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Something Rotten!

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SCENES:
Bea & Nick # 1
Bea & Nick # 2
Nick & Nigel # 1
Nick & Nigel # 2
Portia & Nigel
Will Shakespeare

MUSIC:
God, I Hate Shakespeare – Nick
Right Hand Man – Bea
God, I Hate Shakespeare (reprise) – Nick
I Love the Way – Portia & Nigel
Hard to Be the Bard – Shakespeare
SCENE 4: INT. NICK AND BEA’S FLAT

Nick’s wife BEATRICE (“Bea”) is at the sink doing dishes as Nick enters.

BEA

<HUMMING...>

NICK

Hello, Bea darling...

He gives her a warm hug and a kiss.

NICK

Mmmm. Smells delicious. What is it?

BEA

(over her shoulder)

I’m boiling your underwear. Trust me, you don’t want that.

Nick, who was about to take a sip off a spoon, pours it back in.

BEA

It would have been soup but just as I was going to market the landlord turned up demanding the rent –

Nick has just ladled himself a cup of water from a wooden bucket.

...which means we couldn’t afford the well rights so I got river water.

Nick pours the water back in. Bea vomits into a bucket.

NICK

And now you’re sick. That does it. We’re dipping into the savings.

Nick goes to the SMALL WOODEN CHEST on the mantelpiece...

BEA

NO!!

She practically dives across the room and puts herself between him and the wooden chest.

BEA (CONT’D)

We agreed, Nicky, we never take money out of here! Ever! This money is for the country home where we can raise a family up proper. Now, I know things are tight, but that’s why I was thinking I should get a part-time job.

NICK

A job?
BEA
I’d be a hell of a lot more convincing than those little boys pretending to be women. Couldn’t you see me as Richard’s French Queen?
(thick French accent)
"I hate ziss English cooking! Je’ voudrais un croissant, du camembert, vive la France -- hee-haw-hee-haw!"

NICK
I have no idea what you just said. And you know it’s illegal to put women on stage.

NIGEL
And also our play’s been cancelled.

NICK
Not cancelled, Nige. That’s such a negative way to put it. I mean, yes, we are no longer doing Richard the 2nd but only because we’ve come up with... something better.

BEA
Oooh, what is it?

NICK
Can’t say. Don’t want to jinx it.
(holding her, comforting her)
But, I’m telling you, Bea -- it’s gonna be a hit, and I’m gonna get you outta this dump and into that country home - and everything’s gonna be great.

BEA
Oh, I can’t wait. (she hugs him) See, I knew you’d come through. Even though everyone says you’re rubbish, I don’t listen.

NICK
Aww, that’s swee-- wait, what? Who says I’m rubbish?

BEA
Oh, nobody important. The butcher, the neighbors, my parents. But...

Your parents?

NICK
END
Nick turns and bumps into a man who is hurrying across stage carrying a burlap sack (it's Bea).

NICK
Oh! Sorry, sir.

BEA (LOW VOICE)
No worries, mate... just somethin' we men do, bump into each other and what not...

She's about to continue on when...

NICK
Bea? Not this again...

BEA
Had you for a minute, didn't I?

NICK
What are you doing? I told you to cut this out!

BEA
I know, but they were looking for good strong men to break down the stage and haul the wood away.

Bea vomits into her burlap sack.

NICK
You're still sick?

BEA
Actually, I was gonna tell you about that when you got home. You know how I've having these wild mood swings?

NICK
No.

BEA
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?

She hugs him.
SCENE 3: EXT. LONDON STREET/OUTSIDE THEATER

TOWNSPEOPLE mill about. Nick walks, Nigel follows...

NICK
Okay...new idea, new idea...

NIGEL
If we're looking for new ideas, 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 has stopped to listen. His head tilts back, he snores, snaps awake.

NICK
No! We need something big! Gimme your notebook. (takes notebook, opens it) "Ode to Love?" Poetry?

NIGEL
If I'm really being true to myself, that's what I am. A poet. Which is why maybe you should just go back to writing without me.

NICK
Don't say that. We're a team. You just need take all that poetry energy and channel into something people might pay to see.

NIGEL
Like the Bard.

NICK
A bard. And you know what? -- this little setback might be exactly what we needed. Failure is just opportunity in disguise.

NIGEL
And we've had a lot of opportunities.

NICK
We have to innovate. The world is changing, Nige. 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. C'mon, let's get to work...
He 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
A MUSICAL.
(painting it in the sky)
(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...a fantastic idea.

Yeah?

NICK
It’s brilliant actually. Might be your best yet.

NIGEL
I don’t know, I’ve had some pretty good ideas. I mean “Hannibal?” Hello?

But this! -- 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 some melodies. And all those poems of yours? -- there’s your lyrics!

END
**Portia & Nigel**

Nigel starts to walk away but
notices a peasant woman in a cloak and
hood who has stepped into his path.

**Nigel**
Words, words, words. 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. I've memorized it word for word.

**Nigel**
Really? And 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.

**Portia**
Forgive me. Poetry is forbidden in my house, especially
poems of earthly love. My father says they are the tools
of Satan.

(melodramatically; to the heavens)
**Portia**
**Oh, is there no pity in the clouds that sees into the
bottom of my grief?!**

**Nigel**
Romeo and Juliet, Act 1, Scene 5.

You've seen it?

**Portia**

**Nigel**
Six times. And you?

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

**Nigel**
My brother, too.
PORTIA
I adore Shakespeare.

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

PORTIA
I've got Sonnet number 1. Signed!

NIGEL
Wow!

(checking over his shoulder)
OK, I've never shown this to anyone before but -- a letter. To me. From the Bard. Saying he has received my sonnet.

PORTIA
You sent him a sonnet?

NIGEL
I know Ben Johnson's cousin who knows a guy who works for Shakespeare and he gave it to him.

PORTIA
And he's read it??

NIGEL
Well, he said he would. I mean, he's probably way too busy. He doesn't know who I am or anything.
SHAKESPEARE

Is that a young Bottom I see?!
Nigel Bottom -- playwright, poet and prestigious prodigy.
(to attendant)
Oooh, that was a lot of alliteration --
(singing it)

OCCUPATIONAL HAZARD!
(shaking Nigel's hand)
So, you're Nicky Bottom's little brother. His "secret weapon." Nice to finally meet you. And pray tell -- who is this delightful damsel, this maiden fair, this feast for the eyes?

NIGEL
Oh, um... This is Portia.

SHAKESPEARE
Portia. Good name.

PORTIA
<BIG GASP, BREATHING QUICKLY>

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

PORTIA
M-m-m-master Shakespeare...

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!

END
NICK: Comedies?? Name one thing of his that's funny.
Give me a line, anything.
NIGEL: "On my word, we'll not carry coals for
then we should be colliers!" (TROUPE laughs)
NICK: That's not

Brisk Rock (d = 150)

fun-ny! Argh... God, I hate Shakes-peare! That's right, I said it. I do, I hate Shakes-peare! I just don't get it, how a

<GASP> No! Why?

mediocre actor from a mea-sly li-ttle town is sud-den-ly the bright-est jewel in Eng-land's Roy-al Crown. Oh,
God, I hate Shakespeare! His plays are word-y 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.

Half-time feel

TROUPE:
[NIGEL SINGS]

How can you say that? How can you say that?

How can you say that? How can you say that?
Waltz in 'I' (d = 56)

His genius is he's fooling all of you! But he's

Don't be a penis, the man is a genius.

Don't be a penis, the man is a genius.

brilliant what majesty flows from his pen. His poetry soars like a sweet violin. God's

own inspiration, like lightning doth strike him, and he captures my soul.

NICK: Jezz, you sound just like him!
NIGEL: Really? Thanks!
You should hate Shakespeare! <GASP>
Well, there's your problem, you're so

Well, I don't. I try to em-u-late Shakes-peare.

blind-ed by "the Bard" who's such a pom-pous lit-tle man.

Why is it a prob-lem to ad-

‘Cause he's a hack with a knack for steal-ing an-y-thing he can!

mit that I'm a fan?
How can you say that? How can you say that? The man really knows how to write a bitch-in' play.

You wish you could pen one, We wish we were in one!

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

And that's another thing I
hate a-bout Shake-speare... is all the twits who blo-vi-ate a-bout Shake-speare, and how they prat-tle on a-

bout his great ac-comp-lish-ments, well, la-di-da-di-da! And once they start their gush-ing, there's no stop-ping them and then it's "blah blah

blah blah blah," Shake-speare. And he walks in, it's "dum da dum Ta da!" Shake-speare! He's hold-ing court and they say,

"Will, you're such a gen-i-us, and your writ-ing is di-vine." "A rose by a-ny oth-er name is such a clev-er line!" And they're all
"Ooh!" and he's all "Stop!" and they're all "Yay!" and I'm all "Ugh!" And I'm really getting sick of it! And Ohl, Ohl,

Ohl, I hate Shakespeare!

TROUPE: Shmake-speare! The

I think by now we sorta know you hate Shakespeare.

I think by now we sorta know you hate Shakespeare.

way he feigns humility when all he does is gloat, the way he wears that silly, frilly collar 'round his throat, the

VS.
post-er child for why no-one should ever pro-duce, let me make a short-er list and I will give it to you straight!

Every little thing a-bout Shake- speare is what I

NICK: hate!

Don't hate.

TROUPE: Hates, he hates, he clear-ly, sure-ly, real-ly, tru-ly hates Shake-speare!

Hates, he hates, he clear-ly, sure-ly, real-ly, tru-ly hates Shake-speare!

Short Scene
(2 lines)
Piano-Vocal Score

BEA
NICK
NIGEL

BEA: So... there is no idea...
NICK: Well, we've had the idea that
we need an idea.
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...[GO M.T.]

Driving, but not too fast (\(\text{d} = 150\))

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

[Music and lyrics notation]
Think of me as your side-kick, helping you whenever I can.

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: Uggghhh! (to NIGEL) He's not hearing me. (back to NICK)

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

ever in a pickle, you can call for me and quick... I'll be how fast I run.

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 back - ground just smil-ing ev-’ry now and a-gain But

just to be a pret-ty la-dy that would be a pi-ty, ba-by, Let me be your right hand man

NIGEL: You should probably listen. She's usually right. NICK: Eat your cabbage.

BEA:

I am strong-er than you

VS.
think Don't be think-in' I ain't tough I am where you ought-to go when the go-in's gettin' rough So when things

But if they weren't Luv Mmm

But they're not No, things are fine But it's o-kay What?

They kind of are

BEA: Quit trying to protect me! NICK: Can we change the subject please?

Not un-till I know that if you're

What!
ever in a fix, and it's a fix you need to nix then I'm your "go-to guy".

Don't be so literal.

You're not a guy.

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

poco rit.

fan,
Colla voce

There's no problem that's too big, When you're married that's the gig so don't be a sex-ist pig!

A Tempo

Is it asking too much of you? It's only 'cause I love you Let me be your right,

NICK: What are you doing now?
BEA: I'm gonna get you boys some MEAT!

In fact I'll show you that I'm right...

VAMP

BABY I'm your right Don't put up a fight I can be your right Starting here tonight Let me be your

80
right        hand

Let me be your right hand

Short Scene
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) [GO]

Slow, Delicate (\( \text{\textit{d}} = 100 \))

NIGEL: I love you so much.
NICK: I love you, too. Get some sleep. NIGEL: Okay.

Freely

NICK:

God, I hate Shake-p-eare, but when I sit and real-ly con-tem-plate Shake-p-eare, I guess I hate the fact that

he is ev-ry-thing I e-ver dreamed that I could be, I most-ly hate the way he makes me feel a-bout me.
NICK: 'Cause the truth is...

It wouldn't be that bad to be Shakespeare. In fact, I'd give my left

nud to be Shakespeare.

If I could only have a tiny little smidgen of his notoriety, it could re-

lieve 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.

-rall.

-Clear-
Triumphant Idea Music ($J = 112$)

ASTROLOGER: Tarot cards! Palm readings! Amputees get half price! GYPSY WOMAN: Lucky heather sir? NICK: Thanks, but... I need more than luck.

NICK: Psst. Hey. I'm looking for a soothsayer. EYEPATCH MAN: Norbert the Knowing. Supposed to be the best.

NICK: Walks SL to sign on door rall. NICK: "Out of business due to unforeseen circumstances." So obviously not the very best. [GO m. 48]

Brisk! ($J = 148$)
PORTIA: Oh yes. Your sonnet has Shakespearean sophistication mixed with the complexity of Daniel Webster and the sensitivity of Samuel Daniel. [GO m. 1]

Light Waltz, in 1 (d = 66)


PORTIA:
Sidney and Marlowe and often I borrow their words 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.
Oh,_________every time I hear a perfect rhyme I get all ting ly.

because I know that to find a perfect rhyme is not an easy

V.S.
PORTIA: Youuuuu are really doing something to me, Mr. Poetry Man. Forgive me. I never got to discuss poetry in this way.
NIGEL: It's okay. I never knew poetry could affect someone the way it affects me. PORTIA: Me neither.

PORTIA: Me too!

end all the be all, Oh, you ought to see all the books that I have on my shelf. I find

pleasure pereus-ing those writ-ings and mus-ings so of-ten I plea-sure my self.

NIGEL:

Wall, that didn't sound right. No, I know what you mean, when I'm
PORTIA: You scream? So do I! AHHH!

deep in the throes of impassionate prose I could scream!

PORTIA:

Oh... I love a liltting line of lyrical alliteration. And then I'm like

Who doesn't love alliteration.

whoa... when the phrases come together like a consummation.

sweet elation!
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

poco rubato,

I love, you know that I love,

a tempo

you know that I love...

Scene
Hard to Be the Bard

Rock Shuffle, Swing 8's ($j = 111$)

MINSTREL: 

SHAKESPEARE:

My days are so bu-zy, it's mak-ing me diz-zy, there's so much I got-ta do. It's lunch-es and met-tings, and po-e-try read-ings, and

G7

end-less in-ter-views. Got-ta pose for a por-trait, and how I de-plor-e sit-ting there for e-tern-i-ty. Then it's
off to the inn, where my inn-keeper friend wants to name a drink after me!
Then it's back to my room where I resume my attempts to write a hit,
Just me and my beer and the terrible fear that I might be losing it.
And it's hard, it's really really hard, so very very hard,

SHAKESPEARE:

BARD BOYS:
make it look easy, but honey believe me it's hard, it's hard, it's so incredibly hard. So

It's hard, it's hard, incredibly hard.

C G G A D

inconceivably, unbelievably hard.

It's hard to be the Bard!

inconceivably, unbelievably hard.

D B7 Em C C7

V.S.
I don't know how I do it. I mean, there's only so much of me that can go around.

I got so many fans with so many demands, I can hardly go take a piss. Be it

Hoo!

Ah-woo,

He can't peep

the-a-tre freak, or the aut-o-graph seek-er, they all want a piece of this!

It's a cross that I bear, I'm like Jus-sus I swear, it's a

Hoo!

Ah-woo,

Gim-me gim-me Hoo!

Ah-

bur-den but I suffer through it. It's all part of the game, the trap-pings of fame, but

Hoo!

He is suffer-ing!

Ah-

-122-
some-bod-ys got - ta do it. And I know, I know, I got - ta go and get

woo, So he does it!

back to my pen and ink. Oh, Don't make me do it, don't make me go through it, can some-bod-ys get me a drink? 'Cause it's
hard, It's hard, It's rea-ly rea-ly hard, It's sex-y but it's hard, This

BARD BOYS:
It's hard, It's hard, It's rea-ly hard! sex-y but it's hard.

bar that I'm rais-ing to be this a-ma-zing it's hard, it's hard, it's so an- noy-ing-ly hard. So

It's hard, It's hard, an- noy-ing-ly hard.

SHAKESPEARE: It's hard to be the Bard, baby!

SHAKESPEARE: I know writing made me famous, but being famous is just so much more fun. (Last X)

un-a-void-a-bley, un-en-joy-a-bley hard.

un-a-void-a-bley, un-en-joy-a-bley hard.

VAMP
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, that 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 got to be iambic pentameter!

So you

write down a word, but it's NOT the right word, so you TRY a new word, but you HATE the new word, then 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?
SHAKESPEARE:
It's really the worst. Makes me wonder why I didn't think of that fist. Hard to alleviate the

BARD BOYS:
It's hard!
pressure to create,

Hard to do something as good as the last thing I did that was already great.

It's hard!

Well, I'll hoist him by his petard.

hard! So hard that he is stealing from the Bard.

Ooh.

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

Clever disguise.

Devious lies.
SHAKESPEARE: Nice try, Nick Bottom. But I think Shakespeare needs to know what...

work that's ter-ri-bly and un-bear-a-ble-ly hard.

Ooh,

Ah!

D  B7  Em  C

...Shakespeare's biggest hit will be.

'Cause it's hard.
'Cause it's hard.
'Cause it's hard.

It's hard it's tot-al-ly hard
It's hard it's tot-al-ly hard

I've got for-tune and fame ev-ry-one knows my name I can't help it, it's still frig-gin' hard.

It's hard it's tot-al-ly hard