



Sample Pages from
Will and Whimsy: Sixteen Dramatically
Illustrated Sonnets of Shakespeare

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WILL AND WHIMSY:
SIXTEEN DRAMATICALLY ILLUSTRATED
SONNETS OF SHAKESPEARE

A DRAMEDY IN TWO ACTS BY
Alan Haehnel



Will and Whimsy:

Sixteen Dramatically Illustrated Sonnets of Shakespeare

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Cast

BARD

Sonnet 116

JOSH
LAURA
BILL

Sonnet 89

JAKE
JESSICA

Sonnet 130

STEVE
MARYANNE

Sonnet 29

KAREN
BILBO

Sonnet 90

BOB
CAROL

Sonnet 73

RICK
MOM
VOICE

Sonnet 138

MARNEETA
EARL

Sonnet 129

KALEE
ASHLEY
JONICA

Sonnet 120

CARMEN
RACHEL

Sonnet 146

MINDY
CORY
DARLENE

Sonnet 2

SCOTT
MARTHA

Sonnet 76

SAL
MARLA

Sonnet 44

MAX
BARB

Sonnet 64

JON
SALLY

Sonnet 57

JUNE
FIONA

Sonnet 23

BILLY
JANINE

Production Notes

The Bard should move unhurriedly between scenes. If played by one character, he can simply wait until the lights go down for one scene, then stroll over to the next scene. He should shift positions for each delivery, as well. For some scenes, he might stand as if delivering formally. For others, he might sit in a chair or even lie on the floor. His various postures should suggest that he is reciting the sonnets in various venues and moods. For the most part, the Bard does not interact with the characters in the scenes directly; he is invisible to them. However, the Bard could certainly sit or lie right in their midst. Variety is the key.

Feel free to make changes to this script to fit the needs of your production. Delete scenes or change the order of them. Alter the genders of the characters.

You'll notice that, for the most part, I have the Bard breaking up the delivery of the sonnet into the three quatrains and the couplet, delivering these lines during the course of the scene. This decision is not sacred, either. If you would rather have the Bard deliver the whole sonnet at the beginning of the scene, or at the end, or somewhere in the middle, you have my permission.

Also, the Bard need not be the same person throughout the play. Those who play in one scene would probably like a turn at reciting a sonnet for another. In short, change what you must to make the scenes enjoyable and the sonnets accessible.

Set

The stage is sparsely furnished with various platforms, tables and chairs—the least possible to enact the scenes. The scenes shift using light.

A Note from the Playwright

I have long been a fan of Shakespeare's sonnets.

The first poem I ever committed to memory was his Sonnet 138; I have since memorized a half dozen others, and have made it an assignment in my English classes to have my students memorize at least a portion of one Shakespearian sonnet.

Though Shakespeare did not invent the sonnet form, he certainly used it to great effect, producing at least 154 of them, which are still widely-read and studied today. Part of what makes Shakespeare great and enduring is the timelessness of his themes.

I have chosen to provide modern dramatizations as companions to 16 of my favorite sonnets to help audiences realize that, though Shakespeare's language may be a bit daunting, his topics are relevant to any era.

Sonnet 116*Lights up.*

BARD: “Let me not to the marriage of true minds
Admit impediments.”

JOSH: Laura, I need to ask you the most important question I have
ever asked in my life.

LAURA: Oh, Josh. I don’t know if I’m ready for this.

JOSH: (*sinking to one knee*) Laura, will you...

BILL: (*entering and kneeling next to JOSH*) Before you ask and before you
answer, allow me to introduce myself.

JOSH: What the...?

LAURA: Who are you?

BILL: The name’s Kennedy, friends, William Kennedy III, attorney-at-law
specializing in couples’ relations. Call me Bill.

JOSH: What are you doing here? I was in the middle of asking...

BILL: Asking her to be your bride, yes, I know. I’ve seen it a million
times. Beautiful, beautiful. Will you marry me, will you be mine,
will you swear to love me and only me for the rest of your days,
right?

LAURA: What’s wrong with that?

BILL: Not a thing, not a thing, as long as you’re going in with both eyes
open. That’s why I’m here. I specialize in pre-nuptial agreements
that cover every eventuality.

JOSH: We don’t need that.

BILL: You say you don’t now, but you’ll be glad you met me a few years
down the road when you want to unload the little lady.

JOSH: What?

LAURA: Never!

BARD: “Love is not love
Which alters when it alteration finds
Or bends with the remover to remove.”

BILL: (*to LAURA*) Let me ask you something. This guy is a snorer. I can
tell from the shape of his schnoz. He’ll deny it, of course, but it’s

a fact nonetheless. Are you prepared to sleep with a dude who's going to produce decibel levels high enough to worry the EPA?

JOSH: Now, wait just a second!

BILL: (to JOSH) And you — Josh, right? Do you, Josh, take... what was your name?

LAURA: Laura.

BILL: Do you, Josh, take Laura, who, given the evidence of the wardrobe she has on, is clearly going to max out your credit cards through reckless shopping sprees?

JOSH: She never uses credit cards, do you, Laura?

LAURA: Hardly ever.

BILL: Oo, I heard that word “hardly.” Scary, isn't it?

BARD: “Oh, no, it is an ever-fixed mark
That looks on tempests and is never shaken;
It is the star to every wand'ring bark,
Whose worth's unknown, although his height be taken.”

JOSH: I love her! We'll be fine.

LAURA: Yes! He's the best thing that ever happened to me!

BILL: Of course, of course, I don't dispute that. But look up. Look around. Isn't it a beautiful day? Lovely, right?

JOSH: What's that got to do with anything?

BILL: Only this: On a clear day, love is easy. He's perfect, handsome, wonderful; she's curvaceous, sweet, beautiful. But storms are coming, friends! They're on their way! She wants to go out for dinner; he wants to eat at home — a little rainstorm. He's a bit too attached to his mother, in her opinion — a bit of lightning.

LAURA: We don't argue; we discuss.

BILL: On a sunny day, yes, but what about that hurricane of a day when you visit the office and find him leaning over the desk looking extremely cozy with the young filly of a secretary he hired a month before? Will you discuss then, with the winds blowing and the walls shaking?

JOSH: I'm going to be a teacher! I won't have a secretary!

BILL: Oh, no, but how about that cute little student teacher, huh?

BARD: “Love’s not Time’s fool, though rosy lips and cheeks
Within his bending sickle’s compass come,
Love alters not with his brief hours and weeks,
But bears it out even to the edge of doom.”

LAURA: (to BILL) You just go away. I love him and he loves me and that’s all there is to it.

BILL: Okay, okay, fine. I guess you guys aren’t planning to get old, so you should be just ducky.

JOSH: What?

BILL: No, no, I apologize. I didn’t realize you had found the key to staying young, the key to avoiding those ugly years when his hair is going to migrate off his head and start sticking out his nose; when what’s so perky on her is going to become so saggy; when the fires of passion become a bit more like the occasional belch of interest.

LAURA: Go away, I said! Josh, what were you going to ask before this... thing got here?

JOSH: Uh...

BILL: Feeling doubts, are we? That’s okay. You can go ahead and ask her, but just sign this document first. This little prenuptial agreement provides a guarantee that...

LAURA: (*clapping her hand over BILL’s mouth*) Josh, I want to marry you. I know there will be storms. I know there will be hard times. I know you’re not perfect and neither am I. I know we’re going to grow old. But damn it, Josh, I also know that our love is true! We can look to that when the storms are raging! We can look to that when our skin gets wrinkled! Marry me, Josh!

BILL: But...

JOSH punches BILL, sending him to the ground.

JOSH: Baby, I’m yours.

They exit.

BARD: “If this be error and upon me proved,
I never writ, nor no man ever loved.”

BILL: (*groaning, slowly getting up*) He’s gonna be hearing from my lawyer.

Lights down.

Sonnet 89

Lights up to JAKE throwing pebbles up at JESSICA's window.

JAKE: (*whispering*) Jessica! Jess!

JESSICA enters behind JAKE.

JESSICA: (*also whispering*) Jake?

JAKE: (*startled*) Ah!

JESSICA: What are you doing here?

JAKE: I was just... I... Hi.

JESSICA: That's my parents' bedroom window.

JAKE: Oh, it is? Did you guys switch rooms?

JESSICA: No. I'm on the other side of the house.

JAKE: I could've sworn...

JESSICA: Jake, why are you here? You can't keep coming over. We broke up.

BARD: "Say that thou didst forsake me for some fault,
And I will comment upon that offense;
Speak of my lameness, and I straight will halt,
Against thy reasons making no defense."

JAKE: (*suddenly very focused*) Jessica, fix me.

JESSICA: Fix you?

JAKE: Yes. I have come ready to be fixed. Just tell me my problem. Or problems. As many as you can list. Don't be shy. Go ahead.

JESSICA: Jacob...

JAKE: I can take it. I want to take it. I need to know.

JESSICA: You don't have any problems.

JAKE: We both know that's not true. I'm not perfect, or you never would have left me. I have vowed, then, to become the perfect Jake for you. Or not Jake, if you don't like my name. We can start there. I can be John. Or Stew, if J-names just aren't right. Or Clam Chowder, if you prefer. Studley MacBumperbean. If that's

the name you want for your guy, you go ahead and start calling me that. I'll make the legal changes later.

BARD: "Thou canst not, love, disgrace me half so ill,
To set a form upon desire change,
As I'll myself disgrace, knowing thy will..."

JESSICA: Jake, I don't want to change you.

JAKE: No, I want to change me. All I need is to have you tell me what needs changing. Between your instruction and my motivation, the complete Jake makeover is guaranteed to be finished in record time. I'll return as the most desirable, perfect Studley MacBumperbean you could ever imagine in just... three weeks! Two, if you're in a rush.

JESSICA: Jake, this won't work.

JAKE: One week! It'll be tough, but I can do it in just one short week. Give it to me. Criticize me. Trash me. Head to toe, I'm a mass of mistakes, but it'll all go away once you start the process.

JESSICA: This is all wrong.

JAKE: I know, I know, it's hard to even know where to begin.

JESSICA: That's not what I...

JAKE: My walk. I know that's not great. Start there. Watch carefully. This is how I walk. (*He walks back and forth in front of her.*) See? See?

JESSICA: I know how you walk, Jake.

JAKE: Sloppy, isn't it? Just a mess. Too much, I don't know, arm swing, or something. Tell me... is it my hip placement? Chest too far forward? I wouldn't want to be seen walking with me. How about this? (*He alters his walk.*) Is that a bit more sensitive? I think it has a sort of European flair.

JESSICA: Jake.

JAKE: (*trying another walk*) Or this little variation. The head-bobbing might be a bit heavy, but otherwise it has promise, don't you think?

JESSICA: Jacob!

JAKE: What?

JESSICA: I can't go out with you anymore. This isn't about change. We just... don't work.

JAKE: Oh.

BARD: "I will acquaintance strangle and look strange,
Be absent from thy walks, and in my tongue
Thy sweet beloved name no more shall dwell,
Lest I, too much profane, should do it wrong,
And haply of our old acquaintance tell."

JAKE: Then you'll never see me again.

JESSICA: Jake, we go to school together.

JAKE: I'm transferring. To the Yukon.

JESSICA: This is crazy.

JAKE: To Siberia. You'll never know I existed. And I'll never mention your name again. I will wipe myself from your life, Jessica! As of this moment, I am going to disappear to you.

JAKE turns to leave.

BARD: "For thee, against myself I'll vow debate,
For I must ne'er love him whom thou dost hate."

JESSICA: Jacob, there is one thing you have to change.

JAKE: At last! Thank-you! Name it, my love, and it will be done.

JESSICA: You promise?

JAKE: On a stack of Bibles. On my grandmother's grave. On a stack of my grandmothers, I swear I will change what you ask me to change.

JESSICA: From this night forward, Jacob, you need to stop relying on other people's opinions, especially mine, for your self-worth.

JESSICA exits.

JAKE: I will forever make that... hey, now, that was a trick!

Lights down on him.

Sonnet 130

Lights up.

BARD: “My mistress’ eyes are nothing like the sun.
 Coral is far more red than her lips’ red.
 If snow be white, why then her breasts are dun.
 If hairs be wires, black wires grow on her head.”

STEVE and MARYANNE sit side-by-side. MARYANNE looks at a fashion magazine.

MARYANNE: Look at her. Look at those cheekbones.

STEVE: Uh-huh.

MARYANNE: Are my cheekbones like that?

STEVE: Unh-unh.

MARYANNE: And that hair! It’s so shiny! It looks like... like black paint pouring out of a bucket, practically. Mine doesn’t shine like that, does it?

STEVE: Nope.

BARD: “I have seen roses damask’d red and white,
 But no such roses see I in her cheeks,
 And in some perfumes is there more delight
 Than in the breath that from my mistress reeks.”

MARYANNE: (*taking out a mirror, looking at it*) Look at me! I look like I’m dead! I don’t have any colour. (*She pinches her cheeks, trying to get colour into them.*) There, is that better?

STEVE: It looks like somebody grabbed your face.

MARYANNE: How does my breath smell? (*She breathes in his face.*)
 What’s it remind you of?

STEVE: Try it again.

She breathes in his face again.

MARYANNE: Well? What’s it smell like?

STEVE: Bologna.

BARD: “I love to hear her speak yet well I know
 That music hath a far more pleasing sound.
 I grant I never saw a goddess go.
 My mistress, when she walks, treads on the ground.”

MARYANNE: Listen to my voice. Have you been listening to it? It sounds all gravelly, like I've been smoking three packs a day all my life.

STEVE: Sometimes it's kind of squeaky.

MARYANNE: Oh, great. Gravelly and squeaky. I want a voice like you hear on those perfume ads on television — you know, this really sultry, sexy voice. (*referring to the magazine again*) I saw her being interviewed. She has like this perfect, syrupy voice. (*speaking with a husky, low voice*) “Ever since I was a little girl, I knew I wanted to wear gorgeous clothing and be admired by men.” And she walks like that, too. (*MARYANNE gets up, demonstrating the walk.*) You know, that model walk, all flowy and perfect? How do I look? Do I look flowy and perfect?

STEVE: No. You look kind of... deformed.

BARD: “And yet, by heaven, I think my love as rare
As any she belied with false compare.”

MARYANNE: See? You don't love me! You can't love me! (*Holding up the magazine*) With women like this in the world, how can you possibly love a pinch-faced, bad-breathed, deformed girl like me?

STEVE: (*getting up, taking the magazine, throwing it away, taking MARYANNE in his arms, kissing her soundly*) I'm not out to love a fantasy. The girl I love is named Maryanne. And she's real.

The lights fade as they kiss again.

Sonnet 29

Lights up.

BARD: “When in disgrace with fortune and men's eyes
I all alone beweep my outcast state
And trouble deaf heaven with my bootless cries
And look upon myself and curse my fate... ”

KAREN: (*talking to her fish in a fishbowl*) Do you know what it's like to be a complete and utter failure, Orca? Of course you don't. You get to swim around in there all day, oblivious to everything, even your own captivity, because you've got a tiny little fish brain that only cares about breathing and eating. (*tipping a little food into the fishbowl*) There you go. Be happy. At least one of us should be. (*looking up*) Why couldn't you have made me a fish? Or a worm? A millipede, if you wanted to get fancy? Anything but a human?

(looking back at Orca) He's not listening. Nobody listens to me, Orca. Even you can't maintain eye contact.

BARD: "Wishing me like to one more rich in hope,
Featur'd like him, like him with friends possess'd;
Desiring this man's art and that man's scope,
With what I most enjoy contented least."

KAREN: Orca, I'm going to tell you the truth: Everyone has it better than I do. Everyone. I thought I might be on a par with Julia Glick, who is one of the world's biggest losers. I felt a sort of kinship with her, you know? I could talk to her like we were equals. You know what I found out today, though, Orca? Do you? You know, you're always moving your mouth but you never say anything. I found out, Orca, that Julia Glick is like this incredible concert pianist who is going to college on a full music scholarship! Here I was, thinking that at least the two of us were two loser peas in a pod, that my misery had her company, when all the time she was three miles above me in talent! It's ridiculous! I can't even talk to her now. I am the lone loser of the universe.

BARD: "Yet in these thoughts myself almost despising... "

KAREN: I hate myself!

BARD: "Happily I think on thee... "

KAREN's dog BILBO — actually an actor dressed like a dog — comes bounding in and jumps up on KAREN, knocking her down and licking her joyfully. KAREN can't help laughing.

KAREN: Bilbo, you crazy dog! Get off me! Stop that!

She continues to laugh and wrestle with BILBO under the BARD's lines.

BARD: "... and then my state
Like to the lark at break of day arising
From sullen earth sings hymns at heaven's gate."

KAREN: *(to BILBO who is beside himself at being with her)* You love me, don't you, Bilbo! Don't you? *(BILBO barks.)* Do you love me? *(BILBO barks twice.)* Oh, come here, you crazy dog! Come over here, you lug!

BARD: "For thy sweet love remember'd such wealth brings
That then I scorn to change my state with kings."

KAREN: Julia doesn't have a puppy like you, does she, Bilbo? Huh? No, she doesn't. (*Scratching his stomach, making his back leg shake.*) Oh, you like that, huh? She can play her piano and go to a hundred colleges but she's not getting my Bilbo-boy, is she? (*She gets up and runs offstage, BILBO loping loyally after her.*) Come on, Bilbo! That's my boy! Come on! Happy swimming, Orca! Come on, you big bear! Let's go outside!

Lights down.

Sonnet 90

BARD: "Then hate me when thou wilt, if ever, now,
Now, while the world is bent my deeds to cross,
Join with the spite of fortune, make me bow,
And do not drop in for an after-loss."

CAROL is onstage, reading. BOB enters.

BOB: Okay, Carol, let me have it.

CAROL: What?

BOB: Do it. Do it now.

CAROL: Bob, what are you talking about?

BOB: Don't try to spare me! Believe me, this is the best thing.

CAROL: Bob, you need to calm down.

BOB: No, I do not need to calm down. I need you to tell me what I know you're going to tell me sooner or later. So make it sooner. Make it now.

CAROL: I've already told you I love you.

BOB: That's not it.

CAROL: I've already told you I like the way your nose twitches when you're upset. And how your earlobes get pink when you...

BOB: Carol!

CAROL: What? What do you want me to tell you?

BOB: Carol. Now is the time for you to tell me... you're leaving me.

CAROL: Bob!

BARD: "Ah, do not, when my heart hath scap'd this sorrow,
Come in the rearward of a conquer'd woe;

Give not a windy night a rainy morrow,
To linger out a purpos'd overthrow."

BOB: I know you want to be kind. I know you're probably thinking, "He's probably not feeling strong right now. I'll wait." But no, Carol, now is exactly the right time.

CAROL: Bob...

BOB: Yes, my cat of fifteen years died last week, the only animal with whom I have truly felt a bond of affection. Yes, my top college choice sent me a rejection that read, approximately, "In your dreams, Pal." Yes, I was diagnosed with a rare foot fungus that may cause all my toenails to blacken and fall out. Those might seem like perfect reasons not to leave me, Carol. But you have to believe me — they're not.

CAROL: They're not?

BOB: No, my beloved Carol, they are not. In fact, the fact that I have just had the worst several days of my life — did I mention that my mother told me yesterday that she and Dad had hoped that my older sister would be their last child? — that fact is the very reason why you should tell me that you can't stand me and you're going to leave me.

CAROL: Bob, you are really confusing me.

BARD: "If thou wilt leave me, do not leave me last,
When other petty griefs have done their spite,
But in the onset come, so shall I taste
At first the very worst of fortune's might..." "

CAROL: I'm not planning to leave you.

BOB: Of course you are.

CAROL: What makes you say that?

BOB: Remember that time I forgot to pick you up for the dance because I was playing Xbox? That was despicable, wasn't it?

CAROL: Well, I wasn't too happy.

BOB: You were furious! Justifiably! Or that time I stared at Sally Jensen the whole time she walked across the gym wearing that...

CAROL: Okay, okay, I remember.

BOB: See? You're fed up, aren't you? You can't take it anymore! You've had it up to here with me! Tell me. Go ahead. Let me have it now.

CAROL: Bob, you've hurt me at times, yes, but I still love you. I don't want to leave you. Why are you doing this?

BARD: "And other strains of woe, which now seem woe,
Compar'd with loss of thee will not seem so."

BOB: You don't want to leave me?

CAROL: No.

BOB: Ever?

CAROL: Never.

BOB: Even though I got mad that one time and threw your...

CAROL: Never. Why do you want me to?

BOB: I've been having a cataclysmically bad past few days, Carol.

CAROL: I know.

BOB: You're the only good thing still left in my life.

CAROL: And?

BOB: And I figured, if you were going to leave me, you might as well do it now. That way, everything else that seems so big would suddenly be nothing. 'Cause, Carol...

CAROL: Your lobes are getting pink.

BOB: You're the only thing that really matters.

They begin to exit, hand in hand.

CAROL: Are your toenails really going to fall out?

BOB: Maybe.

CAROL: I'll live with it.

They exit. Lights down.

Sonnet 73

Lights up on a trash bag filled with clothes and other soft things. RICK comes in and trips over it.

RICK: Hey, Mom, what's this bag doing in the hall?

MOM: *(off)* It's just some stuff I cleaned out of your room. It's going to the dump.

RICK: Okay.

He starts to walk off. We hear a voice, dream-like, the voice of RICK's blanket.

VOICE: Hey! Hey, Rick!

RICK: Who's that?

VOICE: It's me. In the bag. Look. (*RICK looks around suspiciously, crosses to the bag, opens it, rummages a bit, doesn't find anything. He gets up to leave.*) No, no — near the bottom. Look for the colour green.

RICK digs a little deeper in the bag and then pulls out a ratty old blanket. He stares at it.

BARD: "That time of year thou mayst in me behold
Where yellow leaves, or none, or few, do hang
Upon those boughs which shake against the cold,
Bare ruin'd choirs, where late the sweet birds sang."

VOICE: Yeah, Rick, it's me, all right. Your old blanky.

RICK: Blanky?

VOICE: Remember me?

RICK: When did you learn to talk?

VOICE: Never. You're imagining this.

RICK: Oh.

VOICE: Yeah, Ricky, I'm headed to the dump. A worn-out, threadbare piece of cloth from your past is all I am. Just thought you might like a chance to say good-bye.

RICK: Okay. Good-bye.

RICK goes to shove the blanket back in the bag.

VOICE: Of course, I didn't get worn out from sitting around doing nothing. Remember that night after you watched part of *The Exorcist*? You were probably about eight years old then. Remember how you thought that the curtains were going to strangle you? Guess you loosened a thread or two on me that night.

BARD: "In me thou seest the twilight of such day
As after sunset fadeth in the west,

Which by and by black night doth take away,
Death's second self, that seals up all in rest.”

VOICE: Anyway, I'm off to the old dumperoo. Enough of the reminiscing. Take it easy, Ricky.

RICK: Uh... tell me a little more.

VOICE: Oh, come on, you're too old for me. You don't want to remember all those times you dragged me around, sucking on your thumb. Naa. Forget it. You don't want to recall the time you accidentally left me behind when you visited your Uncle Ted in Massachusetts, how the whole family had to come home early because you couldn't stand to be without me. Go on, go be with your pals. I'm done. I'm old. I'm worn out. I'm dump fodder.

RICK crosses to the blanket, looks around to make sure no one is watching, then picks it up and smells it. He closes his eyes, obviously relishing the experience as the BARD speaks.

BARD: “In me thou seest the glowing of such fire
That on the ashes of his youth doth lie,
As the death-bed whereon it must expire,
Consum'd with that which it was nourish'd by.”

VOICE: We had some good times, didn't we, Ricky?

RICK: We sure did, Blanky.

VOICE: Running around in the backyard with me around your neck, pretending to be...

RICK: (*throwing the blanket around his neck as a cape*) Captain Wonderful, defender of the universe!

RICK runs around the stage a bit.

VOICE: Look out, Captain Wonderful — there's an asteroid belt threatening to destroy the earth!

RICK: I'll take care of that!

He punches at the air.

VOICE: Take that, you asteroids! You're no match for Captain Wonderful! Woo-hoo!

RICK: Woo-hoo!

VOICE: Yeah, we had some good times. But time... it gives, it takes away, know what I'm saying?

RICK: I guess so.

VOICE: Better put me back in the bag, Rick, before somebody sees you.

RICK takes the blanket off his neck, puts it on top of the bag. As the BARD speaks, he begins to walk away.

BARD: "This thou perceiv'st, which makes thy love more strong,
To love that well, which thou must leave ere long."

VOICE: So long, Ricky.

RICK stares for a moment, then starts to cross back to the blanket.

VOICE: No. Go. You gotta let me go.

RICK stops, stares for another moment, crosses to the blanket, puts it lovingly inside the bag, then exits. Lights down.

Sonnet 138

Lights up.

BARD: "When my love swears that she is made of truth,
I do believe her, though I know she lies.
That she might think me some untutor'd youth,
Unlearned in the world's false subtleties."

EARL sits at the breakfast table, sipping coffee, eating a piece of toast, looking at the newspaper. MARNEETA enters. It is morning; they are both in pyjamas and robes; they are both in their 70's.

MARNEETA: Good morning, Handsome.

EARL: Your eyesight must've got a whole lot worse during the night if you're calling me handsome.

MARNEETA: You're as handsome as the day I met you, Earl.

EARL: Wake up and smell the coffee, Marneeta; you're still dreaming.

MARNEETA: *(coming to the table with her coffee)* I'm awake; I'm smelling my coffee; I'm about to sit across from a very dashing young man.

EARL laughs, shakes his head.

BARD: “Thus vainly thinking that she thinks me young
Although she knows my days are past the best
Simply I credit her false-speaking tongue.
On both sides thus is simple truth suppressed.”

MARNEETA: What are you reading about?

EARL: Lying old women who forgot that their husbands got old.

MARNEETA: There’s nothing wrong with that, as long as the husbands
do their wives the same favour.

EARL: Is that so?

MARNEETA: That is most definitely so. Handsome.

EARL: (*looking up from his paper*) Do you know what I see when I look
at you?

MARNEETA: What do you see? Skin like old tissue paper? Ears that got
too big and eyes that got too small?

BARD: “But wherefore says she not she is unjust?
And wherefore say not I that I am old?
Oh, love’s best habit is in seeming trust.
And age in love loves not to have years told.”

EARL: No. I see my beautiful Marneeta. She’s spry as a fawn and fresh
as spring flowers and some kind of magic made her grow younger
instead of older.

MARNEETA: Oh, well, now who needs the eye doctor?

EARL: I’m wondering if she might like to step out with some virile
young stallion.

MARNEETA: She most certainly would, if she could find one.

EARL: What if he was sitting right across the table from her?

MARNEETA: Well, hallelujah; there is one!

BARD: “Therefore, I lie with her and she with me
And in our faults by lies we flatter’d be.”

MARNEETA: You know something, Handsome?

EARL: What’s that, Beautiful?

MARNEETA: (*getting up, walking away coyly*) I’ve got nothing in
particular to do this morning.

EARL: Is that so?

MARNEETA: It is. But it seems to me there might be some pressing business in the other room.

EARL: You need help finding this business, young lady?

MARNEETA: I thought you'd never ask.

They exit. Lights down.

Sonnet 129

Lights up. KALEE, ASHLEY and JONICA enter from the back of the stage, focused on a single chocolate downstage center.

ASHLEY: It can't be.

KALEE: I don't believe it.

JONICA: No way.

ASHLEY: I thought they were gone.

KALEE: They don't make them anymore.

JONICA: It must be the last one.

ASHLEY: A triple-decker, chocolate chocolate...

KALEE: Caramel-centered, marshmallow-flavoured...

JONICA: Home-dipped and sealed with a kiss...

ALL THREE: Horner's Candy Shoppe Bon-Bon!

BARD: "The expense of spirit in a waste of shame
Is lust in action, and till action, lust
Is perjur'd, murd'rous, bloody, full of blame,
Savage, extreme, rude, cruel, not to trust..."

ALL THREE: I must have it!

They rush at it together, starting to shove each other out of the way.

ASHLEY: Back off! This candy's mine, sister!

KALEE: Forget it! I saw it first!

JONICA: Out of the way, you two!

ASHLEY: Don't you dare! I'll kill you!

KALEE: What are you talking about! You don't deserve it!

ASHLEY: I don't? Well, it certainly shouldn't go to a witch like you!

JONICA: Just back away from the bon-bon and nobody has to get hurt!

ASHLEY: You back away! It's mine!

KALEE: Wait a minute, wait a minute, what are we doing? Are we going crazy over a piece of candy? Is this what chocolate has reduced us to?

ASHLEY: You're right. We're better than this.

JONICA: We should just walk away. Can we?

ASHLEY: We can.

KALEE: Sure.

They turn their backs on the bon-bon and slowly begin to walk to various parts of the stage as the BARD speaks.

BARD: "Enjoy'd no sooner but despised straight,
Past reason hunted, and no sooner had,
Past reason hated as a swallowed bait
On purpose laid to make the taker mad..." "

The three girls turn simultaneously and try to attack the piece of chocolate. This becomes a violent free-for-all with punching, kicking, biting, scratching and screaming. The girls ad lib various horrible insults as they go at it. The fight goes back and forth until, finally, ASHLEY and JONICA lie vanquished. KALEE triumphantly grabs the chocolate. She laughs maniacally and raises it above her head.

BARD: "Mad in pursuit and in possession so,
Had, having, and in quest to have, extreme,
A bliss in proof, and prov'd, a very woe,
Before, a joy propos'd, behind, a dream..." "

KALEE eats the chocolate, savouring it until she goes to swallow. It gets stuck in her throat. She begins to panic. She goes to ASHLEY and JONICA, but they are unresponsive. Ultimately, KALEE succumbs to the

lack of oxygen and lies atop the other two girls — the picture of a Shakespearean tragedy.

BARD: “All this the world knows, yet none knows well
To shun the heaven that leads men to this hell.”

Lights down.

Sonnet 120

Lights up.

BARD: “That you were once unkind befriends me now,
And for the sorrow which I then did feel
Needs must I under my transgression bow,
Unless my nerves were brass or hammered steel.”

CARMEN is intently working on her math homework, frequently pushing the buttons of her calculator. RACHEL enters, bringing with her a scientific scale with weights.

CARMEN: As I sit here contemplating this highly complex algorithm, one which takes my full cerebral attention, I find myself distracted by the noise of an individual who, by now, should be well aware that her presence is completely undesirable.

RACHEL: *(having set up the scale)* Ahem.

CARMEN: Said individual has now “ahemed,” which would lead me to believe that she is going to address me. Said individual should know that such action will not only be ineffectual but completely offensive.

RACHEL: Again I say “ahem.”

CARMEN: Again I say, in summary *(turning to RACHEL)*, Go away! I don’t want you here.

RACHEL: I beg to differ.

CARMEN: I beg to differ with your differing. The recent injury you perpetrated on me is unforgivable. I terminated our friendship days ago.

RACHEL: I have come, Carmen, with evidence illustrating why that friendship should, in fact, be reinstated.

CARMEN: What do you mean, evidence?

RACHEL: Evidence. Data. Corroborating materials. Factual proof.

CARMEN: I know what evidence is; I also happen to know that no data could support your thesis. Cease, desist and be gone. I have mathematics to which I must attend.

BARD: “For if you were by my unkindness shaken
As I by yours, you’ve pass’d a hell of time,
And I, a tyrant, have no leisure taken
To weigh how once I suffered in your crime.”

RACHEL: The two sides of this scale represent the two individuals involved in the friendship in question — Rachel and Carmen. I, Rachel, am represented by the right side of the scale; you, Carmen, by the left.

CARMEN: How predictably pedestrian.

RACHEL: For approximately four months after...

CARMEN: Approximately? That is so like you.

RACHEL: I allowed myself a margin of error of 15.278 minutes, acceptable given this model.

CARMEN: Hmph.

RACHEL: For approximately four months after the genesis of our friendship, when we partnered to earn an A+ on our Calculus project, our satisfaction was essentially equal. We were, in terms of this illustration, in balance.

CARMEN: Synchronize your watch with mine. I am giving you 1 minute and 13 seconds to make a point. I somehow doubt you can do it.

RACHEL: Removal of these weights represents offences we have perpetrated against one another. Removal of a large amount of weight represents a large offence. Conversely, removal of...

CARMEN: ...a small amount of weight represents a small offence. I get it. You have 46 seconds remaining.

BARD: “O that our night of woe might have rememb’red
My deepest sense, how hard true sorrow hits,
And soon to you, as you to me then, tend’red
The humble salve which wounded bosoms fits!”

RACHEL: (*manipulating the weights as she speaks*) November of last year, you claimed that I had not fully researched Einstein’s theories, thus resulting in our getting an A-. We became unbalanced. On the 22nd of that same month, in commemoration

of Thanksgiving, I called you an overstuffed turkey; we returned to balance. In January of this year...

CARMEN: 15 seconds!

RACHEL: I will cut to the most recent events, then. Two weeks ago you hinted to the representative from MIT that I might be a bit soft in my knowledge of quantum mechanics.

CARMEN: I forgot about that.

RACHEL: Severe imbalance! And three days ago, I... I took credit for your answer during our final oral exam in Advanced Chemistry.

CARMEN: Yes, you did! How could you have done that!

BARD: "But that your trespass now becomes a fee,
Mine ransom yours, and yours must ransom me."

During the BARD's lines, RACHEL holds up her hand to stop CARMEN from saying any more. At the end of the BARD's final lines, RACHEL pointedly removes the weights from CARMEN's side of the scale. The two sides come into balance. CARMEN stares at the scale for a long moment, then sits back down at her homework. She takes a deep breath before speaking.

CARMEN: I'm... I'm having some trouble with the second proof on number 36.

RACHEL: I could help.

CARMEN: *(after a pause)* That would be good.

RACHEL pulls up a chair to sit next to CARMEN as the lights go down.

Sonnet 146

Lights up.

BARD: "Poor soul, the centre of my sinful earth,
These rebel pow'rs that thee array,
Why dost thou pine within and suffer dearth,
Painting thy outward walls so costly gay?"

*MINDY sits cross-legged on the floor, meditating.
CORY and DARLENE enter.*

CORY: All right, Mindy, you're coming with us.

DARLENE: That's right, Girl; up, up and away.

MINDY: Where?

DARLENE: To, like, the greatest invention ever created: the mall.

MINDY: I am not going to the mall.

CORY: Why not?

MINDY: I'm busy.

DARLENE: Yeah, right — busy doing a whole lot of nothing!

CORY: Melinda, we are your friends, are we not?

MINDY: Yes.

DARLENE: This is one of those, like, intermission things.

MINDY: What?

DARLENE: You know, when somebody you love is, like, strung out on drugs and you get everybody together and you tell them enough is enough. Like that.

MINDY: An intervention.

CORY: That's it!

DARLENE: That's right. We're intervening.

MINDY: Why?

CORY: 'Cause ever since you had that house fire, Mindy, you have been all screwed up.

BARD: "Why so large cost, having so short a lease,
Dost thou upon thy fading mansion spend?
Shall worms, inheritors of this excess,
Eat up thy charge? Is this thy body's end?"

DARLENE: That's right. You realize you haven't been shopping in over a month? You haven't had your hair done in three weeks at least? Your nails look like... well, I hate to say what they look like.

MINDY: Guys, I appreciate what you're doing, but I don't want to go to the mall. I don't have a lot of energy at the moment.

CORY: That's because you're deprived! You need to get out! Look, we know it was sad and everything, losing your house, but you had insurance. You're getting a brand-new one, right?

MINDY: Actually, it wasn't sad.

DARLENE: Mindy, you were, like, crying for a week after it happened.

MINDY: At first, yeah, but, you know, I went back to the site a couple weeks ago and just sifted through the ashes and it hit me: What good was all of it? So my clothes and my stereo and all my furniture were gone — so what?

CORY: So what? So we go shopping, that's what!

MINDY: No, I mean, why should I spend all my time worrying about the things that can get burned in a fire? Or rot? Or turn into worm-food.

DARLENE: See, that proves it. You really are sick. Come on. Come get in the car.

BARD: "Then, soul, live thou upon thy servant's loss,
And let that pine to aggravate thy store;
Buy terms divine in selling hours of dross;
Within be fed; without be rich no more... "

MINDY: Guys, seriously, I appreciate what you're doing, but I'm just not into it. I'm trying to build up... my insides these days.

DARLENE: You mean, like, doing crunchers and stuff?

MINDY: No, I mean, like, my spirit. Besides, I'm fasting. I really don't have much energy.

CORY: Fasting? You're not fat, Mindy. Come on; we'll hit the food court first.

DARLENE: No anorexia for you, chicky!

MINDY: No, no, no, I'm not fasting to lose weight. Look, the fact is, I'm just not interested in going to the mall anymore. I lost all my stuff once, and, frankly, I'm glad. If I don't start depending on it again, I figure I'll be better off than I was before. Do you see?

CORY: No.

DARLENE: Me neither.

MINDY: Well, I guess there's nothing more I can say. Thanks for caring. I'm okay, though. Have fun at the mall.

BARD: "So shalt thou feed on Death, that feeds on men,
And Death once dead, there's no more dying then."

DARLENE and CORY walk away. MINDY closes her eyes in meditation again. CORY turns to look at MINDY.

CORY: It's sad when people lose track of what's really important.

DARLENE: You can say that again.

DARLENE and CORY exit. MINDY smiles as the lights go down on her.

Sonnet 2

Lights up.

BARD: "When forty winters shall besiege thy brow,
And dig deep trenches in thy beauty's field,
Thy youth's proud livery, so gaz'd on now,
Will be a totter'd weed of small worth held."

SCOTT is onstage. MARTHA comes on quickly and shoves a mirror in front of his face.

SCOTT: Hey! What's this?

MARTHA: A mirror.

SCOTT: Well, I caught that. What's it for?

MARTHA: For you to look in.

SCOTT: Okay.

MARTHA: Look in it. See that face?

SCOTT: Yeah.

MARTHA: It's beautiful.

SCOTT: Well, I guess it's not too bad. Thanks.

MARTHA: No, it really is. You have a gorgeous face, Scott. I love your face.

SCOTT: Well, I love yours, too. I love some other parts even better.

MARTHA: Stay focused.

SCOTT: I am.

MARTHA: On the mirror.

SCOTT: All right, all right. I'm looking in the mirror.

MARTHA: Your face isn't always going to look like that, you know.

SCOTT: I guess.

MARTHA: You're going to get old. So am I.

SCOTT: Well, not right off.

MARTHA: Your nose is going to get bigger and your ears are going to stick out and your face is going to get all wrinkled. You're going to get major bags under your eyes.

SCOTT: How do you know?

MARTHA: They've already started, see?

SCOTT: Where?

MARTHA: Right under there, see? Those are going to get really gross when you get old.

SCOTT: Thanks very much, Martha.

BARD: "Then being asked, where all thy beauty lies,
Where all the treasure of thy lusty days,
To say within thine own deep-sunken eyes
Were an all-eating shame and thriftless praise."

MARTHA: So, what are you going to do about it?

SCOTT: About what?

MARTHA: About the bags, Scott, and the wrinkles and the big ears and the hair growing out of your nose?

SCOTT: Where?

MARTHA: Not yet. When you get old.

SCOTT: I hate that.

MARTHA: What are going to do about the fact that you're going to be really ugly some day?

SCOTT: Martha, what is this all about?

MARTHA: Do you have a plan?

SCOTT: No. I mean, I'm not going to worry about it. Why should I?

MARTHA: You're not going to worry about the fact that you're gorgeous now but it's all going to go away someday.

SCOTT: No. I mean, I'll take pictures. I'll... I'll remember being young and good-looking. I'll be in my rocking chair and I'll say (*stereotypical old man voice*), "I'll tell you what, back when I was in high school, I was a major stud!"

MARTHA: That's a bad answer.

SCOTT: Why is it a bad answer?

MARTHA: Because it's silly. It's empty. I don't like it.

SCOTT: Well, what's a better answer, then?

MARTHA & BARD:

"How much more praise deserv'd thy beauty's use,
If thou couldst answer, 'This fair child of mine
Shall sum my count, and make my old excuse,'
Proving his beauty by succession thine."

SCOTT: What the heck was that?

MARTHA: Shakespeare.

SCOTT: What the heck did it mean?

MARTHA: That there's a way your beautiful face can live on and on.

SCOTT: Oh, yeah? How's that?

MARTHA: Through your child.

SCOTT: My what?

MARTHA: Your child, Scott. When you're old, you can point to your child. That's a way to achieve a sort of immortality. Isn't that great?

SCOTT: Well, yeah. Yeah, I guess that's... good. Someday.

MARTHA: (*taking something out of her pocket, handing it to SCOTT*) Here.

SCOTT: What's this?

MARTHA: A pregnancy test. I took it this morning. Blue means yes; white means no.

*They both look at the test. MARTHA smiles at it.
SCOTT looks like he is in shock.*

BARD: "This were to be new made when thou art old,
And see thy blood warm when thou feel'st it cold."

MARTHA: (*cuddling up to SCOTT, admiring the test*) Blue is my new favourite colour.

SCOTT: (*deer in the headlights*) Right.

MARTHA: We're going to live forever.

The lights go down on the two of them, MARTHA happy; SCOTT dumbfounded.

Sonnet 76

Lights up on MARLA, a singer with a guitar, and her agent, SAL.

SAL: Marla, Marla, Marla, Sweetheart, what are we going to do with you?

MARLA: I don't know, Sal. Shoot me, I guess.

SAL: Would that get a better song out of you?

MARLA: Maybe.

BARD: "Why is my verse so barren of new pride,
So far from variation or quick change?
Why with the time do I not glance aside
To new-found methods, and to compounds strange?"

SAL: Baby, look, I don't want you getting all depressed on me. That's not going to do anybody any good. And it's not that your material is bad. It's just not...

MARLA: Fresh.

SAL: Right on!

MARLA: Original.

SAL: Well, it was original when you first did it. But now it's...

MARLA: Stale. Like mouldy bread.

SAL: A bit overdone.

MARLA: I'm nothing but a repetitive parody of myself, Sal.

SAL: Say, that's not bad. Could you set that to music, maybe? (*Singing terribly*) "I'm nothing, oh, nothing, nothing but a repetitive...?" (*seeing MARLA's despairing look*) Okay, maybe not.

BARD: “Why write I still all one, ever the same,
And keep invention in a noted weed,
That every word doth almost tell my name,
Showing their birth and where they did proceed?”

SAL: So, look, okay, show me what you’ve been working on lately.

MARLA: It’s garbage.

SAL: Hey, I’m your agent. I’ll be the judge of that. Show me, show me, show me, Sweetheart.

MARLA: (*handing over some lyrics*) I’m telling you, it’s just manure.

SAL: (*reading*) Oh, now... this, uh, actually seems a lot like...

MARLA: “Frogs in the Filthy Pond.” I know.

SAL: Except you call it “Toads in the Polluted Bay.”

MARLA: I’m in a rut, Sal!

SAL: Well, okay, so the lyrics are similar. Hit me with a bit of the tune.
Go ahead. (*MARLA plays a few chords. She stops. SAL looks at her for a long moment.*) That sounds, um, familiar.

MARLA: I told you!

SAL: So what is it, Honeycakes? What’s the trouble?

BARD: “O! Know sweet love I always write of you.
And you and love are still my argument;
So all my best is dressing old words new,
Spending again what is already spent.”

SAL: Let’s break your process down a bit, okay? Where have you been going to compose?

MARLA: The only place I can. In my room.

SAL: With all the... uh, your pets.

MARLA: Yuh, so? They inspire me.

SAL: But consider this, Marla, Sweetheart... you know I love you, right?
Consider that perhaps, just perhaps, you could get away from the reptile theme if you could actually... get away from your reptiles?

MARLA: What are you saying, Sal?

SAL: Just look at the names of your songs, Honeycakes: “Squeeze Me, Squeeze Me, Like a Python,” “Lizard Lust,” “Gila Monster Mayhem”...

MARLA: My reptiles are the only things that truly understand me, Sal.

SAL: I’m with you on that, Baby, but maybe you could try a change of venue...

MARLA: Wait a minute. That’s a great idea.

SAL: It... it is? I mean, you will?

MARLA: Sal, if you could set it up, I’ve always dreamed of going to this one place to write songs. I bet it would really shake things up for me.

SAL: Name it, Marla. We’ll get you and your guitar there tomorrow! Where do you want to go?

MARLA: I see myself on the banks of the Nile River, in a cage, next to a pile of rotting meat.

SAL: Rotting...?

MARLA: Carcasses all around me to attract them.

SAL: “Them?” You mean...

MARLA: Crocodiles!

BARD: “For as the sun is daily new and old,
So is my love still telling what is old.”

MARLA: Could you get me that gig, Sal? Huh? Could you?

SAL: I’ll... work on it, Baby. In the meantime, I’ve got a few calls to make. I’ll get back to you. Ciao, Sweetheart.

SAL exits.

MARLA: (*following him off*) Or there’s this snake pit in the Amazon. That would be great, too!

Lights down.

Sonnet 44

BARB: “If the dull substance of my flesh were thought,
 Injurious distance should not stop my way;
 For then despite of space I would be brought,
 From limits far remote, where thou dost stay.”

*Lights come up on either side of the stage, showing
 MAX and BARB on the phone.*

BARB: I don't know, Max; I guess I'm just tired of this long-distance relationship. It's too hard for us to maintain anything good when we're so far apart.

MAX: Barbara, I think I may have discovered a cure for our dilemma.

BARB: You're not going to move, are you?

MAX: In a sense, yes.

BARB: What do you mean, in a sense?

MAX: Barb, what are we made of?

BARB: What do you mean?

MAX: What are we made of? Our most essential elements?

BARB: You mean, like, molecules?

MAX: Smaller than that.

BARB: Atoms?

MAX: Yes. Do you remember studying atoms?

BARB: Not really. I remember something about electrons and proteins...

MAX: Protons, Barbara. Protons and electrons spinning around a nucleus.

BARB: Yeah, okay, but...

MAX: Here's the question, Barbara... what's in-between the protons and the electrons and the nucleus?

BARB: Uh, I don't know. Grape jelly?

MAX: No, no! Nothing! Nothing is between those particles. So, the thing is, Barbara, most of what we are made up of is nothing.

BARB: That's... comforting.



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