

D/RICHARD III "A horse, a horse! My kingdom for a horse!"

[JESS *tackles* RICHARD III.]

A/ANNOUNCER There's a pile-up on the field.

D/ANNOUNCER FUM-BLE!!! And Henry the Eighth comes up with it. He's at the fifteen, the ten . . . He stops at the five-yard line to chop off his wife's head . . .

A/HENRY VIII Who's your daddy?

D/ANNOUNCER TOUCHDOWN for the Red Rose! Oh my! You gotta believe this is the beginning of a Tudor dynasty!

ALL [As CHEERLEADERS.] Henry the Fifth, Richard the Third, the whole royal family's frickin' absurd! Go, [Insert name of local favorite sports team.].! Yay!

[DANIEL and JESS congratulate each other as ADAM clambers into the audience.]

Side 2
F.S. 9

ADAM Can I have some house lights please? [House lights come up. To an audience member.] Can I borrow your program for a sec? [He grabs a program from a patron, which must contain a list of the plays. If there's no program, he may consult the Complete Works book.]

DANIEL What are you doing?

ADAM I just want to check the list of plays. I think we might have done 'em all already.

JESS Really?

ADAM Yeah, see, we did all the histories just now—

DANIEL The comedies were 'a lump of hilarity.'

JESS Okay, that leaves the tragedies. We did *Titus Andronicus* with all the blood—

ADAM *Romeo and Juliet* we did—

[OPHELIA *exits.*]

How does my good lord Hamlet?

J/HAMLET Well, God-a-mercy.

D/POLONIUS Do you know me, my lord?

J/HAMLET Excellent well. You are a fishmonger.

D/POLONIUS What do you read, my lord?

J/HAMLET Words, words, words.

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

A/OPHELIA [*Poking her head out from backstage.*] Daddy, the players are here and they want to do a play-within-a-play and I don't know what that is, so you'd better talk to them right away—

[*She disappears.*]

D/POLONIUS "My lord.

[POLONIUS *follows* OPHELIA *off.*]

~~510~~ 510e 4 J/HAMLET I am but mad north-northwest. When the wind is southerly,
I know a hawk from a handsaw.
I'll have these players play something like
The murder of my father before mine uncle.
I'll observe his looks. If he do but blench,
I know my course. The play's the thing
Wherein I'll catch the conscience of the king!

[HAMLET *kneels and draws his dagger. Lights blackout to a pin-spot, which misses the actor by several feet; he has to slide over to it, while trying to maintain his serious composure. As he speaks, however, the titters of the audience annoy him; each time they react, he reacts with increasing anger.*]

To be, or not to be? That is the question.
 Whether 'tis nobler in the mind to suffer
 The slings and arrows of outrageous fortune
 Or to take arms against a sea of troubles
 And by opposing end them.

[He's really intense now; maybe a little too intense.]

To die; to sleep;"

Perchance to nap...

[If the audience hasn't tittered yet, they will now. It throws him.]

To...doze, to...snooze, perchance to...much, it's too much!!!

[JESS collapses into a nervous breakdown. DANIEL and ADAM rush in to comfort him.]

F.S. II

ADAM Bob, lights please! *[Stage lights come up.]*

DANIEL What's wrong? What happened to your speech?

JESS They were laughing at me!

DANIEL They weren't laughing *at* you. They were laughing... adjacent to you.

JESS No! That woman was laughing *at* me!

[JESS lunges as if to attack the woman in the audience who was laughing, and is restrained by DANIEL and ADAM.]

ADAM Don't worry about her. That's Jennifer and she's on Prozac.

JESS She laughed at me! Just like they laughed at Lulu!!!

DANIEL Ladies and gentlemen, this is a heavy-duty emotional speech, and frankly, Jess hasn't been himself lately—

JESS Lulu...!

ADAM Who's this Lulu he keeps going on about?

DANIEL I don't know. I mean, there's a bratty character named Lulu on *General Hospital*.

JESS She is *not* bratty! She's going through hell! She had an abortion at eighteen 'cause the condom broke, and her mother's been in a catatonic state for four years, and . . . [JESS updates the audience on Lulu's trauma of the week. Visit <http://www.soapcentral.com/gh/recaps.php> for details.] And you don't even care! [Collapses into more sobs.]

ADAM You watch *General Hospital*?!

JESS [*Barely audible.*] Maybe . . .

DANIEL So . . . wait a minute. All that stuff you were spouting about killing our televisions and embracing the Bard . . . that was all B.S.?

JESS [*Feebly.*] No . . .

ADAM Jess . . . you're not really a preeminent Shakespeare scholar at all, are you. [JESS mumbles inaudibly.] ARE YOU!?

JESS I'm not even post-eminent.

DANIEL But . . . you took that course.

JESS I didn't finish it.

DANIEL I saw your certificate!

JESS I made it in Photoshop.

DANIEL [*Stunned.*] I . . . don't even know who you are!

JESS I thought the world of Shakespearean scholarship would be all fast cars and hot babes. But it's not! It's full of folios and quartos and quatrains and ibids. So cold. But when I'm in Port Charles, and everyone's so young and bold, and beautiful and restless—[JESS collapses in a heap, quietly sobbing.] I just love my stories.

[ADAM glares at the woman in the audience.]

ADAM Well, I hope you're really proud of yourself. [*Addressing the rest of the audience.*] Sorry, folks, I think we're gonna have to skip the 'to be or not to be' speech.

DANIEL We can't skip 'to be or not to be,' it's the most famous speech in all of Shakespeare.

ADAM It's overrated.

DANIEL Overrated!?

ADAM Think about it. Hamlet is supposed to be killing his uncle and suddenly he's talking about killing himself. Where did *that* come from? It completely weakens his character.

DANIEL It makes it more complex. The layers give it meaning.

ADAM The layers make it sucky! All those long speeches with big words nobody understands! Like what's that one that goes, "I have of late, but wherefore I know not, lost all my mirth, forgone all custom of exercise; and indeed it goes so heavily with my disposition that this goodly frame, the earth, seems to me a sterile promontory; this most excellent canopy, the air, look you; this brave o'erhanging firmament, this majestic roof fretted with golden fire, why it appears to me no more than a foul and pestilent congregation of vapors. What a piece of work is man; how noble in reason, how infinite in faculty, in form and moving how express and admirable; in action how like an angel; in apprehension how like a god. The beauty of the world, the paragon of animals; and yet to me, what is this quintessence of dust? Man delights not me." [*He has delivered the speech simply, quietly and without a trace of 'interpretation.' You can hear a pin drop. To DANIEL.*] Hey, that didn't suck!

JESS [*Still emotional, like a drunk.*] That was beautiful, man!

DANIEL See you guys? That speech is emotional *and* intellectual. The two can live side by side.