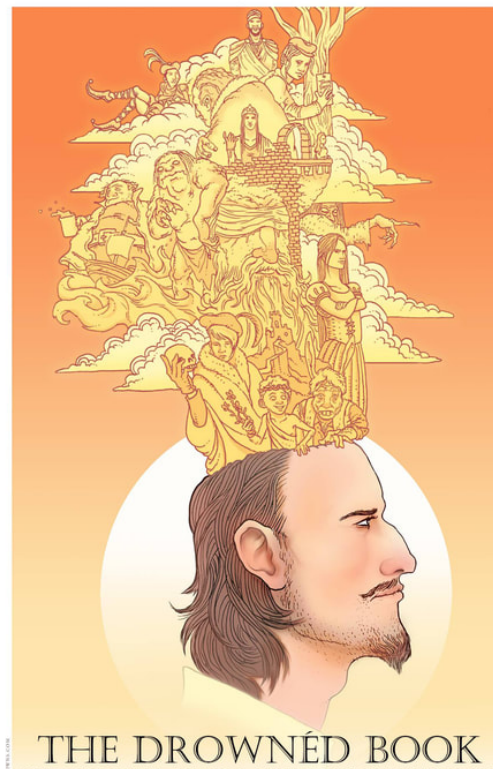


PERUSAL SCRIPT



The Drownèd Book

Or, The History of William Shakespeare
Part Last

A PLAY BY
MAHONRI STEWART



Newport, Maine

© 2018 Mahonri Stewart
ALL RIGHTS RESERVED

CAUTION:

Professionals and amateurs are hereby warned that

THE DROWNÉD BOOK

being fully protected under the copyright laws of the United States Of America, the British Empire, including the Dominion Of Canada, and the other countries of the Copyright Union, is subject to royalty. Anyone presenting the play without the express written permission of the Copyright owners and/or their authorized agent will be liable to the penalties provided by law.

Script and music copies must be rented from the Publisher and Royalty must be paid to the publisher for each and every performance before an audience whether or not admission is charged. A performance license must first be obtained from the publisher prior to any performance(s).

1997, 1988 and 1998 Federal Copyright Law -17 U.S.C. section 504 -allows for a recovery of a minimum of \$250 and a maximum of \$50,000 *for each infringement*, plus attorney fees.

No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording or otherwise without the prior written permission of the author or his respective agent(s), or in accordance with the provisions of the Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988 or under the terms of any license permitting limited copying issued by the Copyright Licensing Agency.

The professional and amateur rights to the performance of this play along with the lecturing, recitation, and public reading rights, are administered exclusively through LEICESTER BAY THEATRICALS without whose permission in writing no performance of it may be made. For all other rights, inquiries may be made to the authors through LEICESTER BAY THEATRICALS. Any adaptation or arrangement of this work without the author's written permission is an infringement of copyright. **Unauthorized duplication by any means is also an infringement.**

FOR PUBLIC PERFORMANCE RIGHTS YOU MUST APPLY TO THE PUBLISHER OR YOU ARE BREAKING THE LAW!

The possession of this PERUSAL SCRIPT, does not constitute permission to perform the work herein contained, in public or in private, for gain or charity. Proper prior application must be made, license granted and royalty paid before a performance may be given. Copies of this PERUSAL SCRIPT and all rehearsal materials may be rented from:

LEICESTER BAY THEATRICALS
P.O. Box 536 Newport, ME 04953-0536
www.leicesterbaytheatricals.com
Printed in the United States Of America

THIS NOTICE MUST APPEAR IN ALL PROGRAMS, ON ALL POSTERS AND PUBLICITY MATERIALS AND INTERNET ADVERTISING/WEBPAGES FOR THE PLAY:

“THE DROWNÉD BOOK” is presented through special arrangement with Leicester Bay Theatricals. All authorized materials are also supplied by LBT, www.leicesterbaytheatricals.com”

NOTE: Your contract with Leicester Bay Theatricals limits you to making copies of this document for persons directly connected with your production. Do not distribute outside of your cast and crew. Following your performance run you must destroy all photocopies, preferably by shredding them. If we sent you the document in printed format, you must return that document to us. If we provided you with an electronic PDF file, simply trash that on your computer so that it cannot be recovered. The electronic document may only be on ONE computer -it may NOT be duplicated. This is also a part of your contract with Leicester Bay Theatricals.

LBT ORDER # 3303

For Anne:
My Hermione, My Beatrice, My Juliet, My Imogen, My Viola.

For William:
My Prince Hal, My Puck, My Questioning Hamlet.

For Charlotte:
My Marina, My Cordelia, My Miranda.

“More are men’s ends marked than their lives before: The setting sun, and music at the close,
As the last taste of sweets, is sweetest last,
Writ in remembrance more than things long past.”

- *Richard II*

“The web of our life is of a mingled yarn, good and ill together: our virtues would be proud, if our
faults whipped them not; and our crimes would despair, if they were not cherished by our virtues.”

- *All's Well That Ends Well*

“O my good lord, when I was like this maid,
I found you wondrous kind...
Will you be mine, now you are doubly won?”

- *All's Well That Ends Well*

“...But this rough magic
I here abjure, and, when I have required Some heavenly music, which even now I do,
To work mine end upon their senses that This airy charm is for, I’ll break my staff,
Bury it certain fathoms in the earth,
And deeper than did ever plummet sound I’ll drown my book.”

- *The Tempest*

PLAYWRIGHT'S NOTE

“Words, Words, Words...”

I received all sorts of reactions, a number of them skeptical, when I told people that I was writing a play about Shakespeare in iambic pentameter, blank verse with pseudo-Jacobean verbiage. We have it in our heads, for some reason, that Shakespeare and his contemporaries wrote in a style and way that cannot, and should not, be imitated. That sort of defeatism made my stubborn streak all the more determined to plunge into the dark waters of time and tug out the pearls I knew were there.

In fact, I found the process of writing this play extremely liberating, not constricting. Words were sparking off my fingers at a rapid clip, while the iambic pentameter became almost instinctual. The flow of language, following Shakespeare's literal iambic beat of the heart, became a natural outgrowth of the storm of syllables that often haunt my cluttered mind.

Through my time as a playwright, I have had many well-intentioned critics of my work try to pare down my love of language. Even some of my friends affectionately call sections of my plays “Mahonrilogues.” I have had to be careful with the “paper bullets” of my brain, and remind myself that so many moderns expect minimalism and economy. Less is more, the adage goes.

Except I don't believe that. Not really. Certainly, minimalism is a choice, often a good choice, depending on the mood of the piece, and what is trying to be accomplished. It's a style I often admire. Mary Zimmerman's *Metamorphoses*, for example, was an ecstatic read for me. Her simple, yet elegant use of language had a mythic quality that, in turn, inspired the style I use for some of my plays and other projects that are based on various mythologies. Similarly, I have taken a more staccato, contemporary style for certain projects, when appropriate. There is a time to adapt style to a project, a time period, or a message. Stretching yourself in different directions can be very refreshing.

Yet I am happiest when the use of heightened language is the right medium for a writing project. That's when I have to think less about process and just let my natural voice ring out. It's ironic that I have to go back centuries to find language that is comfortable for me, but then again I have always felt like an odd fit in this world, in this time. Give me a Victorian vest, an Arthurian sword, or an Elizabethan doublet, then suddenly I feel more in-sync with the world. As it is, I am a stranger, a wanderer. Visions of past worlds are my only comfort. — *Mahonri Stewart*

THE DROWNÈD BOOK

Or, The History of William Shakespeare, Part Last

A play by Mahonri Stewart

CHARACTERS — 7 — (3m 3f 1boy)

(In Order of Appearance)

WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE, near the end of his life

HAMNET’S GHOST, as he was when he died, 11 years old

THOMAS QUINEY

JUDITH SHAKESPEARE

ANNE SHAKESPEARE

SUSANNA SHAKESPEARE

JOHN HALL

Originally presented in Provo, UT, at the Castle Amphitheater, on August 25, 2017, by Zion Theater Company. The Cast was as follows:

William Shakespeare	Bradley Moss
Anne Shakespeare	Shawnda Moss
Judith Shakespeare	Zel Bromley
Thomas Quiney	Sam Schofield
Susanna Shakespeare	Belinda Purdum
John Hall	Peter F. Christensen
Hamnet’s Ghost	William (previously Hyrum) Stewart
Director	Mahonri Stewart
Stage Managers	Ashley Kelly, Katherine Gaylord

THE DROWNÈD BOOK Or, The History of William Shakespeare, Part Last by Mahonri Stewart. Cast of 7: (3m 3f 1boy) 2 hours. Elizabethan Costumes. One simple or elaborate setting. William Shakespeare has come home—but is he welcome back? Having traveled between London and Stratford-Upon-Avon his entire professional life as England’s premiere playwright, he has missed significant events in the life of his family; most tragically, the death of his son Hamnet. Now his daughter Judith hates him, his daughter Susannah distrusts love, and his wife Anne grows ever more distant. To make matters worse, a vengeful, but complex Thomas Quiney plots to tear down all that Shakespeare holds dear and raise himself up in its place. Shakespeare must confront the mistakes of his past, or risk losing what’s left of his future. Premiered by Zion Theatre Company, 2017. **ORDER #3303**

Mahonri Stewart is an award-winning writer and educator. He has written over two dozen plays, most of which have been produced throughout the U.S. and Europe, including productions in Los Angeles, Scotland, and Switzerland. In 2004, his premiere play *Farewell to Eden* won the Kennedy Center’s American College Theater Festival’s National Playwriting Award (Second Place) and their National Selection Team Fellowship Award. Since then, he has also received numerous other awards and honors for his plays, and strives to expand his writing into various other mediums. He received his MFA in Theatre: Dramatic Writing from Arizona State University and his Bachelor degree in Theatre Arts from Utah Valley University. He is a former Playwright-in-Residence at the Noorda Regional Theater

The Drownèd Book

Or, The History of William Shakespeare, Part Last

I. 1 — *Stratford Upon Avon, England. The action of the play is a conflation of the events that happen between the years 1607-1616. Enter WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE.*

WILLIAM: *(Aside)* There it is, paradise and purgatory,
My rest, my wrack, Stratford Upon Avon.
Longing and loathing, place of sharp mem'ry;
Such pointed mem'ry 'tis a potent mixture,
An alchemist's attempt to have both ways,
Gold and iron, comfort and weighty chain.

(Enter HAMNET, Shakespeare's ghostly son, age 11.)

Ah, you have come again, as I had thought,
To spur me on, my dear, airy lion,
Little sprite, small spirit, made of fast fire,
Have you once more come to refine desire?

HAMNET: Joy.

WILLIAM: Such heft in such a tiny word, in joy.
How can I enjoin in joy, enjoy that joy,
When my sad heart feels heavy, so infirm?
Wilt thou bring me with thee to thy high place,
To see if my heart fares better up there?

HAMNET: Joy.

WILLIAM: Is that thy message whole, all thou canst say?

HAMNET: Joy.

WILLIAM: Joy to whom, Joy with whom, from whom, on whom?
I have sought joy in all the twisted paths,
For it doth still evade my entreaties!

(Exit Hamnet.)

Gone.
If I could but tear down Heaven's tall tree,
And bring thee back to those who love and live
That miss thee. Yet thou art more free up there.
I will remember thee, who could forget,

Seeing the one on whom his heart has set?
(Enter THOMAS QUINEY, bumping Shakespeare.)

Pardon me, sir, I did not see thee there!

QUINEY: And yet I saw thee, we all do see thee,
Master of Stratford, Prodigal repaired;
From my youth I have seen thee and despaired.

WILLIAM: Do I know thee, sir?

QUINEY: Not a whit, sirrah.
You know not else, 'cept what Narcissus knew.

WILLIAM: I see thou art not civil

QUINEY: Should I be?
Civility brings peace; I want a brawl.

WILLIAM: Why wouldst thy mind have aught of me at all?
I know thee not.

QUINEY: And yet I know thy face.
If I could but mawl its monstrous features!

WILLIAM: If thou hadst caught me in my younger days,
I would do more than bite my thumb, dear sir,
I would bite thine; but I aim for peace now,
So shall cool my blood and say gramercy
For thy most gracious and good company.

Exit William.

QUINEY: (*Aside*) Thou didst see that burr of a cur, that scut?
That logger head who vainly claims wisdom?
That sly hedgepig whose quills he pretends smooth?
That onion nose, swag-bellied, dank Shag-speare?
Surely thou hast been told of his bright fame,
Hot-wrought fortune made of paper and ink,
Which alchemists formed into breathing golems.
If thou hast not heard of him, then go ask
That Moldwarp vain and he inform thee shall!
That rakehell hath not skills that he boasts of!
Whilst I was once in London with my sire,
I witnessed some of his wrought-over plays.
My old parent sung him as something great,
Ovid born again in English form,
And from our humble Stratford-born, to wit!

Yet when I watchéd those bland, mewling players
Perform those travesti of tragedies,
I could not help but make sport at his words!
I laughed at deaths, and wept at all the jests!
Thus, mortified was I when my old sire
Went to that weak, milk-livered, gleeking actor
And fawned, abased himself so that he could
Purloin some money from that frog, that toadstool.
Shame burned to see my patriarch thus kneeling
'Fore a player! It was he who shouldst kneel!
Break-speare feigned to feel for my poor forebear,
Granting the pitiful and shaméd request,
As if his pretense false was draped in alms,
Benevolence, in blesséd charity!
Such false agapé I forthwith abjure!
I knew his dye, that shade beneath his false love!
A sly Wolf-Sheep, a con, a pseudo-Jew!
Like his own Shylock, his copy, laid traps,
Trading curs'd coins for a pound of flesh.
Good fortune it was then my father died
Before such usuary could be complete
And later come so fully, bloody due.

Believe you Shakes the saint, great man of words?
If sincerity be found in that scratch
'Tis because he stole words, called them his.
Traffic I forswore with verbs of folly,
Thus, would I then nurse tobacco and ale,
Entertain the Jade upon happy knee,
Or be witness, of bear or bull thus baited,
Rather than see Will's plays over-rated.

(Enter JUDITH SHAKESPEARE.)

If that clay-brained canary hath not skill
With art and beauty bold, signed by cold Bill,
There is yet one form his flesh can fine-craft:
He wrought a bonnie girl, that keen Shake-shaft.

(To Judith)

Good morrow, Mistress Shakespeare, so adored!

JUDITH: Hast thou seen my father, Thomas Quiney?
I'm bade against my will to meet him home.

QUINEY: I care not for thy father's whereabouts,

but welcome thy warm presence hereabouts.

JUDITH: I tire of thy false flatteries, sirrah.

Hast thou seen my father William Shakespeare?

QUINEY: If I had, I'd blot it out of mind.

JUDITH: If it were but so simply done for me.

As it is, I must have missed his coming.

QUINEY: Dost thou admire my jerkin, Miss Shakespeare?

JUDITH: Thou dost jerk thy jerkin, if thou thinkest

That I care for vulgar covering!.

QUINEY: Thou dost smother me with what I love best.

JUDITH: What's that, sirrah?

QUINEY: Why nothing more than barbéd wit!

JUDITH: Then thou wouldst be killed with loving malice.

QUINEY: Aye, and die within thy murd'rous eyes.

JUDITH: Then Thomas, I am for thee after all!

For I wouldst mar all thy mistreadings base,

With misery and break thy pate with hate.

Yet methinks that not e'en thy affection

For flagellation wouldst endure my love

Of sharpéd spite. For thy own benefit,

My spaniel dear that loves a kicking hard,

Find gentler lover and a safe mistress,

Then leave me to my dark and mournful mischief.

QUINEY: Wait.

JUDITH: Thou dost seem to enjoy inflicting

Pain as much as receiving it in kind!

QUINEY: If thou wilt receive my inflicted pain,

I will morph it into sensuous pleasure.

An alchemist of feeling thus am I,

Transforming one sensation to another.

JUDITH: It wouldst be a true scientist who could

Philos'pher's stone so use to transform my grief.

Dost thou truly think thou canst turn this heart,

So full of iron dross, to purified gold?

QUINEY: Iron is tougher stuff than yellow gold.

JUDITH: Less supple, so I say it once again,
I'm not for thee, despite thy vain attempts,
Which have been many these past sev'ral years.

QUINEY: Doth that not speak to my bold constancy?

JUDITH: It doth speak to thy bold stupidity.

QUINEY: Wilt thou receive not my sweet love nor hate,
But give me such lukewarm indifference?

JUDITH: Indifference! Then let me be clear, thou lewd, dankish coxcomb: I have had enough of thy coy, cowish coverture! Thy beslubbering words are a pox and a plague on my life, and I will no longer be beholden to such blazoned, blubbering bibble-babble! I do entreat thee that thou shouldst inflict such posturing pestilence into some other woman's ear, for I will not submit to such venomous poison! I wouldst have nothing to do with such a fen-sucked, quarrelsome, quat of a sheep-rump!

QUINEY: O, I'm enrapturéd and ravishèd!
Poet of hard love, soft hate, speak again!
Speak again!

JUDITH: Most despicable, impossible rogue!

Exit Judith.

QUINEY: What passion full of flame and fiery fury!
Nay, she is not indifferent, indeed!
I do thus spy some marks of hate within her,
And if she hates me, then, betimes, she'll love me.
Dost not follow such arithmetic,
Then I shall prove my answer by and by.
Beholdest in my cunning, keen, design
An art far 'yond of Fake-speare, shalt thou find.

Exit Quiney.

•••••

I.2 — “*New Place,*” *Stratford-upon-Avon, the Shakespeares' home. ANNE HATHAWAY SHAKESPEARE and SUSANNA SHAKESPEARE are preparing the house. Enter JUDITH.*

JUDITH: I was unable to locate him, Mother,
Nowhere could I find him at the gates.

ANNE: I'd remind thee of thy tardiness.

SUSANNA: If thou didst miss our Father at the gates

Why is he not met here before thee thus?

ANNE: His rambling, stumbling feet; at best know not
Straight ways, but wander as a bee to hive.
'Tis ready all?

SUSANNA: Aye, Mother, that I'll warrant
the critic stranger would, amazed, proclaim,
"Thy house is clean and bright as courtesy!"

ANNE: 'Tis not made for strangers, but thy father.

JUDITH: Is diff'rence to be had?

SUSANNA: Be not so saucy,
'Tis not becoming to a gracious lady.

JUDITH:
Lady! Judith Shakespeare coarse and plain!
Thou hast swallowéd whole myths, Susanna;
I am no more a lady than that portrait,
Whose lady fine is preening over there.

SUSANNA: Thou art a gentle's daughter, that is true

JUDITH: I am the seed of a knavish, bawdy actor;
An upstart poet who had high ambitions
That vaulted him straight o'er these guarded walls!

ANNE: Thy coat of arms would quarrel with thee, Mother,
On that point, methinks.

JUDITH: Forsooth, coat of arms!
Bedeviléd, pretending coat of arms
Shouldst marry this false portrait of a lady,
And cry themselves honoréd gentry then!
Inanimate, the pairéd lord and lady
May advance to King James's court, forthwith,
And scrape the floor if they behave well 'nough.

ANNE: Why this sour disposition today?
I so would love to see thee bonny-happy.

JUDITH: I would see us all thus happy, Mother,
If father were here to make it rightly so.

ANNE: He shall be here today and make thee seer.

JUDITH: Once here, then gone again; so swift and slipp'ry,
Thus trav'ling as a bouncing, speedy stream.

ANNE: Nay, what thou dost cozen is thy father's substance.

JUDITH: Then why doth he run wet 'tween my fingers
When I try to keep him?

ANNE: Berate him still?
'Tis his so gen'rous hand that hath provided
Our Home, New Place, this grand roof overhead.

JUDITH: Yet his so gen'rous head sleeps rarely here.

SUSANNA: He oft provided home for us in London.

JUDITH: Which home, the Globe so great or the Blackfriars?
Confess, I liked both houses well enough,
But found no bed in them to call my own.

SUSANNA: Thou lookest not in Father's warméd heart,
For there I've always found a goodly rest.

JUDITH: Aye, for thou art thus his favorite child,
Susanna, loved, so like his dear Cordelia.

SUSANNA: If any favor is thus given me,
It is because I have provided rest,
Cold winds shan't bite his tirèd, weary face.

JUDITH: Here trav'lers should expect the wind and ice,
So thus ask not sweet breath nor warmth from me.
What needs that man my love, that knave my praise,
When he doth have his approbation 'ready
From clucking groundlings, and King's court alike,
Their hands and voices raised in cheers, loud shouts?
O, if he only didst need less from those
Who doth not now, not then, know his blind heart.
But, rather, if he yearned for those who 'wait
His absent steps to reach our welcome door,
If he didst give horse rest within our stables,
And bring a comfort to our dame's best bed,
Then wouldst thou see brash youth spin and grow old,
And find my words grow warm to cast out cold.

ANNE: I bespeak thee sternly, shrewish daughter.
Is this the baleful token thou present
In gratitude for Father's generous heart?
Nay, Judith, thou shalt not so leave it thus,
'Til thou shalt then deliver honest answer!

JUDITH: Why do you, Woman, shrive his by-past sins,
Thou who art most offended by neglect?

ANNE: Speak'st hist'ry as a scholar well-acquainted!
As if a child, how wantonly thou brayest..
I thought that I had raised thee to the height
Of handsome, gentlewoman, and fair born
But thou dost still thy faerie stories prattle
Of airy creeds of brash and naive nymphs.
There be reasons for the desolation,
Ruín, and wrack of my hoped for bride's bed.
Thy judgment rash doth not shepherd these grey,
Dark secrets into her short estimation.
Fulsome art thou in thy ign'rance of
The wide world, floating bitter fancy 'bout thee,
Flashing flesh of thy fair, fav'rite fables.
In that, thou art thy father's daughter true!

JUDITH: Nay, his parenting was thus spent abroad.
As thou say'st, I am but ignorant.
Yet how then didst thou and the Will of Words
So raise a rough and dim benighted daughter?
Unlike thee and the nobler Susanne,
I cannot even scratch out my own name.

Exit Judith.

SUSANNA: If she were mine, I would slap her fresh face.

ANNE: Dost thou now also rudely upbraid me?

SUSANNA: Nay, I would see the brightest archangels
Bring thee manna-like comfort at all times.
Thou didst accost her impudence most bravely.

ANNE: But in so doing, did I lose her love?

SUSANNA: What is a child's love, if used as a scepter
To reign with most base, selfish tyranny?

ANNE: Yet I long for such, even if I am
Made subject to its stern looks once awhile.

SUSANNA: So say not, for thou hast this child's sweet love,
With some to spare.

Enter William.

ANNE: Grateful, which I am, for that good spare

I may yet need to use up. Here he comes.

SUSANNA: Papa!

WILLIAM: Delight of my affections, true,
She who waits for me, thus ever faithful,
She who never doubts my heart to be true!

SUSANNA: Delight is mine, today, my dearest Papa.
Like Spring, you bless me with thy safe return
That blasts the frost! With frigid binding winds.
Cold gone, I smell but sweetest apple blossoms.

WILLIAM: O how I revel in thy words!

ANNE: Husband.

WILLIAM: Good morrow, good Anne.

ANNE: Thou callest me good, good Will?

WILLIAM: Always good. That be not doubted, never.

ANNE: In faith, I thought it doubted thus, ever.

WILLIAM: I am in good spirits. Let us leave it.

ANNE: If thou say'st so, Husband.

WILLIAM: So, I say it.
Aye, in gentle earnestness I say it.

ANNE: Gentle spirits, indeed!

(Aside)

How comes all this?

In so few visits a year, 'tis rare thing
For him to seem content or peaceful here.
Always restless, always ready to go
Back to his wider Globe. Is it thus now?

(To William)

The house is finished, anon. Should I also
Instruct the cook to put the fire on?

WILLIAM: I am not hungry, Anne, but for one thing.

ANNE: What one thing is that?

WILLIAM: Nothing.

ANNE: Say nothing?

Dost thou jest with me?

WILLIAM: If I do so jest,
I shall take the trickster Puck's joke further.

SUSANNA: This levity lewd, I find, is not for me!

Exit Susanna. William kisses Anne.

ANNE: Will, thou art in a rare mood.

WILLIAM: Why so rare
For man to want to kiss his fairest friend?

ANNE: Do not mock me, sir.

WILLIAM: In faith, I do not.

ANNE: I wouldst think almost I have met thy twin,
Like those mistaken in thy comedies.

WILLIAM: By my troth, this is no Com'dy's error.
Anne, I would like to make thee laugh—loudly.

ANNE: If this be no jade's trick, and belikest thou
To finish this lewd race, then I say we ought
Take merriment unto another quarter.

WILLIAM: Aye, so that we may roll in won'drous laughter.

Exeunt.

•••••

I.3 — *Enter Judith, carrying a small portrait.*

JUDITH: I spy this bright, beaut'ous portrait again.
A stray witness wouldst think I pine for one
That I could call my love, or such, divine
Of heart, of hand, of soul, in short, a man
But this be not a man, nor 'tis a woman,
Unless you think I'm bent towards that wild wind.
Nay, this figure that sits beside me in
This painting small and dear to my slight heart,
'Tis not a man, but couldst have been if he'd
been granted longer, loving life to live.
All revealèd, it is Hamnet, my twin,
My poor, dear brother, dead, so long gone now.

He wast but ten and one, so I the same,
When Hades claimed his spirit soft and small.
Was Death was so cruel, to not bring me with him?
What man or woman e'er could fill the ache
Left by him whom with me shared tender womb?
Not all soul mates are made after the shape
of wild-hearted lovers made so passionate.
Those be who find peace in a brother,
Since gone, I've not thus found another.

(Enter Hamnet's Ghost.)

What small boy is this belooks so cold?
'Tis truly thee? Oh, what a vision is this!
Say hap'ly so! If I blench at this sight,
Will he leave me? Depart not, spirit dear!
Hamnet! Hast thou words for me? Speak now.
A mute ghost he appears, but frightful not.
Sweet boy! dost thou not even recognize me?
I am much changèd since we last embraced.

HAMNET: Joy.

JUDITH: He speaks, if only but a single word.
Yes, boy, my warm face touch, if thou art real.
I can't feel fingers, 'though I see them there.
I did but now our childhood portrait view.
My wits, have they now fled my grievéd mind?
Care I if it was provéd even so?
Nay, I delight in this bright youthful, ghost,
I would have him always in my view.
What bringsest thee from shadowed purgatory?
Nay, not from that contested, wracked, dim place!
Thou wast but a pure child, thy heart of bliss,
Hence from a heaven art permitted thus,
As Hermes brings a message. Is that so?

HAMNET: Joy.

Enter William, unseen by Judith.

JUDITH: Please, do not leave me so unsatisfied!
How fleet and short thou art, O joyous herald.
But since thy brief, bright light extinguishèd,
The previous dark I am made more aware.

Exit Hamnet.

WILLIAM: Who was that boy thou didst speak to just now?

JUDITH: Father! Didst thou see him?

WILLIAM: Nay, not his face,
Thou didst obscure that. He reminded me
Of one poor boy I knew who came to me
In manner so the same.

JUDITH: Thou art confused.
This boy, he was a stranger to thy face.

WILLIAM: Perhaps as thy acquaintances, thy griefs,
Are thus known to me much more intimate
Than thou hast e'er considered. Other matters:
Proclaims thy mother of thy anger hot?
Dost thou have a quarrel with me, Judith?

JUDITH: My feelings for thee have ever been constant
Since I was a child: Thou dost boil my blood.

WILLIAM: Thy answer is but brutal honesty.
Know'st thou how often thou art in my thoughts?

JUDITH: Thy thoughts may breed and copulate forever,
But they send no child, boy nor girl, to me.

WILLIAM: My thoughts are not my children true; thou art.

JUDITH: Think so in truth? Nay, thou know thou liest;
For see how thoughts have taken up dire flesh
And formed to strut and dance and die again
Only to be resurrected anew.
Are these not thy brave brood in very deed?

WILLIAM: Aye, I do love those, playing, happy shadows.
Yet I love not the shadows for themselves,
But for the 'membered forms in which I cast them.
Hast thou not seen thy copy dear in them?

JUDITH: What, sayest thou? I walk in Regan's gait!
That Gon'ril's serpent's tooth I bravely wear?

WILLIAM: Nay, thou art my Viola, dearest twin
That didst survive the storm, but die in heart
To see her brother dear sink 'neath the waves.
Dost thou believe, thy father's poor eyes can

But see in thee the joy he saw in him?
For when thou lost thy noblest, sweetest twin
So did I feel the wrack myself herein.
He was my son;

And thou art my dear daughter.

JUDITH: And yet thou wast not there when we saw his life fall away.

Exit Judith.

WILLIAM: Aye, like thy broken heart, that pains me still.

Enter Anne.

ANNE: How dost thou, Will?

WILLIAM: Thou didst speak aright. She hateth me.

ANNE: Thou didst think once I hated thee with spite;
That with my hate I threw thee straight away;
That hate was but short-sighted counterfeit.
It couldst not last, for I do know thy heart.

WILLIAM: But she knows not my heart, my mind, thou dost,
That is the chiefest wound at root herein.
I did so many summers tell her this,
“I am thy father true, thy chiefest kin,”
Then fell away like dead and yellow leaf,
Once green when air was warm and wise and wholesome,
Grown brittle now, when the winter air doth sting.

ANNE: The storms have now returned to thy grim brow,
Thou didst arrive so full of joyous cheer.
I hoped that such bright sunshine last anon,
But here thy somber thoughts, are all in mourning.
Didst thou not come in colored glad, array
With full intent to thus enjoy the day?

WILLIAM: Aye, such was my sincere intent to do.
As I was on my journey home today
I thought of bitter nights, how far they seemed.
From this green land I once was banishéd
And am now called the town’s great father, good.
I am now hailed a gentleman rich and true;
And rich I am, so ‘tis not without right!
I purchaséd that coat of arms to show
What father did, and what he failed to do,

Now lives in me as prophecy fulfilled.
'Tis boastful joy to finally claim glad honor?
Such wealth, such hope, such bliss, such happiness?
And e'en when I saw thee, who suffered most
My absence as a hardened accusation,
And turned against thy heart and blessed honor,
Which honor made me suffer in return,
I did not see our pains and arguments,
Instead remembered I the day I saw
Thy darling face gaze warm at me in full
And I remembered: I did truly love thee.

ANNE: Hold to, my dearest husband, keep such love
Within thy breast that it may stay contained.

WILLIAM: When I saw this warm land I lingered so
That comfort did light on my welcomed finger,
Like bird in gayest confidence doth dare
To trust a giant to its tender care,
But move with slightest tremor and thus see
That brav'ry gone, flown back to angry sea.

ANNE: Will, where goest thou?

WILLIAM: Alas, I tire,
And thus will I follow suit and then retire.

Exit William.

ANNE: Exquisite bliss and plaguéd heart did ne'er
In such close quarters live as now do mine.
I urged him marry me when child conceived,
In hopes the love I saw in him would last,
But now e'en after all these lonely years,
His mind still rounds and turns to former tears.

Enter Susanna.

SUSANNA: Dear Mother, fare thou well?

ANNE: I fare fair 'nough.

SUSANNA: Not all is well 'twixt Judith and thy father.

ANNE: Nay.

SUSANNA: And what is betwixt thee and my father?
He seemed so merry before.

ANNE: He was. We were.

SUSANNA: Yet then...?

ANNE: The sand hath settled in the water,
And he did thus see me so clear again.
I was no mermaid as imagined before.
A siren, rather.

SUSANNA: Nay! Say not thus so.
He loves thee. That I know. It must be true.

ANNE: And by what sign canst I know such more truly?
Before-time I gained tokens of his love
And pledged my faith in those blessed sacraments.
But caught I more sheets of professèd love
With signature of his, to a strange, dark name
Some other lady he must hold more dear.
My pilgrim's prayers were caught in my dry throat,
I felt to curse what I once worshippéd!
But these aren't thoughts for my own darling daughter.
Bright myths I taught her of eternal love.
A child should trust her parents love each other.

SUSANNA: That is no myth, I've seen it in thee both.
For I desire to see such fire re-kindled.
My eyes lied not, they saw great love betwixt thee,
Nor lied thy honest hearts.

ANNE: Believe it still.
Perhaps thy faith shall purge dark heresy.
But I am now exhausted, tired, worn, and whittled by the long day.

Exit Anne. Enter William, unseen.

SUSANNA: O what little hope this all gives to me,
When I see love stripped from those who claimed it
In their younger days of morning sunlight,
When their hearts were light as was their conscience.
Look how weary with sin and grief they are
Now that youth and vitality are gone.
Look at how tired and dark their eyes draw down
To the mournful earth that calls them down
Give their regrets up to her slumber.
Doth this love lay down her burden quick,
When opposèd by lethargic fatigue?

Can it rise again, a Lazarus?
I have my own love locked within here
That I dare not utter to evil air,
Hopes like these plucked from our breasts exposed.
This Pandora with her secret box,
Safe as long as I do not unlatch it?
But once love, made plain to the whole, wide world,
Doth she then begin to break down, exposed
This cold, mortal air gives dank, dark chill
Killing not only she, her own dear self
'Twill infect her with a des'prate kiss
Her proclaimed love, that whole, wide world,
Spores sent from her stinking, cursèd mouth
Into ears who hear her base infections.
Best it is to keep closèd this box,
Love protected, binding it with locks.

Exit Susanna.

WILLIAM: I have heard this and cannot unhear it.
My dear daughter, whom I truly adore
Cannot love another since she believes
Wretched Will, I, cannot love her dear mother.
I, who doth write thus 'bout love so often,
Hath made my Susanna's love a coffin.
My unworthy heart I must thus forswear
And place a better one again in there.

Exit William.



II.1 — *Outside New Place. Enter Judith and Quiney.*

JUDITH: What must I do to thus be rid of thee?

QUINEY: Just Marry me; then all is as should be,
Done, no reason I'd find to thus tarry,
'Cept meals, prayérs, and when we make merry.

JUDITH: And look, here's my house, thou art forbidden.

QUINEY: How so, there be some enchantment hidden?

Perhaps there is some witch's charm or hex?

JUDITH: Magic that makes your ships into mad wrecks.

QUINEY: Then thou dost not know the powers of rhyme
That makes thee mine, if I but bide my time.

JUDITH: Nay, tardy clocks tell erroneous hours,
And truants shall be locked, put out our tow'rs!

QUINEY: Judith, just listen!

JUDITH: Get thee gone, Thomas!

Exit Judith.

QUINEY: (*Aside*) Thou might call me a fool to thus persist,
But her sweet witch's charms I can't resist.

Enter WILLIAM.

WILLIAM: Who is this tree that plants in front my house?

QUINEY: Thou dost know me.

WILLIAM: Pray, I do not, sirrah.

QUINEY: Thou knowest me! Mock me not, base Shakespeare!

WILLIAM: Know thee? By what should I know thee, Quiney?

QUINEY: Thou dost now confess it!

WILLIAM: Nay, deny it!
To know thee, thou wouldst need be noteworthy.
Thy father, I knew him, he wast good man.
This mewling whelp, though, mule's back bottom,
He, I have quickly thus forgotten.

QUINEY: I am thus known! A vinter, tobacc'nist,
A man and merchant, master of many!
Thus learned, I, *maîtriser de les Français*;
I do thus more than scribbles, scrying scrapes!
A Mule? Not I. Thou art the ass on stage:
Thus belching flat'lent fancies that add not
To our community's good benefit!

WILLIAM: Pardon me, this is purposeless matter.
Better I knew than to engage with thee.

QUINEY: O 'zounds, master of words cannot retort?

WILLIAM: Let us, sir, bury our useless malice,

Instead, come, I offer thee my chalice.

QUINEY: O calm dishonor, vilest submission!

Not worthy thy feigned, fainting, feckless fame,
Thy foul fortune made thus effeminate
By base and hermaphrodite origin!

WILLIAM: Take care, thou brash and brainless, beardless youth,
Thou dost not desire me an enemy...

QUINEY: That is precisely my deep desire! Youth!

I am a man, a beard as full as thine!
Accosts thou well on stage's protection,
Where swords are blunted, faux *finis* thus writ,
Thy false and vain, constructed victory,
But how dost thou fare when the blood is real
And knives are sharpened?

WILLIAM: How can I not laugh!

I've tried to publish peace, but O now this!
Thou speakest as if thou art worldly thus?
A large, strong wrestler riding our world's stage?
I stood before our Gloriana, Queen,
Receivéd her blessed, standing applause.
I've crossed my wits with wickedest, wild Wits!
E'en after noble Christopher Marlowe
Fell mysteriously in a little room,
I survived enemies and critics, all;
When Kit could no more deliver his speech,
I continued with my soliloquies.
Essex's Earl, to rebel, used my play
Against the Queen, to commit high treason!
Yet when his head fell, my cool wit stood tall.
Thou thinks the blade thou boasts of is sharp?
Thus try the basest blade stabbed Kit's poor
heart,
Or ax that sliced through Essex Earl's weak neck!
Where they fell, I was standing, tall and sure!
I have thus scolded our dread, Scottish king,
And publicly bewitched his occult fears!
And still he invited me to his court,
Our blesséd patron, His crown our Comp'ny's stamp.
When Ben Jonson was thrown in dark prisons,

Here I was invited to ‘grave my name
To James’s translation of Holy Writ.
My plays read, thou shalt see my travels wide:
To France and culture’s seat, great Italy!
Thus I traversed a globe beyond my Globe,
I basked in bishops’, monarchs’ majesty,
I have seen rebellions, tempests, and plagues,
By God’s good grace, I lived to tell my tales.
Thus, ask me not to heed quaint arrogance.
Thou wantest to take aim at Mighty Man,
Yet empty quips, conceited sentences,
Thy frantic, paper bullets of the brain,
Shalt all thus fail in estimation mine.
I blame thee not, be humble and content
With peaceful vineyard, graceful fields, all thine,
The salt of earth still hath its rich savor,
But stand thy boasts little in my favor.

QUINEY: Shouldst I now bow, O great, mighty Shakespeare?

WILLIAM: Nay, instead let us humbly strike a peace.

Thou hast hot pepper with thy hearty salt,
Would I rather find reasons for our love
To grow, than noxious weeds of basest hate.

QUINEY: Have I but one reason to thee thus love,

And a legion reasons to thee thus hate;
Thus, mark me, I shall cut that one reason
From out thy rotting, black plaguéd carcass,
And I shall take her, make her sweetly mine,
Then I shall leave thy corpse to fester, rot,
A monument to laughing folly, thine.

WILLIAM: Her?

QUINEY: How little carest thou for thine own fields

As thou dost wander about thy fair Globe,
Give heed to wisest word of man who plows,
Ignoréd fields are eaten by the cows.

Exit QUINEY.

WILLIAM: (*Aside*) O why doth this man shake my confidence,

As if the critics of my youth had strength
To banish me from Stratford once again?

Like that poached deer I slew those years long past,
I freeze in fear under the hunter's glare.

(Voices are heard.)

Yet hear I bestirring of voices loud!
I must awake from this too potent spell.
It is my daughter Susannah and, why,
That is John Hall the honored physician.
In good faith, truly respectable man.
Is it thus he whom she set her dear love?
I must hear this, so shall hide in casement.

William hides. Enter Susanna and John Hall.

JOHN: Beloved Susannah, wait!

SUSANNA: Sir, I cannot!

JOHN: Nay, tarry but a short while and explain
Why thou hast violently torn our love
When it was fair and valued by you once,
as thou confessed so oft to me before.
I pray thee tell what perfidious star
Hath struck and drained the bright, wholesome verdure
Of love, now rain run out high Welkin's cheek.

SUSANNA: Nay, I cannot! But since thy sad eyes wear
Such mournful expression, know that 'tis not
by fault of thine. Thou art the bright zenith of
Admiration, still idol of my heart.
But I cannot say more lest I injure
My own firm purpose! John, we must not wed!

WILLIAM: *(Aside)* Should I now speak at this and interfere?
My daughter tell of my damned fool's mishaps
And my deeds need not be her dowry dire?

JOHN: Not wed? Thou mayest as well say be dead!
For that is what shall occur to my heart
If we depart from here thus twain.

SUSANNA: Say not,
But be content that we met with true love,
Its sweetest taste pollen like bees to buds,
This cargo fraughting to our hives, our hearts,
Before the fresh and fragrant flow'rs wilted
And died. Instants of love are nigh better

Than to thus see love turn to endless hate.

JOHN: Why speak of love's death, morphed thus into hate?
What betid thy poor mind and infected
thee with such notions sad?

SUSANNA: I can say naught...

WILLIAM: (*Aside*) I cannot let this be.

SUSANNA: ...Just we are done.

WILLIAM: (*Aside*) I have now concocted artifice keen!
I'll prove and manifest their truest love.
There be no sharper spur to swift action
Than oppose, pause for burnéd reaction.

William reveals himself.

SUSANNA: O Father!

WILLIAM: Aye, daughter, though thy secrets
Exposed show base betrayal 'gainst my will!

SUSANNA: In what possible way have I transgressed?

WILLIAM: Thou didst transcend thy family's conflict
'Tween my dear parent's cherished Cath'lic faith,
And former Queen's 'forcement of her father's
Adulteries most vainly justified.
Thou hast gone to a worst, pitched party third,
Thou hast tied thyself to a Puritan,
The overbearing, inveterate foe of
My house, aye, my whole belovéd Globe!

JOHN: Dear sir, ere thou condemn me for my faith,
List how a Puritan loves thy daughter
Thus purely.

WILLIAM: Nay, I shan't take poison that
Would place all dearest things I love to mort!
I submitted my humors to thy care,
But surgeon's knife shall not touch my daughter!

SUSANNA: O Father, thou art livid, hot today,
Allow thy gentler nature have more sway!

WILLIAM: Speak not for him, deserves he not thy love.

SUSANNA: A more deserving man I have not met!

WILLIAM: Thy experience with men is thus too short!
This man is not thus comely, wise, nor good,
To hold so fast to a cruel religion.

JOHN: No, sir, it's thy words, not my faith that shows
A judging disposition and heart cruel.

WILLIAM: Dost thou think so? Thou art a scurvy fool,
In addition to thy other base faults.
Thou hast not worn the actor's reviled cap!
In London it is Puritan complaint
That hath set laws against the player's craft
Banished us from city to the outskirts,
A broken barge tossed on unmannéd isle.
'Tis thy people's self-righteous preachings, cruel,
That caused the Master over Revels to
Take censor's pen, nay, his sharp, deadly sword,
And wound my plays and lame their arms with cuts
That they are blunted thus in their battles!
E'en out of city Puritans offend,
For when we are on tour it hath been thy
Poxed Puritan Councils that barréd us
Entrance to towns and quite a many shires,
Where we eke out living in times of plague.
E'en our dear Stratford lists to Puritans,
So that I never found the honor dear
In my own country, elsewhere obtained.
Thus, my own children were barred meanly from
The sight of their own father's art 'mong peers
'Twas not 'til came they to my London stage
That viewed they visions that I made for them.

SUSANNA: No, thou gives this man baseless injury.
When thou doth lay such fault at his pure feet,
Who took no part in wrongs to thy good art.

WILLIAM: A Puritan, is he not?

JOHN: Ay.

WILLIAM: Then so.

SUSANNA: Not so! Hath not a Puritan conscience?
O, wrong or right, they live by their own light.
As thou dost say what thou wilt in thy plays,

Despite the cons'quence it for others means.
So doth a Puritan claim his right to,
according to his own mind, influence.
Still, see not this man by another's light,
E'en those of his own faith, fam'ly, or tribe.
I beseech thee, see this man by his heart,
Individual in its sphere and part.

WILLIAM: Susann, thou art fair minded Portia, mine,
'Cept thou didst take the poor foreigner's part,
Shown mercy, even a dear, truest love
To the cold stranger within our closed gates.
Shylock is well represented by thee,
Thou wouldst have shown the Jew's humanity.

SUSANNA: Then thou dost approve of his marriage suit?

WILLIAM: Aye, but last I spied, there was another
Last barrier and wall had he to scale.

SUSANNA: I near forgot; I cannot marry him...
Or so I thought.

JOHN: Thou art undone, my love,
Methinks, by father's keen, uncanny wit.

SUSANNA: Aye, he hath shown the glaring folly of
My frightened argument. Forswear, I will,
From comparing my love with another's
Scales crafted by another's state,
And be a maker of my own love's fate.

Susanna and John kiss.

WILLIAM: Now come, good Master Hall, enjoy our hall,
And our good fam'ly's courtesy and fire,
That we may thus become familiar.
Dost thou play chess? We are a gaming sort.

JOHN: Aye, but the kind of chess Susann and I
engage in has even more playful sport.

SUSANNA: Remember that he is my father, John !

WILLIAM: Thou needst not fear, I was young once as well.

Exit William, Susanna, and John.

••••

II.2. — *Inside New Place. There are the sounds of reveling in the next, unseen room. Enter William with an empty serving dish to be filled. He stops and weeps. Enter Anne.*

ANNE: Husband, art thou not well on joyous day?

WILLIAM: Leave me, I will attend to thee there soon.

ANNE: I've left thee be, near our whole long marriage;
Wilt thou not ope thy mind to me e'en on
Our dear, sweet daughter's wedding feast, Will'iam?
I wish to aid thy heart.

WILLIAM: I do not doubt.
Thou wast woven with tender stuff, dear Anne.

ANNE: Indeed, if I am dear to thee, then speak.

WILLIAM: How speak when my heart has no tongue to voice?

ANNE: Let thy heart write, 'haps it is a verbose
Poet like thee, and just needs a sharp quill.

WILLIAM: My heart is oft a solitary thing,
Shy to tenderest touch.

ANNE: Shy thou hast been.
Thou hast been willing to play the brash clown
On stage, but then withdraw when thou doth step
Off of the planks and 'mongst mortals again.
Learn from women: What you thus think, do speak.

WILLIAM: Thou stole that from me.

ANNE: What, you ne'er borrowed
From Kit Marlowe, or Thomas Kyd?

WILLIAM: Ay, Ay,
Cannot I hide from thee. If I to war
went, thou wouldst still find me and wag thy tongue!

ANNE: Ay, I am yet a persistent lover.
But, Will, why hide? Why not come home for good?

WILLIAM: And abandon London, our rich living?

ANNE: Look about thee! Thou art rich already!
What need thee of more plays or more players?
We have gallant New Place o'er our good heads,

Plenty of gold safe, tucked, ready in store,
Thy clever wife hath taken care of our
Investments that have multiplied talents,
Making a rich man a very rich man.
Done well, is not? Art thou thus not free now?

WILLIAM: Canst lonely men ever truly be free?

ANNE: What loneliness shouldst thou hold with me near?
Is not a loyal wife comfort enough?

WILLIAM: Hast thou been loyal, true, and chaste always,
With me so oft conveniently away?

ANNE: Hath thy green-eyed jealousy now returned?
Said thou that those accusations were cold.
That sin thou cleared of fair Desdemona,
Thus I thought thou didst shrive its base, false pitch
From thy mind darkened and my innocence!
I have been thy true companion, e'en when
Thou hast not been true to our lonely bed!

WILLIAM: Broken sacred wedding vows, have I not,
Save for when I thought thou didst break that trust!

ANNE: E'en if that were verily true as bond,
Of which I have oft had dark, broken doubts,
Canst thy wand'ring eyes, thoughts, and pen say so?
Or is this Dark Lady in thy sonnets
As mythical as wild Titania?

WILLIAM: They were published without my permission!

ANNE: But yet they shouted thy perversities
From the very housetops! The shame they caused!

WILLIAM: Thou dost not perceive their significance,
Nor the truest meaning of my poor heart.
Thou dost know that many were writ for thee!

Enter Susanna, in her wedding clothes.

SUSANNA: Father, Mother, thou dost a Babel make!
So much that e'en if Will Kemp's ghost were here
He would not laugh.

WILLIAM: Meant not to disturb guests,
We beseech thy pardon, dear Susanna.

I cursed; Thy mother dropped the pudding black.

ANNE: And then thy father broke pitcher and plate,
Thus fell down on his ass and hurt his pate!

Exit Anne.

SUSANNA: Fair omen this is not, my dear Father,
Do I see my future writ by thy din?
Do fair loves all begin as this day,
Only to fall into harsh disarray?

WILLIAM: O come hither, daughter, lend me thy hand.

Susannah gives her palm to William. He reads it.

SUSANNA: What dost thou, my Papa, is this some game?
It will take more than old gambols to free
Me from the crows that hover near our feast.

WILLIAM: This be an old trick I did learn from some
Three crones who taught me their myster'ous art.
Within thy blessed palm resides thy future.
This here is thy heart line. Since Nuptial Day,
Let us begin thus there, scry thy fortunes
In love.

SUSANNA: Wrinkle not so thy brow! What is revealed?

WILLIAM: O my dear girl, thou art blesséd and true!
The line is long, to the index finger.
With thy man thou shalt rest in loving bliss.

SUSANNA: 'Tis so? 'Tis so! I mean, a merry jest.

WILLIAM: Thy mind line as I would have fairly hoped
Thy education was thus catered to
Thy thirst for knowledge. Judith had other
Claims to her time, though no less observant.

SUSANNA: Aye, she is sharp.

WILLIAM: But thy line more steady.
Thy life line...

SUSANNA: O tell me not that, forbid!
No soul desires to know that in advance!

WILLIAM: Life lines tell quality of the journey,
Not length of life.

SUSANNA: O then pursue the course.

WILLIAM: Thou hast a semi-circle, long and deep.
Which signifies thy health, vitality.
A vibrant living thou shalt surely have.

SUSANNA: I do have cheery hands!

WILLIAM: Yet do Forbear,
Let us see what lies in thy fate line there.

SUSANNA: A line of Fate? That doth sound ominous.
The three witches of fate are fickle hags,
And I would not their single eye hover
O'er my poor life.

WILLIAM: And they shan't. Thou art free.
I see only their light touch, the rest ruled
by thee, except this cross to thy life line
Which signifies the warm help of fam'ly.

SUSANNA: That I do most humbly welcome with cheer!

WILLIAM: In addition to thy dowry, I give
That gift good fortune writ on thy fair palms.
If I could truly but give thee something
To recompense thy constant love to me.
For I wept in here 'fore thou didst come in,
Berating my constant absence from thee.
I found in thee a joy in my long line,
But I have added many a sorrow,
Yesterday gone, now just the morrow.

SUSANNA: Thou art here now. That is a joy itself,
To have thee here at my brightest moment.

Enter John.

JOHN: I do prithee, Susann, didst thou wed me
Or thy father?

SUSANNA: Art thou jealous so soon?

WILLIAM: I pray, forgive froward galiant his care
And impatience. I, too, was a brash swain
Turned husband once, and showed my own fair share
Of ill-favored heat and impertinence.
We are made of weak stuff, each all around.

JOHN: Ay, I do lief correct myself sharply.
I was vexed not at thee, but lack of thee,
and thy dearest, winsome orbit.

SUSANNA: Alack,
I thought I lost thy gentleness ‘ready,
But now, too true, I see there is naught to
Correct.

WILLIAM: Believe that not a bit. Be wise.

SUSANNA: First I’m too harsh and then too light? How thou
Dost whip me around so to hurt my neck!

WILLIAM: Thus is marriage!

JOHN: Surely, dost thou not take
Such a dim view of holy rites and bliss?

WILLIAM: Real expectation is not dim, but bright.
It is what shall give love its truest light.
I, thy Polonius, shall sagely play,
If to thy father’s words heed thou shalt pay.

SUSANNA: Too soon to bore us on our wedding day!

WILLIAM: I shall then be brief to such saucy sprites!
And say, sir, that thou art no longer swain,
And, daughter, thy maid’s knot to be untied.
‘Tis best to cast away the fervent tales
Of perfect love and lovers who err not,
But see across from thee a human form.
In such a face of fault thou shalt then find
A more favoréd medittance to bind.
Rush not to find a stain, nor to berate
But onward move, and clean their dirty slate
Of the wrongs you do so begrudge them there
That love of thine shall rise ‘bove ev’ry care.
Now this hypocrite shall go tell my wife
That years past her love saved my worthless life.

Exit William.

SUSANNA: Wondrous strange my father, though dear to me.

JOHN: I count myself blesséd, though I be an
Artless fellow, but I find myself in
An artful and resplendent family.

SUSANNA: No, not Artless, nor ever was thus so,
‘Though faultless thou may not ever thus be.
Yet it is those imperfections that show
Your most gallant and true humility.
I would not from a portrait of thy face
Hide one odd mole, nor single jarring scar.

JOHN: But doth not wingéd, fancy then doth race
Thy heart to ‘magine me by brighter star?
Would it not be better to form me new
Like the clever, clay shaping Pygmalion;
Or Michelangel’, who couldst shape God true;
And breathe life in lover-chameleon?

SUSANNA: No such Golem would I make mine so well,
Rather Eve and Adam, though from grace fell.

JOHN: Then if thou wouldst take from my scarlet lips
An imperfect kiss, I would so thee mar.

SUSANNA: Ay, bring those red, twinning cherries thus here.
I will partake of thy forbidden fruit.

Susanna and John kiss.

JOHN: And thus, if fears of thine are now quiet,
Let us show that merry synod our joy
Is not thus so easily abated.

SUSANNA: Let us make Morris jig until we laugh
To our fair marriage bed, to dance anew.

Exeunt.



III.1— *Inside New Place. Enter Judith followed by Quiney.*

JUDITH: Thy name is not on the guest list, Thomas.

QUINEY: It is not, I confess.

JUDITH: Intruder then,
Upon my sister’s most dear assembly!

QUINEY: I would intrude into sacred heaven,

Even if a sulph'rous demon were I,
If such daring brought me closer to thee.

JUDITH: Such fair, sweet words drop from such a foul mouth!

QUINEY: Knowest not my fair mouth. Wilt thou meet it?

JUDITH: Nay! I shall not dance this jig with thee, nor engage thy rhythms! Thomas Quiney, thy froward, perverse tongue wouldst make Mephistopheles blush!

QUINEY: Inflict me so, I love cradling curses!

Such ecstasy! I...

Judith hits Quiney.

QUINEY: Agh!

JUDITH: Art thou in ecstasy now?

QUINEY: Why didst thou strike me?

JUDITH: Why dost thou speak to me? It is the same to me, as my smackings are to thee.

QUINEY: Nay, my words rough are, but loving in spite.

I do but...

Judith strikes Quiney again.

QUINEY: I beseech thee, bate thy hand!

JUDITH: What, my hand is as unwelcome as thy lips?

QUINEY: My lips do not leave bruises!

JUDITH: With how thou didst prattle lustily on, I am not certain of that!

QUINEY: Thou dost pitch my sad heart in wretched gaol

When thou doth abuse me in such...

Judith strikes Quiney again.

QUINEY: Thou art a devil-woman!

JUDITH: Ay.

QUINEY: Demons wear beautiful faces!

JUDITH: Ay! And think of that hell thou wouldst dwell in if I wert thy lover, Thomas Quiney!

QUINEY: I can enjoy a little heat...

JUDITH: Ay, our passions would be those of fire, but not the kind that thou feelest in thy loins. Rather, it wouldst be the fire that burns thy pate and peels thy skin with unquenchable pain! So, if thou wouldst suffer, court me to thy doom, but if thou wouldst feel relief, be a bachelor!

QUINEY: Thou unmuzzled shrew, thou shalt not hear from my suit again!

JUDITH: Halloo, Hallay, O happy day!

QUINEY: Thou art like thy father! More the fool I to think otherwise!

JUDITH: What say ye? I will rip those words from thy offending mouth!

QUINEY: The Shakespeares are a cursed kind, a family of vipers! A plague upon thy house!

Exit Quiney.

JUDITH: It is quiet. Can it be so? Am I finally rid of that glutton for pain? Such liberty comes unexpected!
I should feel joy over the deliverance, but now it seemest to me that I am bootless and utterly alone.
Why would I have him back again?

Enter William.

WILLIAM: I was seeking thy distresséd mother,
Only to find my distresséd daughter.
What ails thee, Judith?

JUDITH: Men ail me, Father,
Thus wouldst thy face but make me doubly sick.

WILLIAM: So much distress on such a happy day.

JUDITH: Happy for Susanna, that is not new,
Again she stands on thy tall pedestal,
I am thrown down.

WILLIAM: Who here throws thee thus down?
I wouldst have thee thus stand up in my arms,
Fold thee in my embrace like the bright child
I knew. She had thy eyes, though happ'ier ones.

JUDITH: Aye, they were happy once when they saw thee.

WILLIAM: Why not so now? What guard stands in our way?

JUDITH: The memory and ghost of my brother.

WILLIAM: Would not Hamnet desire thy happiness?

JUDITH: He would.

WILLIAM: I hope for the very same thing.

JUDITH: If I could but believe such happy things.

WILLIAM: Then just believe.

JUDITH: Believe...

WILLIAM: Is it so hard?

JUDITH: Believe. Believe, aye, then thus be deceived.

Thou dost forget, believed I long ago.
Believed a tale of a Trav'ling, Wise Man,
A myth of a storied, mag'cal wizard.
Told tales of far lands, kings and queens, castles.
This Trav'ling Man brought me many such tales.
A child, thus I loved such bright fantasies,
Now grown, I see them as hypocrisies.

Exit Judith. Exit William.

••••

III.2 — *Inside New Place. Anne is onstage, weeping. Enter William.*

ANNE: I thought I was beyond such pebbles wet.
When in our lean, early days we struggled,
I oft was found making these small, damp streams.
And when thou rode to London so far 'way,
I bathed in them without any witness,
Like Artemis, of my own wet skin shy.
Now that I have dared to bathe in them once again,
Hast thou stumbled upon my private place,
And then debased vulnerability.

WILLIAM: Thou art not the virgin, angry huntress.
Thou art my fairest friend, I thy husband.
Thou hast oft exposed thy light, beautiful skin
And told me that thou naked wast for me,
And I returned such exposure in same.
Are we now trying to cover all up?
That which we already, intimate know?
Thy tears, to me, are like thy soft caress,
An always welcomed, bright nakedness.

ANNE: Such fair and faithful words from doubting heart.
I have learnt not to trust their flattery.
Thou dost still yet think me untrue to thee,
Who hath been like an abbess shut away;
Or like a priestess in a Greek temple,
Who only opened holy gates for thee.
Such long days, lonely nights I thus waited
Whilst in London wast thou making fortune...

WILLIAM: A fortune for thee.

ANNE: Ay, ay, which I know.
And after famine, there came sumptuous feast,
Which food thou didst share with us bounteously.
But with that treasure there came steeper price,
We gained a fortune, but lost our crown jewel:
Thy warm company.

WILLIAM: I truly know it,
For as I rode that long, dark, lonely road
Upon my steed t'wards London each cruel Spring,
To put my private thoughts to motley view,
I looked back, and found my heart turned to salt,
Then longing for those loved now left behind:
My fair friend, thou, and our little cherubs.

ANNE: Winters were our haven...

WILLIAM: ...No plays performed.

ANNE: I had thee again, to jealously guard.
Greek Persephone's flipped, mirror image:
Sad Demeter's season of grief, our joy.

WILLIAM: Dark Hades was an imperfect husband,
But his heart was true and his sad love ached.

ANNE: Was Persephone thus a captive held,
Or was the underworld heaven misnamed?

WILLIAM: My Anne...

ANNE: No...no! No more poetry, no more sonnets, no more rhythms, no more rhymes, no
more flattering illusions and allusions!

WILLIAM: By my troth, Anne, this is my truest heart...

ANNE: 'Tis not thy heart I question, but thy feet. Thou art here today, I am able to hold thee in my hands,
but tomorrow will bring the storm again that shalt fly thee away! I shall be as Prometheus this time and
foresee the fall. This season, it shall be I to fly away!

Exit Anne.

WILLIAM: Anne—Anne!

Exit William.

.....

III.3 — *Thomas Quiney's vineyard. Enter Thomas Quiney.*

QUINEY: O wine, tobacco, that is all I need;
To drown and burn myself up 'tis my goal;
Thus I will eradicate my poor heart
Upon the altar of my merchandise.
A woman's womb is not greater than vines,
How much production grows upon it, see!
Thus, Eve's factory's weak matter indeed
Compared to such robust multipliers
And marvelous lusty replenishers!
When set by fruit I grow, women are weak!
As a vintner I have borne more children
Than whole villages of women with child.
What matters Luna and her mere nine months
When compared to the mighty brood of wine
That hath been borne by my wet art?
By Dionysus' cup, I am fertile!
Dost thou see those tobacco fields o'er there?
Aye, they are mine as well, of my dear wares.
I am a wealthy fellow, loss 'tis hers...
I'm considered an important, great man!
The tobacco yonder there in my fields,
It is more beautiful than any maid.
So lit, its smoke doth make a lusty dance
That seduces better than any wench.
The smoke's sweet kiss, most érotique caress
I prefer to woman's clumsy, crude attempts.
Aye, men may claim that keen desire aroused
From useless rumps, thus false-called fairer sex,
As pinnacle of pleasures physical,
But believe not such miscreant lewdsters!
What need I lumpy, rude feminine kine
When I can feast upon my weeds and wine?

Enter Judith, dressed as a man.

JUDITH: I was told by thy man that thou art Thomas Quiney, the master of these purple and green fields.

QUINEY: I am that Tom and these are indeed my opulent fields! And who art thou?

JUDITH: I am Ganymede Tamson, ever at thy service. I operate a tavern in Wilmcote and thus heard such impossible myths of thy wine that I came to either disprove them or partake.

QUINEY: Thou art a wine bearer true, dost thou have a cup?

JUDITH: Aye, I came thus prepared. Your man sent this with me.

QUINEY: Then partake.

Quiney pours and Judith drinks.

JUDITH: Forsooth, thy wine makes me wax rapturous!

Its art and qual'ties art without rival.

QUINEY: Thou singest true the tune of my wet mind,

I just did ponder wine's mightiest worth

Against the poisons that bleed out Eve's teeth.

JUDITH: Ah, thou art wounded too from Eros' point,

Perhaps thou dost need wine's peace more than I.

Quiney drinks.

QUINEY: I thank ye. Thou art strangely prescient.

'Tis true, I am a motley fool for love.

But mistress mine would not be mistress mine,

But rather my ferocious tormentor.

I am an abject monster in her sight,

A thing of wet earth, seaweed, webbéd feet.

Quiney drinks.

JUDITH: And art thou?

QUINEY: Monster, me, do you thus mean?

JUDITH: I know ye not.

QUINEY: I am a creature, 'haps...

A misshaped brute, living in dankest cave;

But if I be a monster, deforméd,

I am a monster that loves a fair maid.

Quiney drinks.

JUDITH: Thou must come off this wine's charms soon enough,

Or thou wilt be a drunken monster, true.

QUINEY: Look, darkness comes so fast upon us now.

Thou spies the moon?

JUDITH: Aye, better seen than thee,

When thy blurred, swimming state is considered.

QUINEY: That moon, it is my friend when I have none.

He shines on me, and comforts me with light
When darkness threatens me with her sharp whip.
When he thus travels to the sky's far side,
I do miss him something quite terrible.

Quiney drinks.

JUDITH: What is that winsome instrument I hear?

It seems to me to come from ev'rywhere
Yet, strangely, also nowhere all at once.

QUINEY: I've often wondered that very same thing!

I've heard it play, but never found its source.
It is as if thou knowest my mind's text,
The entire book full, past and future writ!
I wish my mistress saw me as thou dost,
Perhaps then she would understand in full.
That haunting instrument doth stir hearts, aye!
It truly makes enchanting melodies.
Is it not wondrous beautiful?

JUDITH: 'tis so.

QUINEY: Ah, moon and music lighten life's burdens.

But, what now, sir, 'tis salt in your sad eyes.
In unpacking my griefs and sorrows felt,
Have I now transferréd them thus to you?

JUDITH: My voice hath left me, now I cannot speak.

QUINEY: Then speakest not, give no noisome prattle.

Sweet silence is oft our best medicine.

JUDITH: I must now depart.

QUINEY: Stay.

JUDITH: No, I cannot.

Exit Judith.

QUINEY: Again, abandonéd on my island,

In solitary beauty, thus alone.

Exit Quiney. Re-enter Judith, still dressed as a man. She goes to the cup, tries to drink from it, but it is empty.

JUDITH: What, treasonous cup, not a drop for me?

It wouldst be so much more the simpler tale
If I could say that he's a vile villain;

Plain dealing, honest villain! I cannot,
As much as I wouldst have it thus so be.
His dark shadow is framed with such bright light,
That I know not what comes from what, or where.
But pity thus the wretch, or marry there,
They are two different things, thus beware:
Following honey, will I find a snare?

Exit Judith.



ACT IV has 12 pages

ACT V has 22 pages