

William Shakespeare  
1609

Death  
of a Playwright

# *Table of Contents*

Introduction to the game	3
The Scenario in brief	3
Words with special meaning	3
Vision of the Scenario	4
Preparing to run the scenario	5
Physical components	5
Preparing the room	5
Brief the players	6
Warming Up	7
Enter the character	7
Greeting Circle	7
Monologue	7
Test Scene	7
Framing and playing scenes	9
Hierachy of Truth	9
Appedices	
Roles from Shakespeare's Life	
Scenes	
Characters	

## *Death of a Playwright*

Written by Élias Helfer for Fastaval  
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- Cheresse for patience, encouragement, feedback, and all the rest.
- Everyone playing this scenario (especially if you tell me about it afterwards).



# *Introduction to the game*

This document contains three parts: an intro to you, the person running the game, a number of scenes, and six character documents. In this intro, you will find a description of the physical preparations, a guide to introducing the game, three warm-up exercises, and an intro to the structure and mechanics of the game.

As the person running the game, you should read the intro and the Prospero character document well. You should also skim the the other character documents, and look through the scenes so you have an impression of the connections you see between them.

## *The scenario in brief*

Death of a Playwright consists of a prologue, a main part and an epilogue.

The prologue starts off with Shakespeare lying in his bed in Stratford-upon-Avon while the rest of the family is talking to the doctor and the priest next door. Suddenly, a procession of characters from his plays appear, lead by Prospero, the sorcerer. They want to audit Shakespeare's life and determine what kind of story can be told about it. And so Prospero sets a court to answer that question.

In the main part of the game, the characters take turns framing scenes from Shakespeares life. Through the

## *List of words with a special meaning.*

This scenario uses certain words in a particular way. This list indicates how certain words should be interpreted.

- **Character:** the characters Shakespeare created, and that the players are playing: Titania, Hamlet, Shylock and Lady Macbeth. In most cases does not include Prospero and Shakespeare.
- **Shakespeare:** the person, William Shakespeare, and the player who plays him.
- **Prospero:** the figure Prospero and the game masterplaying him.
- **The stage:** the place in the room where you play scenes. Shakespeare will spend the whole scenario here.
- **The audience:** Prospero and the characters not on stage, as well as the place where they are seated.

scenes they highlight what has been important for him in his life. The scenes are organised in five acts:

- First act is childhood and adolescence in Stratford.
- Second act is the first time in London, when Shakespeare is establishing himself as an actor and a writer.
- Third act is the time in which the Lord Chamberlain's Men is formed and Shakespeare establishes himself as London's greatest playwright.
- Fourth act is the time as a big man in London's theatre world.
- Fifth act is old age in Stratford.

The scenes are not intended to be played chronologically. The characters have free rein to set the scenes they



want, though you should endeavour to ensure that you play a scene from the first act before someone frames a scene from the second act, etc. Players should choose scenes based on what they feel would fit into the story at a given point.

When Prospero judges that the story is reaching its conclusion, he frames the epilogue. In it, Prospero tells Shakespeare that it is time for him to leave the mortal realm. Thus, he should choose one of the characters to lead him into the world of spirits. When Shakespeare has chosen, everybody leaves the stage in procession. Shakespeare has died.

## *Vision of the Scenario*

Shakespeare became a famous playwright, because he could create characters that captured something common to all human beings. Hamlet and Lady Macbeth represent something in the human psyche. In this scenario, Shakespeare will represent us all in our attempts to navigate in an existence in which we may be pushed and nudged to and fro by internal and external forces, but still ultimately must carry the responsibility for our lives.

# Preparing to run the scenario

## *Physical components:*

- 6 character documents (Shakespeare, Prospero, Titania, Hamlet, Shylock and Lady Macbeth). Print them in duplex, maybe on A3 paper folded over.
- 4 character signs for reminding people of a character's poles.
- List of roles. Print one for yourself, one for Shakespeare and one or two for the characters.
- Scenes. Printed and cut out.

## *Preparing the room*

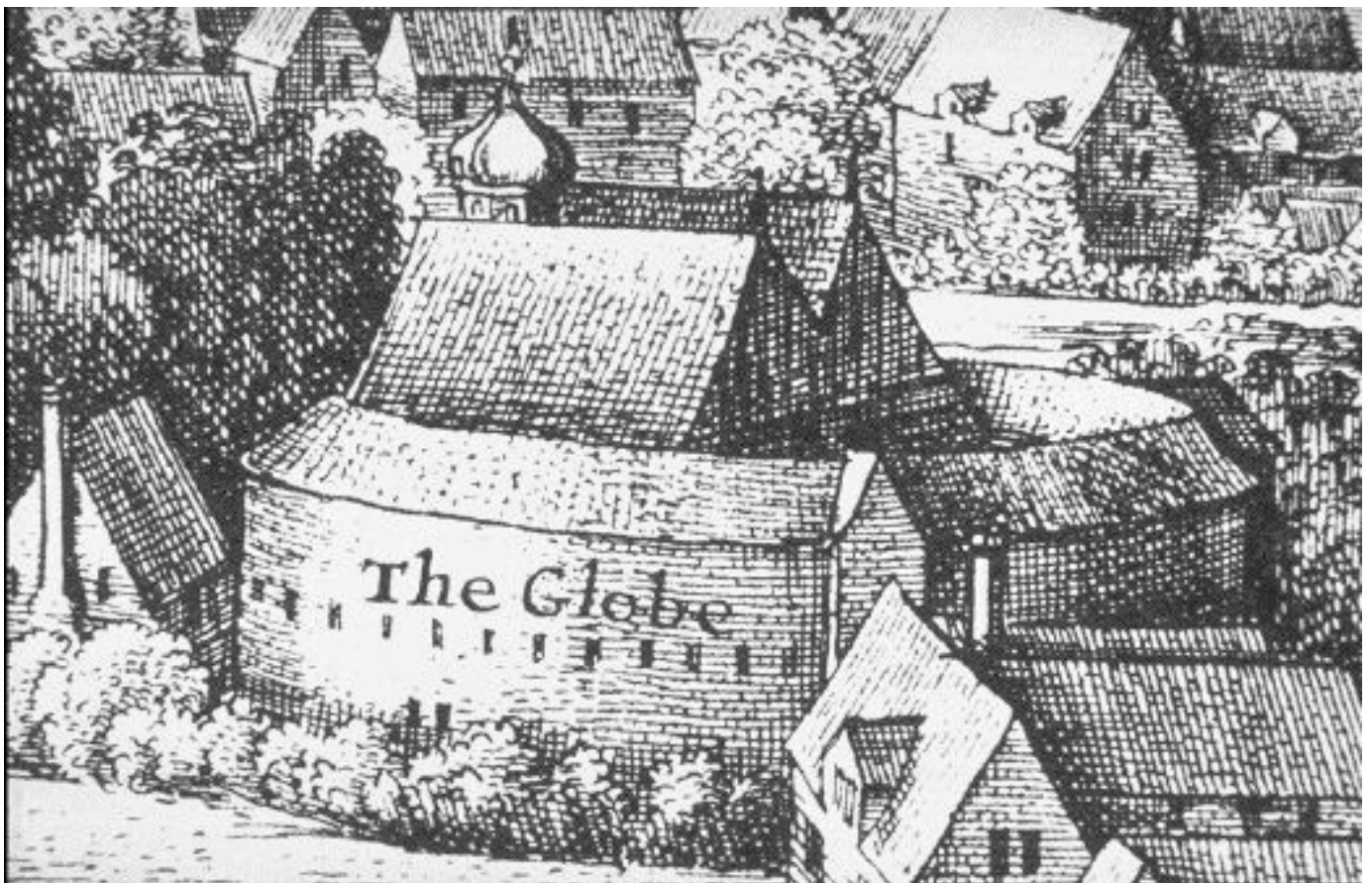
This scenario requires a certain layout of the room. The following guide assumes that you are playing in a large room with many tables and chairs, at Fastaval or another convention. If you

are playing in a living room or another room with less space, you must decide how best to prepare the room to fit the scenario.

The game requires three separate areas: a stage, an audience area opposite the stage and a space where the scenes can be displayed for easy viewing by the players.

Create the stage so that it borders a wall or similar. Place tables or similar in each side to mark the edges. There should be a couple of chairs and maybe a table on the stage to use for props.

Place five chairs in a row or a semicircle so that you can watch the





people on the stage when you are not in a scene. That is the audience.

Make a space for the scenes next to or behind the audience. Give them plenty of space if the room is big enough. You might make a semi-circle of tables and lay out the acts on the tables. You should also put a list of roles near the scenes.

### *Brief the players.*

Start by briefly explaining the scenario to the players. Present the premise of the scenario, and give them a rough sketch of the plot. Tell the players that the goal is not to make a historically correct account of Shakespeare's life. They should make their own version of Shakespeare's life. If any of them have previous knowledge of Shakespeare they are free to draw on that knowledge, as long as they don't contradict something already established in play. The same goes for the characters: there is no expectation that players know Shakespeare's plays, and for the duration of the game, only your versions of the characters exist.

Introduce the different kinds of roles that are in the game: Shakespeare, Prospero and the four characters. In particular, explain the difference between Shakespeare and the characters:

Shakespeare is the main character of the game, and is part of every scene in

the game. On the other hand, he does not frame any scenes, but is the victim of the scenario, and must face whatever the characters throw at him. Shakespeare plays one role in every scene he is in: William Shakespeare at different points in his life.

The characters, on the other hand, are active. They frame scenes and play many different roles throughout the scenario. Each character represents two traits within Shakespeare that together form an axis. In play, they should endeavour to make their axis the main story of Shakespeare's life.

Ask the players who might like to play Shakespeare. It is important to make sure that Shakespeare is played by someone who can manage being in focus for so long, and who likes being on the receiving end of whatever the others throw at him.

When Shakespeare has been cast, you can briefly introduce the four characters and let the players decide which one appeals to them the most.

Ask the players to read through their roles. They should read the biography of the character, their function in the scenario and the two traits they represent. They should also look at the quotes at the back of the scenario and underline three phrases they will try to use during the course of the scenario.

# Warming Up

When you have divided the characters and the players have had time to read them, it is time for a short warm-up.

## *Enter the character*

Ask the players to stand on the floor with their eyes closed. Ask them to visualise their character. Now ask them to focus on their feet and legs - how is the character standing on the floor? Ask them to stand like their character.

From there, they can focus on their hips, torso and shoulders. How does the character hold his or her body? Ask them to assume the same posture. Now ask them to include the arms - how is the character holding their arms?

Finally, they can focus on the head, and assume the character's facial expression.

## *Greeting Circle*

Place yourself on the floor, and have Shakespeare stand opposite. Make sure there is plenty of space around you. Now you should greet Shakespeare like Prospero would greet Shakespeare, and then Shakespeare should greet him back. One by one, the other players step into the circle and greets Prospero, Shakespeare and all other characters in the circle the way their character would greet that character. In each instance, the other will return the greeting.

## *Monologues*

Ask the players to sit in the audience chairs. Now, one by one, they go onto the stage to give a brief monologue telling their character's story. During the monologue they must:

- 1) lower their voice to a theatre whisper
- 2) raise their voice to a shout (as loud as circumstances permit)
- 3) hold a pause for longer than they find comfortable.

They do not have to do them in the order above.

It is a good idea for you to do the first monologue as Prospero.

Tell the players that they shouldn't worry too much about the contents of the monologue. The monologue is their interpretation of their character. If they have seen the play in question they are free to include their knowledge of the character. If not, they form their own version of the character.

## *Test Scene*

When all players have held their monologue, it is time to try framing a scene. Use the scene "Father's High Office".

Explain the principles behind framing scenes to the players. Then read the scene aloud to the players, and ask the characters consider how it fits



their character. It is perfectly alright if one or two characters cannot see any relevance to them.

Discuss possible ways of framing the scene. Who might frame this scene, who would they play, and what is the situation they would frame? Also ask them which other roles might be in this scene.

Ask the players who would like to frame this scene. If none of them would like to do it you can do it, but it is preferable if one of the characters frames the scene. Everybody not in the scene sits down on the audience seats. Now the character frames the scene, and you play it. Cut the scene early, and take a round of questions. Make sure all players are comfortable with how scenes are set.

Now ask all the players to go look at the scenes. The characters should consider which scenes they might like to frame, and it is a benefit to Shakespeare to know what might be in store. Give the players the time they need - probably 10-15 minutes. This might well be combined with a short break before you start the game.

Find out who wants to frame the first scene, and which scene they want to frame. If time permits, you can talk to the player about how he or she wants to do it.

Now you are ready to frame the prologue, and after that, the first scene.



# *Framing and playing scenes*

As a general rule, one of the characters who has just been in the audience sets the next scene. If they need it, the players can take a few moments to choose a scene. Meanwhile Prospero, Shakespeare and the other characters can talk about the scene they just played. The other characters can also spend some time looking for scenes to frame later on.

In the beginning, scenes from the first act can be chosen. When someone has framed a scene from the first act, scenes from the first and second or first act can be chosen, and so on. Prospero can allow exceptions to this rule.

When a character chooses a scene, they take the scene from the table, and walk to the stage to frame the scene. The character frames the scene by giving a brief monologue, addressed to either Shakespeare, Prospero or the Audience. The monologue is given by the character, and is part of the fiction.

In the monologue, the character outlines the scene by explaining where and approximately when it takes place, who is present and what the situation is. The character can also indicate what will happen in the scene, if for instance the scene is moving towards a certain result - in an introduction to the scene "Two Weddings" a character might

## *Hierarchy of Truth*

Different characters have different authority to define what is true and not. From highest to lowest:

Prospero  
Characters in the Audience  
Characters on stage  
Shakespeare

This does not apply to facts about Shakespeare's inner life - in this area, Shakespeare always has final say.

indicate that Shakespeare will marry Anne Hathaway.

The character framing the scene decides which role he or she wants to play. The character can also suggest that a certain character play a certain role, but it is up to the character to accept the role. A character can also decide to enter the stage as a certain role, if they can see a function for that role in the scene.

Characters should choose roles that can push Shakespeare in the direction of one of their poles. Titania might choose roles that can awaken Shakespeare's devotion, perhaps by being the object of desire, or by highlighting the desirability of another.

When on stage, a character plays a

role as seen through the lens of the character. If two different characters play the same role, it should obviously be the same person. At the same time, it should be noticeable that different sides of that role are highlighted.

During a scene, everyone on stage should conduct themselves like actors on stage. Everybody turns towards the audience, and they should declare their lines. When entering the stage, a character should introduce themselves so the audience knows who they are, and physical objects or occurrences should be described from within the fiction.

During a scene, both Shakespeare and the characters on stage may address the audience directly. They do this by looking directly at the audience while speaking. The audience may also

comment on what is happening on stage.

Anyone may cut a scene. The audience can interrupt and speak to the people on stage, or they can start to clap at a scene that has served its purpose. Characters on stage can address the audience and wrap up the scene, or they may start questioning Shakespeare about the scene. Shakespeare can start reflection upon the scene.

# *Roles from Shakespeare's life*

## *Stratford*

**John Shakespeare:** William Shakespeare's father. Reaches the highest peak attainable in Stratford, only to fall into the abyss.

**Mary Shakespeare:** William Shakespeares mother, wife of John Shakespeare.

**Anne Hathaway:** Shakespeare's wife from when he is 18 until his death.

**Anne Whateley:** a nun, whom Shakespeare comes close to marrying. He exchanges letters with her.

**Judith:** Shakespeare's eldest daughter, born in 1583.

**Susanna:** Shakespeare's youngest daughter and Hamnet's twin, born in 1585.

**Hamnet:** Shakespeare's only son and Susanna's twin, born in 1585. Dies at age 11 in 1596.

## *London*

**James Burbage:** The greatest theatre promotor in London and the owner of The Theatre. The head of Leicester's Men and founder of The Lord Chamberlain's Men. Dies in 1597.

**Richard Burbage:** Son of James Burbage. The head of The Lord Chamberlain's Men and a dear friend of Shakespeare.

**William "Will" Kempe:** Comedian and dancer. Member of first Leicester's Men, and later on The Lord Chamberlain's Men. Leaves the company in 1599.

**The Earl of Southampton:** Henry Wriothesley [Wrizzzeley], 3rd Earl of Southampton. A charming young nobleman, known for his close relationships with people of both genders. A patron of several poets.



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# Prologue

Shakespeare is lying in his bed, close to death. Next door, his family is quietly talking to the doctor and the priest. The room is gloomy - a low fire burns in the fireplace.

Suddenly, a strange glow lights up the room, and Shakespeare sees a procession of his characters step into the room. They stand around the bed, look down upon their creator, and start talking about him while Shakespeare looks on in wonder and disquiet.

Place a table, a soft chair or similar on stage - this is Shakespeare's bed. Shakespeare is lying there as the game begins. He is dozing, close to death. Suddenly, he notices something, and he opens wide his eyes. Onto the stage the characters march, lead by Prospero. They stand around Shakespeare, and start talking about him - now he is at death's door, this man who created us all, he reached great fame in his life. Maybe a frightened Shakespeare makes some comment about these ghosts arrayed around him.

After a short while Prospero asks which life this man has lead - which story is Shakespeare's story? They must determine this! Prospero asks them all to take place, and one of the characters frames the first scene.

Act  
First

## *Father's High Office*

### **Stratford 1568**

After occupying a number of official posts, William's father, John Shakespeare, is appointed High Bailiff of Stratford - the highest office in the town!

Roles: John Shakespeare, maybe Mary Shakespeare and William's siblings.

## *Father's Debts*

### **Stratford 1576**

William has been to church with his mother and siblings. John stayed at home, even though he can be fined for not going to church. In church his creditors are waiting, and John has withdrawn from public life to avoid confronting his decline.

Roles: John Shakespeare. Maybe Mary Shakespeare and citizens of Stratford.

## *Two Weddings*

### **27th of November 1582**

18-year-old Shakespeare is on his way to church to marry his beloved, Anne Whateley, when their way is blocked. Shakespeare has impregnated another woman, Anne Hathaway, and her family forces Shakespeare to marry her instead. Anne Hathaway is eight years older than William.

Roles: Anne Hathaway, Anne Whateley. Maybe the Hathaways, maybe John and Mary Shakespeare.

## *The Birth of Hamnet and Judith*

### **January 1585**

Anne gives birth to twins - a boy and a girl, named Hamnet and Judith

Roles: Anne Hathaway. Maybe midwife and family.

# *Magic of the Stage*

## **Kenilworth, Warwickshire 1575**

11 year old William has gone with his family to Kenilworth, 12 miles from Stratford. There, the theatre company Leicester's Men are playing for Queen Elizabeth and Robert Dudley, Earl of Leicester - and the public has been invited for one performance!

After the play, William seeks out the leader of the company, James Burbage, who is deep in conversation with the young comedian and dancer, William Kempe

Roles: James Burbage, Will Kempe.

Record of Fact

## *Elsinore*

Elsinore, 1585

Shakespeare has gone with Leicester's Men to Kronborg Castle in Elsinore. There they play for Frederik II of Denmark at his magnificent new palace, Kronborg.

After the play, William, James Burbage and Will Kempe are at an inn in Elsinore. The two old actors are merry, celebrating their good fortune, while Shakespeare is contemplating his future on stage. And wouldn't Kronborg be the perfect setting for a play?

Roles: James Burbage, Will Kempe.

## *Venus and Adonis*

London, 1593

Shakespeare and a friend are granted an audience with Henry Wriothesly, third earl of Southampton.

Shakespeare dedicated his hugely popular poem, *Venus and Adonis*, to the Earl, a dedication full of declarations of praise and admiration for the Earl. The Earl is a handsome, charming young man, infamous for his vanity and close relationships with women and men. William is hoping that the Earl will give him financial aid - but the Earl may want something more.

Roles: The Earl of Southampton, plus James Burbage, Will Kempe or another friend of Shakespeare.

## *Correspondence with Anne Whateley*

1590-1600

Over the years William exchanges several letters with Anne Whateley, who is serving as a nun in a nunnery close to Stratford. They exchange spiritual considerations, and confide their troubles to one another.

Roles: Anne Whateley

# Fourth Act

## *The Rape of Lucrece*

**London 1594**

One year after *Venus and Adonis*, Shakespeare has once again dedicated a poem to the Earl of Stratford: *The Rape of Lucrece*, a more serious and moralising (and thus also less popular) poem than *Venus and Adonis*. Shakespeare has been invited to dine with the Earl, who is less amiable than usual. His money is tight, and he has decided to stop supporting William.

Roles: The Earl. Maybe another actor or other guests.

## *Under Burbage's Wing*

**London, 1594**

James Burbage has invited Shakespeare to meet him at his theatre. After the dissolution of *Leicester's Men*, he has decided to start a new troupe, the *Lord Chamberlain's Men*. Burbage wants William to be part owner of the troupe - of course on the condition that the Lord Chamberlains will have exclusive rights to Shakespeare's plays.

Roles: James Burbage. Maybe Richard Burbage or Will Kempe.



## *The Death of Hamnet*

**London, August 1596**

Shakespeare is in the middle of preparations for *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. Shakespeare himself will be going on stage as Peter Quince. Suddenly a letter from Stratford arrives. Eleven year old Hamnet has fallen ill, and will probably soon die.

Roles: Messenger. Maybe Will Kempe, Richard Burbage.

## *The Shakespeare Crest*

**Stratford, 20th of October 1596**

William brings home a gift for his father. He has bought him a coat of arms. John had applied for it himself long ago, but it was never granted.

The coat of arms allows John and all his heirs to call themselves gentlemen. After the death of Hamnet, William has no male heirs, and the coat of arms will disappear after his death.

Roller: John Shakespeare, maybe Anne Hathaway, Judith, Susanna.

## *New Place*

**Stratford, 1597**

Shakespeare is in Stratford to buy New Place, the second largest house in Stratford. It is not in particularly good shape - which allows Shakespeare to buy it even cheaper. He looks at the house with Anne, who will live in the house when William is off in London.

Roles: Anne Hathaway, maybe the seller of the house.

## *Anne Whateley's Death.*

**Warwickshire, 1600**

Shakespeare has heard that Anne Whateley is at death's door. He visits her at her death bed to say goodbye.

Roles: Anne Whateley

# Fourth Act

## *Grain Villain*

Stratford, 1598

Shakespeare has been dragged in front of the court. He was stockpiling grain to raise prices, and has sold it to hungry neighbours for high prices. In an England wracked by hunger, this kind of profiteering is frowned upon. And worse yet - he has used his profits for lending money! Now William faces a fine, while the citizens of Stratford are howling against him.

Roles: judge, citizens. Maybe Anne Hathaway, John Shakespeare, Judith, Susanna.

## *Southampton's Plea*

London, januar 1601

The Earl of Southampton seeks out his old friend and protege to ask for a favour. His friend, the Earl of Essex, would like the Lord Chamberlain's Men to play Richard II - and he wants to see the whole play, including the parts where the monarch is deposed and murdered. Queen Elizabeth will certainly not mind!

Roles: Southampton, maybe Richard Burbage.

## *Essex' Coup*

London, 8th Februar 1601

Shakespeare is cleaning after yesterday's production of *Richard II*, a play requested and payed for by the earl of Essex. Suddenly, a member of the company brings news: Essex has just been arrested for an attempts to start an armed rebellion against the Queen. The play was part of his plan to plant the idea of rebellion in the citizens of London. A number of Essex' supporters are arrested, including Southampton.

Roles: Members of the company, maybe Richard Burbage.

## *The King's Men*

London, 1603

Shakespeare and his companions are called before the King. The King is their new patron, and The Lord Chamberlain's Men changes its name to The King's Men. You can reach no higher as a theatre troupe in London.

Roles: Richard Burbage, King James I.

*Fifteenth*

## *The Last Performance*

**London, 1612**

Shakespeare has just left the stage. He played Prospero in *The Tempest* in front of King James and his whole court at Princess Elizabeth's Wedding. William has decided that this will be his last performance as an actor. He has not told this to Richard Burbage yet.

Roles: Richard Burbage, maybe others from *The King's Men*.

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## *The Will*

**Stratford, 25th of March 1616**

William writes his will. Anne automatically inherits a third of everything that Shakespeare owns, but it is customary to leave special presents for your wife. Shakespeare leaves her the second best bed with bedding.

Roles: Notary. Maybe Anne Hathaway, Judith, Susanna.

## *Epilogue*

When the scenario is coming to an end, Prospero will frame the epilogue. He stands up, looks at the others and proclaims that we have heard enough, and we are ready to reach a verdict. He asks everyone to rise, and everybody stands to look at Shakespeare.

Prospero tells Shakespeare that it is time for him to leave the physical world, and walk with them into the spiritual realm. And so Shakespeare must choose one of the characters to lead him.

When Shakespeare has chosen, everyone leaves the stage in stately procession. When everybody has left the stage, the game is over.

When to frame the epilogue: Prospero decides to frame the epilogue when he senses that the characters and Shakespeare are getting "full", or when time is running out. Prospero can choose to frame a last scene to round off the scenario. *The Will* and *The Last Performance* are good choices.



Hamlet

Doubt Maria

Lady Macbeth

Ambition Remorse

Dylock

Propriety

Greed

*Titania*

*Pride*

*Devotion*





# *Prospero*

*- the mighty sorcerer*

*The Innermost Self*

*The Great Unconscious*

# *You are Prospero the Sorcerer*

**Y**ou are the wizard Prospero, rightful duke of Milan. You were betrayed by your brother, Antonio, though a faithful servant helped you escape together with your infant daughter. Many years did you spend on a desert island with only your daughter, Miranda, and the monstrous Caliban, as company. You studied sorcery, and bound the spirit Ariel into your service after releasing him from bondage within a tree.

One day sensing that your brother was on a ship nearby together with his accomplice, Duke Alonso of Naples, and the Duke's son, Ferdinand, you ordered Ariel to conjure up a tempest to smash the ship and throw its passengers upon the shore.

Here you used your sorcerous powers



to make Antonio and Alonso confess and beg forgiveness for their misdeeds, while bringing Ferdinand and Miranda together, causing the two to fall in love.

Thus you made the guilty repent, and you brought Naples and Milan together in harmonious union through the two youngsters. Thus you could break your staff, dispose of your sorcerous books and release Ariel from your service.



## *When you are playing Prospero...*

**W**hen playing Prospero, you are the master of ceremonies and judge of the scenario. The scenario is Prospero holding his court. He is the convener of all present, the conjuror of the scenes and the highest authority in the room. That gives you power and respect - demand and utilise it!

As Prospero, your goal is to examine Shakespeare's life as fully as possible, and to ensure that everything happens with appropriate dignity and seriousness. Each character is the advocate of their own version of Shakespeare's life, and if they fulfill their function well, you may not need to do more than comment on what is happening on stage and take part in the conversation between each scene. And if the conversation is flowing well, feel free to keep back and let the conversation flow. If you feel like something needs to be addressed, or if the characters are stalling, feel free to set a scene or two.

Supporting the mood and energy of the scenario is one of your key responsibilities. Do it by maintaining the character of Prospero throughout the game, and help the others to do the same. Keep the conversation going between each scene, while some characters are in the process of finding the next scene. Address yourself to Shakespeare, or to the characters, and question them about

the scene that was just played, or to perspectives in everything that has been played.

You should also endeavour to use the character of Prospero to guide and aid the players, instead of using your function as game master. When cutting or editing scenes, you can do it as Prospero commenting on the scene. If a player needs help to set a scene, you can do it as Prospero speaking to the character, inquiring into their relationship with Shakespeare.

Make sure to cut scenes tightly. Don't hesitate to interrupt the players, once a scene has fulfilled its purpose.

You start the scenario by leading the prologue, and you finish it by staging the epilogue. Make sure you have considered how those scenes should work within your playing space before the game begins, so that those scenes can run as smoothly as possible.

Good final scenes: Both scenes in the fifth act can be used to round off Shakespeare's life. If it fits your game, you can decide to set one of them yourself and then progress directly to the epilogue. This will mean that the final regular scene is not made by any of the competing characters. It also means that you are on the stage as the epilogue commences.

## Act 4, Scene 1

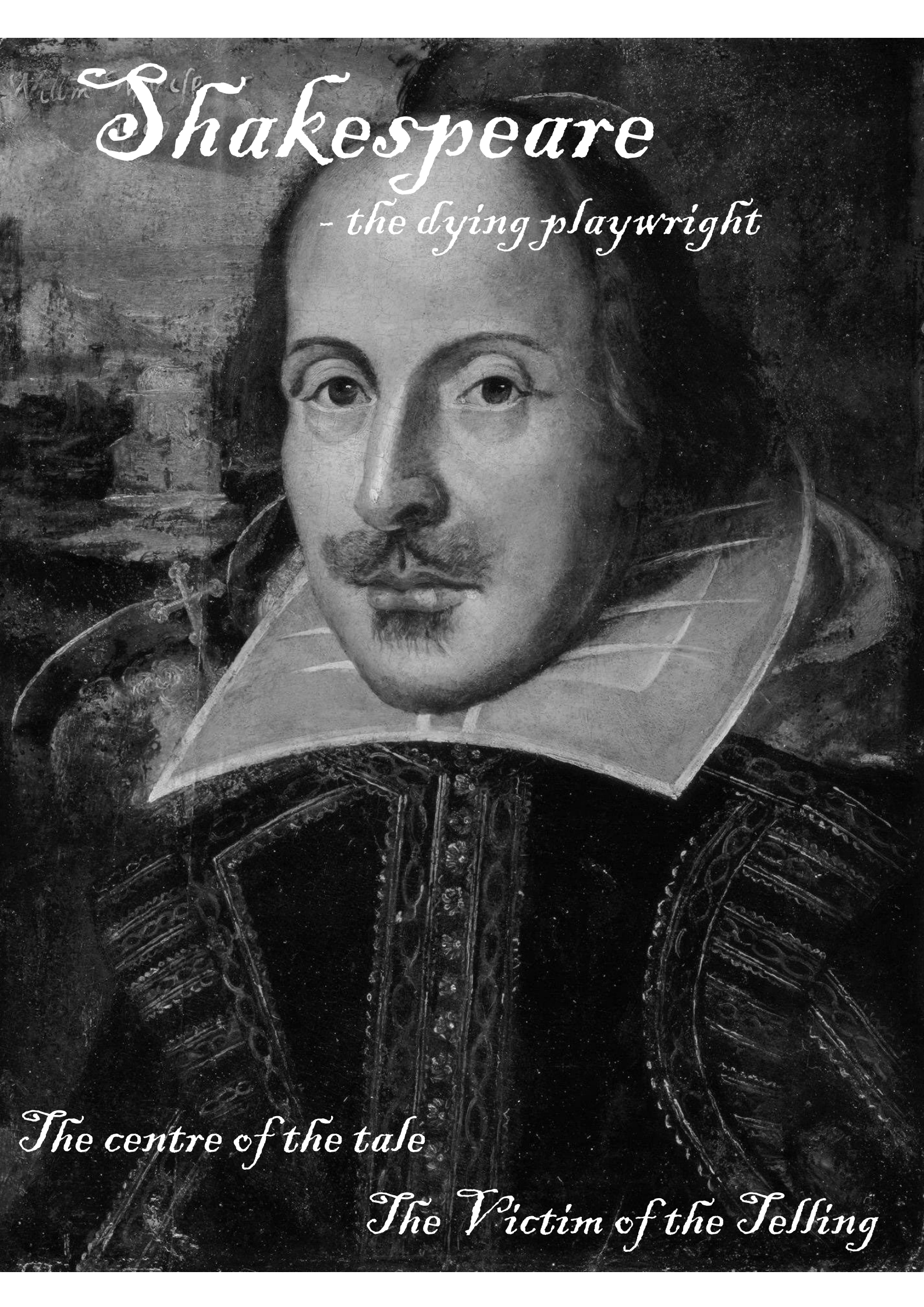
You do look, my son, in a moved sort,  
As if you were dismay'd: be cheerful, sir.  
Our revels now are ended. These our actors,  
As I foretold you, were all spirits and  
Are melted into air, into thin air:  
And, like the baseless fabric of this vision,  
The cloud-capp'd towers, the gorgeous palaces,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

## Epilogue

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







*William Shakespeare*  
**Shakespeare**

*- the dying playwright*

*The centre of the tale*

*The Victim of the Telling*

## *You are William Shakespeare*

**Y**ou are William Shakespeare. You are lying on your deathbed in Stratford-upon-Avon where you grew up, but your life was lived in the frenzy of London's theatre world. You both penned and acted, and you enchanted thousands with your skill at the stage. Your art gave you your livelyhood, and your family is better placed in the world than when you were a child.

You were born in Stratford-upon-Avon in April of 1564. Your father, John Shakespeare, was one of the leaders of Stratford, and occupied many important offices. But his fortunes turned to the worse, and soon he was haunted by debts and shame.

You did not follow in your father's footsteps. You went to school, and served as schoolmaster yourself for a while. But before long, you steered towards London and the theatre.

In London, you went into acting, and you played with whoever wanted you. Soon you also started writing plays, and it wasn't long before you had made a name for yourself. And more than that - in a year where theatres were closed for the plague, you wrote two epic poems that were sold as quickly as they could be printed. They also ensured that you had a warm relationship with the Earl of Southampton, an appealing young nobleman.

But the theatre called the loudest, and soon James Burbage invited you to become a part owner of a new theatre

company, The Lord Chamberlain's Men. In the company, you found a place to belong, and you stayed there for the rest of your days.

The Theatre was not the only venue for your success. By shrewdness and thrift, you gathered a fortune of some size, and soon, you could buy the second largest house in Stratford! Your cunning did put you in front of a court, accused of overcharging for grain in a year of hunger, and you were fined many times for failing to pay your taxes.

Your family was left in Stratford while you spent your time in London. When you were only 18, you married Anne Hathaway, who was carrying your child. This despite the fact that you had been on your way to the altar with Anne Whateley, a young woman with an intellect comparable to your own.

Anne first gave birth to Susanna, and two years later to the twins, Hamnet and Judith. But alas! Hamnet died at eleven, and left no male heir to carry on your name.

In 1613 you retired from life as an actor and playwright. You still owned shares in two theatres, The Globe and Blackfriars. Then, in april of 1616, no more than a month after renewing your will, sickness struck you. And so, here you are in your second best bed, wracked by fever, while Anne and your daughters are speaking to the doctor and the priest.



## *When playing William Shakespeare...*

**W**hen playing Shakespeare, you are the main character of the scenario. You are on the stage in all scenes, and all scenes are about you. No matter what the other characters do and say, in the end, the most important thing is how you relate to what is happening.

At the same time, you are the victim of the game. You have very little influence over which scenes will be played, and how those scenes are framed. You can only react to the things the others do to you.

You will have very few breaks to rest and reflect upon what has happened. You are on stage throughout the game, and cannot sit in the audience to catch your breath.

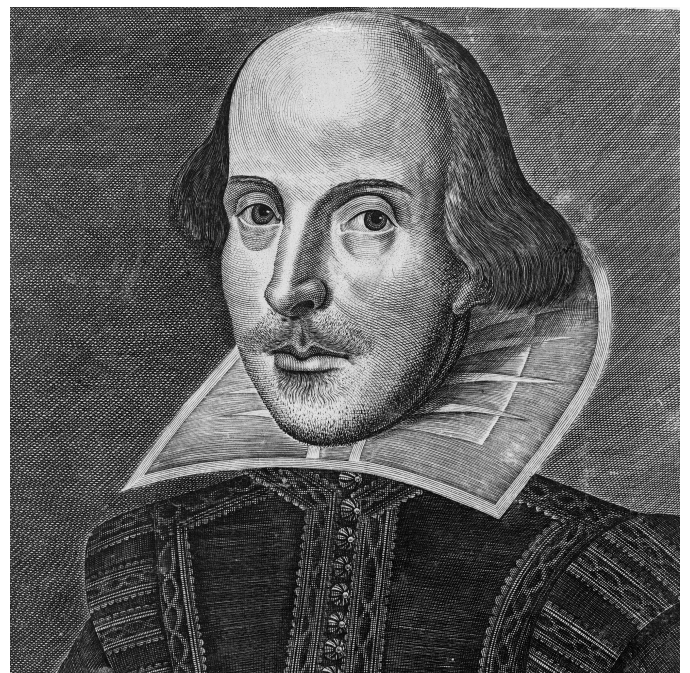
Your task in the game is to be Shakespeare through and through. Both the young William, just arrived in London, and the elderly Shakespeare playing his last role before retiring to

Stratford.

But first and last, you are the dying William Shakespeare, reliving his life. Use that! When you feel the moment is right, address the audience to comment on what is happening on stage. You should also feel free to address Prospero to ask for mercy, when you are hurting.

Throughout the game, the other characters will attempt to push in this or that direction. Let yourself be pushed! Follow where they lead you, and build on what they give you. Only, stay true to Shakespeare. Resist and reject them if they want to lead you in the wrong direction. You alone speak for Shakespeare's character.

Last but not least, keep in mind: Shakespeare may be a true person - but we are playing a true drama! Let yourself be carried by the mood, and let the great emotions sweep you away.



## Sonnet 144

Two loves I have of comfort and despair,  
Which like two spirits do suggest me still;  
The better angel is a man right fair,  
The worser spirit a woman colour'd ill.

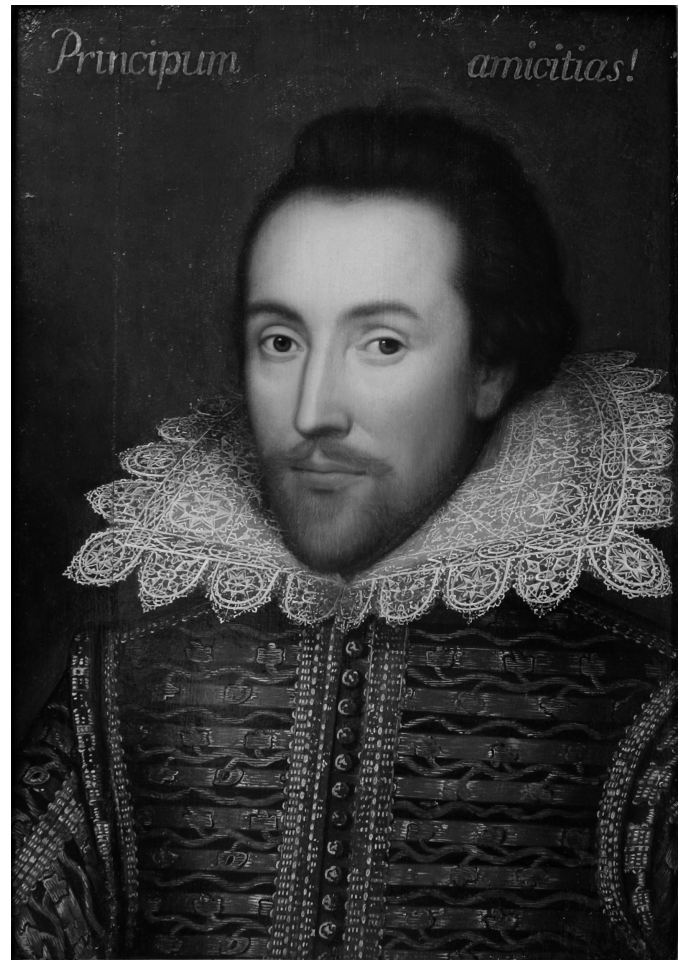
To win me soon to hell, my female evil  
Tempteth my better angel from my side,  
And would corrupt my saint to be a devil,  
Wooing his purity with her foul pride.

And whether that my angel be turn'd fiend  
Suspect I may, but not directly tell;  
But being both from me, both to each friend,  
I guess one angel in another's hell:

Yet this shall I ne'er know, but live in doubt,  
Till my bad angel fire my good one out.

## Dedication, Venus and Adonis

I know not how I shall offend in dedicating  
my unpolished lines to your lordship, nor  
how the world will censure me for choosing  
so strong a prop to support so weak a  
burden only, if your honour seem but  
pleas'd, I account myself highly praised,  
and vow to take advantage of all idle hours,  
till I have honoured you with some graver  
labour. But if the first heir of my invention  
prove deformed, I shall be sorry it had so  
noble a god-father, and never after ear so  
barren a land, for fear it yield me still so bad  
a harvest. I leave it to your honourable  
survey, and your honour to your heart's  
content; which I wish may always answer  
your own wish and the world's hopeful  
expectation.



## Sonnet 18

Shall I compare thee to a summer's day?  
Thou art more lovely and more temperate.  
Rough winds do shake the darling buds of  
    May,  
And summer's lease hath all too short a date.

Sometime too hot the eye of heaven shines,  
And often is his gold complexion dimmed;  
And every fair from fair sometime declines,  
By chance, or nature's changing course,  
    untrimmed;

But thy eternal summer shall not fade,  
Nor lose possession of that fair thou ow'st,  
Nor shall death brag thou wand'rest in his  
    shade,  
When in eternal lines to Time thou grow'st.

So long as men can breathe, or eyes can see,  
So long lives this, and this gives life to thee.



# *Titania*

*- the charmed queen*

*Unbending Pride*

*Sweet Devotion*



## *You are Titania, the Fairy Queen*

**Y**ou play Titania, Queen of the Fairies, married to King Oberon.

You quarrel with your husband over an Indian changeling who belonged to your deceased votaress. Your pride and stubbornness vexes Oberon, and he decides to cast a charm upon you while you sleep, so that you will fall in love with the first creature you see after you wake. This happens to be Bottom the Weaver, who has had his head exchanged for that of an ass. The night long, you shower favours and sweet words upon him.

Late at night, Oberon approaches you to raise the spell. You marvel at your recent infatuation with such a creature, and laugh with Oberon at the whole endeavour. Then you go to Athens, there to bless three newlywed couples with love and prosperity.



## *You represent Shakespeare's Pride*

**Y**ou represent pride. Stubborn self-sufficiency, denial of weakness, rejection of help.

You refuse Lord Oberon your changeling boy as a squire, for he is a dear remembrance of your servant. But soon, the quarrel is no longer over the changeling, but over who will first bend their head to the other. Both are rulers in your court, and neither is used to bending to the demands of others.

Scenes you might consider: Two Weddings, Father's Debt, Elsinore, The Rape of Lucrece, The Shakespeare Crest, New Place, Grain Villain

## *While Playing Titania...*

When you play Titania, you are playing the character Titania along with the traits she represents.

Your aim should be to make your tale the main story of Shakespeare's life. In other words, you should endeavour to give pride and devotion the most prominent place possible in the scenario. When framing scenes, you should point out the situations where Shakespeare can show someone devotion, or where he can display his pride. When choosing a role to play in a scene, choose someone who can drive Shakespeare towards devotion or pride.

Play Titania as much as you can. When in the audience, be Titania watching the players on the stage as part of Prospero's court. When you frame a scene, you are Titania speaking to Shakespeare or Prospero. When playing in a scene, you are playing someone from Shakespeare's life, but let Titania shine through as much as you can. And feel free to step out of the role and comment on the scene as Titania.

## *You represent Shakespeare's Devotion*

You represent devotion. The sweet adoration, the sweet sighs and the veiled looks. The desire to do anything for the beloved.

While under Oberon's spell, you are in the grip of devoted love to Bottom. Despite his exterior, you see something in him that you cannot refuse. His voice is sweet music, and pleasing him fills you up with joy. When the enchantment has been lifted, you see Oberon, your king, your soulmate. In spite of all your quarrel, when the clouds of your pride have lifted, the bright sunshine of your love will embrace the other.

Scenes you might consider: Two Weddings, The Birth of Hamnet and Judith, Venus and Adonis, Correspondence with Anne Whateley, The Rape of Lucrece, The Death of Anne Whateley, Southampton's Plea.

## *Act 3, Scene 1*

OBERON Ill met by moonlight, proud Titania.

TITANIA What, jealous Oberon! Fairies, skip hence:

I have forsworn his bed and company.

OBERON Tarry, rash wanton: am not I thy lord?

TITANIA Then I must be thy lady: but I know  
When thou hast stolen away from fairy land,  
And in the shape of Corin sat all day,  
Playing on pipes of corn and versing love  
To amorous Phillida. Why art thou here,  
Come from the farthest Steppe of India?  
But that, forsooth, the bouncing Amazon,  
Your buskin'd mistress and your warrior love,  
To Theseus must be wedded, and you come  
To give their bed joy and prosperity.

OBERON How canst thou thus for shame,  
Titania,

Glance at my credit with Hippolyta,  
Knowing I know thy love to Theseus?  
Didst thou not lead him through the  
glimmering night

From Perigenia, whom he ravished?  
And make him with fair Aegle break his faith,  
With Ariadne and Antiopa?

TITANIA These are the forgeries of jealousy:  
And never, since the middle summer's spring,  
Met we on hill, in dale, forest or mead,  
By paved fountain or by rushy brook,  
Or in the beached margent of the sea,  
To dance our ringlets to the whistling wind,  
But with thy brawls thou hast disturb'd our  
sport.

Therefore the winds, piping to us in vain,  
As in revenge, have suck'd up from the sea  
Contagious fogs; which falling in the land  
Have every pelting river made so proud  
That they have overborne their continents:  
The ox hath therefore stretch'd his yoke in vain,  
The ploughman lost his sweat, and the green  
corn

Hath rotted ere his youth attain'd a beard;  
The fold stands empty in the drowned field,  
And crows are fatted with the murrion flock;  
The nine men's morris is fill'd up with mud,  
And the quaint mazes in the wanton green  
For lack of tread are undistinguishable:  
The human mortals want their winter here;

No night is now with hymn or carol blest:  
Therefore the moon, the governess of  
floods,

Pale in her anger, washes all the air,  
That rheumatic diseases do abound:  
And thorough this distemperature we see  
The seasons alter: hoary-headed frosts  
Far in the fresh lap of the crimson rose,  
And on old Hiems' thin and icy crown  
An odorous chaplet of sweet summer buds  
Is, as in mockery, set: the spring, the  
summer,

The childing autumn, angry winter, change  
Their wonted liveries, and the mazed world,  
By their increase, now knows not which is  
which:

And this same progeny of evils comes  
From our debate, from our dissension;  
We are their parents and original.



## *Act 4, Scene 1*

Come, sit thee down upon this flowery bed  
While I thy amiable cheeks do coy,  
And stick musk roses in thy sleek, smooth  
head,  
And kiss thy fair large ears, my gentle joy.

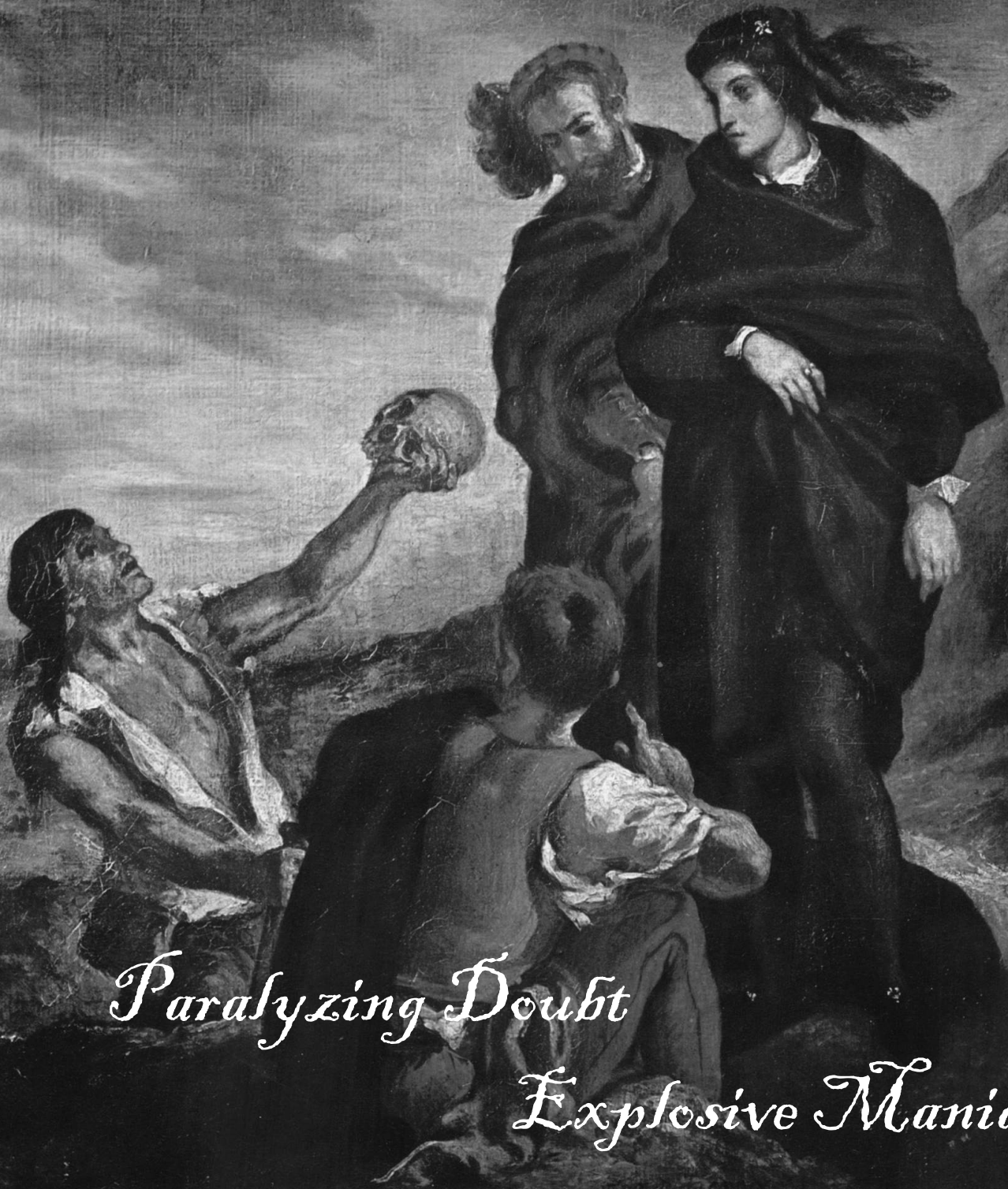
Sleep thou, and I will wind thee in my arms.  
Fairies, be gone, and be all ways away.  
So doth the woodbine the sweet  
honeysuckle

Gently entwist. The female ivy so  
Enrings the barky fingers of the elm.  
Oh, how I love thee! How I dote on thee!



# Hamlet

- the vengeful son



*Paralyzing Doubt*

*Explosive Mania*

## *You are Hamlet, Prince of Denmark*

**Y**ou are Hamlet, prince of Denmark. When returning to Denmark to show your father your last respects, you learn that your mother has already married your uncle, Claudius, who has assumed the crown of Denmark. Soon you are visited by your father's ghost. He claims that Claudius poisoned him, and demands that you avenge his death. At first, you are gripped by wrath and a murderous desire towards Claudius. But soon, you are haunted by doubt - can you trust this apparition? You must have proof of Claudius' guilt.

For this purpose, you stage a play recreating the circumstances surrounding your father's death. When Claudius sees the play, he reacts violently, and leaves the hall with a

great commotion. Sensing his guilt, you follow him - but when you have the chance to kill him, you hesitate, and decide not to kill him yet.

Instead you seek out your mother, to rage against her for her marriage to Claudius so soon after the death of the king. When you hear someone eavesdropping upon your conversation, you do not hesitate to stab him with your sword. It is your love, Ophelia's father.

Claudius sends you to England while matters at the castle are sorted out. But on the way you discover that Claudius is intending to have you killed. And so you return to finally kill Claudius - but not before you yourself have been dealt a poisoned wound in a duel with Ophelia's brother, Laertes.

## *You represent Shakespeare's Doubt*

**Y**ou represent doubt. The nagging, paralysing doubt. Indecisiveness, inadequacy, wavering spirit.

When you hear the ghost's indictment of Claudius for the murder of your father, you are filled with a thirst for vengeance. But soon doubt replaces it: can you rely upon the testimony of the ghost? You are struck by indecisiveness, until actors arrive in Elsinore and you can gain certainty. But even then, you hesitate - this is not the right moment, you must wait.

Thus you postpone your vengeance time and again, until you are destroyed along with Claudius.

Ophelia suffers similar woe under your changing moods. First you curse her and send her away, then you lie with your head in her lap. When you are sent into exile, she meets her end in the cold waters.

Scenes you may consider: Two Weddings, Father's Debt, Elsinore, Correspondence with Anne Whateley, Essex' Coup.



## *When Playing Hamlet...*

**W**hen you play Hamlet, you are playing the character Hamlet along with the traits he represents.

Your aim should be to make your tale the main story of Shakespeare's life. In other words, you should endeavour to give doubt and mania the most prominent place possible in the scenario. When framing scenes, you should point out the situations where Shakespeare can doubt his actions, or where he can react with wild mania. When choosing a role to play in a scene, choose someone who can drive Shakespeare towards doubt or mania.

Play Hamlet as much as you can. When in the audience, be Hamlet watching the players on the stage as part of Prospero's court. When you frame a scene, you are Hamlet speaking to Shakespeare or Prospero. When playing in a scene, you are playing someone from Shakespeare's life, but let Hamlet shine through as much as you can. And feel free to step out of the role and comment on the scene as Hamlet.

## *You represent Shakespeare's Mania*

**Y**ou represent mania. The urge to action, gripping us, making us act with no thought to the consequence. I must act now, without hesitation! No time to waste, react!

When the ghost visits you and tells you of your father's murder, you are seized by rage. You will not delay, but must find Claudius and kill him upon the hour!

When Ophelia seeks you out to break your connection, you rage against her

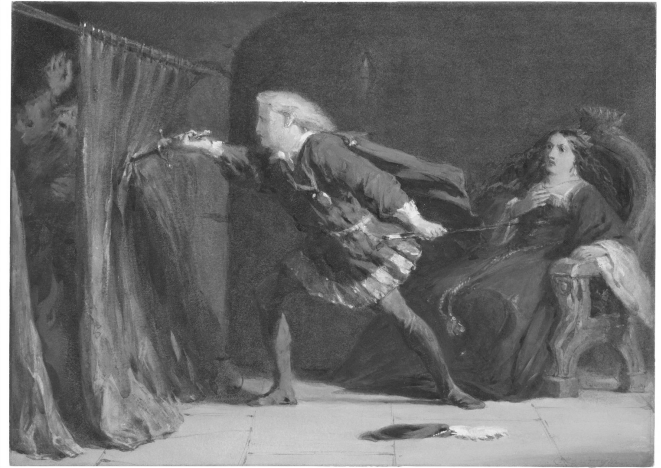
and call her foul names. You deny the love you declared her, and call her a wanton whore.

When you hear someone eavesdropping behind the tapestry in your mother's chamber, you do not hesitate. You do not wait to discover who is standing there, but pull your sword and kill the listener.

Scenes you may consider: 'The Magic of the Stage', 'The Death of Hamnet', 'Grain Villain', 'Southampton's Request', 'Essex' Coup

## Act 3, Scene 1

To be, or not to be? That is the question -  
Whether 'tis nobler in the mind to suffer  
The slings and arrows of outrageous fortune,  
Or to take arms against a sea of troubles,  
And, by opposing, end them? To die, to sleep -  
No more - and by a sleep to say we end  
The heartache and the thousand natural shocks  
That flesh is heir to - 'tis a consummation  
Devoutly to be wished! To die, to sleep.  
To sleep, perchance to dream - ay, there's the rub,  
For in that sleep of death what dreams may come  
When we have shuffled off this mortal coil,  
Must give us pause. There's the respect  
That makes calamity of so long life.  
For who would bear the whips and scorns of  
time,  
Th' oppressor's wrong, the proud man's  
contumely,  
The pangs of despised love, the law's delay,  
The insolence of office, and the spurns  
That patient merit of th' unworthy takes,  
When he himself might his quietus make  
With a bare bodkin? Who would fardels bear,  
To grunt and sweat under a weary life,  
But that the dread of something after death,  
The undiscovered country from whose bourn  
No traveler returns, puzzles the will  
And makes us rather bear those ills we have  
Than fly to others that we know not of?  
Thus conscience does make cowards of us all,  
And thus the native hue of resolution  
Is sicklied o'er with the pale cast of thought,  
And enterprises of great pith and moment  
With this regard their currents turn awry,  
And lose the name of action.

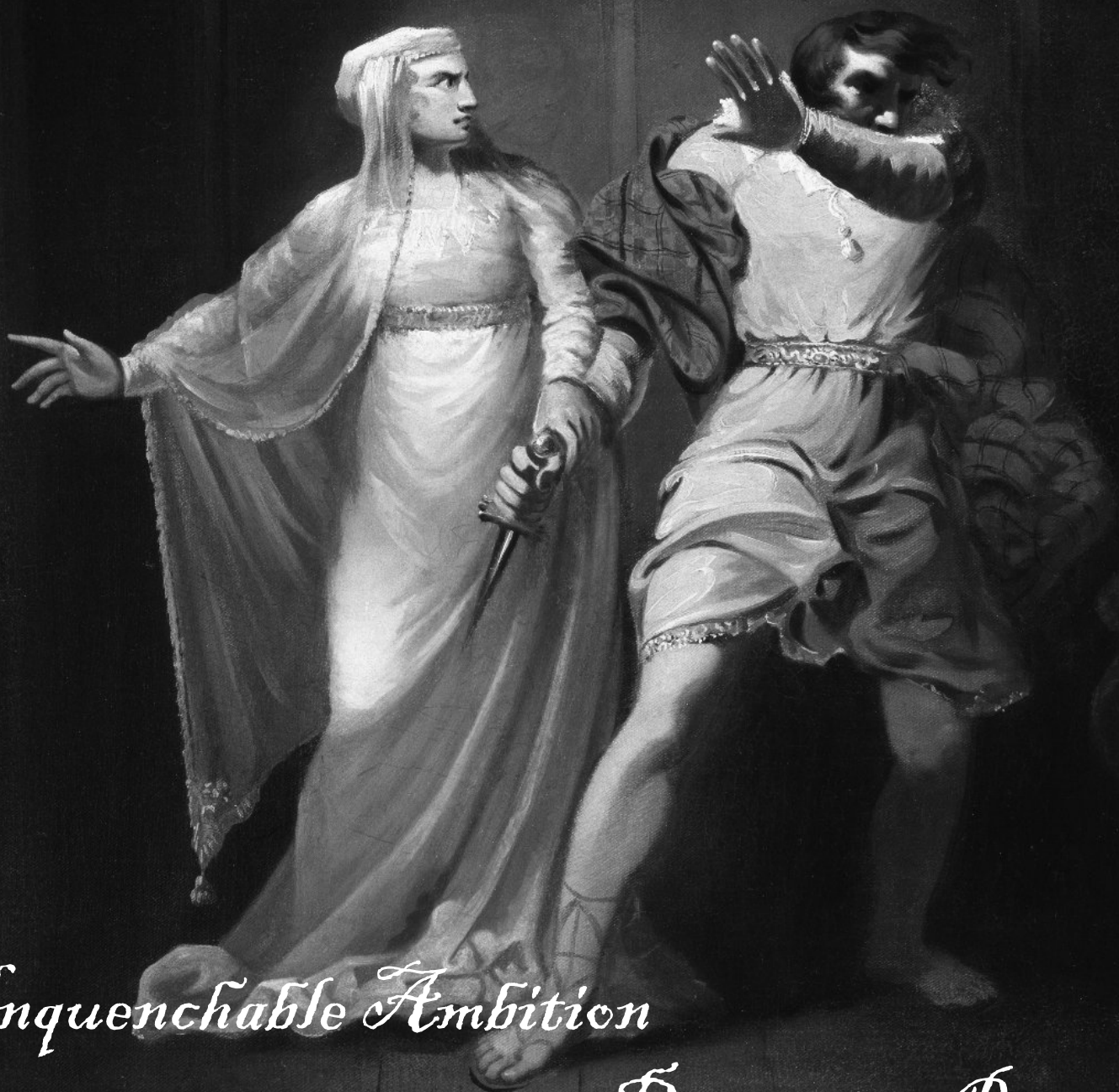


## Act 3, Scene 2

HAMLET Lady, shall I lie in your lap?  
OPHELIA No, my lord.  
HAMLET I mean, my head upon your lap?  
OPHELIA Ay, my lord.  
HAMLET Do you think I meant country  
matters?  
OPHELIA I think nothing, my lord.  
HAMLET That's a fair thought to lie  
between maids' legs.  
OPHELIA What is, my lord?  
HAMLET Nothing.  
OPHELIA You are merry, my lord.  
HAMLET Who, I?  
OPHELIA Ay, my lord.  
HAMLET O God, your only jig-maker.  
What should a man do  
but be merry? for, look you, how cheerfully  
my  
mother looks, and my father died within  
these two hours.  
OPHELIA Nay, 'tis twice two months, my  
lord.  
HAMLET So long? Nay then, let the devil  
wear black, for  
I'll have a suit of sables. O heavens! die two  
months ago, and not forgotten yet? Then  
there's  
hope a great man's memory may outlive his  
life half  
a year: but, by'r lady, he must build  
churches,  
then; or else shall he suffer not thinking on,  
with  
the hobby-horse, whose epitaph is 'For, O,  
for, O,  
the hobby-horse is forgot.'

# *Lady Macbeth*

*- the scheming wife*



*Inquenchable Ambition*

*Devouring Remorse*



## *You are Lady Macbeth, wife of Lord Macbeth*

Your husband is the trusted lieutenant of the king of Scotland. But when you learn that three witches have prophesised that your husband will become king, you are grasped by an insatiable ambition. You cannot wait for the day that you shall be queen. Macbeth, however, is unwilling to act to make the prophesy come true. Thus, when the king calls on you at your castle, you sedate his guards and hand your husband a dagger so that he can kill

the king. He commits the act, but you must go to smear the blood upon the king's guards, so that they will carry the guilt of the murder.

Alas, you cannot savour the fruit of your misdeed. You are haunted by guilt, and you see the blood staining your hands. You wash and you wash, but the stain remains. Slowly you are consumed by the guilt, until you end your own life.

## *You represent Shakespeare's Ambition*

You represent Shakespeare's ambition. Insatiably striving for recognition, status, prestige, power. The temptation to sacrifice everything and everyone for your own goals.

When you hear of the witches' prophecy, it ignites a fire within you. You see an image of yourself as queen of Scotland, and cannot bear waiting for the day that your husband will be crowned.

But you worry - will the prophecy be fulfilled on its own, or will you need to struggle for its fulfilment? You cannot bear the uncertainty - you must help fate along. And so, you pressure your husband into killing the king, and you make sure the king's own guards

will be assumed guilty.

Thus, you are the architect of your own fortune, the fulfiller of the prophecy of the witches.

Scenes you may consider: 'The Magic of the Stage, Elsinore, Venus and Adonis, Under Burbage's Wing, 'The Shakespeare Crest, New Place, 'The King's Men

## *When playing Lady Macbeth...*

**W**hen you play Lady Macbeth, you are playing the character of Lady Macbeth along with the traits she represents.

Your aim should be to make your tale the main story of Shakespeare's life. In other words, you should endeavour to give ambition and remorse the most prominent place possible in the scenario. When framing scenes, you should point out the situations where Shakespeare can display his ambition, or where he can show remorse. When choosing a role to play in a scene, choose someone who can encourage

Shakespeare's ambitions or provoke remorse.

Play Lady Macbeth as much as you can. When in the audience, be Lady Macbeth watching the players on the stage as part of Prospero's court. When you frame a scene, you are Lady Macbeth speaking to Shakespeare or Prospero. When playing in a scene, you are playing someone from Shakespeare's life, but let Lady Macbeth shine through as much as you can. And feel free to step out of the role and comment on the scene as Lady Macbeth.

## *You represent Shakespeare's Remorse*

**Y**ou represent Remorse. Regret at your failure, your abandoned principles, and those you left to their fate.

After you made your husband commit the cold blooded murder of the king, you are hit by the weight of your deed. You have murdered a man for your own advantage and glory, a man who showed you trust, and who treated you kindly and generously. Furthermore, you smeared the king's blood on his two faithful bodyguards, and thus made them serve your penance. In the rush of your monstrous deeds you could dispel the monstrous gravity of your acts, but afterwards you must carry the guilt of what you have done.

Scenes you may consider: Two Weddings, Father's Debt, Correspondance with Anne Whateley, The Death of Hamnet, New Place, Anne Whateley's Death, Grain Villain, Essex' Coup, The Shakespeare Crest



## Act 1, Scene 5

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



## Act 5, Scene 1

Yet here's a spot.

Out, damned spot! out, I say!--One:  
two: why, then, 'tis time to do't.--Hell  
is murky!--Fie, my lord, fie! a soldier,  
and afeard? What need we fear who  
knows it, when none can call our  
power to account? Yet who would  
have thought the old man to have had  
so much blood in him.

The thane of Fife had a wife: where is  
she now?

What, will these hands ne'er be clean?  
No more o' that, my lord, no more o'  
that: you mar all with this starting.

Here's the smell of the blood still: all  
the perfumes of Arabia will not  
sweeten this little

hand. Oh, oh, oh!

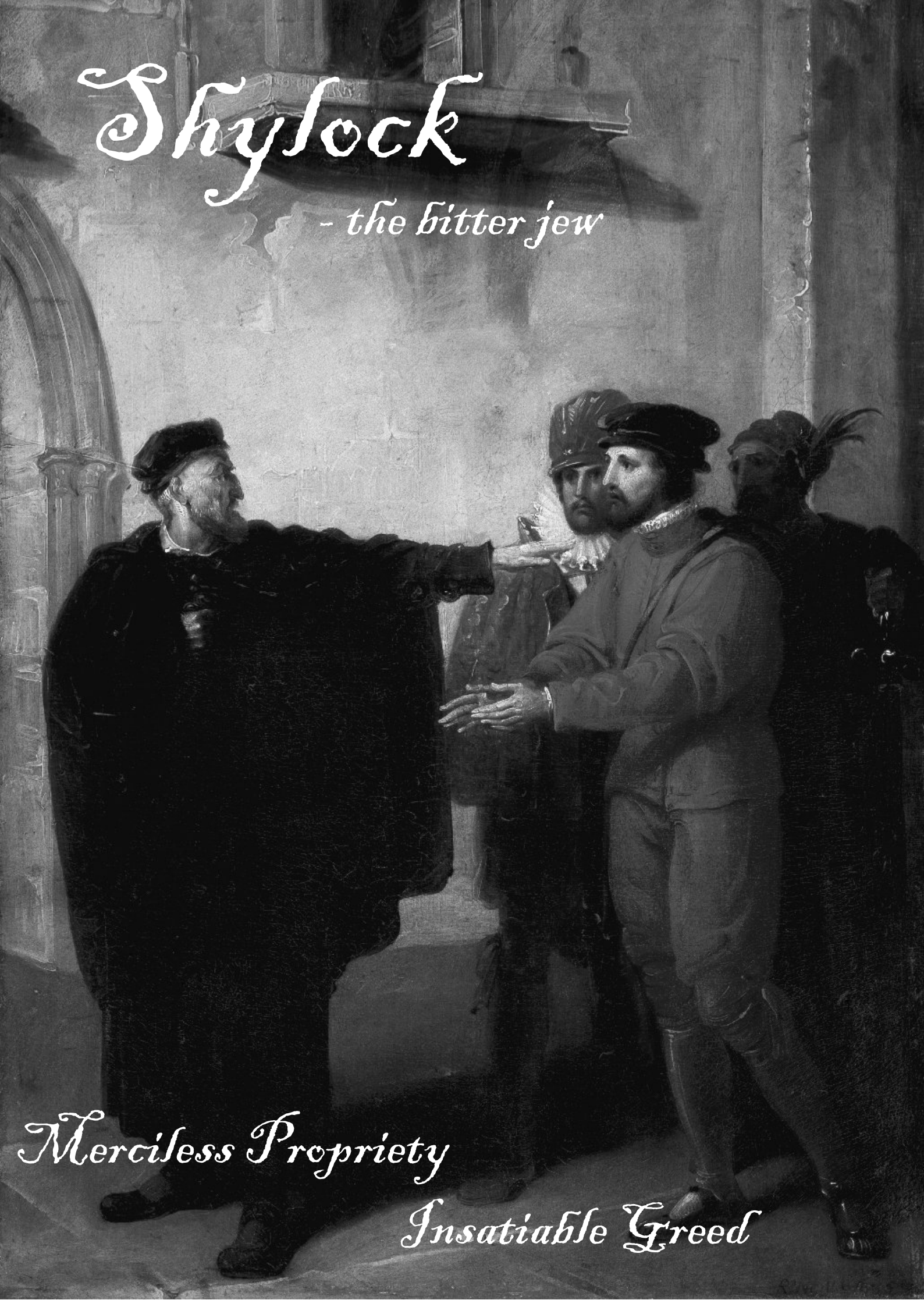
Wash your hands, put on your  
nightgown; look not so

pale. I tell you yet again, Banquo's  
buried; he cannot come out on's  
grave.

To bed, to bed! there's knocking at the  
gate: come, come, come, come, give  
me your hand. What's done cannot be  
undone.--To bed, to bed, to bed!

# *Shylock*

*- the bitter jew*



*Merciless Propriety*

*Insatiable Greed*

## *You are Shylock, the Jewish Usurer*

**Y**ou are Shylock, the Jewish moneylender. As a Jew, you are used to being spat at, called a dog and far worse by the Venetian well to do. Thus, when the merchant, Antonio, one of your worst tormenters, approaches you to ask for a loan, you demand harsh terms: if Antonio does not pay by the date agreed, you shall be entitled to carve a pound of flesh from his body, closest to the heart.

In the meantime your daughter, Jessica, runs away with a young Venetian man, one of Antonio's circle of friends, and the young lovers takes a chest of your money with them.

This humiliation enrages you - the last and greatest in a great number of humiliations you have suffered at the hands of the Christians of Venice.

And so, when Antonio is struck by bad fortune and cannot repay his loan at the agreed upon date, you are without mercy: you reject a payment for double the amount - you want your pound of flesh. You bring Antonio before the Duke to demand that your bond be met. But a young judge tricks you, and instead of getting your pound of flesh, you must give over half of everything you own, and you are forced to be baptized.

## *You represent Shakespeare's Propriety*

**Y**ou represent propriety. The calm insistence that everything is done properly, that custom and law be observed in all matters.

When Antonio calls on you, you question him: why should I lend money to my greatest foe? And yet, if he will accept any terms you set, you will lend him money.

In everything, you see to it that your family is beyond reproach. You demand that your daughter close the blinds and not hang out of the window to gawk at Christians. When she runs away to marry a Christian, and you hear the stories of her life in sin with this Christian tempter, the

shame torments you ceaselessly.

And when Antonio forfeits his payment, you do not temper justice with mercy. The law is on your side. You have a contract, and you will have Antonio fulfill his part. It is only the sophistry of the young judge that robs you of your due.

Scenes you may consider: Father's Debt, The Rape of Lucrece, The Death of Hamnet, The Shakespeare Crest, Grain Villain, Essex' Coup, The King's Men.



## *When you play Shylock...*

**W**hen you play Shylock, you are playing the character of Shylock, along with the traits he represents.

Your aim should be to make your tale the main story of Shakespeare's life. In other words, you should endeavour to give propriety and greed the most prominent place possible in the scenario. When framing scenes, you should point out the situations where Shakespeare can display his greed, or where he can uphold the norms. When choosing a role to play in a scene, choose someone who can incite

Shakespeare's greed or make him insist on propriety.

Play Shylock as much as you can. When in the audience, be Shylock watching the players on the stage as part of Prospero's court. When you frame a scene, you are Shylock speaking to Shakespeare or Prospero. When playing in a scene, you are playing someone from Shakespeare's life, but let Shylock shine through as much as you can. And feel free to step out of the role and comment on the scene as Shylock.

## *You represent Shakespeare's Greed*

**Y**ou represent greed. Possessiveness. The thirst to possess, to own, to have everything you can acquire. The pain of losing, of seeing possessions in someone else's hands.

Your whole existence is about possessing. Your livelihood is lending out your money. You hold your daughter as a bird in a cage. When she breaks out, your greatest pain, besides the shame of losing her to a Christian, is hearing tales of how she spends her money with her Christian seducer.

Similarly with Antonio's flesh: when you hear of his misfortune, that he will not be able to repay his debts, you

are gripped by yearning for the day that you can claim his flesh - and thus his life. You cannot wait for the moment you can cut out the bloody lump from his chest.

Scenes you may consider: Elsinore, Venus and Adonis, Under Burbages Wing, Grain Villain, The King's Men.



## *Act 4, Scene 1*

What judgment shall I dread, doing no wrong?  
You have among you many a purchased slave,  
Which - like your asses and your dogs and  
mules -

You use in abject and in slavish parts  
Because you bought them. Shall I say to you,  
“Let them be free! Marry them to your heirs!  
Why sweat they under burdens? Let their beds  
Be made as soft as yours and let their palates  
Be seasoned with such viands”? You will  
answer,

“The slaves are ours.” So do I answer you.  
The pound of flesh which I demand of him  
Is dearly bought. 'Tis mine and I will have it.  
If you deny me, fie upon your law -  
There is no force in the decrees of Venice.  
I stand for judgment. Answer, shall I have it?

## *Act 3, Scene 1*

Why, there, there, there, there! A diamond gone  
cost me two thousand ducats in Frankfurt—the  
curse never fell upon our nation till now! I  
never felt it till now—Two thousand ducats in  
that, and other precious, precious jewels. I  
would my daughter were dead at my foot and  
the jewels in her ear! Would she were hearsed at  
my foot and the ducats in her coffin! No news  
of them? Why, so. And I know not what's spent  
in the search. Why thou, loss upon loss! The  
thief gone with so much, and so much to find  
the thief—and no satisfaction, no revenge. Nor  
no ill luck stirring but what lights o' my  
shoulders, no sighs but o' my breathing, no  
tears but o' my shedding.

## *Act 3, Scene 1*

SALARINO Why, I am sure, if he forfeit thou  
wilt not take his flesh. What's that good for?

SHYLOCK I'll use it for fish bait. You can't eat  
human flesh, but if it feeds nothing else, it'll  
feed my revenge. He's insulted me and cost me  
half a million ducats. He's laughed at my losses,  
made fun of my earnings, humiliated my race,  
thwarted my deals, turned my friends against  
me, riled up my enemies - and why? Because  
I'm a Jew. Doesn't a Jew have eyes? Doesn't a  
Jew have hands, bodily organs, a human shape,  
five senses, feelings, and passions? Doesn't a  
Jew eat the same food, get hurt with the same  
weapons, get sick with the same diseases, get  
healed by the same medicine, and warm up in  
summer and cool off in winter just like a  
Christian? If you prick us with a pin, don't we  
bleed? If you tickle us, don't we laugh? If you  
poison us, don't we die? And if you treat us  
badly, won't we try to get revenge? If we're like  
you in everything else, we'll resemble you in  
that respect. If a Jew offends a Christian,  
what's the Christian's kind and gentle reaction?  
Revenge. If a Christian offends a Jew, what  
punishment will he come up with if he follows  
the Christian example? Of course, the same  
thing - revenge! I'll treat you as badly as you  
Christians taught me to - and you'll be lucky if  
I don't outdo my teachers.!

