

Side 1 - "Daniel"

Now, this strange room that you are all sitting in is called a 'theater'. It's the place where the words in this book come to life. Where the magic happens. Ah, the history of the Fassett Auditorium. Who can forget that one-night-only staged reading of *American Psycho: The Musical*? Or the Sunday matinee where Spongebob had a major costume malfunction of his squarepants?

And now, tonight, in this very theater... the stage manager tells us we have to be out in two hours.

Seriously, we got a very good deal on rent but there's a guy doing an adult puppet show in the late slot, and he's already backstage and he scares me.

But fear not - although the time we have is short, the feat we will attempt is impossible. Tonight, my partners and I will attempt to capture the magic, the genius, the towering grandeur of THE COMPLETE WORKS OF WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE.

Now, we've got a lot to get through tonight. So without further ado, I'd like to introduce an individual who knows more about Shakespeare than anyone he knows. One of the University of Toledo's most preeminent Shakespearean scholars, he has a Bachelor's Degree from Bowling Green State University and a Certificate of Completion from preeminentshakespeareanscholar.com. Please welcome me in joining Mr. Jess Winfield.

Side 2 - "Jess"

I love William Shakespeare: Playwright, poet, actor; Stratford's proudest flower, transplanted from the heart of the English countryside to bask in the warmth of London's literary greenhouse. A man who, despite the ravages of male pattern baldness, planted the potent seed of his poetical genius in the fertile womb of Elizabeth's England. There it took root and spread through the lymphatic system of western civilization, until it became a giant carbuncle of knowledge and understanding on the very organ of our consciousness.

And yet, how much do we intellectually flaccid members of the twenty-first century appreciate the plump fruit of Shakespeare's loins? Let's find out shall we? [*To the light booth*] Bob, may I have the house lights please?

Now, you are a theater-going crowd, obviously of above-average literary intelligence, and yet - if I may have just a brief show of hands, how many of you have ever seen or read any play by William Shakespeare? Any contact with the Bard whatsoever, just raise your hands... [*Almost everyone raises a hand.*]

We're screwed.

Side 3 - "Adam"

I used Google AI to research Shakespeare's life so I could tell you all the stuff he did... As you can see, I'm not an audience member. I totally punked you. [*Finds place on phone*] The new Google Pixel 11 from T-Mobile, a truly tremendous device, but we'll talk about that later.

Okay... [*reading from phone*] William Shakespeare. William SHakespeare was born in 1564 in the town of Stratford-upon-Avon, War-wick-shy-ur. [*Swipes*] The third of eight children, he was the eldest son of John Shakespeare, a locally prominent merchant, and Mary Arden, daughter of a Roman. [*Swipes*] Catholic member of the landed gentry. In 1582, he married Anne Hathaway. [*pause*]. Oh good for him. Shakespeare arrived in London in 1588 [*Swipes*]. There, with his provincial charm and folksy wit, he quickly became a popular figure around the U.S. Capitol. [*long pause, look at phone*]. After dominating Michael Douglas in a debate, winning the highest office in the land, and totally nailing his role in *Bill and Ted's Excellent Adventure*... [*Swipes, hesitates*]... Shakespeare issued the Emancipation Proclamation on New Year's Day 1863, thus freeing the slaves. I didn't know that before!

Although Shakespeare modernized the economy, won the Civil War, and built a transcontinental railroad, he was sadly assassinated at the Globe Theater in 1864 by an actor with a cannon. [*Swipes*] He lies buried in a log cabin in Stratford. [*Swipes*] Although there's also a huge monument to him at the mall. [*Bows*]. Thank you.

Side 4 - Romeo & Juliet

JESS: Act one, scene one:

Behold two men in search of imbroglio:

The Capulet, Sampson; the Montague, Benvolio

[Enter ADAM as BENVOLIO and DANIEL as SAMPSON, striking aggressive poses. They see each other. D/SAMPSON bites his thumb at A/BENVOLIO, who trips D/SAMPSON in return]

A/BENVOLIO: “Do you bite your thumb at me, sir?”

D/SAMPSON: No sir, I do but bite my thumb.

A/BENVOLIO: Do you bite your thumb at *me*, sir?

D/SAMPSON: No, sir, I do not bite my thumb at you, sir, but I do bite my thumb. Do you quarrel, sir?

A/BENVOLIO: Quarrel sir? No, sir.

D/SAMPSON: But if you do, sir, I am for you. I serve as good a man as you.

A/BENVOLIO: No better.

D/SAMPSON: Yes, better.

A/BENVOLIO: You lie!”

D/SAMPSON: Down with the Montagues!

A/BENVOLIO: Up yours, Capulet!

[They fly at each other. Massive fight scene. Lame fight choreography. Enter JESS as the PRINCE]

J/PRINCE: “Rebellious subjects!”

A/BENVOLIO and D/SAMPSON: Oh now, it’s the Prince! *[They kneel]*

J/PRINCE: “Enemies to the peace. On pain of torture,

Throw your mistemper’d weapons to the ground,

And hear the sentence of your moved prince.”

D/SAMPSON: *[mocks him, then:]* Buzz-kill.

J/PRINCE: “You, Capulet, shall go along with me.

Benvolio, come you this afternoon

To know our farther pleasure in this case.”

A/BENVOLIO: [To D/SAMPSON] Brown-nose!

D/SAMPSON: [To A/BENVOLIO] Ass-hat!

J/PRINCE: Language!

[J/PRINCE and D/SAMPSON *exit*]

A/BENVOLIO: “O where is Romeo? Saw you him today?
Right glad I am he was not at this fray.

But see, he comes!

[DANIEL makes a grand entrance as ROMEO. *The effect is intended to be extremely romantic. It's not.*]

Good morrow, coz.

D/ROMEO: Is the day so young?

A/BENVOLIO: But new struck nine.

D/ROMEO: Aye me, sad hours seem long.

A/BENVOLIO: What sadness lengthens Romeo's hours?

D/ROMEO: Not having that which, having, makes them short.

A/BENVOLIO: Go ye to the feast of Capulets

There sups the fair Rosaline whom thou so lovest

With all the admired beauties of Verona.

Go thither, and compare her face with some that I shall show.

And I shall make thee think thy swan a crow.

D/ROMEO: None fairer than my love”

A/BENVOLIO: There's free beer.

D/ROMEO: Let's go!

JESS: Now hie we to the house of Capulet

Where Romeo shall meet his Juliet.

And where, in a scene of timeless romance,

He'll try to get laid at a Renaissance dance.

Side 5 - Macbeth, Julius Caesar, Antony & Cleopatra

DANIEL: With your kind indulgence, we now present our authentically Scottish interpretation of *Macbeth*.

D/WITCH: “Double, double, toil and trouble.

[JESS enters as MACBETH, carrying a bag of golf clubs. In nearly impenetrable attempts at Scottish accents.

J/MACBETH: Stay, ye imperrrrfect MacSpeakerrrr. MacTell me MacMorrrrrre.

D/WITCH: “Macbeth, Macbeth, beware Macduff.

No man of woman born shall harm Macbeth

Till Birnam Wood come to Dunsinane, dont ye know.

[D/WITCH exits. ADAM enters as MACDUFF with his own set of golf clubs.]

J/MACBETH: Och, that’s daid greet. Then MacWhat MacNeed MacI MacFearrr Macduff?”

A/MACDUFF: See *you*, ye brah-flocked, nanny-figgest clunge-MacKinley! It’s days of Auld Lang Syne fer yew! “Know that Macduff was from his mother’s untimely ripped!” What d’ye think about that?

J/MACBETH: Och! I do nae like it, but I support a woman’s right tae choose! Lae on, haggis breath!

[J/MACBETH pulls out a golf club, and they fence.]

A/MACDUFF: Ah, Macbeth! Ye killed me wife, ye murdered me wee bairns, and ye shat in me stew!

J/MACBETH: Och! I didnae!

A/MACDUFF: Och, aye, ye did. I had tae throw half o’it away.

[A/MACDUFF chases J/MACBETH offstage. Backstage, J/MACBETH’s SCREAM is abruptly cut off with a loud thwack. A/MACDUFF re-enters carrying a severed head.]

A/MACDUFF: “Behold where lies the usurper’s cursed head.”

Macbeth, yer arse is oot the windee.

And know that never was there a story of more blood and death

Than this o’ Mister and Mrs. Macbeth. Thankee. [Exits]

[end Scottish accents. JESS enters]

JESS: Meanwhile in Ancient Rome, Julius Caesar was a much beloved tyrant.

[DANIEL *enters as* JULIUS CAESAR. ADAM *and* JESS *become* CITIZENS]

ADAM and JESS/CITIZENS: All hail, Julius Caesar!

D/CAESAR: Hail, citizens!

JESS: He was warned by a soothsayer-

A/SOOTHSAYER: "Beware the Ides of March"

D/CAESAR: What the hell are the Ides of March?

A/SOOTHSAYER: The 15th of March

D/CAESAR: Why, that's today.

[ADAM *and* JESS *become* CONSPIRATORS *and stab* D/CAESAR *repeatedly*]

ADAM and JESS/CITIZENS: [*Attacking sounds*]

D/CAESAR: "Et tu, Brute?"

[D/CAESAR *dies*. JESS *becomes* MARK ANTONY, *orating over the body*]

J/ANTONY: Friends, Romans, countrymen, lend me your ears.

I come to bury Caesar," so bury him, and let's get on to my play, Antony -

[ADAM *enters as* CLEOPATRA, *wearing a wig and clutching a rubber snake.*]

A/CLEOPATRA: -*and Cleopatra!* Is this an asp I see before me? Come, venomous wretch-

[A/CLEOPATRA *applies the snake to her breast. A wave of nausea hits her. She leaps into the audience and mimes vomiting on several people in the front row*]

JESS and DANIEL: Whoa, Adam! No! Stop!

Side 6 - Callback specific - Hamlet

J/HAMLET: The air bites shrewdly. It is very cold.

D/HORATIO: Look, my lord, it comes!

J/HAMLET: Angels and ministers of grace defend us. Something is rotten in the state of Denmark.

[ADAM *enters as the* GHOST OF HAMLET'S FATHER.]

A/GHOST: Mark me!

J/HAMLET: Speak. I am bound to hear.

A/GHOST: So art thou to revenge when thou shalt hear.

If ever thou didst thy dear father love

Revenge his foul and most unnatural murder.

J/HAMLET: Murder!

D/HORATIO: Murder!

A/GHOST: The serpent that did sting thy father's life now wears his crown.

J/HAMLET: My uncle!

D/HORATIO: Your uncle!

A/GHOST: Let not the royal bed of Denmark become a couch for incest."

J/HAMLET: Incest!

D/HORATIO: A couch!

A/GHOST: "Adieu, Hamlet, remember me!" [*Exits*]

D/HORATIO: My lord, this is strange.

J/HAMLET: There are more things in heaven and earth than are dreamt of in your philosophy." So PISS OFF! [*Slaps him*]

[D/HORATIO *exits*]

"I hereafter shall think meat..."

Mmm, bacon...

"To put an antic disposition on. The time is out of joint.

O cursed spite that ever I was born to exit right!

[J/HAMLET *exits left, then embarrassed, re-enters and exits right.* DANIEL *enters as* POLONIUS. *He takes his time, totters slowly downstage center, wheezing, until finally...*]

D/POLONIUS: Neither a borrower nor a lender be.

[*He is tremendously satisfied with himself.* ADAM *enters screaming as* OPHELIA]

A/OPHELIA: Aaaaaaaaaaaaaa!

D/POLONIUS: How now, Ophelia. What's the matter?

A/OPHELIA: My lord, as I was sewing in my closet, Lord Hamlet, with his doublet all unbraced,

No hat upon his head, pale as his shirt,

His knees knocking each other, and with a look

So piteous in purport as if he had been loosed

Out of hell to speak of horrors, he comes before me.

D/POLONIUS: Mad for thy love?

A/OPHELIA: Aaaaaaaaaaaa! I know not.

D/POLONIUS: Why, this is the very ecstasy of love. I have found the cause of Hamlet's lunacy.

Since brevity is the soul of wit, I will be brief: He is mad.

[J/HAMLET *enters reading a book, feigning madness.*]

Look you where the poor wretch comes reading. Away, I do beseech you.

[A/OPHELIA *exits*]

How does my good lord Hamlet?

J/HAMLET: Well, God-americy.

D/POLONIUS: Do you know me, my lord?

J/HAMLET: Excellent well. You are a fishmonger.

D/POLONIUS: What do you need, my lord?

J/HAMLET: Words, words, words.

D/POLONIUS: [*aside.*] Though this be madness, yet there's method in't."

[A/OPHELIA *pokes her head out from backstage.*]

A/OPHELIA: [*Fast*] Daddy, the Players are here and they say they want to do a play-within-a-play whatever that means. [*Beat*] That's all.