, toads,
Or any creeping venom'd thing that lives!
If ever he have child, abortive be it,
Prodigious, and untimely brought to light,
Whose ugly and unnatural aspect
May fright the hopeful mother at the view;
And that be heir to his unhappiness!
If ever he have wife, let her he made
A miserable by the death of him
As I am made by my poor lord and thee!
Come, now towards Chertsey with your holy load,
Taken from Paul's to be interred there;
And still, as you are weary of the weight,
Rest you, whiles I lament King Henry's corse.

Charles She's going to marry the man who killed her family?

Puck Marry she will and suffer for it. This Richard is no mean villain. He has proven himself a bunched toad whose poison drips from pale lips to fall on all his host. Lancaster and York both will die and Richmond take the throne. Heroic Richmond, grandfather of that same Elizabeth served by your Bard, and so Richard seems villainous and Richmond, every inch a king.

Charles Are you saying Shakespeare "adjusted" things to flatter the queen?

Puck I warrant.

Charles Hmm. I suppose that makes sense. This Richard III guy though. How can he be so evil. Is there no mercy in Shakespeare's plays?

Puck (snaps fingers and exits with Charles)

PORTIA: The quality of mercy is not strain'd,
It droppeth as the gentle rain from heaven
Upon the place beneath: it is twice blest;

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It blesseth him that gives and him that takes:
'Tis mightiest in the mightiest: it becomes
The throned monarch better than his crown;
His sceptre shows the force of temporal power,
The attribute to awe and majesty,
Wherein doth sit the dread and fear of kings;
But mercy is above this sceptred sway;
It is enthroned in the hearts of kings,
It is an attribute to God himself;
And earthly power doth then show likest God's
When mercy seasons justice. Therefore, Jew,
Though justice be thy plea, consider this,
That, in the course of justice, none of us
Should see salvation: we do pray for mercy;
And that same prayer doth teach us all to render
The deeds of mercy. I have spoke thus much
To mitigate the justice of thy plea;
Which if thou follow, this strict court of Venice
Must needs give sentence 'gainst the merchant there.

Scene 8

[Charles enters and sits on the stairs. Puck enters.]

Puck Look not so melancholy friend.

Charles I was just thinking about everything. I see now that these plays are like our movies today.

Puck A hit a hit!

Charles Yeah, well speaking of hits. What about action. You haven't shown me anything like that yet.

Puck Cry Havoc then and let slip the dogs of war!

[They hide behind stairs]
{Alarums. Enter MACBETH.}

MACBETH: They have tied me to a stake; I cannot fly,
But, bear-like, I must fight the course. What's he
That was not born of woman? Such a one
Am I to fear, or none.

{Enter YOUNG SIWARD.}

SIWARD: What is thy name?

MACBETH: Thou'lt be afraid to hear it.

SIWARD: No; though thou call'st thyself a hotter name
Than any is in hell.

MACBETH: My name's Macbeth.

SIWARD: The devil himself could not pronounce a title
More hateful to mine ear.

MACBETH: No, nor more fearful.

SIWARD: Thou liest, abhorred tyrant; with my sword
I'll prove the lie thou speak'st.

[They fight and YOUNG SIWARD is slain.]

MACBETH: Thou wast born of woman
But swords I smile at, weapons laugh to scorn,
Brandish'd by man that's of a woman born. Why should I play the Roman fool, and die
On mine own sword? whiles I see lives, the gashes
Do better upon them.

{Enter MACDUFF.}

MACDUFF: Turn, hell-hound, turn!

MACBETH: Of all men else I have avoided thee:

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But get thee back; my soul is too much charged
With blood of thine already.

MACDUFF: I have no words:
My voice is in my sword: thou bloodier villain
Than terms can give thee out!

[They fight.]

MACBETH: Thou lovest labour:
As easy mayst thou the intrenchant air
With thy keen sword impress as make me bleed:
Let fall thy blade on vulnerable crests;
I bear a charmed life, which must not yield,
To one of woman born.

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

MACBETH: Accursed be that tongue that tells me so,
For it hath cow'd my better part of man!
And be these juggling fiends no more believed,
That palter with us in a double sense;
That keep the word of promise to our ear,
And break it to our hope. I'll not fight with thee.

MACDUFF: Then yield thee, coward,
And live to be the show and gaze o' the time:
We'll have thee, as our rarer monsters are,
Painted on a pole, and underwrit,
'Here may you see the tyrant.'

MACBETH: I will not yield,
To kiss the ground before young Malcolm's feet,
And to be baited with the rabble's curse.
Though Birnam wood be come to Dunsinane,
And thou opposed, being of no woman born,
Yet I will try the last. Before my body
I throw my warlike shield. Lay on, Macduff,
And damn'd be him that first cries, 'Hold, enough!'

[Exeunt, fighting. Alarums.]

Scene 9

[Charles and Puck enter from behind stairs]

Charles That was a little close don't you think.

Puck Discretion is the better part of valor. To save our lives, the better part we'll take and avoid these, or else fly.

Charles I'm with you on that. That was a little close for comfort. A little scary.

Puck Zounds! There is much to fear. Tis now the very witching time of night when churchyards yawn and hell itself breathes out contagion.

Charles What are you talking about.

Puck Ghosts! Fly good Charles. Hie thyself hence whilst the ghosts of Danish Princes walk the night!

[Exit Puck and Charles]

MARCELLUS: Holla! Bernardo!

BERNARDO: Say,
What, is Horatio there?

HORATIO: A piece of him.

BERNARDO: Welcome, Horatio: welcome, good Marcellus.

MARCELLUS: What, has this thing appear'd again to-night?

BERNARDO: I have seen nothing.

MARCELLUS: Horatio says 'tis but our fantasy,
And will not let belief take hold of him
Touching this dreaded sight, twice seen of us:
Therefore I have entreated him along
With us to watch the minutes of this night;
That if again this apparition come,
He may approve our eyes and speak to it.

HORATIO: Tush, tush, 'twill not appear.

BERNARDO: Sit down awhile;
And let us once again assail your ears,
That are so fortified against our story
What we have two nights seen.

HORATIO: Well, sit we down,
And let us hear Bernardo speak of this.

BERNARDO: Last night of all,
When yond same star that's westward from the pole
Had made his course to illumine that part of heaven
Where now it burns, Marcellus and myself,

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The bell then beating one,--

{Enter Ghost.}

MARCELLUS: Peace, break thee off; look, where it comes again!

BERNARDO: In the same figure, like the king that's dead.

MARCELLUS: Thou art a scholar; speak to it, Horatio.

BERNARDO: Looks it not like the king? mark it, Horatio.

HORATIO: Most like: it harrows me with fear and wonder.

BERNARDO: It would be spoke to.

MARCELLUS: Question it, Horatio.

HORATIO: What art thou that usurp'st this time of night,
Together with that fair and warlike form
In which the majesty of buried Denmark
Did sometimes march? by heaven I charge thee, speak!

MARCELLUS: It is offended.

BERNARDO: See, it stalks away!

HORATIO: Stay! speak, speak! I charge thee, speak!

[Exit Ghost.]

MARCELLUS: 'Tis gone, and will not answer.

BERNARDO: How now, Horatio! you tremble and look pale:
Is not this something more than fantasy?
What think you on't?

HORATIO: Before my God, I might not this believe
Without the sensible and true avouch
Of mine own eyes.

MARCELLUS: Is it not like the king?

HORATIO: As thou art to thyself:
Such was the very armour he had on
When he the ambitious Norway combated;
So frown'd he once, when, in an angry parle,
He smote the sledded Polacks on the ice.
'Tis strange.

MARCELLUS: Thus twice before, and jump at this dead hour,
With martial stalk hath he gone by our watch.

BERNARDO: I think it be no other but e'en so:
Well may it sort that this portentous figure
Comes armed through our watch; so like the king

That was and is the question of these wars.

HORATIO: A mote it is to trouble the mind's eye.
In the most high and palmy state of Rome,
A little ere the mightiest Julius fell,
The graves stood tenantless and the sheeted dead
Did squeak and gibber in the Roman streets:
As stars with trains of fire and dews of blood,
Disasters in the sun; and the moist star
Upon whose influence Neptune's empire stands
Was sick almost to doomsday with eclipse:
And even the like precursor of fierce events,
As harbingers preceding still the fates
And prologue to the omen coming on,
Have heaven and earth together demonstrated
Unto our climates and countrymen.--
But soft, behold! lo, where it comes again!

{Re-enter Ghost.}

I'll cross it, though it blast me. Stay, illusion!
If thou hast any sound, or use of voice,
Speak to me:
If there be any good thing to be done,
That may to thee do ease and grace to me,
Speak to me:

[Cock crows.]

If thou art privy to thy country's fate,
Which, happily, foreknowing may avoid,
O, speak!
Or if thou hast uphoarded in thy life
Extorted treasure in the womb of earth,
For which, they say, you spirits oft walk in death,
Speak of it: stay, and speak! Stop it, Marcellus.

MARCELLUS: Shall I strike at it with my partisan?

HORATIO: Do, if it will not stand.

BERNARDO: 'Tis here!

HORATIO: 'Tis here!

MARCELLUS: 'Tis gone!

[Exit Ghost.]

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Scene 10

Charles Ok. Got it. Ghosts. Don't show me any more of that. [pause] So what now? What else should I know?

Puck Know thee that he who left his wife only his second best bed did, in his plays, more plays create?

Charles Plays inside plays?

Puck Marry sir! Come. Sit. Hither come a troupe of finest players. That they are rascals, doubt not. Yet wink at their insolence and be merry.

Prologue: Gentles, perchance you wonder at this show;
But wonder on, till truth make all things plain.
This man is Pyramus, if you would know;
This beauteous lady Thisby is certain.
This man, with lime and rough-cast, doth present
Wall, that vile Wall which did these lovers sunder;
And through Wall's chink, poor souls, they are content
To whisper. At the which let no man wonder.
This man, with lanthorn, dog, and bush of thorn,
Presenteth Moonshine; for, if you will know,
By moonshine did these lovers think no scorn
To meet at Ninus' tomb, there, there to woo.
This grisly beast, which Lion hight by name,
The trusty Thisby, coming first by night,
Did scare away, or rather did affright;
And, as she fled, her mantle she did fall,
Which Lion vile with bloody mouth did stain.
Anon comes Pyramus, sweet youth and tall,
And finds his trusty Thisby's mantle slain:
Whereat, with blade, with bloody blameful blade,
He bravely broach'd his boiling bloody breast;
And Thisby, tarrying in mulberry shade,
His dagger drew, and died. For all the rest,
Let Lion, Moonshine, Wall, and lovers twain
At large discourse, while here they do remain.

[Exeunt Prologue, Thisbe, Lion, and Moonshine.]

Wall: In this same interlude it doth befall
That I, one Snout by name, present a wall;
And such a wall, as I would have you think,
That had in it a crannied hole or chink,
Through which the lovers, Pyramus and Thisby,
Did whisper often very secretly.
This loam, this rough-cast and this stone doth show
That I am that same wall; the truth is so:
And this the cranny is, right and sinister,
Through which the fearful lovers are to whisper.

[Enter Pyramus.]

Pyramus: O grim-look'd night! O night with hue so black!
O night, which ever art when day is not!
O night, O night! alack, alack, alack,
I fear my Thisby's promise is forgot!
And thou, O wall, O sweet, O lovely wall,
That stand'st between her father's ground and
mine!
Thou wall, O wall, O sweet and lovely wall,
Show me thy chink, to blink through with mine
eyne!

[Wall holds up his fingers.]

Thanks, courteous wall: Jove shield thee well for
this!
But what see I? No Thisby do I see.
O wicked wall, through whom I see no bliss!
Cursed be thy stones for thus deceiving me!

[Enter Thisbe.]

Thisbe: O wall, full often hast thou heard my moans,
For parting my fair Pyramus and me!
My cherry lips have often kiss'd thy stones,
Thy stones with lime and hair knit up in thee.

Pyramus: I see a voice: now will I to the chink,
To spy an I can hear my Thisby's face.
Thisby!

Thisbe: My love thou art, my love I think.

Pyramus: Think what thou wilt, I am thy lover's grace;
And, like Limander, am I trusty still.

Thisbe: And I like Helen, till the Fates me kill.

Pyramus: Not Shafalus to Procrus was so true.

Thisbe: As Shafalus to Procrus, I to you.

Pyramus: O kiss me through the hole of this vile wall!

Thisbe: I kiss the wall's hole, not your lips at all.

Pyramus: Wilt thou at Ninny's tomb meet me straightway?

Thisbe: 'Tide life, 'tide death, I come without delay.

[Exeunt Pyramus and Thisbe.]

Wall: Thus have I, Wall, my part discharged so;
And, being done, thus Wall away doth go.

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[Exit.]

{Enter Lion and Moonshine.}

Lion: You, ladies, you, whose gentle hearts do fear
 The smallest monstrous mouse that creeps on floor,
 May now perchance both quake and tremble here,
 When lion rough in wildest rage doth roar.
 Then know that I, one Snug the joiner, am
 A lion-fell, nor else no lion's dam;
 For, if I should as lion come in strife
 Into this place, 'twere pity on my life.

Moonshine: This lanthorn doth the horned moon present;--
 This lanthorn doth the horned moon present;
 Myself the man i' the moon do seem to be.
 All that I have to say, is, to tell you that the
 lanthorn is the moon; I, the man in the moon;
 this thorn-bush, my thorn-bush; and this dog, my dog.

[Enter Thisbe.]

Thisbe: This is old Ninny's tomb. Where is my love?

Lion: [Roaring] Oh----

[Thisbe runs off.]

[The Lion shakes Thisbe's mantle, and exit.]

[Enter Pyramus.]

Pyramus: Sweet Moon, I thank thee for thy sunny beams;
 I thank thee, Moon, for shining now so bright;
 For, by thy gracious, golden, glittering gleams,
 I trust to take of truest Thisby sight.
 But stay, O spite!
 But mark, poor knight,
 What dreadful dole is here!
 Eyes, do you see?
 How can it be?
 O dainty duck! O dear!
 Thy mantle good,
 What, stain'd with blood!
 Approach, ye Furies fell!
 O Fates, come, come,
 Cut thread and thrum;
 Quail, crush, conclude, and quell!
 O wherefore, Nature, didst thou lions frame?
 Since lion vile hath here deflower'd my dear:
 Which is--no, no--which was the fairest dame
 That lived, that loved, that liked, that look'd
 with cheer.

Come, tears, confound;
Out, sword, and wound
The pap of Pyramus;
Ay, that left pap,
Where heart doth hop:

[Stabs himself.]

Thus die I, thus, thus, thus.
Now am I dead,
Now am I fled;
My soul is in the sky:
Tongue, lose thy light;
Moon take thy flight:

[Exit Moonshine.]

Now die, die, die, die, die.

[Dies.]

[Thisbe Enters]

Thisbe: Asleep, my love?
What, dead, my dove?
O Pyramus, arise!
Speak, speak. Quite dumb?
Dead, dead? A tomb
Must cover thy sweet eyes.
These My lips,
This cherry nose,
These yellow cowslip cheeks,
Are gone, are gone:
Lovers, make moan:
His eyes were green as leeks.
O Sisters Three,
Come, come to me,
With hands as pale as milk;
Lay them in gore,
Since you have shore
With shears his thread of silk.
Tongue, not a word:
Come, trusty sword;
Come, blade, my breast imbrue:

[Stabs herself.]

And, farewell, friends;
Thus Thisby ends:
Adieu, adieu, adieu.

[Dies.]

Scene 11

[Charles and Puck applaud scene while actors leave stage]

Charles This is great Puck, but I don't think I'll ever pass this test. I need more help. Maybe I can just look over on someone's paper.

Puck Naughty Varlet! Cudgel thy brains, my lord. You need no others but thyself. Come. Here is one who will fill thy cold blood with mettle. [Bows to King] My Liege, this, my lord, wishes one more to aid him when the grey eyed morn chequers the eastern clouds with streaks of light.

HENRY V: What's he that wishes so?

No, my fair cousin:

If we are mark'd to die, we are enow

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.

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 remember'd.

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 remember'd;

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
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.

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Scene 12

Puck What say you now of the Bard and his feast of language?

Charles I think I get it. At least I understand the meaning behind the words. [sits on stairs]

Puck Then go. Tomorrow and tomorrow and tomorrow comes anon.

Charles My test! How do I get back home?

Puck This place is what you will my lord. Castle or keep, Heath or home. Only think it and it will be so. And for my part, fare you well. [Puck blows dust on Charles. Charles falls asleep] Good night sweet prince. May fortune shine on you on the morrow. [Puck Exits, lights change]

[Charles wakes up]

Charles Sleep. It really does knit up the ravelled sleeve of time. Hey... I think I get it! Puck? Puck! Thanks for everything Puck! I guess I'm home. [Looks at watch] And now, once more unto the breach. What's past is prologue, what to come is mine. Now am I made of sterner stuff. The world is my oyster. [He exits]

Epilogue

[Enter Prospero]

Prospero: 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-capp'd 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.

CURTAIN