

LIBRETTO VOCAL BOOK

25 Emily
B.



Book by
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Music & Lyrics by
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Conceived by
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**MUSIC THEATRE
INTERNATIONAL**

CHARACTERS

Shakespeare

Nick Bottom

Nigel Bottom

Nostradamus

Bea

Brother Jeremiah

Portia

ENSEMBLE:

Minstrel

Townspeople

Troupe

Lord Clapham

Shylock

Bard Boys

Crowd

Chorus

Etc.

OU!

Mad Mother
by Razor &
ed by

ACT 1

#1 – Overture

*There's a curtain on which hangs a large banner which reads:
SOMETHING ROTTEN!*

#2 – Welcome to the Renaissance

A MINSTREL strolls onto the stage in front of the curtain, strums his lute:

MINSTREL

WAR OF THE ROSES, CHAUCER'S TALES
THE BRUTAL FEUDAL SYSTEM
HOLY CRUSADES, BUBONIC PLAGUE
CAN'T SAY THAT WE'VE REALLY MISSED 'EM
SO DARK AND BARBARIC, SO DULL AND MUNDANE
THAT WAS SO MIDDLE AGES
THAT WAS SO – CHARLEMAGNE

Curtain opens to reveal...

SCENE 1: A South London Street (In 1595)

Tudor buildings, a theater front, (a la Globe Theater) and TOWNSPEOPLE.

MINSTREL

WELCOME TO THE RENAISSANCE
WITH POETS PAINTERS AND BON VIVANTS
AND MERRY MINSTRELS
WHO STROLL THE STREETS OF LONDON
A STRUMMIN' THEIR LUTES

2 MEN

IN PUFFY PANTS AND POINTY LEATHER BOOTS!

The TOWNSPEOPLE join in.

MINSTREL

TOWNSPEOPLE

WELCOME TO THE RENAISSANCE
WHERE WE OOH AND AHH YOU WITH AMBIANCE
WE'RE SO PROGRESSIVE
THE LATEST AND THE GREATEST
WE BRING IT TO YOU - WITH MUCH ADO
WELCOME TO THE RENAISSANCE
WHERE EVERYTHING IS NEW

THE LATEST AND THE GREATEST
WE BRING IT TO YOU -
WELCOME TO THE RENAISSANCE

MEN

HERE WE'VE MADE ADVANCES IN THE SCIENCES

THEY hold up very old scientific; sextant, telescope, etc.

WOMEN

WE HAVE THE LATEST GADGETS AND APPLIANCES

THEY hold up a bellows, a cauldron, a washboard, a pewter mug, etc.

SOLO WOMAN

OUR MUGS ARE MADE OF PEWTER

SOLO MAN

OUR HOUSES ALL ARE TUDOR

MINSTREL

DECORATED WITH A MODERN FLAIR

WOMEN

SEE US IN OUR PETTICOATS AND FARTHINGALES

MEN

OUR TRENDY BEARDS WE TRIM TO LOOK LIKE SWALLOW TAILS

CROWD

WE'RE CALLED ELIZABETHANS

PURITANS step forward (BROTHER JEREMIAH, PORTIA and 1 other PURITAN WOMAN)

BROTHER JEREMIAH

THEY'RE ALL A BUNCH OF HEATHENS

JEREMIAH, PORTIA, PURITAN WOMAN

HEATHENS HEADED STRAIGHT FOR YOU KNOW WHERE

MINSTREL

WHILE WITCHES ARE BURNING, AND WARS TEND TO START
WE BRING YOU MOMENTS OF CULTURE AND ART

CROWD

CULTURE AND ART..

WELCOME TO THE RENAISSANCE

WELL OUR PRINTING PRESS HAS THE FANCY FONTS

THAT'S RIGHT, WE'RE FANCY

AND VERY LITERARY, THEATRICAL, TOO

IT'S WHAT WE DO

WELCOME TO THE RENAISSANCE

WHERE EVERYTHING IS NEW!

Music changes, more contemporary. THEY do a funky modern dance. FRANCIS BACON steps up, holding a chicken.

MAN 1

HEY LOOK IT'S FRANCIS BACON WITH A CHICKEN

WOMAN 1

WHAT'S HE MAKIN'?

MAN 1

WELL I THINK HE'S FOUND A WAY OF FREEZING MEAT

CROWD

THAT'S NEW!

WALTER RALEIGH enters, smoking a pipe.

MAN 2

HEY LOOK IT'S WALTER RALEIGH
FOUND A NEW WORLD BY GOLLY

WOMAN 2

AND HE'S BROUGHT US ALL TOBACCO, WHAT A TREAT!

CROWD

ALSO NEW!

A red carpet is rolled out from the theater and a sign above is revealed:

"ROMEO & JULIET - Ye Olde World Premiere."

MINSTREL

AND WE HAVE A LIST OF WRITERS WHO
ARE ALWAYS WRITING SOMETHING NEW

CROWD

IT'S TRUE! WE DO!

SOLO MAN

LIKE WHO?!

MINSTREL

LIKE WHO? LIKE DEKKER!

CROWD

WOOO!

MINSTREL

JOHN WEBSTER!

CROWD

WOOO!

MINSTREL

BEN JOHNSON!

CROWD

UH HUH.

AND CHRISTOPHER MARLOWE
THOMAS KYD, THOMAS MIDDLETON, THOMAS MOORE

MINSTREL

AND OUR BRIGHTEST STAR

CROWD

YO! – HE'S THE BOMB, THE SOUL OF THE AGE
 THE WHIZ OF THE ELIZABETHAN STAGE
 HE'S INCREDIBLE, UNFORGETTABLE
 HE'S JUST SO FREAKIN' AWESOME!

SHAKESPEARE!... SHAKESPEARE!!

SHAKESPEARE enters – and is instantly mobbed (blocking our view of him) He enters the theater, the CROWD turns.

WE LOVE HIM, WE LOVE HIM, WE LOVE HIM, WE LOVE HIM
 WE LOVE HIM, WE LOVE HIM, WE LOVE HIM – WE LOVE HIM!

HIS PLAYS ARE SO BRILLIANT
 HIS WRITING'S FIRST RATE
 HIS ACTING'S INCREDIBLE

CROWD (HALF 1)

ISN'T HE GREAT, ISN'T HE GREAT

CROWD (HALF 2)

WE LOVE HIM, WE LOVE HIM, WE LOVE HIM
 WE LOVE HIM, WE LOVE HIM, WE LOVE HIM

CROWD

WE – LOVE – HIM!!
 WELCOME TO THE RENAISSANCE
 NOT THE ONE IN ITALY OR IN FRANCE
 NO THE ONE IN ENGLAND
 THE ONE WHERE WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE IS CREAM OF THE CROP

MINSTREL

THE ONE WHERE WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE IS THE TOP!

CROWD

WELCOME TO THE RENAISSANCE
 TO A 16TH CENTURY EXPERI-AHNCE
 IN THE AGE THAT'S GOLDEN
 THE OLDEN DAYS ARE OVER, WE BID THEM ADIEU
 WELL HAL-LE-LU!
 WELCOME TO THE RENAISSANCE WHERE EVERYTHING IS NEW!
 EVERYTHING IS NEW – WELCOME TO THE RENAISSANCE
 EVERYTHING IS NEW

MINSTREL

CAUSE RENAISSANCE MEANS REBIRTH!

The song ends. Applause. THEY break the tableau and exit as the MINSTREL steps forward.

#2A – Welcome to the Renaissance (Playoff)

CROWD

WE LOVE HIM, WE LOVE HIM, WE LOVE HIM, WE LOVE HIM...
WE LOVE HIM, WE LOVE HIM, WE LOVE HIIIIIIIM

MINSTREL

WELCOME TO THE RENAISSANCE
WHERE NOT EVERYONE'S GETTING WHAT HE WANTS
IT'S SO FRUSTRATING
CAUSE IF YOU'RE NAME IS SHAKESPEARE, YOU'RE HOTTER THAN HOT
BUT IF YOU'RE ANY OTHER WRITER THEN YOU'RE NOT

The exterior of the theater opens to reveal.

SCENE 2: The Theatre

Inside the theater NICK BOTTOM steps forward, standing center stage wearing a crown and cape. He is flanked by his TROUPE.

NICK

Oh noble kinsmen that royal blood and love do bind.
Seek now thy own succor, and flee thy native land.
To die today twill not be done til dawn
Ta-tee, ta-tum, da-dee-da-dum and who talks like this?

(to Nigel)

Nigel, why can't we just write like we speak?

TOM SNOOT

Yeah. I haven't understood a single word in our last three plays.

ROBIN enters in a dress.

ROBIN

Did I miss my cue?

NICK

Robin, what are you wearing? This isn't dress rehearsal.

ROBIN

Oh. I, um, thought it might help me get into character if I were to wear dresses and hang out in taverns and flirt with men. You know... for research.

PETER QUINCE

Nick, I have a question about motivation...

NICK

Yes...?

PETER QUINCE

Why haven't you given up yet?

NICK

Peter! This one is working, I can feel it – it's just missing something right here. Nigel, help me out.

NIGEL

Um, well... I did write something in my notebook last night...

(removes a small leather bound book from his satchel)

I was thinking it might be good if King Richard is contemplating his own mortality... but now that I've said it out loud, it sounds stupid.

NICK

Well, let me read it.

NIGEL

It's probably terrible.

NICK

Let me see!

There's a tug of war. NICK finally gets the notebook and reads as NIGEL nervously looks on.

NIGEL

Oh, God, it's bad, isn't it? I don't even know why you let me write with you.

NICK

Nigel, it's good.

NIGEL

Yeah?

NICK

It's *really* good.

NIGEL

Well, I put a lot of layers in it...

NICK

One suggestion.

(pointing to pages)

How about instead of "tombstones" he says "epitaphs."

NIGEL

Oooh, yeah — that's better. Good one, brother.

NICK

Okay, everyone take your places. Let's try this.

(reading)

Let us talk of graves, of worms, of epitaphs;

(raised eyebrow to Nigel, impressed with himself)

Make dust our paper, and with rainy eyes
Write sorrow on the bosom of the earth.

(then — fist pump)

Yes! That is good! I'm starting to believe this is gonna be the Bottom Brothers' first hit.

LORD CLAPHAM

Pity we have to shut it down!

LORD CLAPHAM, their patron, enters. He's a lesser lord and extravagantly overdresses to compensate; pink and orange satin with a ridiculously ornate feathered hat. THEY all bow to him.

NICK

Lord Clapham. What do you mean—shut it down?

LORD CLAPHAM

Guess whose next production is going to be *The Tragedy of Richard the 2nd*??

CLAPHAM unrolls a scroll/POSTER that says "THE TRAGEDIE OF RICHARD II by William Shakespeare." TROUPE GASPS!

NIGEL

Shakespeare??

NICK

Why is he doing *Richard the 2nd*?? He just did *Richard the 3rd*! Who goes backwards?!

NIGEL

He breaks convention. That's why he's so great.

NICK

Oh yeah? Did you see *Romeo and Juliet*? What's so great about two lovers who kill themselves in the end?

LORD CLAPHAM

OH, YOU'VE SPOILT IT! I'm seeing it this evening.

NIGEL

You should. It's life-changing.

NICK

Is it? "Love you, stab myself, drink poison, the end."

LORD CLAPHAM

(putting fingers in his ears, stomping like a child)

STOP IT! STOP IT, STOP IT! You're ruining everything! Now I paid for an original play and you will lose my patronage, do you hear? No more money—unless I hear a new idea—on the morrow!

TOM SNOOT

I think that means "tomorrow"

PETER QUINCE

If he quits, we're all out of a job...

CLAPHAM starts to exit. NICK follows.

NICK

Lord Clapham, please...

LORD CLAPHAM

Write something original – like the Bard!

CLAPHAM exits

NICK

The "bard." Why is he the Bard? He's uh bard. Just like I'm a bard, you're a bard.
HE'S JUST ONE OF THE BARDS!

NIGEL

He's the Bard because he does it all: histories, tragedies, comedies.

NICK

Comedies?? Name one thing of his that's funny. Gimme a line, anything.

NIGEL

"On my word, we'll not carry coals for then we should be colliers!"

NIGEL laughs. The TROUPE laughs.

NICK

That's not funny! Urggggghhhhh...

#3 – God, I Hate Shakespeare

(stomping the downbeat)

GOD I HATE SHAKESPEARE!

TROUPE

<GASPS>

NICK

THAT'S RIGHT I SAID IT.

NIGEL

NO!

NICK

I DO I HATE SHAKESPEARE

ROBIN

WHY?

NICK

I JUST DON'T GET IT
 HOW A MEDIOCRE ACTOR FROM A MEASLY LITTLE TOWN
 IS SUDDENLY THE BRIGHTEST JEWEL IN ENGLAND'S ROYAL CROWN
 OH, GOD I HATE SHAKESPEARE
 HIS PLAYS ARE WORDY
 BUT OH NO, THE "GREAT" SHAKESPEARE
 THAT LITTLE TURD, HE
 HAS NO SENSE ABOUT THE AUDIENCE, HE MAKES THEM FEEL SO DUMB
 THE BASTARD DOESN'T CARE THAT MY POOR ASS IS GETTING NUMB

TROUPE

HOW CAN YOU SAY THAT, HOW CAN YOU SAY THAT?

NICK

IT'S EASY I CAN SAY IT CAUSE IT'S ABSOLUTELY TRUE

TROUPE

DON'T BE A PENIS, THE MAN IS A GENIUS

NICK

HIS GENIUS IS HE'S FOOLING ALL OF YOU.

NIGEL

BUT – HE'S BRILLIANT, WHAT MAJESTY FLOWS FROM HIS PEN
 HIS POETRY SOARS LIKE A SWEET VIOLIN
 GOD'S OWN INSPIRATION LIKE LIGHTNING DOTHS STRIKE HIM
 AND HE CAPTURES MY SOUL –

NICK

Jeez, you sound just like him!

NIGEL

Really? Thanks!

NICK

YOU SHOULD HATE SHAKESPEARE!

TROUPE

<GASP>

NIGEL

WELL I DON'T I TRY TO EMULATE SHAKESPEARE

NICK

WELL THERE'S YOUR PROBLEM, YOU'RE SO
BLINDED BY "THE BARD" WHO'S SUCH A POMPOUS LITTLE MAN

NIGEL

WHY IS IT A PROBLEM TO ADMIT THAT I'M A FAN

NICK

CAUSE HE'S A HACK WITH A KNACK
FOR STEALING ANYTHING HE CAN

TROUPE

HOW CAN YOU SAY THAT, HOW CAN YOU SAY THAT
THE MAN REALLY KNOWS HOW TO WRITE A BITCHIN' PLAY
YOU WISH YOU COULD PEN ONE

(whispered)

WE WISH WE WERE IN ONE

NICK

I JUST WISH THAT HE WOULD GO AWAY!

NIGEL

Well, that's not gonna happen because everyone I know says he's the greatest writer
England's ever known!

NICK

AND THAT'S ANOTHER THING I HATE ABOUT SHAKESPEARE
IS ALL THE TWITS WHO BLOVIATE ABOUT SHAKESPEARE
AND HOW THEY PRATTLE ON
ABOUT HIS GREAT ACCOMPLISHMENTS WELL, LA DE DA DE DAH.
AND ONCE THEY START THEIR GUSHING THERE'S NO STOPPING THEM
AND THEN IT'S "BLAH BLAH BLAH BLAH SHAKESPEARE
AND HE WALKS IN, IT'S 'DUM DA DUM, TA DA!, SHAKESPEARE!
HE'S HOLDING COURT AND THEY SAY...
"WILL, YOU'RE SUCH A GENIUS AND YOUR WRITING IS DIVINE"
"A ROSE BY ANY OTHER NAME IS SUCH A CLEVER LINE"
AND THEY'RE ALL "OOOOH" AND HE'S ALL "STOP"
AND THEY'RE ALL "YAY!" AND I'M ALL "UGGGGGHH"
AND I'M REALLY GETTING SICK OF IT!
AND OH, OH OH I HATE SHAKESPEARE

TROUPE

I THINK BY NOW WE SORTA KNOW YOU HATE SHAKESPEARE

NICK

SHMAKESPEARE!

THE WAY HE FEIGNS HUMILITY WHEN ALL HE DOES IS GLOAT
THE WAY HE WEARS THAT SILLY FRILLY COLLAR 'ROUND HIS THROAT
THE POSTER CHILD FOR WHY NO ONE SHOULD EVER PROCREATE
LET ME MAKE A SHORTER LIST AND I WILL GIVE IT TO YOU STRAIGHT
EVERY LITTLE THING ABOUT SHAKESPEARE
IS WHAT I HATE

TROUPE

HATES, HE HATES, HE CLEARLY SURELY REALLY TRULY
HATES SHAKESPEARE.

NIGEL

DON'T HATE.

Song ends. After applause...

PETER QUINCE

Nick, do we still have a job!?

TROUPE

Yeah, what are we gonna do!/Where will you find a patron?/What Show are we
doing now!/I'm Hungry, etc.

NICK

It's ok... don't worry... Tom, it's gonna be... QUIET!

(THEY quiet)

I'll take care of it. Come back tomorrow and we'll have a new idea.

#3A - *God, I Hate Shakespeare (Playoff)*

THEY exit, muttering nervously as the set transforms into...

SCENE 3:

A South London Street / Outside Nick & Bea's House

TOWNSPEOPLE *mill about.*

NICK

New idea... new idea... we need a new idea.

NIGEL

I still say we should write our life story – two orphaned brothers, their father lost at sea, whose mother died of a broken heart. How you, at age 14, carried me, your sickly little brother on your back – all the way from Cornwall.

NICK

No. We gotta think bigger! We have to *innovate*. The world is changing. I recently heard about a man who has a toilet that *flushes*.

NIGEL

Really?? He doesn't throw his shit into the street?

NICK

No. He pulls a lever and it gets *whooshed* down a pipe... and then into the street. And that's what we need. Something *new*.

NIGEL

But that's what you're good at – big ideas. I'm really just a poet at heart. You were doing better without me, oh God am I the problem?

NICK

No. Shakespeare is! Why did I ever suggest he become a writer? I was just trying to get him out of our troupe because he was so annoying. Now he's like this giant sun... that... that...

NIGEL

"Shines so bright, no other star is seen."

NICK

See? That's good! Which is why we work together. Now let's get to it.

NIGEL enters Nick's house (which has just moved into place). Before Nick enters, SHYLOCK steps out from around the corner.

SHYLOCK

Nicholas Bottom.

NICK

Shylock! What are you doing at my house?

SHYLOCK

Your debt is due.

NICK

Shhhh...

(pulls him away from house)

I've, uh... hit a little setback with the play. But—if you give me another week—I'll name a character after you.

SHYLOCK

Too late. Shakespeare already promised that. I can see it now. "Shylock—the really nice Jew." Here's a better offer. Cut me in as an investor in your play and I'll cancel your debt.

NICK

You're not a patron, you're a money lender!

SHYLOCK

BECAUSE THAT'S THE ONLY JOB THEY'LL LET JEWS DO! But what I really love —ohhhhh, what gives me nachus in my pupik—is *the theater*. I LOVE IT! I-love-it I-love-it I-love-it. I love the sights, the smells, the roar of the crowd, the splat of the fruit as it hits the actors. It's a temple to me, I tell you. A temple! Catholic, Protestant, Jew—I don't give a rats *tuchus*. My religion—is *theater*.

NICK

Wow, I had no idea. But I can't, it's illegal. If I let you invest we'd both be *hanged* at Tyburn.

SHYLOCK

At least you'd finally have an audience. Take the weekend. Mull it over. Because on Monday, your interest doubles.

#3B – Nick & Bea's Flat

SHYLOCK exits. NICK rubs his brow, feeling the pressure. TRANSITION MUSIC
HE enters his house.

SCENE 4: Nick & Bea's House

NICK enters. NIGEL is at the table eating from a bowl. BEA is at the cast iron kettle over the fire.

NICK

Hello, darling. How was your day?

THEY kiss.

BEA

Interesting. I went to the stocks and watched the mob throw cabbages at the criminals.

NICK

What'd you do that for?? You hate all that!

BEA

I know, it was awful.

(handing him a bowl)

Boiled cabbage?

NICK

Ah. I see.

NIGEL

I think it's delicious.

BEA

Aw, thanks Nige. There would've been meat, but the landlord came by demanding the rent — took our last shilling right out of my hand. Then I was gonna surprise you with some mutton — but sheep are *fast*.

NICK

Wait, wh — you chased a SHEEP? Alright, that's it.

HE pushes away from the table and heads for a WOODEN LOCK BOX on the mantle.

BEA

What are you doing?

NICK

I'm just...

HE grabs the money box. SHE quickly takes it away.

BEA

No! We've been through this, we do not touch the money box!

SHE puts it back.

NICK

Come on, Bea... we shouldn't have to live like this. You deserve better.

BEA

And so do you — we all do, and that's what we're saving for. A better life. A simple cottage in the country, for all of us. You, me, a couple of kids...

(taking money back, passing Nigel)

...a room for Nigel and maybe his *wife* one day?...

NIGEL

(embarrassed)

Oh, stop it..

BEA

Now, I know it's been a while since we've put any money in there, and that's why I was thinking—I should get a job.

NICK

What? No, if you get a job, that will just make me feel like a failure. None of the other writers' wives have jobs.

BEA

Well, they should. This is the nineties! We've got a woman on the throne and by the year 1600, women will be completely equal to men. Ooh! I just thought of the perfect job for me. I could be in your play!

NICK

What?? You can't act.

SHE BURST INTO TEARS, covers her face with her hands.

Sorry, I didn't mean to hurt your feelings.

BEA

Gotcha. See I can act.

NICK

You know it's *illegal* to put women on stage.

NIGEL

And anyway, our play's been cancelled.

BEA

What?

NICK

Not *cancelled*, *Nige*. That's such a negative way to put it.

(NICK)

(firing him a look)

I mean, yes, we are no longer doing Richard the Second but only because we've come up with... a *better idea!*

BEA

Oooh, what is it?

NICK

Can't say. Don't want to jinx it.

BEA

So... there is no idea.

NICK

Well, we've had the idea...

HE motions to Nigel, help me out here...

NIGEL

... that we need an idea.

NICK gives Nigel a "what the hell was that" shrug?

BEA

Then let me help you! I'll go out and earn some money and that'll take the pressure off you guys.

NICK

Bea, listen...

#4 - *Right Hand Man*

BEA

No, you listen. Cause I just want to make things better and I need to know that you understand...

(sings)

IF YOU EVER GOT IN TROUBLE
I WOULD BE THERE ON THE DOUBLE
JUST TO BAIL YOU OUT
IF THERE'S ANYTHING YOU LACK
YOU KNOW I'VE ALWAYS GOT YOUR BACK
THAT'S WHAT IT'S ALL ABOUT

(BEA)

THINK OF ME AS YOUR SIDEKICK
 HELPING YOU WHENEVER I CAN
 I'M MORE THAN JUST A WOMAN, BABY
 WHEN THE PRESSURE'S COMIN', BABY
 LET ME BE YOUR RIGHT HAND MAN

NICK

But you're not a man. I'm the man.

BEA

Uggggh!

(to Nigel)

He's not hearing me.

(back to Nick)

IF YOU'RE EVER IN A PICKLE
 YOU CAN CALL FOR ME AND QUICK'LL
 BE HOW FAST I RUN

NICK

But... I'm not in a pickle.

BEA

YOU AND ME SHOULD BE A TEAM
 FOR ANY DREAM OR ANY SCHEME
 THAT'S HOW IT SHOULD BE DONE

SURE, I COULD STAY IN THE BACKGROUND
 JUST SMILING EVERY NOW AND AGAIN
 BUT JUST TO BE A PRETTY LADY
 THAT WOULD BE A PITY, BABY
 LET ME BE YOUR RIGHT HAND MAN

NIGEL

You should probably listen. She's usually right.

NICK

Eat your cabbage.

SHE steps in front of Nick. HE tries to protest, SHE keeps interrupting his attempts.

BEA

I AM STRONGER THAN YOU THINK
 DON'T BE THINKIN' I AIN'T TOUGH

(BEA)

I AM WHERE YOU OUGHTA GO
WHEN THE GOING'S GETTIN' ROUGH
SO WHEN THINGS ARE GOING BADLY...

NICK

BUT THEY'RE NOT

NIGEL

THEY KIND OF ARE

NICK

NO, THINGS ARE FINE

BEA

BUT IF THEY WEREN'T

NICK

BUT IT'S OKAY

BEA

LUV.

NICK

WHAT?

BEA

MMMM.

NICK

WHAT??

BEA

Quit trying to protect me!

NICK

Can we change the subject please?

BEA

NOT UNTIL I KNOW THAT...
IF YOU'RE EVER IN A FIX
AND IT'S A FIX YOU NEED TO NIX
THEN I'M YOUR GO TO GUY

NICK

YOU'RE NOT A GUY

BEA

DON'T BE SO LITERAL...

(BEA)

AND DON'T FORGET
 I'M NOT A SHRINKING VIOLET
 A SOLID ROCK AM I
 SO DON'T BE THINKING I'LL CRUMBLE
 WHEN THE YOU-KNOW-WHAT HITS THE FAN

NICK tries to speak. SHE kisses him to stop him from speaking.

THERE'S NO PROBLEM THAT'S TOO BIG .
 WHEN YOU'RE MARRIED, THAT'S THE GIG
 SO DON'T BE A SEXIST PIG!
 IS IT ASKING TOO MUCH OF YOU?
 IT'S ONLY 'CAUSE I LOVE YOU
 LET ME BE YOUR RIGHT
 IN FACT I'LL SHOW YOU THAT I'M RIGHT...

SHE grabs a bow and arrow, straps it on.

NICK

What are you doing now?

BEA

I'm gonna get you boys some MEAT!

(singing)

BABY I'M YOUR RIGHT
 DON'T PUT UP A FIGHT
 I CAN BE YOUR RIGHT
 STARTING HERE TONIGHT
 LET ME BE YOUR RIGHT HAND MAN
 LET ME BE YOUR RIGHT HAND - MAN

SHE slams the door and is gone.

NICK

What just happened?

NIGEL

I'd love to have someone to do stuff like that for me. I think it's sweet.

NICK

It's humiliating. She goes out in the town square collecting old cabbage to feed us? What sort of husband am I? That's why we need a new idea. One great idea can turn everything around. Oh, and we need it by tomorrow.

NIGEL

Tomorrow?? Oh God...

NIGEL starts breathing quickly, clutching his chest.

NICK

Don't...

NIGEL

(starting to hyperventilate)

I just... I don't think I can write under this sort of pressure.

NIGEL'S breathing gets worse, he doubles over, gasping for air. NICK grabs his shoulders, steadies him.

NICK

It's okay. Breathe, breathe... I'll ... see what I can come up with, and we'll start again first thing in the morning.

NIGEL

OK—sorry Nick.

(hugs him)

#4A – God, I Hate Shakespeare (Reprise)

I love you so much.

NICK

I love you, too. Now get some sleep.

NIGEL

Okay.

NIGEL plops down in his bed and is out cold. NICK sighs – the weight of the world on his shoulders.

GOD I HATE SHAKESPEARE
BUT WHEN I SIT AND REALLY CONTEMPLATE SHAKESPEARE
I GUESS I HATE THE FACT THAT HE IS EVERYTHING
I EVER DREAMED THAT I COULD BE
I MOSTLY HATE THE WAY HE MAKES ME FEEL ABOUT ME

CAUSE THE TRUTH IS, IT WOULDN'T BE THAT BAD TO BE SHAKESPEARE
IN FACT, I'D GIVE MY LEFT NAD TO BE SHAKESPEARE
IF I COULD ONLY HAVE ONE TINY LITTLE SMIDGEN OF HIS NOTORIETY

(NICK)

IT COULD RELIEVE ME FROM THE PRESSURES OF RESPONSIBILITY
I'VE GOT TO MAKE IT HAPPEN, GOT TO FIND THAT POT OF GOLD
IF THERE WAS JUST SOME WAY TO KNOW
JUST WHAT THE FUTURE HOLDS...

(suddenly has a thought)

What the future holds...

HE checks to make sure no one is around, then lifts the wooden chest, removes a bag of coins from it, then puts the box back and exits. Set transitions to...

gain

id on

AKESPEARE

OTORIETY

SCENE 5: Soothsayer Alley

There's a row of rundown storefronts manned by various psychics, fortune tellers, astrologers, etc.

ASTROLOGER

Tarot cards! Palm readings! Amputees get half price!

PSYCHIC WOMAN

Lucky heather sir?

NICK

Thanks, but... I need more than luck.

NICK approaches a MAN WITH AN EYEPATCH, checks over his shoulder.
Psst. Hey. I'm looking for a soothsayer.

EYEPATCH MAN

(pointing)

Norbert the Knowing. Supposed to be the best.

A second story window opens, NOSTRADAMUS pokes his head out.

NICK

(reading)

"Out of business due to unforeseen circumstances."

(then...)

So obviously not the *very* best.

NOSTRADAMUS

Did I hear a need for future seeing?

The window closes. We hear footsteps on stairs, then falling, pots and pans, a cat SCREECH, then a door opens and Nostradamus steps out.

If seeing is what you need, then I can help you. If help is what you need, then I can see you. If neither is what you need, then I can foresee you leaving very shortly. So— am I hired? Actually, I know I will be, I'm just being polite.

NICK

Who are you?

NOSTRADAMUS

I— am Nostradamus.

NICK

THE Nostradamus?

NOSTRADAMUS

No. I'm his nephew. Thomas.

NICK

Thomas Nostradamus?

NOSTRADAMUS

(raising his hand as if giving oath)

I promise. But I share the same gifts as my esteemed uncle. And for half a crown, I'll share those gifts with you. And I predict for you a new life... with no teeth! That was a freebie.

NICK

Uhhh... I'll keep looking if you don't mind.

NOSTRADAMUS

Suit yourself.

(getting a vision, then eerily)

But beware the sign of the black dog.

NICK

Right. Thank you. Good luck in the asylum.

NOSTRADAMUS goes one way, NICK goes the other. A PUB SIGN shifts and falls, stopping just before hitting Nick on the head. It says "THE BLACK DOG." (or – a MAN walks past carrying a sign, nearly hit Nick with it. When the man turns, we can see the sign says "BLACK DOG PUB")

Half a crown you said?

NOSTRADAMUS returns as NICK pays him.

NOSTRADAMUS

Excellent! Now – what is it you would like the future to tell?

NICK

Well, I'm a writer –

NOSTRADAMUS

I knew that.

NICK

...and I want you to look into the future and tell me...

(checks to make sure no one's listening)

What will the next big thing in theater be? – what audiences will be lining up to see.

NOSTRADAMUS

Right. Stand back. Give me some space.

HE shakes out and warms up like an athlete before an event, then more hacking and clearing his sinuses, then squints hard and puts his fingers to his temples. He squints – then gets the shivers.

Oh. Oh my. Wow. Ooooh, in the future, the theaters are very *niiiiice*. Cushy red seats. AND A ROOF! And wait!... whoa, what is this?? It's UNBELIEVABLE!

NICK

What? What?!

NOSTRADAMUS

That much?? For a glass of *wine*?!?!

NICK

How about what's on the stage?

NOSTRADAMUS

Right. Getting to that...

HE squints, then gets a vision that causes him to stumble backwards. NICK has to catch him.

Whoa! What spectacle! I have seen the future!

NICK

What, what is it??!

NOSTRADAMUS

The biggest, most fantastic thing in theater will be...

(painting it in the air)

MUSICALS.

NICK

What?

NOSTRADAMUS

(painting it again)

Musicals.

NICK

What the hell are "musicals?"

NOSTRADAMUS

(squinting into the distance)

It appears to be a play where the dialogue stops and the plot is conveyed through song.

NICK

Through song?

NOSTRADAMUS

Yes.

NICK

Wait, wait. So—an actor is saying his lines and then, out of nowhere, he just starts *singing*??

NOSTRADAMUS

Yes!

#5 — A Musical

NICK

WELL, THAT IS THE...
 STUPIDEST THING THAT I HAVE EVER HEARD
 YOU'RE DOING A PLAY, GOT SOMETHING TO SAY
 SO YOU *SING* IT? IT'S ABSURD
 WHO ON EARTH IS GOING TO SIT THERE
 WHILE AN ACTOR BREAKS INTO SONG
 WHAT POSSIBLE THOUGHT CAN THE AUDIENCE THINK
 OTHER THAN THIS IS HORRIBLY — WRONG?

NOSTRADAMUS

Remarkably, they won't think that.

NICK

Seriously? And why not?

NOSTRADAMUS

Because.

IT'S... A...
 MUSICAL, A MUSICAL
 AND NOTHING'S AS AMAZING AS A MUSICAL
 WITH SONG AND DANCE, AND SWEET ROMANCE
 AND HAPPY ENDINGS HAPPENING BY HAPPENSTANCE
 BRIGHT LIGHTS, STAGE FIGHTS AND A DAZZLING CHORUS
 YOU WANNA BE GREAT THEN YOU GOTTA CREATE
 A MUSICAL

NICK

I don't know, I find it hard to believe people would actually pay to see something like this.

NOSTRADAMUS

LET'S JUST SAY IT'S A SATURDAY NIGHT
AND YOU WANNA GO OUT ON THE TOWN
GOT A LADY TO FLATTER WHO MIGHT
GIVE IT UP IF YOU DON'T LET HER DOWN
YOU COULD GO SEE A TRAGEDY
BUT THAT WOULDN'T BE VERY FUN
OR A PLAY FROM GREEK MYTHOLOGY
SEE A MOTHER HAVE SEX WITH HER SON? EW.
YOU COULD GO SEE A DRAMA,
WITH ALL THAT TRAUMA AND PAIN
OR GO SEE SOMETHING MORE RELAXING
AND LESS TAXING ON THE BRAIN

Behind him, the ENSEMBLE of psychics, palm readers, etc, join him... becoming the chorus.

GO SEE A...

MUSICAL, A MUSICAL

A PUFFY PIECE RELEASING ALL YOUR BLUESICALS
WHERE CROONERS CROON...

CHORUS
(AH AH AH AH)

A CATCHY TUNE

AND LIMBER LEGGY LADIES THRILL YA TILL YA SWOON

OOHS, AHHS - BIG APPLAUSE

AND A STANDING OVATION

NOSTRADAMUS, CHORUS

THE FUTURE IS BRIGHT, IF YOU CAN JUST WRITE
A MUSICAL

NOSTRADAMUS

SOME MAKE YOU HAPPY, SOME MAKE YOU SAD

SOME ARE QUITE BIG, SOME QUITE SMALL

SOME ARE TOO LONG, SOME ARE JUST PLAYS WITH SONG. (AH)

CHORUS

SOME MUSICALS HAVE NO TALKING AT ALL

NICK

No talking at all?

NOSTRADAMUS

THAT'S RIGHT, THERE'S NO TALKING.

ALL OF THE DIALOGUE IS SUNG

IN A VERY DRAMATIC FASHION

NICK

Um... really?

NOSTRADAMUS

YES, REAALLLLLLLY

NICK

There's no tal—

NOSTRADAMUS

THERE'S NO TAL-KING
AND THEY OFTEN STAY ON ONE NOTE FOR A VERY LONG TIME
SO THAT WHEN THEY CHANGE TO A DIFFERENT NOTE YOU NOTICE.

(dramatic chord)

AND IT'S SUPPOSED TO CREATE A DRAMATIC EFFECT
BUT MOSTLY YOU JUST SIT THERE ASKING YOURSELF
WHY AREN'T THEY TALKING?

NICK

Sounds miserable.

NOSTRADAMUS

I BELIEVE IT'S PRONOUNCED MISER-AHHH-BLUH

NICK

And people actually *like* this?

NOSTRADAMUS

No! They love it! And what's not to love?

(singing)

IT'S SUCH A DELIGHT, THERE'S NOTHING QUITE LIKE
A MUSICAL

(fingers to temples)

Whoa, wait! Another vision. I haven't even told you the best part.

(singing)

FEEL THAT FASCINATING RHYTHM MOVE INTO YOUR FEET

NICK

Um... what is that?

NOSTRADAMUS *shimmies his feet.*

NOSTRADAMUS

FEEL YOUR ASS GYRATING TO THAT TITILLATING BEAT

NOSTRADAMUS *shakes his butt to the beat of the drum.*

NICK

Whoa... are you okay?

NOSTRADAMUS

YOU SLAP YOUR LAP

(SLAP, SLAP)

THEN FINGER SNAP

(SNAP, SNAP)

THAT'S WHEN YOU KNOW IT'S TIME TO TAP

NOSTRADAMUS *does a little tap dance...*

NICK

What the hell are you doing now?

NOSTRADAMUS

It's called a "dance break." Apparently, this happens in musicals as well. People on stage, just bursting into spontaneous dance!

NICK

Why? Does it advance the plot?

NOSTRADAMUS

No.

NICK

Develop character?

NOSTRADAMUS

Nope!

NICK

Then why do it?

NOSTRADAMUS

Because - IT'S ENTERTAINING! 5, 6, 7, 8!

CHORUS *taps onto stage as Nostradamus's vision comes to life: a big homage to Broadway production numbers.*

GRAB A SEAT AND JUST RELAX.

(more tapping)

MUSICALS HAVE JUST TWO ACTS!

(NOSTRADAMUS)

More tapping, NOSTRADAMUS ends up center stage.

(fingers to temples)

Another vision!

IT'S A MUSICAL!
WHATTAYA TALK, WHATTAYA TALK
IT'S A MUSICAL, A SUESSICAL? –
NO A MUSICAL, WITH GIRLS ON STAGE!

CHORUS

A MUSICAL!

NOSTRADAMUS

WE'VE GOT SNAPPY REPARTEE
AND THE WOMEN ARE RISQUE
AND THE CHORUS BOYS ARE KINDA GAY

NOSTRADAMUS

A MUSICAL!
A TRUE-OO-OO, BLUE-OO-OO, NEW-OOO MUSICAL!

CHORUS

A MUSICAL!
–MUSICAL!

ALL THAT JAZZ homage then segues into something that suggests BUENOS AIRES from Evita.

NOSTRADAMUS

STAND BACK! – IT'S A MUSICAL!

Then THEY freeze in a pose as piano plays an homage to SEASONS OF LOVE.
Some musicals are very serious.

Then something JESUS CHRIST SUPERSTAR-ISH.

NOSTRADAMUS, CHORUS

A BIG GLITTERING MUSICAL! A MUSICAL!

And then into HARD KNOCK LIFE

IT'S A MUSICAL – FOR US!

The DANCERS swirl around him...

NOSTRADAMUS

A BRIGHT AND SHINY MIGHTY FINE-Y
GLITTER GLITZ AND CHORUS LINE-Y
BOB YOUR HEAD AND SHAKE YOUR HINY
MUSICAL

NOSTRADAMUS, CHORUS

IT'S A MUSICAL (IT'S A MUSICAL)
IT'S A MUSICAL (IT'S A MUSICAL)

Nick steps forward full of hope and wonder, surrounded by the chorus.

NICK

Yes! Now, I get it!

WE'LL DO A MUSICAL.

NOSTRADAMUS

No kidding!

NICK

A MUSICAL
WHAT COULD BE MORE AMAZING THAN A MUSICAL
WITH SONG AND DANCE, AND SWEET ROMANCE
AND WITH A MUSICAL WE MIGHT HAVE

(CLAP)

HALF A CHANCE

NICK, NOSTRADAMUS

OOHS AHHS, BIG APPLAUSE
WITH EVERYONE CHEERING FOR US

The CHORUS line up like SWEET CHARITY and applaud.

NOSTRADAMUS

AND FOR SOME UNEXPLAINABLE REASON
THE CROWD GOES WILD EVERY TIME
WHEN DANCERS KICK IN UNISON
IN ONE BIG WONDERFUL LINE

CHORUS moves into Rockette's style kick line.

NOSTRADAMUS, NICK, CHORUS

AND THEN YOU'VE GOT YOURSELF
A MUSICAL - A MUSICAL
A LA-LA-LA-LA LA LAPALOOZICAL
WITH SPLASHY STYLE, AND A BIG FAKE SMILE
A SNAZZY BAND, SOME JAZZY HANDS
I SWEAR THAT I'LL
CROSS MY HEART, HOPE TO DIE
IF IT ISN'T A DOOZY

NOSTRADAMUS

TAKE IT FROM ME, THEY'LL BE FLOCKING TO SEE

NOSTRADAMUS, NICK

YOUR STAR LIT, WON'T QUIT BIG HIT
MUSICAL!

A CHORUS LINE-style ending (homage to "ONE") with actors holding headshots in front of their faces...

NICK, NOSTRADAMUS, CHORUS

A BIG HIT MUSICAL!

Song ends. After the (hopefully) long applause...

NICK

You really think that'll work?

NOSTRADAMUS

Actually, sometimes it works so well, you do the end of the exact same song,
AGAIN! A 5-6-7-8!

#5A – A Musical (Tag)

NICK, NOSTRADAMUS

TAKE IT FROM ME, THEY'LL BE FLOCKING TO SEE
YOUR STAR LIT WON'T QUIT BIG HIT MUSICAL!!!

Big finish. The set changes to...

SCENE 6: A South London Street / Outside The Theatre

#5B – Brother Jeremiah

NIGEL enters, writing ideas in his LEATHER NOTEBOOK.

NIGEL

Okay, come on, Nigel. Big idea for a show... big idea...

(smacking his head)

Oh, for a muse of fire... Oof!

He's bumped into PORTIA, a woman dressed in black Puritan garb causing her to drop her Bible. His pages fall.

Sorry... I wasn't looking where I was...

PORTIA

No, that was my fault, I had my head in the—.

THEIR EYES MEET. MUSIC STING as they experience love at first sight. They are drawn towards each other, then PORTIA sees the page she's holding. She reads it, looks up in awe.

#5C – Portia and Nigel Meet

Is this a poem?

NIGEL

Uh huh.

PORTIA

Are you... a poet?

NIGEL

Uh huh.

PORTIA

I love poetry. And the way poets use lyrical language to express the beauty of life.

NIGEL

Uh huh.

THEY stare into each other's eyes.

BROTHER JEREMIAH (O.S.)

Portia! Come away from that heathen at once!

SHE snaps out of it as BROTHER JEREMIAH, a Puritan dressed in black with a flat brimmed hat, pulls her away, eyeing Nigel suspiciously. NICK enters with a lute strapped over his shoulder.

NICK

Nigel! There you are. Big news.

NIGEL

Me, too. I think I'm in love.

NICK

You?? With who?

NIGEL points. THE HAGGARD WOMAN has stepped in front of Portia, looking crazed.

Wow. I guess a guy can only wait so long.

NIGEL

Not her. Her.

The HAGGARD WOMAN moves away revealing PORTIA – who is standing next to BROTHER JEREMIAH.

NICK

A Puritan!? Are you mad?? DO YOU KNOW WHO HER FATHER IS??

JEREMIAH stands on a soap box flanked by PORTIA and OTHER PURITANS as he preaches liked a crazed street evangelist.

BROTHER JEREMIAH

Brethren, I say unto thee... the theaters are a scourge upon our land! Where men dress as women and kiss other men. I have seen it myself and it did *stiffen* my... resolve!

(HE furrows his brow, what did I just say?, then moves on)

For such sinful role-play is the gateway to lustful desires and fantasies of the flesh!

NICK

You really want that guy giving a speech at your wedding reception?

BROTHER JEREMIAH

(pointed, towards Nick and Nigel)

Let not thy sacred soul be poisoned by the playwrights and poets whose dark invention diverts simple minds from the one true book...

(as HE is exiting, efftely to his men)

C'mon, boys.

NICK pulls Nigel away, not noticing that he is still staring at Portia. SHE throws him one last glance before SHE exits.

NICK

Forget about her. It'll never work. Now listen. You know the big idea we're looking for? Well, I've got it.

NIGEL

You have?

NICK

Yes. Now, I want you to listen with an open mind because it's a bit radical.

NIGEL

Okay. What is it?

NICK

(painting it in the sky)

A MUSICAL.

(NIGEL looks confused)

It's a play with songs—but the songs advance the plot and develop character as they seamlessly segue from dialogue into singing.

NIGEL thinks about it for a beat.

NIGEL

That... is... the most... amazing idea.

NICK

Yeah?

NIGEL

It's *brilliant* actually. How better to express the inner longings of the human soul than with music? And you're always writing songs on your lute.

NICK

I already dusted it off and started banging out a few tunes. And all those poems of yours?—there's your lyrics!

NIGEL

Wow. It's perfect for us. How did you come up with this?

NICK

(quickly diverting question)

That's—not important. But this is good, right?

NIGEL

Yeah. "A MUSICAL." I *love* it.

NICK

We just need to figure out what it's about.

NIGEL

I still say we should tell our...

NICK

Please don't say two brothers from Cornwall.

NIGEL

But why not? I think we should just write something emotionally true, something from the heart.

NICK

No! We need to think bigger. Was the Bible written from the heart?

NIGEL

Well, I would hope so.

NICK

Okay, it probably was but my point is—Matthew, Mark, Luke? Those writers were writing about an event. Something big, epic, *world-changing*.

(suddenly hit with an idea)

I've got it!

#6 – *The Black Death*

Yes! Why didn't I think of this before?

NIGEL

What?!

NICK

The most significant historical event in the last thousand years!

LIGHTS OUT on them and up on the TROUPE who appear on the stage behind them.

SCENE 7: The Theatre

TROUPE

WHAT'S THAT COMING UP THE SILK ROAD OUT OF CHINA?
THE BLACK DEATH (BLACK DEATH, OOH!)
WHAT'S THAT CREEPING ROUND YOUR PEEPEE AND YOUR VAGINA?
THE BLACK DEATH (BLACK DEATH, OOH!)
THE BLACK DEATH - IT'S GONNA GET YA
IT'S THE BLACK DEATH - IT'S GONNA HIT YA
WITH THOSE BLISTERS OOZING LIKE SYRUP
THAT PESTY LITTLE PESTILENCE IS KILLING HALF OF EUROPE
IT'S THE BLACK DEATH - AND IT'S COMING FOR YOU...

GRIM REAPERS enter with their scythes.

MMMM MMM MMM MMM MMM... MMMM... MMMM...
THE BLACK DEATH (BLACK DEATH, OOH)
MMMM MMM MMM MMM MMM... MMMM... MMMM...
THE BLACK DEATH (BLACK DEATH, OOH)
BLACK DEATH IT'S GETTING CLOSER
IT'S THE BLACK DEATH IT'S GETTING GROSSER
AND IT'S MAKING IT'S WAY ACROSS ENGLAND
SOON EVERYTHING THAT'S DANGLING
WON'T BE ANY GOOD FOR DINGLIN'
IT'S THE BLACK DEATH - AND IT'S COMING FOR YOU
BLACK DEATH!

Song ends. NICK turns to LORD CLAPHAM.

NICK

Well, m'lord? What do you think?

LORD CLAPHAM

They're *singing*.

NICK

Right. That's what you do in a musical.

LORD CLAPHAM

But they're *singing about the plague!*

NICK

I know! Shakespeare would never do something like this!

LORD CLAPHAM

Because it's a terrible idea! You'll make me look ridiculous!

THEY look at his outrageous costume.

NICK

But I can guarantee you – everyone will love it!

BROTHER JEREMIAH (O.S.)

Nick and Nigel Bottom!

NICK

Almost everyone.

NICK turns as BROTHER JEREMIAH and his PURITANS enter.

Brother Jeremiah? To what do we owe the pleasure?

BROTHER JEREMIAH

Pleasure is a sin. As is music, which I've heard emanating from this – den of iniquity.

NICK

Den of iniquity? What makes you say that?

JEREMIAH looks around at the troupe; some dressed as reapers, others like plague victims, ROBIN in his dress. HE curtsies.

ROBIN

Hello.

BROTHER JEREMIAH

As if theater wasn't heinous enough, you've now added *music* – which leads to dancing... which *stirs the loins* and promotes lustful desires, which is why we must see the theaters pulled down – for we can not abide such ungodly erections.

There's an awkward pause as the phrase just hangs there. JEREMIAH continues.

As a magistrate, I have much influence with the Master of the Justice. So you listen to this, *Bottom*. If you continue promoting this filth and debauchery, I will see you tied to a post begging for mercy as I give you the rod.

(HE pauses a moment, pondering what he said, how it sounded...)

Good day, sir.

The PURITANS exit. PORTIA throws one last look at Nigel.

LORD CLAPHAM

That's it. I'm out.

NICK

But Lord Clapham...

LORD CLAPHAM

I am sorry, gentlemen, but these religious nutters frighten me. I must withdraw my patronage. Good day.

CLAPHAM exits.

NICK

Please, sir, you can't... UGHHHHHHH.

PETER QUINCE

I can't believe you just let that happen!

THEY all start arguing, talking over each other..

SNUG

(to Tom)

You shoulda been a better reaper! You're reaping was shite!

ROBIN

If we had better dresses... this wouldn't have happened!

PETER QUINCE

My reaping was superb! Take that back

TOM SNOOT

You weren't a grim reaper, you were like the *annoying reaper*/etc.

NICK

WOULD EVERYONE PLEASE JUST CALM DOWN!!!!

THEY all freeze. NICK takes a big calming breath.

I'm on it.

#6A - *The Black Death (Incidental)*

The uncertain TROUPE exits as NIGEL stumbles downstage and the theater set transitions to...

SCENE 8: A South London Street

TOWNSPEOPLE enter and MINGLE and shop at the market stalls and shop fronts.
NIGEL begins to hyperventilate again...

NIGEL

Nick! We just lost our patron!

(doubling over)

Oh god, I can't take this, this is bad...

(breathing heavy)

NICK

No, no, don't go there. Breathe, breathe, walk it off

NICK walks him toward the bench.

A group of WORKERS carrying shovels, file in. NICK bumps into BEA who is disguised as man carrying a bucket.

BEA

Watch it, ya daft eejit!!

(that's "idiot" with accent)

NICK

Sorry, sir. Beg your pardon.

NICK keeps walking as TWO LADIES pass. BEA stalks the ladies in a macho way.

BEA

Oy, darlings. Buy you a pint, eh? Eh!?

NICK

(recognizing the voice)

Bea?

BEA

(still in accent)

Don't know what yer talkin' about, lad. Name's Johnny.

NICK

Bea, I know it's you.

BEA

But I fooled you for a second, didn't I? Told you I could act!

NICK

What the hell are you doing dressed like that?

BEA

Remember that job I mentioned? Turns out all the good ones are for men. And besides, I know you need help because you said "I don't need help."

NICK

Bea, this just makes me feel—

(sniffs)

Is that a bucket of shit?

BEA

Bear shit, to be precise. I've been promoted. This morning I didn't have a bucket!

(SHE pats his face, HE recoils)

And look! I already made a penny. I'm gonna put it in the money box.

NICK

No! I mean... I'll do it.

FOREMAN

Yo! Bear shit boy!

FOREMAN motions her to follow, then leaves.

BEA

Hear that? I have a job title! And one day it'll be "bear shit woman!"

(kissing him)

Keep writing. I love you, luv!

BEA hurries off. NICK turns. NIGEL is there.

NIGEL

Nick! What are we going to—

NICK

Keep writing. I'll be back.

NIGEL

What?? Alone??

NIGEL starts to hyperventilate again.

NICK

Nigel, please. I need you, now more than ever. I've got to go find us a new backer and that means you need to come up with a new idea. Please tell me I can count on you for that!

NICK exits in a huff. NIGEL steadies himself.

NIGEL

Yes, you can. Yes, you can.

(HE sits, tries to write)

Uggggh, no you can't.

HE stands to leave and is blocked by A WOMAN IN A CLOAK (PORTIA).

Oh. Good day, mistress.

PORTIA

"Good days were those when lit with love, till dusk of death did herald th' eternal night"

NIGEL

Hey – I wrote that.

The WOMAN lowers her hood, revealing herself to be PORTIA.

PORTIA

Yes, I know.

(holding up a page)

I accidentally took this after our first encounter. Your sonnet. It's – perfection.

NIGEL

Really? You thought it was... good?

PORTIA

It... touched me in places I did not know could be touched.

PORTIA suddenly realizes how that sounded, turns away – embarrassed.

Forgive me. Poetry is forbidden in my house, especially poems of earthly love.

(melodramatically; to the heavens)

OH, IS THERE NO PITY SITTING IN THE CLOUDS THAT SEES INTO THE BOTTOM OF MY GRIEF?!

NIGEL

Romeo and Juliet, Act 3, Scene 5.

PORTIA

You've seen it?

NIGEL

Six times, and you?

PORTIA

Eight! If my father knew, he would disown me.

My brother, too.

NIGEL

I adore Shakespeare.

PORTIA

Me, too! I've got a Comedy of Errors, first edition.

NIGEL

I've got Sonnet number 1. Signed!

PORTIA

Wow!

NIGEL

I know! Heh-heh, heh-heh...

PORTIA

Heh-heh, heh-heh...

NIGEL

THEY giggle together; nerdy, awkward laughs and snorts. Then...

NIGEL

(weakly)

That's awesome.

PORTIA

I think you're his equal — if not better.

NIGEL

What??? No way.

PORTIA

Oh yes. Your sonnet has Shakespearean sophistication mixed with the complexity of Daniel Webster and the sensitivity of Samuel Daniel.

#7 — *I Love the Way*

Wow. You really love poetry.

NIGEL

Oh, I do. I really, really do.

PORTIA

(SHE sings)

I LOVE SIDNEY AND MARLOWE
AND OFTEN I BORROW THEIR WORDS

(PORTIA)

TO EXPRESS HOW I FEEL
 I LOVE POEMS OF MYSTERY, FANTASY, HISTORY
 OH WHAT SEDUCTIVE APPEAL

AT NIGHT, ALONE IN MY BEDROOM, SATISFYING MY NEED
 THE CANDLELIGHT FIRE IGNITES MY DESIRE – TO READ

OHHHHH EVERY TIME I HEAR A PERFECT RHYME
 I GET ALL TINGLY
 BECAUSE I KNOW THAT TO FIND A PERFECT RHYME
 IS NOT AN EASY THING-LY

I LOVE THE PLACES THAT WORDS LET ME GO
 I LOVE THE WAY THAT YOUR WORDS MOVE ME SO

(moving closer, facing him)

NO WORDS HAVE TOUCHED ME THE WAY THAT YOURS DO
 AND I LOVE

(speaking)

Youuuuuuu are really doing something to me, Mr. Poetry Man. Forgive me. I never get to discuss poems in this way.

NIGEL

It's okay. I never knew poetry could affect someone the way it affects me.

PORTIA

Me neither.

NIGEL

(singing)

IT'S THE END ALL THE BE ALL OH YOU OUGHTA SEE ALL THE BOOKS
 THAT I HAVE ON MY SHELF

PORTIA

Me, too!

(singing)

I FIND PLEASURE PERUSING THOSE WRITINGS AND MUSINGS
 SO OFTEN I PLEASURE MYSELF
 WAIT, THAT DIDN'T SOUND RIGHT

NIGEL

NO, I KNOW WHAT YOU MEAN
WHEN I'M DEEP IN THE THROES
OF IMPASSIONATE PROSE—I COULD SCREAM

PORTIA

You scream? So do I! AHHH!!

(singing)

OHHHHH, I LOVE A LILTING LINE
OF LYRICAL ALLITERATION

NIGEL

WHO DOESN'T LOVE ALLITERATION

PORTIA

AND THEN I'M LIKE WHOA...
WHEN THE PHRASES COME TOGETHER LIKE A CONSUMMATION

NIGEL

SWEET ELATION!

PORTIA, NIGEL

I LOVE THE PLACES THAT WORDS LET ME GO
I LOVE THE WAY THAT YOUR WORDS MOVE ME SO
I LOVE THAT YOU FEEL THE SAME WAY I DO
AND I LOVE
YOU KNOW THAT I LOVE, YOU KNOW THAT I LOVE...

*Overcome with emotion, SHE throws herself into her arms. On the final music sting,
HE looks heavenward.*

NIGEL

Me, too.

APPLAUSE as THEY stand there awkward.

Okay, I want to show you something.

*HE reaches into his codpiece, SHE looks away, embarrassed. HE pulls out a piece of
paper and she is relieved to see what he was doing.*

I keep it hidden from my brother. It's a letter. To me. From the Bard. Saying he has
received my sonnet.

PORTIA

You sent Shakespeare a sonnet? And he's read it??

NIGEL

Well, he said he would.

PORTIA

You know him!!?

NIGEL

Um, kind of. He was in the same acting troupe as my brother, but I was just a kid then. It's not like he knows who I am or anything.

MESSENGER

Master Nigel Bottom?

NIGEL

Yes?

MESSENGER

(extending a scroll)

An invitation, from Master Shakespeare – to be his personal guest at a recitation in the park.

NIGEL

(reading the scroll)

Shakespeare in the park?

(to the messenger)

Can she be my plus one?

The WILL POWER guitar riff starts. The MESSENGER shrugs. Why not? He motions for them to follow him which THEY do as the we transition to...

SCENE 9: The Park

#8 – Will Power

CROWD ENTERS and gathers around a small stage. NIGEL and PORTIA work their way to the front row. Music continues to build. Two MEN holding smoking burlap sacks (Renaissance fog machines) circle the stage.

CROWD

(chanting)

WE WANT WILL! WE WANT WILL! WE WANT WILL!

(repeat as needed under announcement)

An ANNOUNCER steps onto the platform.

ANNOUNCER

Ladies and Gentlemen, all the way from Stratford Upon Avon, the King of Couplets, the Sultan of Sonnets, the man who put the I AM in iambic pentameter, put your hands together for the one, the only – WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE!

WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE steps through the fog. CROWD GOES WILD! He's dressed like a Renaissance rock star: leather pants, big frilly collar, bigger cod piece, a silk cape.

SHAKESPEARE

Thank you! Is it good to see me or what!?

SHRIEKS as HE tosses his cape into the crowd.

WOMAN IN CROWD

Do Sonnet 18!

MAN IN CROWD

Do "Kingdom for a horse!"

WHOLE CROWD

All the world's a stage!/Sonnet 10!/make up a word!!

SHAKESPEARE

Okay, okay – here's one for all you beautiful Tudors out there, a little sonnet that's been very good to me, let's see if you know it.

(music chord, HE sings – very Tom Jones)

SHALL I COMPARE THEE...

(puts his hand to his ear)

CROWD

TO A SUMMER'S DAY!

SHAKESPEARE

YEAH! THOU ART MORE LOVELY AND MORE TEMPERATE
AND THE ROUGH WINDS SHAKE – THE DARLING BUDS OF MAY, YEAH
AND SUMMER'S LEASE...

(cups his ear to the crowd)

CROWD

HATH ALL TOO SHORT A DATE!

SHAKESPEARE

I ADORE THE ADORATION, THOUGH OTHERS MAY APPALL IT

NIGEL, PORTIA, CROWD

(AH AH AH)

SHAKESPEARE

IT'S QUITE THE NEW SENSATION – WHAT SHALL WE CALL IT?

NIGEL, PORTIA, CROWD

WILL POWER!

SHAKESPEARE

I AM THE WILL OF THE PEOPLE, NOW

NIGEL, PORTIA, CROWD

HE IS THE WILL OF THE PEOPLE NOW – WILL POWER!

SHAKESPEARE

I AM THE WILL OF THE PEOPLE, NOW

NIGEL, PORTIA, CROWD

HE IS THE WILL.

SHAKESPEARE

CAN YOU FEEL IT?

NIGEL, PORTIA, CROWD

WHOO!

SHAKESPEARE

Aw, I'm feeling it too.

(pointing to woman in crowd)

In fact I'd like to feel you a little bit later.

(laughter)

(SHAKESPEARE)

DO YOU WANT MORE?

(CROWD reacts)

OH YEAH? WHEN DO YOU WANT IT? TOMORROW? LATER?

(CROWD says "no, no...")

LET ME HEAR YOU SAY "NOW..."

NIGEL, PORTIA, CROWD

NOW!

SHAKESPEARE

LET ME HEAR YOU SAY "NOW IS..."

NIGEL, PORTIA, CROWD

NOW IS!

SHAKESPEARE

That scans.

LET ME HEAR YOU SAY "NOW IS THE..."

NIGEL, PORTIA, CROWD

NOW IS THE...!

SHAKESPEARE

Do you know it? Well do it with me!

(singing)

NOW IS THE WINTER OF OUR DISCONTENT!

NIGEL, PORTIA, CROWD

NOW IS THE WINTER OF OUR DISCONTENT!

SHAKESPEARE

MADE GLORIOUS SUMMER BY THIS SON OF YORK!

NIGEL, PORTIA, CROWD

MADE GLORIOUS SUMMER BY THIS SON OF YORK!

SHAKESPEARE

LET ME HEAR YOU SAY GLORIOUS

NIGEL, PORTIA, CROWD

GLORIOUS!

SHAKESPEARE

DO YOU MEAN ME?

NIGEL, PORTIA, CROWD

GLORIOUS!

SHAKESPEARE

WELL I CAN BE.

NIGEL, PORTIA, CROWD

GLORIOUS!

SHAKESPEARE

WELL, LET'S SEE...

G-L-O-R-I-O-U-S, WHO FITS THAT BILL?

NIGEL, PORTIA, CROWD

IT'S WILL!

SHAKESPEARE

I GUESS!

THERE'S A FEVER GOING 'ROUND HAS ANYBODY CAUGHT IT?

NIGEL, PORTIA, CROWD

(AH AH AH)

WE'RE SHAKIN' IT FOR SHAKESPEARE!

SHAKESPEARE

ME THINKS YOU'VE GOT IT!

NIGEL, PORTIA, CROWD

WILL POWER!

SHAKESPEARE

I AM THE WILL OF THE PEOPLE NOW

NIGEL, PORTIA, CROWD

HE IS THE WILL OF THE PEOPLE NOW - WILL POWER

SHAKESPEARE

I AM THE WILL OF THE PEOPLE NOW

NIGEL, PORTIA, CROWD

HE IS THE WILL

SHAKESPEARE

HUZZAH!

NIGEL, PORTIA, CROWD

HUZZAH!!

SHAKESPEARE

Oh, that is music to my ears. And if music be the food of love—play on! That's a new one, don't know where to put it yet. But speaking of love...

(segues into ballad...)

Here's one for all you lovers out there.

BUT SOFT WHAT LIGHT
THROUGH YONDER WINDOW BREAKS...

thank you

CROWD applauds, holds up candles like cigarette lighters at a rock concert, waves them back and forth

SHAKESPEARE

IT IS THE EAST AND JULIET IS THE SUN
ARISE FAIR SUN – AND KILL THE ENVIOUS MOON
OHHHH, THE MOON
WHO IS ALREADY SICK AND PALE
SO SICK AND SO PALE WITH GRIEF
THAT THOU HER MAID – ART FAR
MORE FAIR THAN SHE – THAN SHEEEEE...

WOMAN IN CROWD

EEEEEEEEEEEEK!!!

SHAKESPEARE

Thank you. I like that one, too.

SOMEONE throws their Tudor underwear onto the stage. SHAKESPEARE catches it.

CROWD

WILL POWER! WILL POWER!

SHAKESPEARE

I AM THE WILL WITH THE SKILL
TO THRILL YOU WITH THE QUILL

SHAKESPEARE

I AM THE HARD WORKING BARD YOU REGARD YEAH...

CROWD

YEAH!

SHAKESPEARE

I AM THE WILL...

CROWD

HE IS THE WILL

SHAKESPEARE

I AM THE WILL

CROWD

HE IS THE WILL

SHAKESPEARE

I AM THE NAME YOU WANT TO SEE UP ON THAT BILL

CROWD

WILL, WILL, WILL, WILL...

SHAKESPEARE

I AM THE SWAN

CROWD

BEAUTIFUL SWAN

SHAKESPEARE

OF THE AVON

CROWD

THE ONE IN STRATFORD!

SHAKESPEARE

THE CHOSEN ONE THAT GOD IN HEAVEN SMILED UPON

CROWD

THANK YOU GOD!

SHAKESPEARE

AND IF YOU WANNA SEE PERFÉCTION
ON ANY GIVEN DAY – YOU KNOW WHAT THEY SAY
WHERE THERE’S A WILL THERE’S A
WAAAAAAAAAYYYYY....

WHERE THERE’S A WILL THERE’S A
WAAAAAAAAAYYYYY....

WILL POWER

CROWD

AH AH
AHHHHH

WILL POWER

WILL POWER

WI-I-I-I-LLL POWER!

SHAKESPEARE

Good night! Good night! Parting is such sweet sorrow!!

Lights out on Shakespeare's stage and up on the downstage area. As the CROWD files out, LORD CLAPHAM crosses. NICK walks alongside him...

#8A - Will Power (Playoff)

NICK

...Lord Clapham, Lord Clapham! We are no longer doing *Black Death* so won't you please consider reinvesting?

LORD CLAPHAM

No! I'm not speaking to you - you ruined *Romeo & Juliet*! Now I'm off to see *Richard III*...

NICK

Oh yeah? Richard can't find his horse then he dies.

LORD CLAPHAM

(fingers in ears)

Stop it! Stop it!

CLAPHAM hurries off. There's a row of MEN carrying pieces of Shakespeare's stage away. The last one is BEA - dressed as a different man this time. She carries a thick wooden beam, her face hidden behind it.

LEAD MAN

Oy, new bloke! You up to this or not?

BEA

Oh, don't worry 'bout me. I'm as strong as the next guy!

NICK hears the voice and instantly knows...

NICK

Bea? What are you doing? I told you to cut this out.

BEA

I know, but they were looking for good strong men to haul the stage away. Why aren't they ever looking for good strong women?

NICK

Because some jobs are just better suited for men. Now give me that.

SHE hands him the beam. HE buckles under the weight.

Whoa, so heavy...

HE sets the beam down. SHE gets dizzy, staggers slightly.

You okay?

CROWD files

BEA

Actually, I was gonna tell you the news when you got home. You know how I've been having these wild mood swings?

NICK

No.

BEA

(sudden mood swing)

YES YOU DO! — I TOLD YOU ABOUT THEM!!!

(feeling her stomach)

Well, there's a reason for it.

NICK

Oh God, you've got the plague.

BEA

No. I'm *pregnant*.

NICK

You sure it's not the plague?

BEA

No! Isn't it wonderful?

NICK

It is. It's... great news.

THEY hug and kiss just as THREE GUYS enter to get the beam. They see these two "guys" kissing, stop cold.

(motioning to him and Bea)

It's okay, we're having a baby together.

The GUYS take the beam and run off.

BEA

Oh, Nick. You're going to be a father. A family, like we always wanted. Now we're gonna need that country cottage more than ever.

NICK

And I'm working on it.

BEA

So am I... better get to it.

SHE staggers again...

on't you

see Richard III...

s stage

a thick

NICK

No. You go home and rest.

SHE nods her consent, then kisses him.

BEA

Thanks, I love you, luv.

NICK

I love you, too.

SHE exits.

(excited)

I'm going to be a *father*?

(then, sobered and worried)

I'm going to be a father...

NICK rubs his brow, feeling the pressure. SHYLOCK enters, having overheard this.

SHYLOCK

Hello, Nick. Ready to reconsider my offer?

NICK

No, Shylock.

SHYLOCK

Because you're prejudiced against the Jew?

NICK

Not me. All of Renaissance Europe! Besides I've already got a Puritan saying my writing's the work of Satan and I should burn in Hell.

SHYLOCK

Don't listen to critics! They're *fakakta*! Come on Nick—be a *mensch*! Let me help you!

NICK

I'm not that desperate.

SHYLOCK

Really? You have no show, no patron, and your brother is at a private party for William Shakespeare.

NICK

What?! I'LL KILL HIM!

SHYLOCK

It's invitation only. And guess who has an invitation?

#9 – *Shakespeare's After Party*

*SHYLOCK follows, holding up his invitation. THEY exit as the riff from
WILLPOWER plays...*

CROWD

SHAKESPEARE!

SHAKESPEARE!

Set transitions to...

and this.

my

you!

SCENE 10: After-Show Party Tent

A crowded tent which is lavishly decorated with flowing silks and lots of throw pillows; Playboy club meets hippie love den. A jazzy version of "BUT SOFT WHAT LIGHT" plays. FRANCIS BACON and THOMAS MIDDLETON stand off to the side, smoking pipes. NIGEL and PORTIA enter. They look around in awe.

PORTIA

Oh my...

A scantily clad WAITRESS walks past with a tray of goblets.

WAITRESS

Drinks?

PORTIA

Oh, yes. I'm parched. Thank you.

THEY each take a goblet. PORTIA downs hers quickly - then...

(barely able to speak)

That's not water.

Then - SHE takes another sip. Mmmm, pretty good!

NIGEL

Ohmygod, look over there. It's Thomas Middleton.

PORTIA

<GASP>

And he's talking to Edmund Spenser. And ohmygosh, ohmygosh... look who just walked in!

NIGEL, PORTIA

Francis Bacon!

NIGEL

Wow. It's like - all the greatest poets of London are right here in this room!

PORTIA

Including you.

NIGEL reacts. Then THEY both giggle. PORTIA takes another drink as SHAKESPEARE enters and strikes a pose.

SHAKESPEARE

Is that a young Bottom I see?!

CROWD

(singing)

SHAKESPEARE!

SHAKESPEARE

(polite greetings as HE works the room)

Hi... hi... how are you, thanks for coming... good to see you, yes you can touch me, ooh, I wanna talk to you...

(as the excited guest stands)

Not now.

(arriving at Nigel)

So... Nigel Bottom – playwright, poet and prestigious prodigy.

(to the crowd)

Oooh, that was a lot of alliteration –

(sing-song)

OCCUPATIONAL HA-ZARD!

(playing to crowd, then back to Nigel)

So – Nicky Bottom's little brother. His "secret weapon", all grown up. And who is this delightful damsel, this maiden fair, this feast for the eyes?

NIGEL

Oh, um... This is Portia.

SHAKESPEARE

Portia. Good name.

PORTIA

PORTIA stares stage-struck, mouth quivering, breathing quickening

SHAKESPEARE

That's right. This is happening. Just breathe...

PORTIA

M-m-m-master Shakespeare...

SHE bows and is now so tipsy she collapses to the ground.

SHAKESPEARE

Aw, she's bedazzled. You like that word? I made it up, it's what I do!

(turns to crowd)

Let's drink to that!

CROWD

HUZZAH!!!!

NIGEL helps Portia to her feet. SHE takes another huge gulp. She gets woozy.

PORTIA

I think I need a bit of a lie down.

SHE tries to sit on sofa but falls behind it.

SHAKESPEARE

So! Nigel. What are you and that brother of yours working on? A tragedy? A comedy? A tragic attempt at comedy?

(to the crowd)

See what I did there?

(THEY don't laugh enough)

SEE WHAT I DID??

THEY laugh harder.

NIGEL

Actually, Nick doesn't want me to tell anyone.

SHAKESPEARE

Oh, God, he's so paranoid. Always has been. Even when I was a lowly actor in his sad little troupe, he was so *insecure*. Of course, with you as his partner, he has even more reason to be. I've read your sonnet.

HE puts a hand on Nigel's shoulder, nods like "yeah, that's right, I read it." NIGEL waits for a comment. SHAKESPEARE finds a bit of dust on Nigel's coat, flicks it off. Nigel is in agony, waiting.

It's good. Quite good. I'd love to read more.

(feigning surprise)

Oh—is that your folio?

HE points to Nigel's leather notebook.

NIGEL

What, this? Oh, this is just—a collection of random lines and thoughts...

SHAKESPEARE

Would you like me to give it a looky-loo? What am I saying? Of course you would! I'm Shakespeare!

CROWD

(singing, raising a glass)

SHAKESPEARE!

SHAKESPEARE

(takes Nigel's notebook, reads)

Hmmm. "All the world's a stage" Good line, that.

There's a commotion at the door as SHYLOCK and NICK enter. SHAKESPEARE steps away, flipping through pages.

DOORMAN

Hey, you're not allowed in here...

DOORMAN tries to stop them.

SHYLOCK

It's okay he's my plus one...

NICK

Trust me I have no desire to stay...

(backing into the room)

...I'm just looking for my...

(seeing Nigel)

Brother! There you are! Why the hell are... oh, hello Will.

SHAKESPEARE hides the notebook behind his back.

SHAKESPEARE

Hello, Nick. Been a long time.

NICK

Not long enough. Is that... my brother's *notebook*?

(takes it from him)

Nice try.

NIGEL

He was just offering to look at my ideas.

NICK

Or *his* ideas as they'd soon be known.

CROWD

Ooohhh.

SHAKESPEARE

Do you bite your thumb at me sir?

CROWD laugh and lightly applaud

NICK

Really? Quoting *Romeo and Juliet*? Pathetic.

SHAKESPEARE

By my troth, the tartness of his face doth sour the ripened grape.

CROWD

HA-HA-HA-HA-HA

NICK

Oh yeah? Well, by my troth your grape... is stupid.

NICK instantly winces at what he said, wishing he could take it back.

SHAKESPEARE

Such a clever retort, and you can't write a hit?

CROWD

Oooooooh...

More LAUGHTER at Nick's expense. HE'S fuming.

SHAKESPEARE

No, no, no, no, no, no... we should actually thank this man. He was the one who suggested I take up writing in the first place.

NICK

Because you're a shit actor.

SHAKESPEARE

Oh no I'm not!

NICK

Oh yes you are!

SHAKESPEARE

Oh no I'm not!

NICK

Oh yes you are!

SHAKESPEARE

Take it back.

BROTHER JEREMIAH (O.S.)

OUT OF MY WAY, HEATHEN!

BROTHER JEREMIAH enters with TWO PURITAN FOLLOWERS.

PANICKED WOMAN

PURITANS!!!

PEOPLE scatter. SHAKESPEARE is whisked away by his MEN as JEREMIAH scans the room.

BROTHER JEREMIAH

Where is she?? Where is my daughter?

(SEEING HER, GASP!)

PORTIA!

PORTIA rises from behind the sofa holding a goblet of wine, quite drunk.

PORTIA

Hello, daddy-o.

BROTHER JEREMIAH

You said you were in your room, reading your bible.

PORTIA

(slurred speech)

Ohhh, Bible-bible-bibble-babble

<BLOWING A RASPBERRY>

JEREMIAH is FURIOUS. He turns to Nigel.

BROTHER JEREMIAH

Hear me now, sinner. You dare to cross me and corrupt my daughter!? So help me God, I will smite these Bottoms – and smite them hard.

HE pauses, rethinking what he said. Then turns to Portia.

COME WITH ME!

PORTIA

(giggling as SHE exits)

Smite their bottoms...

HE drags her away. NIGEL goes after them.

NIGEL

Portia!

NICK

(grabbing Nigel)

And you — come with me!

HE grabs Nigel and pulls him across the stage in the opposite direction.

NIGEL

Let me go! I'm not a child!

NICK

Then why are you acting like one?! I told you to stay away from her and now look what's happened — we're on the most wanted list of a deranged Puritan! And Shakespeare nearly got your notebook full of ideas — which, by the way, is the only reason he invited you here.

NIGEL

No!

NICK

You are so naive! You've got to watch your back with this guy. Believe me, I know every trick in his book.

NIGEL

Well, it was all very confusing! And now she's gone and I've lost my inspiration and the love of my life and... I've got to get her back!

(Running off)

PORTIA!

NICK

No! Nigel!! We have a show to write! URGGGGGH.

SHYLOCK, who has been seated this whole time with his back to them, stands.

SHYLOCK

So. Ready to reconsider now...?

#9A — Shakespeare (Incidental)

We hear the guitar riff of "GOD I HATE SHAKESPEARE"

NICK

You know what...

Guitar plays again.

Why the hell not!? Let's do it!

SHYLOCK

Really! Mozeltov! I love it, I love it, I love it! So – tell me – what’s our new show about?

NICK

Um, we’re still... looking for that great idea.

SHYLOCK

Hmmm... Too bad you can’t get a peek into Shakespeare’s notebook, huh?

This gives NICK an idea. LIGHTING CHANGE. MORE “GOD I HATE SHAKESPEARE” GUITAR as Nick removes his money pouch, bounces it in his hand as the set transitions to...

now look
And
the only

I know

ation and

SCENE 11: Soothsayer Alley

NICK crosses into the alley as NOSTRADAMUS steps out.

NOSTRADAMUS

I knew you'd be back.

NICK

Really?

NOSTRADAMUS

No. But it sounds impressive, doesn't it? How goes it with your *musical*?

NICK

Not great, actually. We're having a hard time figuring out what a musical should be about.

NOSTRADAMUS

Hair!

NICK

Hair?

NOSTRADAMUS

No, that would just be *weird*, wouldn't it? Wait!

(fingers to temples)

Little shop... of whores.

NICK

Really? That doesn't sound right either.

NOSTRADAMUS

I know. Why is the shop little? Small whores?

NICK

Look, the truth is...

(looking around)

I'm... I'm kind of desperate. I need an idea that is guaranteed to be a success. One that will have 'em lined up around the theater! So I want you to look into the future and tell me...

(looks around again)

What will Shakespeare's greatest play be?

NOSTRADAMUS

Oooh. Are you sure you want to cross that line? Wouldn't you rather just come up with an idea of your own?

NICK

Of course I would! I've tried and...

(hard to say it)

I can't, okay? Maybe if I had more time or less pressure. I just need one – one hit! – to get me out of this hole.

NOSTRADAMUS

I must warn you – for this, you will pay a great price.

NICK

(giving him money bag)

I brought every penny I own.

NOSTRADAMUS

That's not what I meant – but okay.

NICK doesn't let go of the bag.

NICK

Are you sure this will work? 'Cause I've got everything riding on this... and now I've got a baby on the way.

NOSTRADAMUS

Which I predicted, remember. A new life – with no teeth?

NICK remembers, lights up. NOSTRADAMUS nods confidently. Let's go of the money bag.

Okay! Shakespeare's biggest hit. Here we go!

NOSTRADAMUS does a ritual – rubbing hands, fingers to temples, etc. He stumbles backwards, NICK catches him.

Whoa! I see it! Shakespeare's greatest play!

NICK

Yes...?

NOSTRADAMUS

...the one they will be talking about for generations to come...

NICK

Yes...???

NOSTRADAMUS

And this play will be called....

(squinting, straining, then painting it in the air)

"OMELETTE!"

NICK is ready to celebrate, then has to think about that for a beat.

NICK

Omelette?

(NOSTRADAMUS *nods*)

Like with the eggs?

NOSTRADAMUS

Yes. No wait...

(*squinting*)

No, that was it. Omelette. And wait! Another vision!

(*fingers to temples*)

Something... Danish?

NICK

A Danish. So... there's some sort of—breakfast theme?

NOSTRADAMUS

And wait! Wait! Ham... ham... ham—something.

NICK

Ham omelette?

NOSTRADAMUS

That must be it.

NICK

And you're sure it will be big?

NOSTRADAMUS

It will be known as perhaps the single greatest play ever written.

NICK

(*fist pump*)

Yes!

NOSTRADAMUS

Whoa! I'm getting a flood of images! So many...

NICK

Write 'em down! All of 'em!

NOSTRADAMUS

Let me get my quill!

NOSTRADAMUS *runs O.S.*

NICK

Oh man, this is gonna solve so many problems! My future is suddenly looking brighter!

#10 - Bottom's Gonna Be On Top

(singing)

NO MORE MR. ANONYMOUS
NO MORE WORLD THAT IS NICK BOTTOM-LESS
MY NAME WILL BE SYNONYMOUS
WITH BEING ON THE TOP

And we are into Nick's fantasy.

I CAN SEE IT NOW I'M THE CAT'S MEOW
IT'S A HIT, POW!
IT'S GONNA BE GREAT, GONNA BE GREAT

LIGHTS UP behind him. TOWNSPEOPLE enter and line up in much the same way the did for Shakespeare in the opening.

EVERYWHERE I GO THEY WILL LOVE ME SO
HAIL MY NAME, OH
IT'S GONNA BE GREAT, GONNA BE GREAT

TOWNSPEOPLE

MASTER BOTTOM YOU'RE SUCH A WONDERFUL WRITER

NICK

(eyes closed, dreaming)

Oooh, I can hear them now...

TOWNSPEOPLE

AND YOUR TALENT IS TALENT BEYOND COMPARE

NICK

(goes to them)

Why, thank you!

TOWNSPEOPLE

YOU'RE A STAR, YOU ARE, AND YOU COULDN'T BE BRIGHTER

NICK

Well, now you're just embarrassing me.

TOWNSPEOPLE

YOU'RE A REAL VISIONARY

NICK

THANK YOU JESUS AND HAIL MARY!

NICK, TOWNSPEOPLE

THIS BOTTOM'S GONNA BE ON TOP
THIS BOTTOM'S GONNA BE ON TOP

NICK

MAN, I'M GONNA SIZZLE, MAN I'M GONNA POP

NICK, TOWNSPEOPLE

AND THIS BOTTOM'S GONNA BE ON TOP

NICK

THIS IS HEAVEN SENT - FEELING CONFIDENT
MONEY WELL SPENT

IT'S GONNA BE GREAT, GONNA BE GREAT
THROW A BIG PARADE - PRAISES WILL BE MADE

COMPLIMENTS PAID

IT'S GONNA BE GREAT, GONNA BE GREAT

BEA enters pushing a wooden pram.

BEA

ME AND BABY ARE SO ETERNALLY GRATEFUL

NICK

You're who I'm doing it for.

BEA

THANK YOU FOR OUR COTTAGE IN THE WOODS.

NICK

You deserve it!

NIGEL approaches from the opposite side

NIGEL

IF GRATITUDE WAS FOOD I WOULD HAVE A BIG PLATE FULL

NICK

Nice metaphor, bro!

SHYLOCK and LORD CLAPHAM enter.

LORD CLAPHAM

YOU'RE THE GREATEST

SHYLOCK

YOU DA MAN!

NICK

I REALLY SHOULDN'T SAY IT BUT YES I AM

SHYLOCK and CLAPHAM join NICK as HE sings triumphantly

NICK, SHYLOCK, CLAPHAM, CHORUS

AND THIS BOTTOM'S GONNA BE ON TOP

THIS BOTTOM'S GONNA BE ON TOP

NICK

ONCE I GET GOING,
NEVER GONNA STOP

CHORUS

OOOH AAAHHH

NICK, SHYLOCK, CLAPHAM, CHORUS

AND THIS BOTTOM'S GONNA BE ON TOP

NOSTRADAMUS approaches. LIGHTING CHANGES to show we are out of the fantasy.

NOSTRADAMUS

There's also a prince, and a ghost! MURDER MOST FOUL!

NICK

Write down everything you see! Because I see me. And I'm not a bard. I'm the Bard!

The RENAISSANCE WRITERS we met in the opening enter. They line the red carpet as HE walks down it waving to the imaginary crowd.

RENAISSANCE WRITERS

WE ARE THE ROYALTY OF THE RENAISSANCE WRITERS

NICK

Indeed you are.

RENAISSANCE WRITERS

BUT NOW WE'RE HANDING DOWN THE CROWN TO YOU

NICK

Really? I'm honored.

RENAISSANCE WRITERS

YOU WERE A NOBODY BUT THEN OVERNIGHT YOU'RE SOMEONE
BETTER THAN THE REST OF US
NOW YOU ARE THE BEST OF US

THEY bow.

SHAKESPEARE (O.S.)

Not—so—fast!

SHAKESPEARE enters. NICK faces off with him.

NICK

Hello, Will. I knew you wouldn't go down without a fight.

THEY circle each other like matadors.

SHAKESPEARE

THE TOP, SIR? NAY, THOU SURELY DOTH JEST
I SAY, ON MY HONOR HERE, I DOTH PROTEST.

NICK

Yawn. Rhyming couplet. That is so 1580's.

SHAKESPEARE

Oh yeah? Well...

THEY have a "tap off" - tapping in rhythm as they speak...

IF YOU WANT TO MAKE IT TO THE TOP
THEN YOU'RE GONNA HAFTA GO THROUGH ME
CAUSE ON THE TOP IS WHERE I LIVE
AND I WILL NOT BE GIVING UP THAT EASILY SO THERE

NICK

OH MAN, I HAVE BEEN WAITING FOR THIS
MOMENT FOR SO LONG I'M GONNA
ENJOY IT WHEN I KNOCK YOU OFF YOUR PERCH.

SHAKESPEARE

OH NO YOU WON'T.

NICK

OH YES I WILL.

SHAKESPEARE

OH NO YOU WON'T.

RE SOMEONE

NICK

OH YES I WILL.

SHAKESPEARE

OH NO YOU WON'T.

NICK

OH YES I WILL.

SHAKESPEARE

OH, NO YOU WON'T—MY ACCOMPLISHMENTS ARE MUCH MORE ACCOMPLISHED THAN YOURS.

NICK

INNNNNNN YOUR DREAMS—I AM THE BEST.

SHAKESPEARE

YOU CAN'T BE THE BEST BECAUSE I AM THE BEST
I HAVE WRITTEN TWELVE PLAYS AND EACH ONE IS A TESTAMENT
TO MY GREAT SKILL—I AM THE WILL!
AND I WROTE TAMING OF THE SHREW
AND RICHARD THREE AND RICHARD TWO
AND HENRYS FOUR AND FIVE AND SIX

(beat)

AND TITUS ANDRONICUS
AND OH, DID I FORGET? *ROMEO AND JULIET?*

NICK comes at him furiously, backing him across the stage.

NICK

WELL I HAVE JUST WRITTEN THE THING
THAT THE CRITICS ARE CALLING THE GREATEST THING
THEY'VE EVER SEEN
AND THE PEOPLE ARE LOVING IT, CAN'T GET ENOUGH OF IT
EVERYONE! EVEN INCLUDING THE QUEEN!
SHE RECENTLY INVITED ME, TO HER CASTLE WHERE SHE KNIGHTED ME
AND PRIVATELY SHE TOLD ME THAT YOU'RE
NOT ANY GOOD, NOT ANY GOOD, NOT ANY GOOD, NOT ANY GOOD
AND SHE TOLD ME THAT ALL OF YOUR PLAYS MAKE HER VOMIT
AND NOTHING'S AS GOOD AS MY MUSICAL OMELETTE!

HE strikes a hands-on-hip pose.

SHAKESPEARE

WAIT A MINUTE. YOU WROTE OMELETTE?

NICK

YES.

SHAKESPEARE

(melodramatic, operatic)

I NEVER THOUGHT THAT I WOULD MEET MY EQUAL
BUT I CONCEDE I HAVE BEEN BESTED BY THE BEST

(looking up, hopeful)

MAYBE WE COULD PARTNER ON A SEQUEL.

NICK

OH, MY HOW THE TIDE HAS TURNED
LET'S REVIEW, WHAT HAVE WE LEARNED?
SEE, YOU WERE HERE, BUT NOW WE SWAP
SO KISS THIS BOTTOM I'M ON THE TOP - YEAH

CHORUS dances around Nick.

CHORUS

HE'S ON TOP! HE'S ON TOP!

NICK

RIGHT WHERE I OUGHTA BE!

CHORUS

WHA-WHA-WOW WOW

NICK, CHORUS

AND THIS BOTTOM'S GONNA BE ON TOP

CHORUS

HE'S ON TOP!

NICK

IT'S NICE UP HERE!

CHORUS

HE'S ON TOP!

NICK

I'M ENJOYING THE VIEW!

CHORUS

WHA-WHA-WOW WOW.

NICK, CHORUS

YEAH THIS BOTTOM'S GONNA BE ON TOP
YEAH THIS BOTTOM'S GONNA BE ON TOP
YEAH THIS BOTTOM'S GONNA BE ON TOP

Abrupt lighting change. NICK, holding two pewter mugs, is out of his fantasy and now standing in front of Nigel.

NIGEL

You want us to write "Omelette?" Really? I'm not so sure about this.

NICK

Well, I am, little brother.

(hands Nigel a mug)

So raise a glass. To "Omelette. The Musical!"

BOTTOMS UP!

CHORUS

BOTTOM'S UP

NICK, CHORUS

YEAH THIS BOTTOM'S GONNA BE ON TOP!

BLACK OUT.

ACT 2

#11 – Entr'acte

The MINSTREL enters in front of curtain again...

#11A – Welcome to the Renaissance (Reprise)

MINSTREL

WELCOME TO THE RENAISSANCE .
NOW THE STAGE IS SET FOR A HUGE RESPONSE
OR AN EPIC FAILURE
AND NICK AND NIGEL BOTTOM
ARE STARTING TO SWEAT
CAUSE THEY DON'T HAVE THE STORY WRITTEN YET
WELCOME TO THE RENAISSANCE
GOTTA GIVE THE AUDIENCE WHAT IT WANTS
BUT IT'S NOT THAT EASY
AND IF YOU'RE WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE
YOU'RE FEELING THE HEAT
TO STILL BE NEW
WELCOME TO THE RENAISSANCE
WHAT'S A FAMOUS BARD TO DO?

CURTAIN rises to reveal

SCENE 1: London Street

We hear a ROCK SHUFFLE as SHAKESPEARE enters flanked by his ENTOURAGE.

#12 – Hard to Be the Bard**SHAKESPEARE**

MY DAYS ARE SO BUSY IT'S MAKING ME DIZZY
THERE'S SO MUCH I GOTTA DO
IT'S LUNCHESES AND MEETINGS AND POETRY READINGS
AND ENDLESS INTERVIEWS

HE sits in a chair and poses as a PAINTER paints him.

GOTTA POSE FOR A PORTRAIT
AND HOW I DEPLORE SITTING THERE FOR ETERNITY

HE stands as a MAN in an apron approaches with a pewter mug.

THEN IT'S OFF TO THE INN
WHERE MY INNKEEPER FRIEND
WANTS TO NAME A DRINK AFTER ME

A writing desk rolls in. HE sits and writes.

THEN IT'S BACK TO MY ROOM, WHERE I RESUME
MY ATTEMPT TO WRITE A HIT
JUST ME AND MY BEER AND THE TERRIBLE FEAR
THAT I MIGHT BE LOSING IT

His MEN flank him – like the Pips as THEY dance behind him and echo his sentiment.

SHAKESPEARE

AND IT'S HARD
IT'S HARD
IT'S REALLY, REALLY HARD –
SO VERY VERY HARD
I MAKE IT LOOK EASY BUT HONEY BELIEVE ME
IT'S HARD
IT'S HARD
IT'S SO INCREDIBLY HARD
SO INCONCEIVABLY, UNBELIEVABLY HARD
IT'S HARD TO BE THE BARD

BARD BOYS

IT'S HARD
IT'S HARD
IT'S REALLY, HARD –
VERY VERY HARD

IT'S HARD
IT'S HARD
INCREDIBLY HARD
INCONCEIVABLY, UNBELIEVABLY HARD

(SHAKESPEARE)

(to his ENTOURAGE)
Honestly, I don't know how I do it. I mean, there's only so much of me that can go around.

SHAKESPEARE

I GOT SO MANY FANS
WITH SO MANY DEMANDS
I CAN HARDLY GO TAKE A PISS
BE IT THEATER FREAK OR
THE AUTOGRAPH SEEKER
THEY ALL WANT A PIECE OF THIS

HE signs autographs - poses while someone sketches a picture.

IT'S A CROSS THAT I BEAR
I'M LIKE JESUS, I SWEAR
IT'S A BURDEN BUT I SUFFER THROUGH IT
IT'S ALL PART OF THE GAME,
THE TRAPPINGS OF FAME
BUT SOMEBODY'S GOTTA DO IT

Now we're back to the room and the writing desk...

AND I KNOW, I KNOW, I GOTTA GO
AND GET BACK TO MY PEN AND INK

SHAKESPEARE

OH DON'T MAKE ME DO IT, DON'T MAKE ME GO THROUGH IT

(calling to his manservant)

CAN SOMEBODY GET ME A DRINK!

SHAKESPEARE

'CAUSE IT'S HARD
IT'S HARD
IT'S REALLY, REALLY HARD
IT'S SEXY BUT IT'S HARD
THIS BAR THAT I'M RAISING TO BE THIS
AMAZING
IT'S HARD
IT'S HARD
IT'S SO ANNOYINGLY HARD
SO UNAVOIDABLY UNENJOYABLY HARD

BARD BOYS

OOOH
AH, OOOH
HE CAN'T PEE
AH, OOOH

GIMME, GIMME

AH, OOOH
HE IS SUFFERING

AH, OOOH
SO HE DOES IT

GOTTA GO
OOOOH, AHFFF

BARD BOYS

IT'S HARD
IT'S HARD
IT'S REALLY, REALLY HARD
IT'S SEXY BUT IT'S HARD

IT'S HARD
IT'S HARD
ANNOYINGLY HARD
UNAVOIDABLY UNENJOY

SHAKESPEARE

IT'S HARD to be the bard, BABY

(turning to his men)

I know writing made me famous, but being famous is just so much more fun.

(sings)

YOU SEE WHAT PEOPLE JUST DON'T UNDERSTAND
IS THAT WRITING'S DEMANDING
IT'S MENTALLY CHALLENGING AND IT'S A BORE
IT'S SUCH A CHORE
TO SIT IN A ROOM BY YOURSELF
OH MY GOD, I JUST HATE IT!
AND YOU'RE TRYING TO FIND
AN OPENING LINE OR A BRILLIANT IDEA
AND YOU'RE PACING THE FLOOR
AND SEARCHING FOR JUST A BIT OF DIVINE INTERVENTION

SO ONE LITTLE NUGGET THAT ONE LITTLE SPARK
THEN EUREKA! YOU FIND IT YOU'RE READY TO START
SO NOW YOU CAN WRITE, RIGHT? WRONG!
YOU'RE NOT EVEN CLOSE, YOU REMEMBER THAT DAMN IT, YOUR
PLAY'S GOTTA BE IN IAMBIC PENTAMETER!

THEN YOU WRITE DOWN A WORD BUT IT'S NOT THE RIGHT WORD
SO YOU TRY A NEW WORD BUT YOU HATE THE NEW THE WORD
AND YOU NEED A GOOD WORD BUT YOU CAN'T FIND THE WORD
OH WHAT IS IT, WHERE IS IT, WHERE IS IT, WHAT IS IT
AH-HA-HA-HA-HA... UGGGGGHHHHH

(talking to his quill)

What is it?? Tell me!...

(as the quill)

You know what you are?

(as Shakespeare)

Please, enlighten me

(as quill)

You're a petulant little boy and a fraud.

(strangling quill)

Shut up, mother!!

VALET

Sir.

SHAKESPEARE

(embarrassed he got caught)

Hello.

SHAKESPEARE turns, still crazed. Next to the servant is the MAN WITH THE EYEPATCH.

VALET

You asked for information on what Nicholas Bottom is writing. Our spy is here with news.

SHAKESPEARE

(whispering to servant)

Did he see me losing it?

VALET

He's half blind, sir.

SHAKESPEARE

Oh, good. Then he only saw half of it. Ha ha, see what I did?

(to the Eyepatch Man)

Speak, man. What news?

The EYEPATCH MAN extends a hand. SHAKESPEARE puts a shilling in it.

EYEPATCH MAN

I saw Nick Bottom, I did. He paid a soothsayer to foresee what Shakespeare's greatest play would be.

SHAKESPEARE

<GASP>

That sneaky little thief! Why doesn't he get his own idea!?

BARD BOYS

IT'S HARD

SHAKESPEARE

Oh yeah. It is, isn't it?

IT'S REALLY THE WORST

BARD BOYS

IT'S HARD

SHAKESPEARE

MAKES ME WONDER WHY I DIDN'T THINK OF THAT FIRST

BARD BOYS

IT'S HARD

SHAKESPEARE

HARD TO ALLEVIATE THAT PRESSURE TO CREATE

BARD BOYS

IT'S HARD

SHAKESPEARE

HARD TO DO SOMETHING AS GOOD AS THE LAST THING I DID
THAT WAS ALREADY GREAT

BARD BOYS

IT'S HARD

SHAKESPEARE

IT'S HARD!

BARD BOYS

SO HARD IN FACT THAT HE'S STEALING FROM THE BARD

The MEN start handing him articles of clothing for his disguise.

SHAKESPEARE

BARD BOYS

WELL I'LL HOIST HIM BY HIS PETARD

ALL THAT I NEED IS A CLEVER DISGUISE

I'LL MAKE HIM PAY FOR HIS DEVIOUS LIES

LET HIM DO ALL THE TEDIOUS STUFF

THE WORK THAT'S TERRIBLY AND UNBEARABLY

HAA-ARRRRRD

CLEVER DISGUISE

DEVIOUS LIES

SHAKESPEARE is now in his disguise: coat, hat and full beard.

SHAKESPEARE

Nice try, Nick Bottom. But I think *Shakespeare* needs to find out what Shakespeare's biggest hit will be.

SHAKESPEARE

BARD BOYS

CAUSE IT'S HARD

CAUSE IT'S HARD

CAUSE IT'S HARD

IT'S HARD IT'S TOTALLY HARD

IT'S HARD IT'S TOTALLY HARD

IT'S HARD IT'S TOTALLY HARD

H THE

s here with

it.

e's

SHAKESPEARE

I'VE GOT FORTUNE AND FAME
EVERYONE KNOWS MY NAME
I CAN'T HELP IT IT'S STILL FRIGGIN' HARD

Final pose. Song ends. THEY exit as the set transitions to...

#12A - *Hard to Be the Bard (Playoff)*

SCENE 2: The Theatre

NICK is at a table alone with NOSTRADAMUS, furiously sifting through his various sheets of parchment.

NICK

Okay, so just to make sure I've got this all straight, we've got a Prince... eating a Danish... and he's visited by the ghost of his dead father?

NOSTRADAMUS

Not a ghost. The *phantom*! He's the former king who was murdered by the Prince's uncle... and the uncle's name is...

(fingers to temples)

Scar.

NICK

Scar.

(writing that down)

And he murdered the king. And the prince is in love, but she goes mad you say?

NOSTRADAMUS

Yes! And — how do you solve a problem like Ophelia?

NICK

Right. How do you?

NOSTRADAMUS

(fingers to temples, squinting)

The prince says "get thee to a nunnery!" And then the nuns hide her and all of the singing children — from the Nazis.

NICK

Uh huh. And these "Nazis" — are they good guys or bad?

NOSTRADAMUS

Not sure. But it feels important to get that one right.

The TROUPE enters, looking confused and bewildered as they review script pages.

NICK

Oh, they're back.

(pulls Nostradamus aside)

Okay, remember — stay over here and don't say anything.

SHYLOCK enters.

SHYLOCK

(deep breath, smelling the air)

Ahhhh, the theater! I love it, I love it, I love it!

NICK

Shylock! Just in time! Have a seat, we're just about to start.

SHYLOCK

I love it!

NICK

You haven't seen it yet.

SHYLOCK

I know, but I just love being here. I'm verklempt, I tell you!

SHYLOCK takes a seat as NIGEL steps up to Nick.

NIGEL

Um, Nick? Isn't it illegal to have a Jewish patron?

NICK

He's not a *patron*, he's producing *money* for the production to get it produced... so we call him a... well we haven't got a title yet.

(to the cast)

Okay, everyone, let's take it from the top of the song.

#13 - *It's Eggs*

(crossing, muttering to himself)

Watch and weep Shakespeare. Watch and weep.

The TROUPE sing and dance.

TROUPE

WHAT'S THAT COOKIN' ON THE GRIDDLE
WHIPPED UP AND BEATEN - IT'S EGGS
THROW SOME FIXINS IN THE MIDDLE
SO GOOD FOR EATIN' - IT'S EGGS

(IT'S EGGS - OOH!)

(IT'S EGGS, OOH!)

NICK

I SEE WITHIN THESE FLUFFY FOLDS
THE SCRAMBLED NATURE OF MY SOUL
I'M CRACKING UP AS I BEGIN
TO SEE THE BITS OF ME WITHIN THIS

NICK, TROUPE

OM... OM, OM—OM, OM, OM
OM, OM, OM—OMELETTE!

SHYLOCK

(cutting them off)

I'm sorry, can I jump in here?

The MUSIC fizzles out. THEY stop.

Umm—what the hell is this?

NICK

I told you there'd be singing.

SHYLOCK

But they're singing about eggs.

NICK

It's a *metaphor*. The griddle is his mind. What's he thinking? Eggs: the symbol of life. But his thoughts are *scrambled*—he's "cracking up"... like an egg.

SHYLOCK

Yeah, I'm not getting any of that.

NIGEL

Um... neither am I and I *wrote* it. I mean...

(checking script)

What's a fiddler, and why is he on the roof?

NICK

Because... the roof is where the chim chimney is. Quit over-thinking it...

SHYLOCK

I'm just thinking about the audience. You know, the people who've come in from Jersey.

NICK

Jersey?

SHYLOCK

In the Channel Islands. Next to Guernsey.

TOM, ROBIN, PETER, SNUG

Oh, yeah/Of course/Lot of theatre-go-ers come in from there...

SHYLOCK

These are salt-of-the-earth people, they've worked hard all week, they don't want metaphors. They want good old fashioned frivolous entertainment.

NOSTRADAMUS

CATS!

SHYLOCK

What?

NOSTRADAMUS

A whole stage covered with singing cats! No, wait...

(squinting).

No, that's right. Singing cats.

SHYLOCK

Who's the nut job?

NICK

He's... in the show. I told you musicals need a big cast.

NOSTRADAMUS looks delighted with this news.

NIGEL

I'm sorry, Nick, I have a strong feeling something isn't right about all this.

TOM, SNUG, ROBIN

I don't get it/I miss the reapers!/we need better dresses.

TROUPE

I have some ideas/I agree/I'm not sure about all the eggs, etc.

SHAKESPEARE (AS TOBY)

(Yorkshire accent)

Ey up!

(pronounced "eye up")

'Scuse me, lads.

ALL heads turn. SHAKESPEARE - in disguise - has entered.

(as TOBY)

Name's Toby Belch. A humble actor from York. I come seeking an audition for the Bottom Brothers.

NICK

That's us.

SHAKESPEARE

Oh! What an honor. I hear tell you are creating a work that is... incendiary. Monumental. Bigger than Shakespeare.

NICK

(to troupe)

Did ya hear that? That's right. Toby, was it?

SHAKESPEARE (TOBY)

From York.

NICK

We are working on something pretty special. It's a play full of songs — about an omelette.

SHAKESPEARE (TOBY)

(dropping accent)

That's the great idea?

NICK

What?

SHAKESPEARE (TOBY)

I said, "that's a great idea!"

(hands him paper)

Here's my head-sketch and resume.

NICK

(reading)

Hey. You've been in every one of my plays.

SHAKESPEARE (TOBY)

(feigning deference)

I'm a massive fan. And it's so unfair that Shakespeare gets all the praise and attention and the money —

(rubbing it in)

So much money — when your plays are in a class all of their own.

NICK

I like the new York actor! You're hired! Gents, meet our newest cast member — Toby Belch! Teach him the song.

THEY shake hands and introduce themselves. NICK notices NIGEL heading for the door.

Where are you going? We have a whole second Act to sort out.

NIGEL

I... need to... explore some other ideas.

NICK

Let's not go through this again. I told you... this is the idea. Omelette.

NIGEL

Yeah, and I told you something about that doesn't feel right... and I just have something that... I need to write on my own.

NICK

Oh, I get it. You want to go see her, don't you? Well, that's not gonna happen.

(NIGEL starts to leave)

Don't. Stay... do not...

NIGEL's look betrays him. He doesn't know what to say, so he just runs away.

Nigel... get back h— Uggggh...

(turning to Nostradamus)

That girl.

NOSTRADAMUS

Yoko!

LIGHTS OUT ON THEM as we transition to...

#13A — Portia (Incidental)

SCENE 3: Under London Bridge

Underneath London Bridge, NIGEL enters. PORTIA emerges from hiding.

Portia!

NIGEL

THEY embrace.

PORTIA

Oh, Nigel! You made it! I had to climb out the window, but I don't think anyone saw me...

NIGEL

Are you certain you want to do this?

PORTIA

Yes.

NIGEL

Because we don't have to if you don't want to.

PORTIA

No, no, I *want* to. I'm just... nervous.

NIGEL

So am I.

(lays his coat on the ground)

Is here okay?

SHE nods, sits. NIGEL reaches into his codpiece, feeling for something. Portia looks away – until Nigel pulls out a PARCHMENT and reads.

NIGEL

"ODE TO Portia" –by Nigel Bottom.

(very fast)

"Like-stars-and-sun-together-never seen,
yet-heaven-made-us-one-our-flames to-shine,"

PORTIA

Whoa, whoa. Slow down.

NIGEL

Sorry – guess I'm more nervous than I thought. Let me try that again...

(deep breath, starting over)

Like stars and sun together never seen, yet heaven made us one our flames to shine...

PORTIA

Oh God...

SHE'S overcome with sensation that is new to her.

NIGEL

Through night and day, no dusk or dawn between, and none could dim our light nor love divine...

PORTIA

Mmmmm-hmmm...

NIGEL

(a little faster)

"Astronomers—behold these starry eyes!"

PORTIA

Mmm-HMMM...

NIGEL

"Forbidden love—bid secret hearts beat loud!"

PORTIA

Keep going...

NIGEL

"If laws of man our stately love denies."

PORTIA

Don't stop...

NIGEL

"In laws of nature is our love allowed."

PORTIA

Yes!

NIGEL

(really fast)

"And-to-the-stars-will-fly the elusive-dove-to-heaven's-gate-with-my-eternal-love!"

(breathless, turns away)

I finished too quickly. I skipped straight to the final couplet.

PORTIA

It's okay.

(goes to him, hugs him from behind)

It was beautiful. Will you write me another?

NIGEL

What, straight away?

PORTIA

No, not straight away. But—this is what you should be writing, words that feel true to *you*.

NIGEL

You mean instead of *Omelette*? I know. That just doesn't feel right...

PORTIA

Then don't write it. Write from your heart. It will move others as it has moved me.

NIGEL

Will it move your father? Change his mind? He doesn't approve of us.

PORTIA

Neither does your brother. Oooh! Does that make us star-crossed??

NIGEL, PORTIA

<GASP—then giggle>

NIGEL

Wait, that's not a good thing. We both know how that story ends—with me drinking poison and you with a dagger in your heart.

#14—*We See the Light*

PORTIA

Maybe it doesn't have to. Maybe we can write a *different* ending.

(singing)

I'M TIRED OF LISTENING
TO THE SAME SAD STORY
HOW LOVERS FAIL
BECAUSE IT'S WRITTEN IN THE STARS
THE FEUDING FAMILY PLOT
IS STARTING TO BORE ME
I'M THINKING WE
CAN SHOW 'EM THAT'S NOT WHO WE ARE

IT MAY TAKE A LITTLE MORE PERSUADING
FOR THOSE WHO THINK IT'S BETTER

(PORTIA)

THAT WE ARE APART
I HAVE NO DOUBT THEIR DOUBTS
WILL SOON BE FADING
WE'LL SHOW 'EM HOW TRUE LOVE FINDS A WAY!
EVEN THOUGH—I KNOW WHAT THEY'LL SAY

A group of PURITANS enter carrying church pews.

PURITANS

NO, NO THAT WON'T DO, GOD HAS PLANS FOR YOU
IF YOU LIVE IN SIN, YOU LET THE DEVIL WIN
NO, NO THAT WON'T DO

The PURITANS sit on the pews.

PORTIA

But then, they'll hear the words of truth you've written from your heart!

NIGEL steps forward and reads from his poem.

NIGEL

IF LOVE IS A SICKNESS, THEN FIND ME NO CURE
FOR TIS ONLY LOVE, THAT I KNOW TO BE PURE

PURITANS

Awwwww.

PORTIA

Then they'll

THINK ABOUT IT...

PURITANS all rub their chins...

PURITANS

HMMMMM..

PORTIA

AND PRAY ABOUT IT..

PURITANS

(hands in prayer)

YEAH...

PORTIA

*THEN THEIR HEARTS WILL OPEN.
AND THEY'LL BE SINGIN' A DIFFERENT TUNE!*

PURITANS flip their capes and frocks over to reveal paisley and bright flowers as they burst out into a jubilant 70's style dance, with PORTIA and NIGEL joining in.

PURITANS, NIGEL, PORTIA

WE SEE, THE LIGHT
 YOU CHANGED HOW WE'RE THINKIN'
 CUZ WE WERE BLIND
 BUT YOU SHOWED US THE WAY
 WE'RE WRONG, YOU'RE RIGHT
 SALVATION IS YOURS IF YOU DO WHAT IS TRUE TO YOU
 AND YOU DO IT WITH
 LUH-UH-UH-UH-UH-OVE
 DO IT WITH LUH-UH-UH-UH-UH-OVE
 YEAH... OH!

THEY now realize that JEREMIAH has entered and is standing amongst them - arms folded, looking angry.

NIGEL

YOUR FATHER!

PORTIA

YEAH, HE'S A HARD MAN TO BE MOVED
 AND HE'LL SAY...

JEREMIAH

THIS IS UNACCEPTABLE, I DO NOT APPROVE

PORTIA

BUT I KNOW YOU'LL WIN HIM OVER
 HIS HEART IS GONNA SING
 AND HE'LL LOVE YOU WHEN YOU DO YOUR THING
 Go on, do it. Do it right now. Do it.

NIGEL

IF LOVE IS LOVED PURELY
 THEN LET ME OPINE
 THAT ALL LOVE IS SURELY DIVINE

CHORUS

OOOOOH, OOOOH
 GO ON DO IT, GO ON, DO IT RIGHT NOW

BROTHER JEREMIAH throws off his coat revealing something brightly colored underneath.

BROTHER JEREMIAH

Good God, ya'll...

I SEE THE LIGHT

BROTHER JEREMIAH, PURITANS

YOU'VE CHANGED HOW HE'S/I'M THINKIN'
CAUSE HE/I WAS BLIND

BROTHER JEREMIAH

BUT YOU SHOWED ME THE WAY
I'M WRONG
YOU'RE RIGHT

PURITANS

(HE'S WRONG)
(YOU'RE RIGHT)

BROTHER JEREMIAH, PURITANS

SALVATION IS YOURS
IF YOU DO WHAT IS TRUE TO YOU
AND YOU DO IT WITH
LUH-UH-UH-UH-UH-OVE
DO IT WITH
LUH-UH-UH-UH-UH-OVE

BROTHER JEREMIAH

OH, BRETHREN!
I SAY UNTO YOU

PURITANS, NIGEL, PORTIA

SAY WHAT?

BROTHER JEREMIAH

I SAY -
WHO ARE WE TO JUDGE THESE TWO?

PURITANS, NIGEL, PORTIA

SO TRUE,
PREACH IT!

BROTHER JEREMIAH

HE'S A WRITER, HE'S DOING WHAT HE CAN

PURITANS

WHAT HE CAN...

BROTHER JEREMIAH

SHE'S THE DAUGHTER OF A PREACHER MAN

PURITANS

WHOO!

BROTHER JEREMIAH

AND THEY GOT THE RIGHT...

JEREMIAH, PURITANS

THEY GOT THE RIGHT, THEY GOT THE RIGHT TO BE TOGETHER

JEREMIAH

I NEED NO FURTHER PROOF

(pointing to Nigel's poem)

THESE WORDS, THEY SPEAK THE TRUTH

JEREMIAH, PURITANS, NIGEL, PORTIA

AND THE TRUTH WILL SET YOU FREE

JEREMIAH

SET YOU FREE...

JEREMIAH, PURITANS

WHEN YOU DO WHAT IS TRUE TO YOU AND YOU DO IT WITH...

NICK has entered and he's about to voice his objection.

NICK

WAIT!

NIGEL simply holds his poem out in front of his face.

NIGEL

READ.

NICK reads and instantly smiles broadly.

NICK

AWWWWWWW....

ENSEMBLE

YAY!

PURITANS, NICK, JEREMIAH

LUH-UH-UH-UH-UH-OVE

DO IT WITH

LUH-UH-UH-UH-UH-OVE

During the final chorus, various PURITANS step forward and take soulful solo lines...

PURITANS

YEAH, WE SEE THE LIGHT (WE SEE, THE LIGHT)
YOU CHANGED HOW WE'RE THINKIN'

(PURITANS)

| | |
|--|---------------------|
| CUZ WE | (CUZ WE) |
| WERE BLIND, | (WERE BLIND) |
| BUT YOU SHOWED US THE WAY | (SHOWED US THE WAY) |
| WE'RE WRONG | (WE'RE WRONG), |
| YOU'RE RIGHT | (YOU'RE RIGHT) |
| SALVATION | (SALVATION) |
| IS YOURS | |
| IF YOU DO WHAT IS TRUE TO YOU | |
| AND YOU DO IT WITH LUH-UH-UH-UH-UH-OVE | |

PURITAN 1

YEAH, I BELIEVE IN THE POWER OF LOVE. WHOO!

PURITANS

LUH-UH-UH-UH-UH-OVE

PURITAN 2

I'VE BEEN CHANGED, I'VE BEEN CHANGED
I'VE BEEN CHANGED BY LOVE!

PURITANS

LUH-UH-UH-UH-UH-OVE

PURITAN 3

AND WHAT WE NEED IS

PURITANS

PURE LUH-UH-UH-UH-UH-OVE

PURITAN 4

CAN YOU FEEL IT...

ALL

WE SEE - THE LIGHT!

#14A - We See the Light (Playoff)

PURITANS

(dancing offstage)

LUH-UH-UH-UH-UH-OVE, DO IT WITH LUH-UH-UH-UH-UH-OVE,
DO IT WITH LOVE!

NIGEL and PORTIA are left on stage.

NIGEL
You really think that could happen?

PORTIA
Yes. Once my father sees your heart is true, he will love you as much as I do.

#14B - Portia and Nigel Kiss

THEY kiss. JEREMIAH enters with a couple of PURITANS.

BROTHER JEREMIAH
THERE SHE IS!! YOU DARE DEFY ME, DAUGHTER OF EVE!?

Please, father...

PORTIA

BROTHER JEREMIAH
You bid me grant you leave so you could pray forgiveness in church, and instead you slither off here to sate your lustful desires!?

(to Nigel)

PORTIA

Read it. Read your poem.

NIGEL steps forward to read (as he did in the song)

NIGEL

"If love is a sic..."

BROTHER JEREMIAH

SILENCE!

NIGEL

Okay.

BROTHER JEREMIAH
You will tempt my daughter no more. She will be locked in the church tower, and there she will stay until her exile to our brethren in Scotland.

#15 - Nigel's Theme

NO!...

PORTIA

PORTIA and NIGEL embrace. A PURITAN separates them and drags her away.

Portia!

NIGEL

Write what you feel, Nigel.

PORTIA

I will! I promise!

NIGEL

I love you!

PORTIA

And I lov—

NIGEL

JEREMIAH stops him.

BROTHER JEREMIAH

I am warning you, boy! Leave her be—or you will pay... dearly.

JEREMIAH leaves. NIGEL is left alone, panicking.

NIGEL

Portia!!!

CHORD STING. NIGEL faces forward.

OH WHAT GOOD IS LIVING
WHEN LIFE IS SO CRUEL
AND MY DESTINY
IS TO BE FORTUNE'S FOOL
IF MY PEN BE MY ONE
AND MY ONLY COMPANION
LET IT SPEAK FOR MY SOUL

HE sits at the writing desk.

LET IT SPEAK FOR MY SOUL...

(writing)

SURE AS THE DAY
FOLLOWS THE NIGHT...
SURE AS THEY SKY TURNS TO BLUE.

HE takes out a quill, starts writing. As he writes, the theater opens and the TROUPE (and SHAKESPEARE) enters, holding script pages in front of their faces.

SCENE 4: The Theater

NIGEL

THIS MUCH I KNOW, THIS MUCH IS TRUE
ABOVE ALL ELSE IN WHATEVER YOU DO
TO THINE OWN SELF BE TRUE

The TROUPE lowers their pages.

TROUPE

Wow!/that's really good/so poetic, etc...

NIGEL

I'm still working out the details but why don't we take it from the prince's soliloquy.

(handing Peter Quince a page)

Peter - please...

PETER takes the page, steps forward.

PETER QUINCE

To be or not to be - that is the question.

SHAKESPEARE/TOBY hears this. Perks up. Edges forward, trying to get a look at the speech...

Whether 'tis nobler in the mind to suffer the slings and arrows of outrageous fortune
or to take arms against a sea of troubles.

(lowering paper, to Nigel)

This is really good shit, mate.

TROUPE

It is!/It's amazing/etc.

SHAKESPEARE reaches for the page but PETER walks away before he can get it.

NIGEL

Let's keep going. Robin - from your entrance...

ROBIN, holding pages, steps forward. NICK enters, unseen.

ROBIN

Oh that this too solid flesh would melt, thaw, and resolve itself into a dew.

PETER QUINCE

Frailty, thy name is woman - get thee to a nunnery.

TROUPE

ROBIN

Hold thy tongue, fair prince.

PETER QUINCE

The lady doth protest too much me thinks.

NICK

Um... what the hell?

PETER QUINCE

Nick, you're little brother has written something truly amazing.

FRANCIS FLUTE

It's better than Shakespeare

SHAKESPEARE

Um... is it?

NICK crosses to Nigel.

NICK

You wrote something and didn't even run it by me?

NIGEL

Nick, please—just listen. You gave me all these insane ideas, and I took the ones that actually made sense and wrote something that rings true. In here.

NICK

Oh, God...

NIGEL

Don't—DO THAT! Please just hear me out...

(collecting his thoughts)

It's about a prince... and he's not eating a Danish he is Danish... and he's full of anguish for a great loss, and he realizes his own life has no meaning. He's so depressed he wants to kill himself but he can't even make up his mind about that. Then his true love is forced into religious exile—where she probably dies of a broken heart. Then he descends into madness and he dies and everyone dies and the whole stage is covered in bodies, and blood, and death... and "the rest is silence", they're all left...

(reading)

..."to die, to sleep, to sleep perchance, to dream."

NIGEL drops the pages. SHAKESPEARE picks them up and walks downstage.

SHAKESPEARE

(dropping the Toby voice)

That's the great idea...

NICK takes the pages from Shakespeare, reads...

NICK

This has nothing to do with eggs!

SHAKESPEARE

That's what's missing! Why don't I collect all these pages and hold them for safe keeping?

SHAKESPEARE takes the pages back from Nick but NIGEL takes them from Shakespeare.

NIGEL

Nick, I'm worried you aren't thinking clearly here. Read it. I think it's good.

NICK

I am reading and where's the omelette?

NIGEL

There is no omelette.

NICK

What do you mean there's no omelette, there has to be an omelette.

NIGEL

Why?

#16 - *To Thine Own Self Be True*

NICK

Because it's called Omelette!

NIGEL

Why does it have to be called Omelette!?

NICK

It just... does, okay? You have to trust me on this.

NIGEL

(to the troupe)

He's not hearing me.

FRANCIS FLUE

Just read him what you wrote...

NIGEL

Why? He won't listen.

SHAKESPEARE

(taking pages from Nigel)

I should really take these before this turns ugly.

ROBIN

(taking pages from Shakespeare)

Just—read it!

NIGEL

Okay, fine...

(NIGEL takes the pages)

Something happened last night. I promised to write what I feel—and here it is.

(sings)

SURE AS THE DAY FOLLOWS THE NIGHT
SURE AS THE SKY TURNS TO BLUE
THIS MUCH I KNOW THIS MUCH IS TRUE
ABOVE ALL ELSE IN WHATEVER YOU DO

TROUPE, NIGEL

TO THINE OWN SELF BE TRUE

TOM

I love that!

FRANCIS

It's like good line and good advice!

SHAKESPEARE (AS TOBY)

I don't know. I thought the whole breakfast theme was really *strong*. Everyone loves breakfast!

NICK

Exactly! But there's no ham, there's no eggs... You're completely ignoring the theme!

NIGEL

I'm ignoring the "breakfast theme"—because it's ridiculous!

NICK

Oh really? So my idea is wrong but this whole "true to yourself" thing is right?

NIGEL

That's not just a line, it's what I *believe*.

NICK

Then you are a fool if you think life is as simple as that.

NIGEL

I do!

NICK

Well, I don't!

NIGEL

Ugggh, this is hopeless.

FRANCIS

You really should listen, Nick—it just makes your heart wanna soar.

The TROUPE steps center stage and forms a choir, singing a capella.

TROUPE

SURE AS THE DAY, FOLLOWS THE NIGHT

SURE AS THE SKY TURNS TO BLUE

THIS MUCH I KNOW...

NIGEL

THIS MUCH I KNOW

TROUPE

THIS MUCH IS TRUE

NIGEL

THIS MUCH IS TRUE...

TROUPE

NIGEL

ABOVE ALL ELSE,

IN WHATEVER YOU DO

TO THINE OWN SELF BE TRUE.

TO THINE OWN SELF BE TRUE.

REMEMBER

TO THINE OWN SELF BE TRUE.

Silence. NICK appears to have listened. He steps up to Nigel – then SCREAMS.

NICK

WHERE'S— THE OMELETTE??

NIGEL

Wow. What has happened to you? Where's the brother who had integrity, who inspired me to become a writer?

NICK

He finally has a great idea! And I can tell you for a fact it will be known as the single greatest play ever written!

NIGEL

HOW CAN YOU POSSIBLY KNOW THAT??

NICK

I just do! Now we don't have time for this. We open in a week. Are you gonna help me write Omelette or not?

NIGEL looks to the troupe, then back to Nick.

NIGEL

No.

NICK

No??

NIGEL

I can't. It doesn't feel right. And deep down, I don't think it feels right to you either.

NIGEL starts to leave. NICK stops him.

NICK

It must be so great to always "do what you feel" because you have no one else to take care of but yourself. And that's why I never wanted to write that sappy "brother who carried you from Cornwall" story — because I'm still carrying you. And I'm sick of it!

NIGEL recoils hearing this. He's hurt.

NIGEL

Then why don't I just get off your back.

NIGEL exits, taking pages out of Shakespeare's hands.

SHAKESPEARE

(reaching towards pages that are no longer there)
D'ahhhhhhhhhh....

HE smiles to the troupe, then hurries out.

NICK is momentarily shaken...

Then SHYLOCK enters with NOSTRADAMUS behind him.

SHYLOCK

Nick! There you are! I've got news! Your musical? Omelette? We're not selling any tickets...

NICK looks gutted

...because we've SOLD OUT!

(to the troupe)

They lined up around the block!

TROUPE

What?/Seriously?/wait, what did he say?...

NICK

(crossing to Nostradamus)

"What audiences will be lining up to see..."

NOSTRADAMUS

Told ya.

NICK

So what'll it be guys? You wanna do something "meaningful" and "artistic?"

TROUPE

Yeah/we are artists/we have integrity...

NICK

OR—do you want to be in a massive hit and actually make some money?

TROUPE

That one/we wanna get paid/we need money...etc.

#16A – To Thine Own Self (Part 2)

NICK

Then let's give the audience what they're hungry for. OMELETTE THE MUSICAL!

WE'RE ON OUR WAY TO GLORY

WE'LL PLAY FOR KINGS AND QUEENS

AND THERE AND THEN

WE'LL SEE THE END

WILL JUSTIFY THE MEANS

TROUPE

THE END WILL JUSTIFY THE MEANS

SURE AS THE DAY FOLLOWS THE NIGHT

NICK

SURELY WE MUST SEE THIS THROUGH

TROUPE

OKAY IF YOU SAY SO

NICK

DAMNED IF I DON'T

TROUPE

DON'T!

NICK

DAMNED IF I DO!

TROUPE

DO!

NICK

BUT DAMN IT I DON'T HAVE

THE LUXURY TO

HANG ALL MY HOPE

ON SOME SIMPLISTIC TROPE

LIKE TO THINE OWN SELF...

TROUPE

TO THINE OWN SELF

NICK, TROUPE

BE TRUE

#16B - *To Thine Own Self (Playoff)*

The TROUPE and NICK exit as the theater closes and we transition to...

Scene 5: A South London Street

NIGEL heads across stage but is stopped when SHAKESPEARE (TOBY) runs in.

SHAKESPEARE (AS TOBY)

Ay, up!

NIGEL

Toby? What do you want?

SHAKESPEARE (AS TOBY)

Just to say... I didn't really get a chance to read all of what you wrote, but I'd happily do it now.

NIGEL

Why? "I think good thoughts whilst others write good words."

SHAKESPEARE (AS TOBY)

Good line, that.

NIGEL

Right. Because I didn't write it.

NIGEL, SHAKESPEARE

Shakespeare did.

NIGEL bows his head in defeat. SHAKESPEARE gets an idea...

SHAKESPEARE (AS TOBY)

Right. Shakespeare. You really admire him, don't you?

NIGEL nods.

Right. Well—I'll leave you in peace then.

SHAKESPEARE/TOBY hurries off, already removing the Toby disguise as NIGEL sifts through the pages...

NIGEL

(muttering to himself)

Oh, Portia... I did what you said and look what happened.

SHAKESPEARE enters as himself.

SHAKESPEARE

Nigel!

(pointing to his face, "remember me?")

It's Will. Fancy meeting you here, what a complete and utter coincidence.

(SHAKESPEARE)

<GASP>

And is that the Bottom Brother's new play?

NIGEL

No, this is something I tried to write on my own.

SHAKESPEARE

May I?

NIGEL

What? Oh, yeah, sure...

NIGEL hands him the pages. SHAKESPEARE turns away, reads. Is amazed.

"When sorrows come, they come not single spies but in battalions"

(blown away)

God...

NIGEL

Oh god, is it that bad?

SHAKESPEARE

(sincerely)

No.

(changing tactics)

No... it's just...

(pointing to pages)

"To be or not to be" "What a piece of work is man..." It's a lot of cliches, Nigel.

NIGEL

Really? That's been done?

SHAKESPEARE

Oh yeah—and as your friend, I will read this and see if there's anything here that can be salvaged. But I don't want to see this with your name on it.

(tucks pages in his shirt)

But your "musical..." "OMELETTE?" I've told everyone I know they simply must go and see it.

NIGEL

Really? But it's so...

SHAKESPEARE

Bold? Daring? Yes. A lesser writer would shy away. Would you?

(SHAKESPEARE)

(a hand on his back)

Write your Omelette.

(points to the pages)

Not this. That. Forget this. Write that.

SHAKESPEARE exits. NIGEL heads for the bench SL and sits.

NIGEL

Write your omelette... write your omelette...

*We hear BEA and three women (MIRANDA, ROSALIND, and HELENA) O.S.
They're all chattering...*

BEA, LADIES

That was so fun/So glad we did this/etc.

BEA

Nigel! The ladies just threw me a party and gave me the sweetest gifts for the baby.
Look what Helena gave me to help the baby sleep.

SHE holds up a big jug.

HELENA

Whiskey!

BEA

Isn't that thoughtful? And Miranda gave me this to help with the delivery.

MIRANDA

It's a stick - to bite on.

BEA puts the stick in her mouth, screams delivery pain. THEY all laugh.

BEA

AHHHHHH! Yeah, that's gonna hurt. Hey, how's the show going?

NIGEL

Um... you'd have to ask Nick.

BEA instantly senses something's wrong.

BEA

(to ladies)

I'll catch up with you later.

(BEA)

The LADIES nod understandingly, taking their gifts for Bea and exit. BEA leads Nigel to the bench - has him sit.

What's wrong?

NIGEL

We just had a big fight. He said some things that... He said he was *carrying* me.

BEA

Oh no.

NIGEL

Yeah. It really hurt. I'm thinking maybe we shouldn't work together anymore.

BEA

(nods, thinking)

Uh-huh. Do you know the poem "Love is a shit-load of work?"

NIGEL

Um... no?

BEA

That's because the poets never write about what love is really like. Try being married for ten years, it's not all summer's days and sweet-smelling roses. It's more like "Shall I compare thee to a horses ass?"

THEY laugh.

Look, I'll admit I've never seen him like this. He's under a lot of pressure and doing some really stupid things; keeping stuff to himself, saying hurtful things, taking all our savings from the money box...

NIGEL

What??

BEA

Oh yeah. Still trying to figure out how that love poem is gonna end. But what stops us from walking out on him? I think it's because you know, like I know...

#16C - Right Hand Man (Reprise)

(SHE sings)

IF YOU EVER GOT IN TROUBLE
HE WOULD BE THERE ON THE DOUBLE
JUST TO BAIL YOU OUT
IF THERE'S ANYTHING YOU LACK

(BEA)

YOU KNOW HE'S ALWAYS GOT YOUR BACK
THAT'S WHAT HE'S ALL ABOUT
HE HAS HIS FAULTS, BUT HE MEANS WELL
AND HE ALWAYS DOES THE BEST THAT HE CAN
BUT IT SHOULD BE UNDERSTOOD
I WOULDN'T CHANGE HIM IF I COULD
CAUSE I KNOW HIS HEART IS GOOD
AND HE'LL ALWAYS BE YOUR RIGHT HAND MAN

(speaking)

He can't do this without you. Maybe you need to carry him for a bit.

NIGEL

Okay. I will.

BEA

Great. I can't wait to see what you two come up with. I'm sure you'll give 'em a show they'll never forget.

SCENE 6: On Stage At The Theatre

The TROUPE are in the banquet room. NIGEL enters, holding an egg like Yorrick's skull.

#17 - *Something Rotten*

NICK

Alas, poor yolk, I know thee well.

(singing)

THERE'S SOMETHING ROTTEN, THERE'S SOMETHING ROTTEN

NICK, TROUPE

YOU CAN SMELL IT, YOU CAN TELL IT'S SOMETHING ROTTEN
NOW THE KINGDOM IS SHOT AND IT'S ALL GONE TO POT
HEAVEN HELP US THERE IS SOMETHING ROTT-EN.

NICK looks to the egg.

NICK

Frailty, thy name is egg. How like thee I am. For I am—what I am, and what I am doth be an illusion.

HORATIO

You beckoned, my lord.

NICK

Where is Macavity?

HORATIO

At the Jellicle Ball. He would not come.

NICK goes to Nigel, dressed as a guard.

NICK

GO AND FETCH HIM!

NIGEL hurries off.

HORATIO

Alas, my lord, what vexes thee?

NICK

I dreamed a dream, Horatio. An impossible dream. There were wheels upon yon dream. And raindrops upon Rosencrantz and whiskers on his kitten.

HORATIO

What be the meaning of it?

NICK

We've got trouble.

HORATIO

Trouble?

NICK

TROUBLE, I SAY! MY FATHER LIES DEAD AND THE SERPENT
THAT DID STING HIS LIFE NOW WEARS HIS CROWN.

SHAKESPEARE enters as the KING. On the opposite side, NIGEL runs back in.

Where is Macavity!??

NIGEL (SPEAR CARRIER)

Macavity's not there!

NICK

(getting more crazed)

ZOUNDS!

ROBIN (the QUEEN) enters. ALL bow.

FOOTMAN

My Queen.

ROBIN (QUEEN)

Oh, what a ball. I could have danced all night!
Gentle prince, thine absence 'twas worrisome for the King and I.

NICK

If mama weren't married, t'would not be so.

Three COURTIERS (Tom Snout, Peter Quince, Snug) enter.

TOM SNOUT

Where be the king!?

NICK turns to greet them but they walk right past him and bow to Shakespeare.

SHAKESPEARE (SCAR)

Gentle fellows! What news?

TOM SNOUT

The Nazis have arrived.

SHAKESPEARE (SCAR)

The Nazis?

A beat where THEY look concerned, then...

ALL

HUZZAH!

SHAKESPEARE

The Nazis are such good men one and all! With their succor, we shall make war against the Puerto Ricans.

ALL

TONIGHT!

SHAKESPEARE

(praying to the heavens)

Oh luck, be a lady tonight.

As ROBIN, TOM, PETER and the OTHERS congratulate Shakespeare, NICK points angrily at him.

NICK

He wears the crown that should don my head. GOD I HOPE I GET IT!

SHAKESPEARE

Fair guests — *wilkommen, bienvenue*, welcome. The wedding breakfast is served!

#17A — *Intro to Omelette*

Lights up on the banquet table where SHAKESPEARE (King) sits with ROBIN (queen) surrounded by court.

MEMBERS OF COURT stand about. NICK notices a bowl of eggs on the table.

NICK

My father newly dead and the funeral boiled eggs now coldly furnish forth the marriage table. Methinks another chef might have whisked our disparate eggs together — as one.

SHAKESPEARE (TOBY)

Pray, nephew — what dost thou mean?

NICK

Well, I'll tell you...

#18 - *Make an Omelette***(NICK)***(singing)*

THE FRUIT OF LIFE CAN'T ALWAYS TASTE LIKE SWEET PERSIMMONS
 SOMETIMES IT'S HARD TO SWALLOW, I'M AFRAID
 BUT WHEN LIFE HAS HANDED YOU SOME LEMONS
 THEN HAND IT BACK A MUG OF LEMONADE
 MY FATHER SAID THIS TO ME
 THAT, HE DID AND THEN HE BLEW ME...
 AWAY WITH WISDOM SIMPLE AND CONCISE
 HE SAID, EGBERT, LIFE IS MERELY WHAT YOU MAKE OF IT
 SO HEED THIS SOUND ADVICE

YOU MAKE WINE FROM SOUR GRAPES
 YOU GOT A FLAT PANCAKE, HEY, CALL IT A CREPE
 WHEN LIFE GIVES YOU EGGS
 MAKE AN OMELETTE

YOU GET COLA FROM A NUT
 A DIRTY WORM MAKES SILK FROM OUT OF HIS BUTT
 WHEN LIFE GIVES YOU EGGS
 MAKE AN OMELETTE - OMELETTE

THREE CHEFS enter with frying pans.

NICK, THREE CHEFS

THE SOLUTION TO YOUR TROUBLES
 IS CHEESE AND VEGETABLES

(pronounced "veg-i-TUH-bles")

AND BACON, MAKE AN OMELETTE, YEAH

NICK

WHEN IT LOOKS LIKE YOU SHOULD QUIT
 FIND ANOTHER WAY OF LOOKING AT IT

NICK, THREE CHEFS

WHEN LIFE GIVES YOU EGGS, YOU GOTTA MAKE THAT
 OM, OM, OM - OM, OM, OM - OM, OM, OM OMELETTE
 OM, OM, OM - OM, OM, OM - OM, OM, OM OMELETTE
 OMELETTE!

NOSTRADAMUS enters as THE PHANTOM.

NOSTRADAMUS

THE SOLUTION TO YOUR TROUBLES
RIGHT HERE IN RIVER CITY
SHIPOOPI, CHICAGO, OMELETTE - YEAH
WHEN IT LOOKS LIKE YOU SHOULD QUIT

NOSTRADAMUS, CHORUS

FIND ANOTHER WAY OF LOOKING AT IT

NICK, NOSTRADAMUS, CHORUS

WHEN LIFE GIVES YOU EGGS
JUST A GREAT BIG BOWL OF EGGS
WHEN LIFE GIVES YOU EGGS YOU GOTTA MAKE THAT OMELETTE

Breakdown. NICK is joined by THREE CHEFS.

NICK, CHEFS

CRACK! SPLAT! PSHHH...
CRACK! SPLAT! PSHHH... (MAKE AN OMELETTE)
CRACK! SPLAT! PSHHH... (MAKE AN OMELETTE)
MAKE AN OMELETTE, MAKE AN OMELETTE, MAKE AN OMELETTE NOW

NICK

How?

THREE CHEFS

FIRST, MELT A TABLESPOON OF BUTTER IN A MEDIUM FRYING PAN
OVER MEDIUM HEAT
AND SAUTE THE ONIONS AND GREEN PEPPERS TIL THEY'RE TENDER
ADD THE HAM PIECES

NICK

MAKE AN OMELETTE, MAKE AN OMELETTE, MAKE AN OMELETTE NOW

THREE CHEFS

TURN OFF THE HEAT!
LET THE OMELETTE SIT ONE MINUTE IN THE SKILLET
SO THE INSIDE COOKS RIGHT THROUGH

CAST enter in egg costumes. THEY dance. Then NICK begins attacking them, trying to catch them and hit them and crack them open with his whisk.

NICK, CHORUS

TAKE THAT EGG AND BEAT IT (NO)
TAKE THAT EGG AND BEAT IT (NO)
YOU GOTTA BEAT IT AND HEAT IT BEFORE YOU EAT IT
SO BEAT THAT EGG
BEAT THAT EGG
BEAT THAT EGG

CHEFS, SHAKESPEARE, NICK, ROBIN

AND THAT'S HOW YOU MAKE AN OMELETTE
THAT'S HOW YOU MAKE AN OMELETTE
THAT'S HOW YOU MAKE AN OMELETTE
THAT'S HOW YOU MAKE AN...

There is ONE EGG left on stage. It slowly rises...and sings

SAD LITTLE EGG

AND I AM TELLING YOU
I'M NOT GOING TO BE AN OMELETTE

NICK whacks the sad little egg who cracks and runs away.

CHEFS, SHAKESPEARE, NICK, ROBIN

YOU MAKE WINE FROM SOUR GRAPES
YOU GOT A FLAT PANCAKE JUST CALL IT A CREPE
WHEN LIFE GIVES YOU EGGS MAKE AN

ALL

OMMMMMMMMM-LETTE
SHAKE A LEG AND SLAP A THIGH
IF YOUR CHOLESTEROL'S HIGH YOU'LL PROBABLY DIE
WHEN LIFE GIVES YOU EGGS - JUST A GREAT BIG BOWL OF EGGS

WHEN LIFE GIVES YOU EGGS YOU GOTTA MAKE THAT
OM, OM, OM - OM, OM, OM - OM, OM, OM - OM, OM, OM
FOR HEAVEN'S SAKE, IT WAS WHITE AND YELLOW AND WHITE AND
YELLOW AND WHITE AND YELLOW AND WHITE.
MAKE AN OMELETTE!

Song ends. Applause.

NICK

Though this may appear madness, there be method in it. Simple truths -

MELETTE

MELETTE NOW

ING PAN

RE TENDER

MELETTE NOW

ing

SHAKESPEARE (AS TOBY)

Can I interrupt here? I have a question.

NICK is thrown by the unscripted interruption.

NICK

Er, fair Uncle Scar? Why doth thou speakest when thou shouldn't... speakest?

The CAST is confused. "Toby" is clearly off script.

SHAKESPEARE

Because I want to know—how canst thou make an omelette... when one of the eggs be rotten?

(sniffing Nick)

Ah, therein lies the rub! The rotten one—is you!

NICK

Toby?

SHAKESPEARE

Or not Toby—that is the question.

HE removes his beard and wig revealing his true identity.

NIGEL

Will?

PETER QUINCE

Shakespeare?

NICK

You little snake.

SHAKESPEARE

And you said I was a shit actor.

NICK

You will not make an ass of me.

SHAKESPEARE

No need. You've done a fine job on your own.

NIGEL

Nick, what's going on?

SHAKESPEARE

Allow me, since Master Bottom's plots are hard to follow.

(points to Nostradamus)

(SHAKESPEARE)

This man is a soothsayer. And he was hired by...

(points to Nick)

...this man, who paid him to look into the future and steal my greatest idea.

(looking at the guys in egg costumes)

Though I can't believe I come up with this shit.

ROBIN

Nick? Is this true?

NICK

Guys, I can expl—

The TROUPE, disappointed, walk away. NICK follows them but they're gone. Then he turns to see NIGEL staring in disbelief.

NIGEL

You lied to me?

NICK

You don't understand...

NIGEL

No. I don't.

NIGEL storms off. NICK bows his head, defeated.

SHAKESPEARE

Well—my work is done.

(leaving, passing Nick)

Nice try, Nick.

(to the audience)

Yeah, that just happened.

SHAKESPEARE exits. NICK is left alone with NOSTRADAMUS...

#18A — After Omelette

NICK

I have failed... in every way.

NOSTRADAMUS

I could have told you this would happen, but you wouldn't have listened

NICK

No, you did tell me. You said there would be a great price. And now, I have to pay it...

#18B - Into the Courtroom

DRAMATIC MUSIC PLAYS as we transition to

SCENE 7: Courtroom

NOSTRADAMUS takes his seat on the bench beside SHYLOCK and NIGEL. Nigel turns his back on Nick. The GALLERY is in an uproar.

GALLERY, PEOPLE IN COURT

Outrageous!/Hang them!/This is obscene/I'm scarred for life!/etc.

THE MASTER OF THE JUSTICE bangs his gavel as JEREMIAH steps forward.

MASTER OF THE JUSTICE

Order! Silence in the court!

BROTHER JEREMIAH

I share their outrage, m'lord, at this vile and offensive production. It was my duty as a magistrate, but more importantly my duty to God, to have them arrested for blasphemy, treason, employment of a Jew, witchcraft, and the provocative parading of eggs. And for such offenses, the law demands beheading.

MURMURS of approval from the CROWD.

MASTER OF THE JUSTICE

Defendants? Do you have a lawyer present?

NICK

No, your grace.

BEA (O.S.)

(OLD MALE VOICE)

Correction! I am their lawyer.

An ELDERLY BEARDED MAN in a black robe and wig enters (it's BEA in disguise). And I say beheading this man would be redundant. Clearly the fool has lost his head already!

NICK

Bea?

BEA

Be more specific? I shall. Did you take the money from the money box?

NICK

(bowing head in shame)

Yes.

BEA

Did you deceive your brother?

NICK

Yes.

BEA

Did you lie to your wife... who by all accounts is a wonderful and supportive woman...

(tapping clerk's desk)

Write that down!

NICK

Yes. I did all those things.

BEA

Which is why I enter a plea of temporary insanity!
And before sentencing is pronounced, I think we'd all like to know... what on earth were you thinking?

NICK

The learned counselor is right.

#19 - *To Thine Own Self (Reprise)*

I did lose my mind. No, worse. I lost myself. And it wouldn't have happened if I had just listened. Someone much wiser than me tried to tell me...

SURE AS THE DAY FOLLOWS THE NIGHT
SURE AS THE SKY TURNS TO BLUE
THIS MUCH I KNOW, THIS MUCH IS TRUE
ABOVE ALL ELSE IN WHATEVER YOU DO
TO THINE OWN SELF BE TRUE

WHY DID I WANDER SO FAR FROM THE MAN
THAT THE TWO OF YOU KNEW I COULD BE
AND I LOST SIGHT OF ALL
THAT MATTERED SOMEHOW
I COULD NOT SEE IT THEN
BUT I SEE IT NOW

BEA points Nick towards Nigel. NICK approaches him as music plays...

I JUST DIDN'T THINK, I HAD IT IN ME
SO I MADE IT HARDER THAN IT HAD TO BE
SHOULDA FOLLOWED MY HEART, SHOULDA LISTENED TO YOU
TO THINE OWN SELF BE TRUE

NIGEL joins him.

NICK, NIGEL

TO THINE OWN SELF BE TRUE

THEY hug.

MASTER OF THE JUSTICE

That's very touching, but the law demands beheading, and nothing can change that.

BEA

Or can it? The defense calls Master William Shakespeare.

#19A – Shakespeare in Court

NICK is about to protest. BEA puts a finger to his lips as SHAKESPEARE enters.

GALLERY, CLERK, MASTER OF JUSTICE

(singing)

SHAKESPEARE!

SHAKESPEARE!

SHAKESPEARE

Hi... hi... how are you, good to see you...

(taking center stage)

If it please the court...

MASTER OF THE JUSTICE

(clapping his hands)

Oh, the court is very pleased. Continue.

SHAKESPEARE

Words without thoughts never to heaven go...

MASTER OF THE JUSTICE

(to clerk)

I love how he puts words in the wrong order.

SHAKESPEARE

And the quality of mercy is not strained. It droppeth as the gentle rain from heaven.

MASTER OF THE JUSTICE

It's good because he entertains, but he makes you *think* as well...

SHAKESPEARE

But! - if a merciful ending is not written here today, then on my stage shall I replay these events – with these characters and thee at thy bench – then, shall I see fair justice done.

MASTER OF THE JUSTICE

Are you saying you might write a play about this? With me as a character? Well, I wouldn't want to look the fool.

SHAKESPEARE

And you shan't, Lord Falstaff – not if you spare their lives and see these mischief makers banish-ed. Send them off of this royal throne of kings, this sceptered isle, this blessed plot, this earth, this realm – this England.

*The GALLERY, CLERK, GUARDS and JUDGE... even NOSTRADAMUS all
APPLAUD*

SHAKESPEARE bows.

MASTER OF THE JUSTICE

(tearing up)

That is so much more elegant than beheading, I agree. Defendants, I sentence you to be *banish-ed*.

(a point and wink to Shakespeare)

Transported on the first ship for the New World. And take your so called 'Musicals' with you!

HE bangs his gavel and then leaves. NICK hugs Nigel, then turns and kisses Bea.

The GALLERY reacts.

BROTHER JEREMIAH

Look! Homosexuals! Come back! Charge them!

BEA

Oh, please. I'm a woman!

JEREMIAH backs away repulsed.

BROTHER JEREMIAH

(mocking her)

I'm a woman...

SHAKESPEARE crosses.

SHAKESPEARE

You're welcome.

NIGEL

For what? All those lines were from my pages. You're just getting us out of the way so you can steal my work.

SHAKESPEARE

Getting beheaded would have been out of the way as well. No, the world is better with you in it—just not my world.

(to Nick)

Besides, this amazing woman—and impressive actor—persuaded me I could make a stand for free speech today.

NICK

I'd say you got about twenty free speeches there.

NICK steps towards Shakespeare. NIGEL stops him.

NIGEL

Let it go, Nick. All's well that ends well.

SHAKESPEARE

Good line.

NICK

Stop giving him your best stuff!

SHAKESPEARE

(stepping forward)

Good-night, sweet prince. And flights of angels...

(searching for it)

... do something!

(shrugs)

Exit Shakespeare!

CROWD

SHAKESPEARE!

SHAKESPEARE exits, the CROWD follows him. PORTIA runs in

PORTIA

Nigel!

NIGEL

Portia! Oh, I thought I'd never see you again!

THEY embrace.

BROTHER JEREMIAH

Portia!? What are you doing here? I sent you away!

PORTIA

And I'm going. But not before I say goodbye.

BROTHER JEREMIAH

Very well. I will allow it.

PORTIA steps up to Nigel.

PORTIA

It pains the heart to say adieu to someone you love, but alas, the time has come.

(NIGEL is about to cry but SHE turns to Jeremiah)

Goodbye father.

BROTHER JEREMIAH

What?!

PORTIA

"The good man's children will be prosperous in the wilderness" – Psalms 112.

You have your poets, and I will have mine.

SHE kisses Nigel.

BROTHER JEREMIAH

What??... No!... Oh Goddammit!

HE cups his mouth again, then embarrassed, tries to regain his composure and proudly exits

NICK

So you made a deal... with Shakespeare?

BEA

We wanted a new country home – and we're getting a home in a new country!

NOSTRADAMUS

Didn't see that coming!

SHYLOCK

I hear in the New World, a guy like me can be anything he wants!

NIGEL

And I bet they'll be open to something really original.

NICK

And brother – I know just the story we should tell.

#20 – *Welcome to America*

LIGHTING CHANGE. STAGE TRANSFORMS as THEY exit revealing...

SCENE 8: New American Colony

LARGE WOODEN FORT made of logs with spikes on top. The TROUPE are lined up as the familiar BLACK DEATH music plays. SHYLOCK enters and addresses the audience.

SHYLOCK

Ladies and Gentlemen, Shylock Entertainment in association with Pilgrim Productions presents the Bottom Brothers in their touching life story!

HE motions to the troupe and stands off to the side.

TROUPE

WHO'S THAT COMING OUT OF CORNWALL
WITH HIS BROTHER

IT'S NICK (AND NIGEL BOTTOM)

WHO'S THAT STARTING OUT WITH NOTHIN'
BUT EACH OTHER

IT'S NICK (AND NIGEL BOTTOM)

NIGEL, NICK

YES WE ARE THE BOTTOM BROTHERS
WRITING PLAYS JUST LIKE OUR MOTHER SAID WE OUGHTA DO
WE'VE LEARNED A THING OR TWO

BEA

HE ALMOST GOT US ALL BEHEADED

NICK

(shrugging)

Sorry!

PORTIA

INSTEAD WE JUST GOT BANISHED-ED

ALL

YAY!!!

NICK, NIGEL

WE CAME FROM LONDON ON A BOAT
WE LANDED HERE AND WENT AND WROTE
A PLAY WITH SONGS

NICK & NIGEL, BEA & PORTIA
AND DANCERS GALORE

BEA, PORTIA

IT'S SOMETHING NO ONE ELSE HAS EVER SEEN BEFORE

ALL

SO HERE WE GO, PUTTING ON A SHOW

NICK, NIGEL

AND NOT JUST ANY OLD ORDINARY SHOW

NICK, NIGEL, BEA, PORTIA

A BIG AND BOLD EXTRAORDINARY SHOW

ALL

A MUST SEE MAGICAL NEW ORIGINAL MUSICAL!

A MUSICAL! A MUSICAL

THERE'S NOTHING AS AMAZING AS A MUSICAL

WITH SONG AND DANCE

AND SWEET ROMANCE

AND HAPPY ENDINGS HAPPENING BY HAPPENSTANCE

AND YOU'LL SEE, IT WILL BE

ONLY THE BEGINNING

THIS GLORIOUS CREATION CALLED A MU-U-SICAL

SHYLOCK enters with a newspaper and hands it to Nigel.

SHYLOCK

Have you heard the news? Shakespeare's new play opened. They say it's his masterpiece.

NICK

What's it called?

NIGEL

(reading paper)

"Hamlet"

NOSTRADAMUS

Hamlet! I was this close.

ALL

WELCOME TO AMERICA

WHERE NOTHING RHYMES WITH AMERICA

BUT WHO'S COMPLAINING

WE'RE LIVING IN THE NEW WORLD

WE'RE LIVING THE DREAM

(ALL)

IT'S OUR DEBUT
WELCOME TO AMERICA
WHERE EVERYTHING IS NEW!
WELCOME TO AMERICA
EVERYTHING IS NEW
WELCOME TO AMERICA

NICK

LAND OF OPPORTUNITY!

BLACK OUT.

#21 - *Bows*

#22 - *Exit Music*

his

APPENDIX: Alternate Lines

PAGES 10 - 13

In GOD I HATE SHAKESPEARE... we have provided alternate lyrics if you would prefer they sing "MAN I HATE SHAKESPEARE" instead. Also, instead of the lyric "THE BASTARD DOESN'T CARE THAT MY POOR ASS IS GETTING NUMB," replace with "HE DOESN'T SEEM TO CARE THAT MY POOR BUM IS GETTING NUMB" When the ensemble joins, instead of singing "THE MAN REALLY KNOWS HOW TO WRITE A BITCHIN' PLAY" change to "THE MAN REALLY KNOWS HOW TO WRITE AN AWESOME PLAY"

PAGE 14

NIGEL

Really?? He doesn't throw his poop into the street?

NICK

No. He pulls a lever and it gets whooshed down a pipe... and then into the street. And that's what we need. Something new.

PAGE 42

NICK

Bea, this just makes me feel--

(sniffs)

Is that a bucket of poop? (or crap)

BEA

Bear poop (or crap), to be precise. I've been promoted. This morning I didn't have a bucket!

(SHE pats his face, HE recoils)

And look! I already made a penny. I'm gonna put it in the money box.

NICK

No! I mean... I'll do it.

FOREMAN

Yo! Bear poop boy! (Or "Bear crap boy!")

FOREMAN motions her to follow, then leaves.

BEA

Hear that? I have a job title! And one day it'll be "bear poop woman!"
(or "Bear crap woman")

PAGE 62

NICK

Because you're a bad actor (Instead of "because you're a shit actor").

PAGE 99

Instead of Peter Quince saying "This is really good shit, mate" — he can say "Wow, you've, like really wroted some good writing here, mate."

PAGE 110

BEA

(nods, thinking)

Uh-huh. Do you know the poem "Love is a shit-load of work?"
(alternates would be "Do you know the poem 'love is a boat-load of work' — or if you want to be slightly edgy without cursing, you could say 'love is a butt-load of work'")

PAGE 118

SHAKESPEARE

And you said I was a bad actor.

PAGE 119

SHAKESPEARE

Though I can't believe I
come up with this crap (or dreck or tripe).

PAGE 126

BROTHER JERMAH

Oh, god damnit! (change to the substitute word of your choice i.e. "oh poop!" or "Gosh Darn it!" or just "Oh damn!"... it can be ridiculous or it can be the first time Jeremiah has ever sworn in his life.

Alternate lyric in "BOTTOM'S GONNA BE ON TOP" to replace:

"WE ARE THE ROYALTY OF THE RENAISSANCE WRITERS..."

SEE HOW THE ROYALTY OF THE RENAISSANCE WRITERS
NOW ARE HANDING DOWN THE CROWN TO YOU
YOU WERE A NOBODY BUT THEN OVERNIGHT YOU'RE SOMEONE
BETTER THAN THE REST OF THEM
NOW YOU ARE THE BEST OF THEM

PAGE 89

In Act 2, the scene between Nigel and Portia where reading poetry is almost a sexual experience... if you wish to replace that with something with less innuendo, do the following:

NIGEL

"ODE TO Portia" - by Nigel Bottom.

(overcome by chronic shyness, HE mumbles inaudibly into his lapel)

"Like stars and sun together never seen, yet heaven made us one our flames to shine..."

PORTIA

Speak up a little...

NIGEL

(barely audible, he can't make eye contact)

Through night and day, no dusk or dawn between, and none could dim our light nor love divine..

PORTIA

Let me help you...

She gets up and reads with him. He gets more confident and reads aloud with her.

NIGEL, PORTIA

And to the stars will fly the elusive dove; to heaven's gate with my eternal-love!

(THEIR eyes meet on the last phrase)

PORTIA

It's beautiful. This is what you should be writing, words that feel true to you.

BROTHER JEREMIAH

If all of the sexual innuendo used by Brother Jeremiah feels inappropriate for your production, you can contact MTI and ask them for the *Something Rotten JR* edition which has a cleaner, more straightforward version of that character.