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*Stone, Parchment, Saber
or Hamlet—Episode I: The Phantom Menace*

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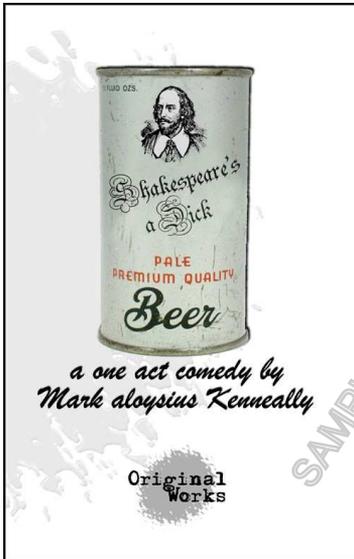
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Shakespeare's a Dick
By Mark aloysius Kenneally



Synopsis: When the young red-neck Wally curses the name of Shakespeare and opts to attend a Monster Truck Show instead of "As You Like It," he feels the wrath of the Bard. Waking up after a heavy night of boozing, he finds he can only speak in Shakespearian verse. His best friend

Ramie searches for a cure from their high school English teacher Ingrid, while his girlfriend Doris swoons for the new Wally.

Cast Size: 2 Males, 2 Females

**Stone, Parchment, Saber
or
Hamlet- Episode I: The Phantom Menace**

**A comedy for a melancholy Prince
by Jason Aaron Goldberg**

SAMPLE ONLY

Characters:

Bernardo - The man with the plan.

Francisco - The un-lucky one.

Marcellus - The head watchman.

Horatio - Hamlet's best friend.

Hamlet - The butt of the joke.

SAMPLE ONLY

Stone, Parchment, Saber

Scene 1.

(BERNARDO and FRANCISCO sit at the gates of the castle, each holds a personal flask of spirits. It is bitter cold and the two men are freezing. They wear their unhappiness on their faces.)

BERNARDO

For all that I am, I see not why a few splashes of spirit on a cold day is cause for the night watch.

FRANCISCO

The King is an untamed man. It was all the more reason to abuse his usurped power.

(They swig in unison.)

BERNARDO

Something must be done.

FRANCISCO

You are full of madness, yet you speak the truth.

BERNARDO

From madness springs genius. Mark me! I see our challenge; we must be clean in our task.

FRANCISCO

Good Bernardo, what is your vision?

BERNARDO

Is the great King Hamlet not newly dead?

FRANCISCO

Aye, he is.

BERNARDO

Is not his unfaithful brother the new King?

FRANCISCO

Aye, he is.

BERNARDO

And is he also not the same man who has given us this solemn duty?

FRANCISCO

Aye sir, he is. Where is your focus?

BERNARDO

We shall attack him with great horror.

FRANCISCO

An attack on the King will bring us the noose.

BERNARDO

A physical attack is not the mission. We shall employ the strongest of all offences, terror. We shall tell the King the ghost of his brother appeared to us. Aye. And he has been summoned. As he approaches the gate, you will enter as the apparition, scaring him to his core.

FRANCISCO
Two things trouble me.

BERNARDO
Speak them now.

FRANCISCO
One, the King will never travel alone.

BERNARDO
True. I will have Marcellus and Horatio bring him.

FRANCISCO
Well done.

BERNARDO
Your secondary concern?

FRANCISCO
I will not be the one to dress as the ghost, by God.
You can partake in that venture.

BERNARDO
I cannot logically be the ghost, for it was my plan.

FRANCISCO
And a cunning plan it is, but I will not play the
ghost.

BERNARDO
Give me good reason as to why.

FRANCISCO
I am always the ghost.

BERNARDO

What say you? This undertaking is fresh.

FRANCISCO

Tis true. Yet, I am always the one in costume.

BERNARDO

These words hurt me Francisco.

FRANCISCO

I am always sent for the drink. I am always to tell the others of a gathering. Why is it you never do such things?

BERNARDO

It all rests in the chain of command.

FRANCISCO

This is not a military action. Therefore I will not be forced in to such a trap.

BERNARDO

Very well my friend. The decision will come from a game of chance.

FRANCISCO

(He swigs.) Name your game.

BERNARDO

Good Rosencrantz and fair Guildenstern constantly lecture on fifty-fifty chance. We will take that chance and toss a coin. If heads be the decision I will portray the ghost. If the fates point to tails, the task will go to you.

FRANCISCO

(He swigs again, and smiles.) I accept, for I know the outcome will be heads.

BERNARDO

What gives you such confidence?

FRANCISCO

As you professed, good Rosencrantz and fair Guildenstern have attempted this chance often. And as they have seen the fates always point to heads.

BERNARDO

We shall see how the fates feel today. Give me a coin.

FRANCISCO

For what reason?

BERNARDO

To toss.

FRANCISCO

I have no coins for tossing.

BERNARDO

What do you have coins for?

FRANCISCO

Expenses.

BERNARDO

I will return the coin promptly when the chance is complete.

FRANCISCO

That would be fine, but I have no coins. We will have to use one of yours.

BERNARDO

I am without as well.

FRANCISCO

Now how will we choose?

BERNARDO

A new game is demanded.

FRANCISCO

What is a fair game for a decision of this magnitude?

BERNARDO & FRANCISCO

Stone, parchment, saber.

(They smile, toast, and swig.)

FRANCISCO

Never a finer or fairer competition.

BERNARDO

A children's game with unquestionably honest results.

FRANCISCO

Splendid.

BERNARDO

Indeed, we will show our hands at the count of three.

(The game is “rock, paper, scissors.” Instead of scissors the term “saber” is used. “Saber” is shown by extending only the middle finger at the opponent; “saber” stabs through “parchment.” Stone and Parchment are the same as Rock and Paper respectively. FRANCISCO and BERNARDO begin to play. After the count of three FRANCISCO is showing “Stone” and BERNARDO is showing “Parchment.” BERNARDO has won.)

FRANCISCO

Let us go again.

BERNARDO

For what purpose? I have won.

FRANCISCO

I was not fully prepared. Now I am.

BERNARDO

Where is the sportsmanship in that? If I were to lose now, what would come of my previous victory?

FRANCISCO

Nothing, it would be gone.

BERNARDO

Then the match is uneven. We will play once more, if you are victorious, we will play once more. The winner of that match will not play the King. Yet, if I am again the victor, you will maintain your role.

FRANCISCO

Fair enough. I am ready. I trust you are prepared for defeat.

BERNARDO

We shall soon see.

(The two men begin the three count and show their hands. FRANCISCO is showing "Parchment." BERNARDO is showing "Saber.")

FRANCISCO

Zounds! I was sure to win. Impossible.

BERNARDO

On the contrary my good man, it is possible. You are going to play the ghost. I will tell Marcellus that you and I have seen the figure. I will convince him to bring Horatio tomorrow evening; Horatio in turn will bring the King. Come, we must prepare your guise.

Scene 2.

(It is the next evening, and still bitter cold. FRANCISCO is visibly unhappy with having to play the ghost of the King. He is wearing his armor and is covered in white powder, he looks very much like a ghost. BERNARDO cannot conceal his excitement.)

BERNARDO

Well done Francisco. You look very much the part. I will take my place awaiting Marcellus and the King. You wait beyond, and when they arrive, appear from over hill. Remember to have your visor down and do not speak, for we do not want to spoil the surprise.

FRANCISCO

I am sick at heart.

BERNARDO

All will be well, now make haste.

(FRANCISCO exits. BERNARDO waits for MARCELLUS, HORATIO, and the KING. BERNARDO removes his flask and takes a swig. After only a few moments MARCELLUS and HORATIO enter, the KING is nowhere to be seen.)

BERNARDO

Stand ho! Who is there?

HORATIO

Friends to this ground.

MARCELLUS

And liegemen to the Dane. Holla, Bernardo!

BERNARDO

Say— What, is Horatio there?

HORATIO

A piece of him.

BERNARDO

Welcome, Horatio, welcome, good Marcellus.

HORATIO

What, has the thing appear'd again to-night?

BERNARDO

I have seen nothing.

MARCELLUS

Horatio says' tis but our fantasy,
And will not let belief take hold of him
Touching this dreaded sight you have seen
Therefore I have entreated him along.
If again this apparition come,
He may approve and speak to it.

HORATIO

Tush, tush, 'twill not appear.

BERNARDO

Sit down a while,
And let me assail your ears
That are so fortified against our story,
What Francisco and I have two nights seen.

HORATIO

Well, sit we down,
And let us hear Bernardo speak of this.

BERNARDO

Last night of all,

(Before Bernardo can finish anymore of the speech written by Shakespeare FRANCISCO appears as the ghost. BERNARDO leaps to his feet. FRANCISCO has forgotten to put his visor down. BERNARDO stands behind MARCELLUS and HORATIO making huge gestures for FRANCISCO to put the visor down. MARCELLUS and HORATIO stand dumb-founded looking at "the ghost." FRANCISCO finally understands what BERNARDO is trying to say and puts his visor down. As soon as the visor is down MARCELLUS breaks in with his line.)

MARCELLUS

Peace, break thee off! Look where it comes again!

(MARCELLUS and HORATIO try to hide but cannot find a place. BERNARDO stands, subtly enjoying the festivities. FRANCISCO stands looking very unhappy in his armor, face covered by his visor.)

BERNARDO

(Very confidently) In the same figure like the King that's dead.

MARCELLUS

(Frightened) Thou art a scholar, speak to it, Horatio.

BERNARDO

(As if trying to prove a point) Looks he not like the King? Mark it, Horatio.

HORATIO

Most like; it harrows me with fear and wonder.

MARCELLUS

Speak to it, Horatio.

HORATIO

What art thou usurp'st this time of night,
Together with that fair and warlike form
In which the majesty of buried Denmark
Did sometimes march? By heaven I charge thee
speak!

(FRANCISCO knows he is not to speak and looks to exit.)

MARCELLUS

It is offended.

(FRANCISCO has no idea what to do. BERNARDO, still behind MARCELLUS and HORATIO is waving at FRANCISCO to leave. FRANCISCO lifts his visor to better see what BERNARDO wants. When he gets it he quickly lowers his visor and exits even quicker.)

BERNARDO

See, it stalks away!

HORATIO

Stay! Speak, speak, I charge thee speak!

MARCELLUS

'Tis gone and will not answer.

BERNARDO

(Enjoying their reactions) How now, Horatio?
You tremble and look pale.
Is not this something more than fantasy?
What think you on't?

HORATIO

Before my God, I might not this believe
Without the sensible and true avouch
Of mine own eyes.

MARCELLUS

Is it not like the King?

HORATIO

As thou art to thyself.
Such was the very armor he had on
When he the ambitious Norway combated.
'Tis strange.

BERNARDO

It can be no other than the King.
Well may it sort that this portentous figure
Comes armed through our watch so like the King
Perhaps he requests his brother.

(FRANCISCO enters again, still in costume. He tried to sneak on to signal BERNARDO, but is seen by the others.)

HORATIO

But soft, behold! Lo where it comes again!

(FRANCISCO is scared and does not know what to do. He looks to BERNARDO and gets nothing. He raises his arms as if asking "What do I do?" The stage direction in Hamlet reads: "It spreads his arms.")

HORATIO

I'll cross it though it blast me. Stay, illusion!

If thou hast any sound or use of voice,

Speak to me.

If there be any good thing to be done

That may to thee do ease, and grace to me,

Speak to me.

If thou art privy to thy country's fate,

Which happily foreknowing may avoid,

O speak!

Or if thou hast uphoarded in thy life

Extorted treasure in the womb of earth,

For which, they say, your spirits oft walk in death,

Speak of it, stay and speak! Stop it, Marcellus.

(All of the previous speech is too heightened for FRANCISCO or BERNARDO to fully understand. Perhaps they understood the word "spirits.")

MARCELLUS

Shall I strike it with my partisan?

HORATIO

Do, if it will not stand.

(FRANCISCO understands this and gets very scared. He begins to exit. BERNARDO is gesturing for FRANCISCO to leave.)

BERNARDO

'Tis here!

HORATIO

'Tis here!

FRANCISCO runs off.

MARCELLUS

'Tis gone!

We do it wrong, being so majestic,
To offer it the show of violence,
For it is as the air, invulnerable,
And our vain blows malicious mockery.

(BERNARDO cannot follow anything MARCELLUS is saying.)

BERNARDO

It was about to speak when the cock crew.

Scene 3.

(BERNARDO quietly stalks through the woods alone.)

BERNARDO

Francisco... Francisco, what say you?

FRANCISCO

I am here.

(FRANCISCO reveals himself from behind a tree, still dressed as the GHOST.)

BERNARDO

Excellent! Well played Francisco.

FRANCISCO

Then it was satisfactory?

BERNARDO

Indeed, Indeed.

FRANCISCO

Then I will make haste and find you on the morrow.
This abuse is enough for one waking day.

BERNARDO

My friend you must hold your ground.

FRANCISCO

What say you?