

SHAKESPEARE BACHELOR

By Kristen Doherty

“A tale told by an idiot, full of sound and fury, signifying nothing”

William Shakespeare.

CHARACTERS

OSHER - The incredibly handsome host who has the ability to make the bachelorettes scream at the sight of him.

WILL SHAKESPEARE - The greatest playwright in the history of the (*echo*) world... world... world.

LADY MACBETH (Macbeth) - The psychopathic/paranoid clean freak.

JULIET (Romeo and Juliet) –

The ditzy teenager who falls in love way, way too fast.

TITANIA (A Midsummer Night's Dream) - The delusional, flirty, hippy who uses magic to get ahead.

OPHELIA (Hamlet) - The petulant florist and swimmer with trust issues.

BEATRICE (Much Ado About Nothing) - The witty and sassy joker who tells it as it is.

VIOLA (Twelfth Night) - The mega competitive, friend-zoned, tomboy.

TAMORA (Titus Andronicus) - The mean girl with a taste for pie.

CORDELIA (King Lear) - The sweet, bookish girl who loves Will as the playwright, no more, nor less.

KATHERINE (Taming of the Shrew) - The shrew who does not want to get married.

CLEOPATRA (Antony and Cleopatra) - QWEEN

SCENE 1 – WELCOME TO SHAKESPEARE BACHELOR.

SFX - Dramatic, classical Bachelor music plays.

The beautiful bachelor garden, there are fake flowers and fairy lights EVERYWHERE. Osher enters.

OSHER: Welcome to the Bachelor. Here in this beautiful mansion, right now, there are ten ladies lining up to meet their bachelor. Bachelorettes who are on a journey to be the best character ever written. Now, our new bachelor is no ordinary man. Oh no. No doubt many of you would have heard of him. He is, in fact, the greatest playwright who ever existed in the history of the world, world, world, world.

SFX – Echo “world, world, world.”

OSHER: Some may say love is written in the stars, as tonight, we will meet our bachelor, William Shakespeare.

SFX - Beautiful, sad music swirls.

VFX - Footage of Shakespeare sitting at his desk, looking lonely. He picks up his quill and writes. He shakes his head, scribbles out the writing, and screws up the paper. He sadly puts his head on the desk, a tear escapes his eye. (Alternately, this section can be staged)

WILL: *(voice over)* I’ve always had a fascination with writing, I remember plucking the feathers out of my chicken’s butt just to make my own quill when I was a wee lad in Stratford Upon Avon. Now I’m the most popular playwright in London. My plays have graced the stages of the Swan, the Globe, the Curtain and the Theatre, which is called “the Theatre”, many, many, many, many times. But it’s not enough! *(slams fist on the table)* Something is missing. You can’t have a cuddle with an ink and quill.

VFX - Footage of Shakespeare taking off his shirt. He runs along a beach. He stops and looks forlornly into the distance.

WILL: *(voice over footage)* For me, the course of true love has not run smooth. It’s not like I haven’t loved before. I have of course. I’m Shakespeare, I kinda invented love. It’s just that there’s never been that *one* who I’ve really... you know, made that connection with. So, I’ve come into the Bachelor Mansion to find her, the one, my ultimate creation. The greatest character I’ve ever written.

VFX - Film ends.

Will and Osher enter from opposite sides, meet centre stage and shake hands.

OSHER: Greetings Will, and welcome to the Bachelor Mansion.

WILL: Thanks, Osher. It’s great to be here.

OSHER: From what anyone can see, you have it all. One may ask, why? Why do you need to look for “the one”?

WILL: Ay me! Sad hours seem long. When not having that, which, having, makes them short.

OSHER: Love?

WILL: Yes Osher, love. I am looking for love. My perfect character. A wise man once said one needs “A heart to love, and in that heart, courage, to make love known”

OSHER: Excuse me if I am wrong, Will, but were you that wise man?

WILL: Oh, ho, ho. How, right you are, my dear fellow. How right you are. It seems that when I said I’d die a bachelor, I never thought I’d live to be married. (*he chortles*)

OSHER: But Will, we all know you were once married.

WILL: Ahh, yes, dear Anne. I did leave her my second-best bed, you know.

OSHER: I think everyone knows that. Well Will, your life is about to change, and it will never be the same. I hope you are ready to fall in love with the greatest character you’ve ever written, because the first chariot is coming up the driveway right now. (*exits*)

SCENE 2 – THE BACHELOTTES ENTER THE MANSION

SFX - Beautiful depressing music plays.

Ophelia enters, she is dripping wet and petulant - Addresses the audience.

OPHELIA: Hi I’m Ophelia. I’ve had my heart broken by a guy who my dad wanted me to marry. His mum, the Queen, was my dad’s boss and they thought we’d be cute together. Bad choice Dad! This guy, Hamlet, was so moody! Broke up with me with no warning. Told me he loved me and then denied he’d ever said it. I was shook! I tried not to be too grouchy with him cause he was in a pretty dark place; his dad died and then his mum married his gross uncle, like, weeks later. So, I guess it was kinda understandable that he was hating on love. But then he stabbed my dad and killed my brother. Yep! Both of them, d.e.a.d. So anyways, obviously I couldn’t forgive him after that. He made me crazy! So, I’m looking forward to meeting Will. I recon we’ll have lots in common. I’m a bit of a poet too you know. And I bet his love letters will be better than Hamlet’s any day. (*walks solemnly towards Will, she whips out her ukulele and sings*)

To-morrow is Saint Valentine's day,
All in the morning betime,
And I a maid at your window,
To be your Valentine. (*Dramatically strums*)

WILL: (*claps*) Oh, that was great.

OPHELIA: I have a present for you. (*pulls a wilted bunch of flowers and hands them to Will*) There's rosemary, that's for remembrance; pray love, remember. And there is pansies, that's for thoughts. There's fennel for you, and columbines. There's rue for you; Oh, you must wear your rue with a difference. There's a daisy. (*whimpers*) I would give you some violets, but they withered all when my father died. (*bursts into loud, ugly crying*)

WILL: (*uncomfortable*) Well, that’s nice. Um... Thanks, Ophelia, is it?

Ophelia nods through her tears.

WILL: It’s been so great meeting you. Be not melancholy, dear lady. We shall catch up inside.

Will hands her back the flowers, turns her around and directs her in the way of the mansion. She trudges out. Will turns expectantly for his next bachelorette.

WILL: Whomever shall be next, this is such fun!

SFX - Beautiful fairy music begins.

Titania enters – glittery, ethereal and hippy-esque. She addresses the audience.

TITANIA: Hi. I'm Titania and I am ageless. I've not had the best luck when it comes to love. My ex, Oberon, put a spell on me which made me fall in love with a half man-half donkey creature. And then, while I was all doped out on Donkey-love, that jerk stole my kid and put him in his army. And on top of that, his so called "love juice" wiped all memory I had of my little Indian boy. That's just not cool man. So now I'm ready to meet a man that will treat me with the respect the Queen of the fairies deserves. And because Will is the greatest playwright in the history of the world, he can immortalise me in writing as well. I shall cast my spell upon him and make sure I am forever known as the most beloved of them all. (*Titania floats towards Will*) Greetings mortal.

WILL: Hi. You look great, all shimmery and stuff.

TITANIA: Thanks. It's fairy dust. Here have some. (*blows glitter at Will*)

WILL: (*coughs and splutters*) Argh! My eyes! You got it in my eyes.

TITANIA: Oopsey.

WILL: Argh it burns. Cut! Cut! Osher!

Osher runs to sponge Will's eyes with a bucket and sponge.

Blackout/Lights up. SFX – Twinkling fairy music.

Will and Titania stand in their last position before accident. Osher has gone.

WILL: (*love drunk, woozy*) ...It's lovely to meet you Titania, it's strange, (*hiccup*) it seems that even though you almost blinded me for life, I feel an immediate connection with you. Enchanté, beautiful lady. (*he kisses her hand, entranced*)

TITANIA: Will, maybe there is no need for this silly little show, as you have already found the one you are looking for.

WILL: I think I may have. (*looks at her lovingly*) Titania, I lov//

TITANIA: Oopsie. You still have some fairy dust on your eyelash. (*wipes it away*)

WILL: (*shakes his head. The spell has come off. Gasps*) Titania! You bewitched me!

TITANIA: (*flirty*) Did I?

WILL: (*scolds*) Uh, uh, uh. Play fair dear lady.

TITANIA: All's fair in love and war.

WILL: (*annoyed*) That's not my quote. Hmm... (*turns her around, annoyed*) I shall see you inside. If I see fit. (*pushes her out the door and turns in glee*) Next!

SFX - Doom and gloom music

Tamora enters, she is seductive, dangerous, and holds a pie. Addresses the audience.

TAMORA: I am Tamora. My beauty is eternal. Men fall at my feet and will do whatever I say. These other bachelorettes don't have a chance. I have had my fair share of... how would you say? Conquests. *(smiles sinisterly and adds with relish)* Yes, conquests. But here I am now without love in my life. I thrive on a challenge, so I have come to the Bachelor Mansion to win myself another husband. Will shall be my third... Or fourth. I keep losing track. No one has measured up thus far. *(dramatic pause)* Except one. There was one man, Titus. He challenged me in a way no one could. Made me believe his lies and no matter what I did, the depths in which I stooped; I could never beat him. In the end he fed me a dirty street pie and I was done. So now I'm looking forward to getting my teeth stuck into a new challenge because I know that success will taste so sweet. *(walks determinedly towards Will)*

TAMORA: Will? Tamora. I made you a pie. *(holds it out to him)*

WILL: Thank you. *(a bit confused)* I shall eat it later. *(hands the pie back to her)* Stick it in the fridge for me.

TAMORA: I shall. Until we meet again.

WILL: Indeed. Indeed.

An uneasy Will propels her towards the door. She exits, a bit offended.

SFX - Plonk, plonk, funny music.

Viola enters wearing a disguise, a man's tunic and hat. Addresses the audience directly.

VIOLA: Hi there, I'm Viola. If a love life could be a status, mine would be "it's complicated". I hope you're following closely. My twin brother, Cesario, and I got into a bit of trouble when we were young and he took off. I kinda got thrown in the deep end, literally, and started working for this guy, Duke Orsino. Duke. *(sigh)* He was so hot, and I totally fell in love with him, but I was pretending to be something that I wasn't... My brother, actually. Yeah, I was pretending to be my brother. And for a while it was bliss; me perving on the Duke from afar. But then it all became a big mess because he fell in love with my bestie and then *she* started totally crushing on me. Well, me as Cesario anyway. And so, it became this big love triangle which then turned into, like, a love quadrangle, when my brother, the actual Cesario rocks up. Seriously! It was a disaster! Duke and I did end up together, but it was never the same. I think he liked me better as Cesario, or maybe he never got over Olivia? See, I told you. Complicated! *(walks determinedly towards Will, whips off her jacket and hat to reveal a glamorous dress)* Tuh, duh! Presenting me! Viola. Your most versatile character, and therefore winner of your heart.

WILL: Well, someone's getting a little ahead of themselves, now, aren't they?

VIOLA: I can be whomever you want me to be.

WILL: Good for you. *(pats her on the head)* Now off you go.

He spins her around and pushes her to the door. Viola exits feeling rushed.

WILL: *(claps his hands in glee)* I am loved of all ladies, oh yes, I am.

SFX - Evil plotting music

Lady Macbeth enters, glamorous, deadly - she addresses the audience directly.

LADY MACBETH: My name is Lady Macbeth. You can call me...Lady Macbeth. I am determined to be the last bachelorette standing and I will stop at nothing to win. *(sickly sweet smile)* I mean to win Will's love. To secure my place as his favourite, his number one. I have been married before, but my husband was a weak man. Spineless. No ambition. I had to push him every step of the way to further his career. Then the power went to his head... And he lost it. Literally. So now I want a powerful man. A successful man. And you can't get more successful than the greatest playwright whom ever existed. I shall be forever known as his greatest character *(evil laugh)* and I don't mind getting a little blood on my hands to make it happen. *(Slinks toward Will)*

WILL: Err...Lady Macbeth, is it?

Will sticks his hand out to shake hers, she whips out the hand sanitiser and waits for him to rub it in his hands, he does so. Greets him warmly when he's finished.

LADY MACBETH: Ahh Will. What a pleasure it is to meet you. *(she stokes his face)* Your face, my Will, is as a book where bachelorettes will read strange matters.

WILL: Ahh yes. Jolly good point. I shall work on my poker face. It has been a pleasure. M'lady. *(kisses her hand and chokes)* Soap is it?

LADY MABETH: *(rubs her hands)* Bleach. Can't be too careful. Hands are dirty, dirty things, hard to keep clean.

WILL: *(coughs, has trouble breathing, calls out)* Osher!? Can I get some water? Osher!

Blackout.

SCENE 3 – INSIDE THE BACHELOR MANSION

The Bachelorettes are all milling around in awe of the mansion.

SFX – Bachelor music plays.

Osher enters. Bachelorettes scream

BACHELORETTE: *(overlap)* It's Osher/It's really him/Look at his beautiful hair/I want to touch it/Is it real?/Osher!/Can you believe it? Etc.

OSHER: Welcome ladies, to your home for the foreseeable future.

Bachelorettes are beyond excited. They squeal, cheer.

OSHER: I have someone here who is very excited to get to know you all a little better.

The bachelorettes are in raptures.

OSHER: *(announces)* And here is - The author of 37 plays and 154 sonnets and the inventor of over 1700 words, including elbow, lonely, critic, bedroom, uncomfortable, torture, blanket, addiction, anchovy, eyeball, cheap, puppy-dog, puking, advertising, bandit, unreal and of course swagger. The man that epitomises that very word - The lunatic, the lover and the poet, Your bachelor...Mr William Shakespeare.

Will enters. The bachelorettes all scream, overwhelmed.

OSHER: Time with Will is important, so my advice is, make the most of it. Good luck. *(exits)*

WILL: Thanks, Osher. Ladies it is quite the honour being chosen as television's next bachelor. I can't believe that//

TAMORA: *(interrupts)* Sorry, Will. Can I steal you away?

WILL: Um... I was just...

TAMORA: Now?!

WILL: *(a bit scared)* Ok.

Tamora leads Will away from the others to sit on the Love Couch

LADY MACBETH: Can you believe that? How rude. He was just about to ask me for some private time.

VIOLA: Yeah, whatever.

LADY MACBETH: Excuse me?

OPHELIA: *(teary)* This is really overwhelming.

TITANIA: Aren't the lights pretty? They're called fairy lights, you know.

LADY MACBETH: I've waited long enough. I'm going over.

VIOLA: *I was just going to go over.*

TITANIA: Hey guys, don't argue. You're ruining the vibe. The chi energy is way off! *(She plucks bad energy from the sky)*

TAMORA: So, Will, I thought it best to tell you straight out, that I always get what I want.

WILL: *(uncomfortable)* Err...

Lady Macbeth and Viola rush toward Will, trying to stop the other one getting there first. Titania follows in hot pursuit, a crying Ophelia trudges behind.

SFX – Fairy Magic sound effect

Titania reaches out her arms and casts a spell on Lady Macbeth, Viola and Ophelia, stopping them in their track. They freeze on the spot.. She saunters past them and approaches Will and Tamora.

TITANIA: Sorry... You don't mind if I interrupt, do you?

TAMORA: *(angry)* Yes!

WILL: No. Not at all.

Titania sits and Tamora rises, eyeing off Titania.

TAMORA: I'll be waiting for you over there, Will. *(she strides off and sits/stands glaring at them)*

TITANIA: *(to Will)* I have a little present for you.

WILL: *(claps hands)* Oh! I love presents.

TITANIA: *(reaches into her dress and pulls out a little glittery box)* It's a fairy.

WILL: Oh, how wonderful. In here? A real fairy? *(He shakes the box vigorously)*

SFX - The death rattle of a fairy.

TITANIA: *(horrified, gasps)* Oh no! They are very fragile.

Will opens the box and they both watch the tiny fairy fall to the ground. Titania is mortified.

WILL: Deary me. Not real sturdy, are they? *(picks it up between his fingers, puts it back in the box and hands it back to Titania)*

TITANIA: *(cries to the box)* Oh, Peaseblossom. I'm sorry.

WILL: Never mind. I'd expect you'd have plenty of them, being the Queen of fairies and all.

Titania bursts into tears and rushes out. As she passes Lady Macbeth, Viola and Ophelia the magic comes off them. Lady Macbeth and Viola suddenly continue their race to Will's side, tripping each other, pulling one and other back, Meanwhile, Ophelia passes them and reaches Will first.

OPHELIA: Do you mind if I sit here? *(sits)*

WILL: Not at all. So, Ophelia, why don't you tell me a bit about yourself?

OPHELIA: Well. I'm a florist and I compete in synchronised swimming events, but I'm not very good at it.

Meanwhile, Lady Macbeth karate chops Viola on the back of the neck. Viola sinks to the ground. Lady Macbeth saunters over to Will and Ophelia.

LADY MACBETH: Sorry. Can I steal you away for a minute, Will?

WILL: *(a little afraid)* Sure.

OPHELIA: Don't mind me.

Will stands, Lady Macbeth links arms with him and walks him downstage.

OPHELIA: *(sighs)* O'what a noble mind is here o'ethrown. To have seen what I have seen, see what I see. *(shoves some cheese in her mouth, depressed)*

Meanwhile, Viola shakes it off her concussion and rises slowly, a bit worse for wear.

LADY MACBETH: So, Will, I heard you are looking to fall in love with the greatest character you've ever written. Look, I don't want to sound conceited, but you can stop looking.

VIOLA: (*stumbles over, still woozy*) Yes Will, it is me who you are looking for!

They are joined by the other Bachelorettes.

LADY MACBETH: As if! It is obviously me.

OPHELIA: Hello! I'm right here.

TAMORA: Excuse me, what's going on here?

TITANIA: (*pops up from nowhere*) Will... Don't forget what we have.

WILL: Ladies, please. There's plenty of me to go around.

The bachelorettes start bickering. Osher enters, they immediately stop.

OSHER: Good evening, ladies. Will.

ALL: Good evening Osher.

OSHER: It can never be said that you know what to expect in the Bachelor Mansion. While you have all been getting to know Will, five new bachelorettes have arrived at the mansion. Five more beautiful Shakespearean women, all wanting to win the biggest piece of Will's heart.

BACHELORETTE: What!?

OSHER: Will, are you ready?

WILL: You'd better believe it!

Will shakes the other bachelorettes off him and happily follows Osher to the meeting spot.

SFX – Highly dramatic music.

LADY MACBETH: What is happening?

TITANIA: Intruders!

VIOLA: You have got to be kidding.

OPHELIA: (*cries*) Five more?

TITANIA: I hope they don't think they're going to get with *our* boyfriend!

LADY MACBETH: We have been here for like ten more minutes than they have. How dare they think that they can just come in here and take Will from us!

TAMORA: Well, they've got another thing coming.

Bachelorettes all sit on Love Couch to watch the proceedings.

SCENE 4 – THE INTRUDERS ENTER THE MANSION.

SFX - Cute but sweet music starts.

Juliet enters wearing a wedding dress, excited for her big day. She addresses the audience.

JULIET: Hi, I'm Juliet. I'm fourteen, but shh, don't tell the producers. I told them I'm old enough, and I am! I totally am. I am so ready to fall in love... again. Confession. I have been married before. And I thought it was like, written in the stars and all, you know? Anyway, it was a disaster! Our parents hated each other! Hated! You have no idea. So, we snuck off together and got married in secret. But then my dad wanted me to hook up with his friend, Paris. Ewh! As if! Anyways, (*sigh*) Romeo and I were only together like three days. (*sadly*) Three days and I lost my hubstar, (*a big pout*) but he has made the face of heaven so fine. Sad story, right? (*brightly*) But I'm young and I would totally die if I'm not married before I get all old and saggy, like my mum... She's like 26 or 27. Gross!

SFX - Wedding music plays.

JULIET: (*walks down the aisle to Will. Gushes*) I do!

WILL: Um, so, Juliet, is it?

JULIET: Yes, it is, Juliet Montague. Was once Capulet, soon to be Shakespeare though. Mrs Juliet Shakespeare has a nice ring to it, don't you think? Speaking of rings, I have brought one just in case, and I have a friar at the ready. (*turns and calls off*) Friar Lawrence! Do you want to come out?

WILL: (*interrupts her*) Oh no, no. Let's not be too hasty.

JULIET: Of course, my love. Let's not rush things. I'll have him come back tomorrow, shall I?

WILL: You do that.

Will turns Juliet around and sends her on her way.

JULIET: Good night, good night! A thousand times goodnight. Parting is such sweet sorrow, that I shall say good night till it be morrow (*waves enthusiastically and skips off*)

WILL: (*shudders*) A man loves the meat in his youth that he cannot endure in his age.

SFX - Dramatic but playful music starts.

Katherine is shoved onto stage by an outside force. She clearly doesn't want to be there. She addresses the audience directly.

KATHERINE: Hi I'm Katherine, and I can't believe they talked me into being on this show. (*yells to off-stage*) You owe me big-time Bianca! (*to audience*) I have always been happy being single, but my dad won't let my (*sarcastic*) poor little sister marry anyone until I have. Well boo-hoo to her because she isn't as sweet and innocent as she makes out to be. She has our dad wrapped around her manipulative little finger. She's his little treasure, but she lies! She's been hooking up with her tutor when she's supposed to be studying. And she made him convince his gold-digging friend, Petruchio to seduce me so they can be together. No wonder I have trust issues. Yeah, Petruchio was pretty charming, I guess, and I gave in for a bit. Oh, I admit I can be a bit of a shrew and I didn't make it easy for him, believe me! But eventually he wormed his way into my affections... But not for long. Pretty soon I was like, Petruchio? More like Petruchi-NO. No way, no-how, not happening not now, not ever! So here I

am, single again. And I'm here to win. I hope the other bachelorettes are ready for this, because I am going to bring it. *(walks determinedly towards Will)*

WILL: Hello. I heard Kate is your name.

KATHERINE: Well, you must be hard of hearing: They call me Katherine, those that dare talk of me.

WILL: Kate. So pleased to meet you.

KATHERINE: This had better be worth it. *(turns and storms off)*

SFX - Funny, plonk, plonk, music plays.

Beatrice enters, she has the air of a stand-up comedian about to do an act.

BEATRICE: Hi, I'm Beatrice. I have been heard to say I'd rather hear a dog bark at a crow than a man say he loves me. I know, harsh, right? But I am here to find love. Believe me, I am as surprised as anyone. But I need someone to bounce off, you know? I enjoy a bit of banter, a bit of "hey nonny, nonny". I have just come out of a really complicated relationship where we kinda hated each other, but kinda also secretly loved each other. A bit of a battle of wits, you know? But then our mutual friends totally thought we should be a couple and basically tricked us into getting together. Thank guys, not! Benedick challenged me to no end, thought he was funnier than me. Pft! As if! So, I'm moving on. I don't want to sit in the corner and sing heigh ho for a husband anymore, I am single and I'm ready to mingle. *(strides towards Will)*

WILL: Greetings. Beatrice, is it?

BEATRICE: Pick a hand, any hand.

She holds up a small package and then hides it behind her back.

WILL: Umm, left?

BEATRICE: *(makes error noise and reveals an empty hand)* Eee, oww! Pick again Willy.

WILL: Umm, right?

BEATRICE: *(reveals an empty hand)* Wrong again. You're not real great at this are you?

WILL: But you swapped it behind your back.

BEATRICE: Oh, bit of a sore loser, are you?

WILL: I'm not. You cheated!

BEATRICE: Says who?

WILL: Says me.

BEATRICE: *(turns to leave)* Whatever Trevor.

WILL: But what were you hiding?

BEATRICE: Find me later and I might give it to you. *(Winks. Turns and exits, laughing)*

WILL: Why do these things always end in a jade trick?

SFX - Fabulous music plays.

Cleopatra enters, she is fierce! - she addresses the audience.

CLEOPATRA: Yes, that's right, I am Cleopatra. You probably have heard of me. Most people have. I'm kind of a big deal. I have it all, beauty, obviously; brains, and a belief that I will be victorious in this silly little game of love. And that's what love is really, isn't it? A game. My ex, Mark Antony, didn't really understand my sense of humour, my little joke. When I said I would die for him, I didn't really mean it. It was just a game, a test, if you like, to see if he loved me best. Unfortunately, he didn't get the memo. Oopsey. Oh well, once bitten, twice shy. So, I've brought my little friend with me. *(she pulls out a snake)* Little Asp. Isn't she cute? She's also my exit strategy if Will and I don't work out. *(struts towards Will like she's on a catwalk, then hands him a photo card with her signature)*

CLEOPATRA: You're welcome.

WILL: But I didn't//

CLEOPATRA: *(looks around in disdain)* Is this the famous Bachelor mansion? I was expecting something a bit more regal, luxurious. More to my taste... Oh well, give me some music: music, moody food for us that trade in love. *(pats him on the cheek. Turns and exits into mansion)*

WILL: *(puzzled)* I am amazed and know not what to say.

SFX - Beautiful music plays.

Cordelia enters – nervous, excited, geeky, sweet. She addresses the audience.

CORDELIA: Hi I'm Cordelia, and I am really excited to be here. I can't believe I am finally about to meet the greatest playwright in history. I have always admired Will, his work is beyond incredible. What he has written has become an integral part of the psyche of the entire world, and I am in awe of him. I am here for the right reason, not like those other bachelorettes. They will tell Will that they love him just to get his rose, to be known as the greatest character he's ever written. Those bachelorettes remind me of my awful, two-faced sisters, who lied and manipulated my father to get the biggest share of the family inheritance. And when I refused to be as fake as them, he kicked *me* out. Well, now I refuse to play those games and pretend to be something that I'm not. I am here for the playwright, no more, no less. I am here for his words.

Cordelia walks towards Will. He looks immediately besotted.

CORDELIA: Hi Will, I'm Cordelia. I am honoured to meet you.

WILL: It is I who is honoured to meet you. Hear my soul speak, the very instant that I saw you, did my heart fly to your service.

CORDELIA: *(she holds her heart)* Beautiful. Will, you are a poet. *(smiles)* Words, words, incredible words. *(turns and exits, elated)*

WILL: *(watches her go)* Did my heart love till now? Forswear it, sight, for I ne'er saw true beauty til this night.

Blackout.

SCENE 5 - THE FIRST GROUP DATE

Original bachelorettes are milling around, the intruder bachelorettes walk in.

SFX - Music - Mexican stand-off.

Bachelorettes stand in two rows facing off. Crack necks, punch hands, eye each other off. Osher enters and walks through the middle of them.

SFX - Music changes to Bachelor music.

Immediately the bachelorettes break into raptures Juliet almost hyperventilates. They all rush to stand together in two rows.

OSHER: Greetings again, ladies.

BACHELORETTE: Greetings Osher.

OSHER: It's been quite the night. Will has loved meeting you and is looking forward to getting to know you all a little better. He has sent me to give you something.

Osher whips out a Date Scroll. There are a few screams.

OSHER: Yes. This is an invitation from Will for all of you to join him on the first group date. They say a man's heart is through his stomach.

WILL: *(off stage)* That wasn't my quote!

OSHER: And tonight, we shall find out if it's true, as Will will test your culinary skills. Tonight, Will would like to see Elizabethan home cooking at its best. And may the best woman win.

WILL: *(off-stage)* Again, not my quote.

Blackout

SFX – MasterChef music plays.

One at a time the bachelorettes enter with a plate covered in a cloche etc. Will sits with fork, knife and napkin tucked into his shirt. He looks thrilled with all of the options, letting out "Oohs and ahh's" as the bachelorettes present their meals to him.

CORDELIA: Roast Cows Udder.

VIOLA: Pig trotters.

BEATRICE: Ear of Veal.

CLEOPATRA: Whole roast swan.

JULIET: Stewed lamb's head.

LADY MACBETH: Stewed lamb's heart.

VIOLA: Stewed lamb's liver and lungs

OPHELIA: Blancmange of chicken brains.

TITANIA: Gooducken. Goose stuffed with a duck, stuffed with a chicken. Gooducken.

WILL: Oh, delicious. All of my favourites.

TAMORA: *(presents her pie under Will's nose)* Pie. It's a family recipe.

WILL: *(inhales deeply)* I shall try the pie.

The other bachelorettes groan in disappointment.

TAMORA: I'm sure you'll enjoy eating it as much as I enjoyed making it for you.

WILL: *(eats pie)* Oh. Very unusual flavours. I don't think I've tasted this kind of meat before.

TAMORA: It's an acquired taste. Believe me, it'll grow on you.

WILL: Oh, there's something crunchy in here. *(pulls a bone out of his mouth)*

TAMORA: Oops, missed one.

WILL: And what's this? *(pulls a ring out of the pie)* A ring?

TAMORA: Umm. *(covering her tracks)* Surprise! I put that in there for you. A little gift, a sign of my affection.

WILL: It's quite lovely. *(wipes the ring clean and puts it on his finger to admire it)* It reminds me of the one our producer, Larry always wears. I haven't seen him around for a while//

TAMORA: *(changes topic)* It's the latest fashion. Nothing is too good for you Will.

WILL: Thank you, Tamora//

SFX - A loud groaning is heard.

Will holds his stomach in obvious discomfort. The bachelorettes look worried.

WILL: Oooh!

SFX - The groaning sound continues.

WILL: Oooh! *(knees buckle, he holds his backside, a very worried look on his face)* Ooh dear! *(calls out, panicked)* Osher!

Blackout/Lights up

Bachelorettes stand in a row; Will and their meals are now gone.

OSHER: *(solemn)* Ladies, unfortunately Will has been taken unwell, so there will be no rose ceremony tonight. *(exits)*

TAMORA: Oh no. Poor Will. Maybe it was someone he ate?

Bachelorettes look at Tamora in alarm.

CORDELIA: Someone?

TAMORA: *Something* I said. *Something* he ate. (*smiles sweetly*)

OSHER: So, all of you are safe for one more night.

LX - Blue light.

SFX - Sinister music plays.

The Bachelorettes step forward and speak straight to the audience.

TAMORA: (*evilily*) Safe for now.

LADY MACBETH: Not if I've got anything to do with it. Screw my courage to the sticking place and I'll not fail.

KATHERINE: These bachelorettes don't know what I'm capable of.

VIOLA: I'll do anything to win.

BEATRICE: I shall be victorious.

TITANIA: I will cast my spell on him.

CLEOPATRA: Will won't be able to resist my charms.

OPHELIA: I won't take no for an answer.

JULIET: He will be mine.

CORDELIA: ...I hope he reads me poetry.

All of the bachelorettes look at Cordelia in disgust and walk out, leaving her alone.

Blackout

SCENE 6 – THE SINGLE DATE

SFX - Bachelor music plays.

Morning. The bachelorettes are milling around the house, sitting on couches, drinking cups of tea in their gowns. Lady Macbeth is furiously cleaning.

TAMORA: So, girls, are we all excited?

BACHELORETTE: (*all answer enthusiastically/overlapping*) Sure am/Can't wait/ So excited/Beyond excited, etc.

TAMORA: So, *who* do you think it's going to be on the menu for today?

Bachelorette's look horrified. A beat.

TAMORA: Oops! I mean, what! What do you think is going to be on the menu for today? Ahem.

LADY MACBETH: Have you finished with that? (*picks up Tamora's coffee cup and furiously wipes down the table*) Out damn spot. Out I say. One, two, three...Oh, will this table ne'er be clean.

Osher enters, Bachelorettes scream.

OSHER: Good morning, ladies.

BACHELORETTES: (*big smiles, they are on their best behaviour*) Good morning, Osher.

OSHER: Right now, as we speak, Will is preparing himself for the date of a lifetime. I hope you are all ready for a challenge, and willing to do what it takes to win Will's heart. As the man himself has said, "Love goes be haps, some Cupids kill with arrows, some with traps" (*whips out a scroll*) I'll leave you with this date scroll. (*exits*)

All the bachelorettes go to grab the scroll, they all get it at once. There's a wrestle for it. Titania freezes them and grabs the scroll.

TITANIA: My turn.

Titania sashays over to the Love Couch, then clicks her fingers, all of the Bachelorettes come out of the freeze, and rush to huddle around her.

TITANIA: So! Are any of you getting any vibes, girls? Single or group date?

BACHELORETTES: (*various answers*) Single/Group

TITANIA: Oh, let's see then, shall we? My guess is a single and I hope he picks me. Oops did I say that out loud? (*she giggles and opens up the date scroll*) It's a single!

Bachelorettes react.

TITANIA: Ok. Here's a clue. (*reads*) "If music be the food of love, play on."

KATHERINE: Well obviously the date will be listening to music. I have quite the ear for music. It's me.

CLEOPATRA: Or dancing. I am an incredible dancer. It has to be me.

OPHELIA: Singing! Will knows that I am quite the musician, I sang to him when I met him. It's me, of course.

TAMORA: Eating! He said food. Maybe pie could be on the menu? It is obviously me!

TITANIA: And the lucky girl is... is... Cordelia. What the?! There must be some kind of mistake.

BEATRICE: You can't be serious!

LADY MACBETH: She just got here!

OPHELIA: This is so unfair!

JULIET: It should have been me! (*she bursts into tears*) Why Will, why?

CORDELIA: I don't know what to say... I'm so excited.

Blackout.

Cordelia enters and Will is standing waiting for her. She walks over and embraces him.

CORDELIA: Thank you so much for asking me Will. I'm so happy that you did.

WILL: I was unsure as to what we should do today, my love. I could have taken you sky diving from a sea plane, or boating on the luxury super yacht. But then I thought no. No! We cannot spend our first date on trifles. Cordelia, you deserve the very best gift I could give you. And that gift would be me, my time, my talent. I gift you with my talent.

CORDELIA: That is all I could ever wish for, Will.

WILL: Today I will present to you the smorgasbord of Will. I have had to ask a little friend of mine to help. Maybe you know him?

Osher steps out. Cordelia is thrilled.

OSHER: Good afternoon, Cordelia.

WILL: My friend, Osher, and I have prepared a little routine for you. What the hipsters of today call "Modern Dance" It shall be hot and hasty like a Scottish jig.

OSHER: Cordelia, we shall now perform for you a physical interpretation of one of Will's most famous and let's say universally adored pieces of prose.

CORDELIA: But there are so many to choose from.

WILL: I know. We could have picked any of my many, many, many, many, many famous... Nay, legendary passages.

OSHER: "To be or not to be, that is the question."

CORDELIA: "This is very midsummer madness."

WILL: "Get thee to a nunnery!"

OSHER: "All that glitters is not gold."

CORDELIA: "Shall I compare thee to a summer's day?"

WILL: "I've not slept one wink"

OSHER: "Knock, knock, who's there?"

CORDELIA: "Vanish into thin air"

WILL: "Out of the jaws of death"

OSHER: “Fight fire with fire”

CORDELIA: “It makes your hair stand on end”

WILL: “Break the ice”

OSHER: “Off with his head”

CORDELIA: “A horse a horse, my kingdom for a horse”

WILL: “Some are born great; some achieve greatness, and some have greatness thrust upon them.” Just like today, Cordelia, you will have greatness thrust upon you, as we will perform for you my favourite passage.

They all laugh and applaud each other.

CORDELIA: This is so lovely. I can’t believe you set this all up for me.

OSHER: Well, in actual fact we’ll be using it on a spin off show. Osher and Will’s Outback Adventure.

WILL: Will and Osher!

OSHER: Osher and Will.

WILL: Will and Osher (*puts up his hand to silence Osher*) Osher, please. That’s not important right now. This moment is all about Cordelia.

OSHER: (*whispers*) Of course it is.

Will spins Cordelia around and points to the audience.

WILL: So! If you can just go sit over there?

CORDELIA: (*confused*) Over there?

WILL: No. A few rows back. Maybe a few seats in.

CORDELIA: (*tries to move past audience to get to the seat which Will is directing her to*) Here?

WILL: Nope. Up, up, up. Swap with that guy. (*yells up to audience member*) Come on buddy, give her your seat. Perfect. Now, can you see my best side?

CORDELIA: (*calls back to Will*) Um, I think so.

WILL: Shall we proceed?

OSHER: Yes Will, let’s. Cordelia. Have you guessed Will’s favourite passage yet? It starts with a little line, maybe you’ve heard of it?

CORDELIA: (*calls back*) Can I dare to dream?

WILL: Yes! Yes, Cordelia you can.

OSHER/WILL: All the world's a stage...

CORDELIA: *(she claps, excited)* It is! It is! It's my favourite too.

Osher and Will proceed to perform a ridiculous rap, modern dance, physical interpretation of the below passage, accompanied by overly dramatic music.

OSHER/WILL: All the world's a stage
 And all the men and women merely players;
 They have their exits and their entrances;
 And one man in his time plays many parts,
 His acts being seven ages. At first the infant,
 Mewling and puking in the nurse's arms;
 And then the whining school-boy, with his satchel
 And shining morning face, creeping like snail
 Unwillingly to school. And then the lover,
 Sighing like furnace, with a woeful ballad
 Made to his mistress' eyebrow. Then a soldier,
 Full of strange oaths, and bearded like the pard,
 Jealous in honour, sudden and quick in quarrel,
 Seeking the bubble reputation,
 Even in the cannon's mouth. And then the justice,
 In fair round belly with good capon lin'd,
 With eyes severe and beard of formal cut,
 Full of wise saws and modern instances;
 And so he plays his part. The sixth age shifts
 Into the lean and slipper'd pantaloon,
 With spectacles on nose and pouch on side;
 His youthful hose, well sav'd, a world too wide
 For his shrunk shank; and his big manly voice,
 Turning again toward childish treble, pipes
 And whistles in his sound. Last scene of all,
 That ends this strange eventful history,
 Is second childishness and mere oblivion;
 Sans teeth, sans eyes, sans taste, sans everything.

CORDELIA: *(leads the audience in a standing ovation)* Bravo! Bravo!

WILL: *(puts out his hand)* Join me?

OSHER: *(whispers)* I'll leave you.

Osher exit. Cordelia squeezes out of her seat in the audience and joins Will on-stage. He leads her to the Cheese Table. They eat some cheese.

SFX - Romantic music plays.

CORDELIA: Thanks for such a wonderful afternoon, Will. It was everything I could have hoped for.

WILL: Cordelia, I have had the most wonderful time, speaking about myself. After all, you can never have too much of a good thing.

CORDELIA: I do love nothing in the world so well as your words Will. Is that not strange?

WILL: As strange as the thing I know not. You really are a woman of exquisite taste, Cordelia.

CORDELIA: Why, thank you, kind sir.

WILL: But there's one more thing. (*reaches behind himself and pulls out a rose*) Cordelia, Will you accept this rose?

CORDELIA: Will I, Will? Oh, I will, I will.

Blackout.

SCENE 7 - BACK AT THE MANSION

SFX - Bachelor music plays.

Bachelorettes are milling around the lounge room.

BEATRICE: So, how do you think Cordelia is going on her date?

JULIET: I hope she hasn't kissed him.

LADY MACBETH: I don't know what Will sees in her. She is dull. Well, I suppose love looks not with the eyes, but with the mind, and therefore is winged Cupid painted blind.

TITANIA: Dull? She's a woman of conviction.

BEATRICE: She has a heart of gold.

LADY MACBETH: Yawn! She didn't do anything exciting. She didn't kill the king, or fall in love with a donkey, or eat her sons in a pie.

TAMORA: I didn't know they were in there!

CLEOPATRA: Lady Macbeth is right! She didn't go crazy or disguise herself as a boy to go on an adventure, or kill herself for love, and she certainly wasn't the queen of Egypt. She was just a brat that wouldn't do what her dad wanted.

BEATRICE: O beware, my lord, of jealousy; it is the green-ey'd monster which doth mock the meat it feeds on.

CLEOPATRA: Are you calling me jealous?

BEATRICE: Are you saying your story is worth more than hers?

Cordelia enters and interrupts the argument. All the bachelorettes are immediately welcoming and all cheer when she walks in the door.

CLEOPATRA: Oh, here she is. We are so happy that your back, Cordelia. Was it wonderful?

BEATRICE: Tell us what happened.

JULIET: We've been waiting with bated breath. Was it romantic?

TITANIA: Was it magical?

VIOLA: Was it exciting?

CORDELIA: It was the most wonderful date I could have ever wished for.

JULIET: Did you kiss him?

CORDELIA: No! of course not! That's not why I'm here.

JULIET: Why are you here then? Kissing is the best!

CORDELIA: I'm here for the right reasons.

BEATRICE: Again! What did you do on your date?

OPHELIA: Why was it wonderful?

KATHERINE: Why can't you just answer the question?

BEATRICE: What's the big secret?

LADY MACBETH: Why won't you tell us?

TAMORA: Just tell us what happened!

CORDELIA: *(sighs and gladly admits)* He recited his words to me.

TAMORA: What?!

LADY MACBETH: That's it?

OPHELIA: You're kidding?

VIOLA: That's all you did?

CORDELIA: Yes.

JULIET: No kiss?

CORDELIA: *(laughs)* No.

BEATRICE: He just recited his words?

OPHELIA: That was your date?

CLEOPATRA: No glitz, no glamour?

VIOLA: Just listening to him. Ha! Well ladies, Nothing, to see here.

LX - Lights change to blue. SFX - Sinister music plays.

Bachelorettes step forward, dramatically and speak direct to audience.

TITANIA: Doesn't look like we had anything to worry about.

OPHELIA: It seems Cordelia is not the be all and end all...after all.

VIOLA: It's still anyone's game.

CLEOPATRA: She had her chance, and she blew it.

JULIET: If it had been me, we would have kissed for sure.

KATHERINE: Cordelia is a fool. I have my eye on the prize.

TAMORA: Victory will be mine. I can almost taste it.

BEATRICE: Not long now and my name will be at the top.

LADY MACBETH: I shall be the greatest Shakespearean character ever written.

They all look at Cordelia in anticipation.

CORDELIA: (*Shakes her head smiling*) Words, words, words.

Blackout

SCENE 8 – THE INTRUDERS GROUP DATE

SFX - Bachelor music plays.

Bachelorettes are standing in their rows. Osher enters.

OSHER: Good afternoon, ladies.

BACHELORETTEs: (*beyond excited*) Good afternoon Osher.

OSHER: I come baring gifts. On this date scroll is written the names of ladies or lady who Will would like to take on a magical adventure.... I'll leave this with you.

Osher places the date scroll on the cheese table and exits. As soon as he is out of sight all of the bachelorettes scramble for the scroll, pushing and grabbing. It's reminiscent of a rugby game. Cordelia stands back looking concerned. Katherine looks on with disdain. The rest fight for glory, until Cleopatra uses her Asp to scare the others away.

CLEOPATRA: (*threatening*) Go back, I warrant thee; but I'll catch thine eyes, though they had wings: slave, soulless villain, dog!

The bachelorettes back off, terrified. Cleopatra picks up the date scroll.

CLEOPATRA: (*cheerful*) Well...Looks like I'm reading it then. Ok, so it's a group date!

Bachelorettes all react. Some are excited, some disappointed.

CLEOPATRA: The first name on the scroll is.... Cordelia?!

TAMORA: What?!

LADY MACBETH: She's already had a date.

OPHELIA: She already has a rose!

VIOLA: Someone's obviously a favourite.

CORDELIA: Me? Oh, how wonderful.

CLEOPATRA: Is it? Hmm. Oh, look, the second person on the list is yours truly. Then Beatrice.

BEATRICE: Yes! Yes! Yes! There's me one step closer to becoming Will's bride, ladies. What can I say, I'm just lucky. There was a star danced and under that I was born.

KATHERINE: Never going to happen.

BEATRICE: Oh yeah? Well, we haven't heard your name called yet have we, Kate?

KATHERINE: (*getting all in her face*) It's Katherine!

CLEOPATRA: (*interrupts*) Yes, it is! Katherine, you're next on the list.

KATHERINE: (*aggressive to Beatrice*) Ha! In your face!

BEATRICE: Bring it!

JULIET: Is my name on there? Oh, please let my name be there?

CLEOPATRA: (*rolls eyes*) Yeah. You're the last name on the scroll.

JULIET: (*bursts into tears*) Oh, thank you! Thank you!

Juliet rushes over to Cleopatra and hugs her. Cleopatra is disgusted and stays straight as a board.

JULIET: (*sobs*) I'm so happy.

LADY MACBETH: Chill out! He hasn't asked you to marry him.

JULIET: Yet. It's only a matter of time and you will all be calling me Mrs Shakespeare.

Blackout/Lights up.

SFX – Medieval fair music plays.

Cleopatra, Juliet, Katherine, Beatrice and Cordelia stand in a row. Will sits in a throne to watch the proceedings. There is a large wheel of fortune centre stage. Listed on it - Apple Bobbing, Verse, Jousting, Ring Around the Rosie, Archery, Fencing and Torture. Osher enters. The bachelorettes scream.

OSHER: Welcome ladies. It seems a game is afoot. Will has brought you here today to test your mettle with some medieval merriment. Of course, as women in the Elizabethan era you did not have the same access to entertainment as the men did. There was no school for girls. If you were rich enough to receive an education, you would be tutored at home. You could not be heirs to your family fortune, this would,

of course, all go to your brothers, or a distant male relative if you had none. You could be legally married around the age of 12.

JULIET: Nothing wrong with that.

OSHER: To someone of your fathers choosing.

JULIET: Yeah, that sucks.

OSHER: And if you were lucky enough not to die in childbirth, you would live a mundane life of servitude to your husband and his family. But never fear, you could break up the tedium of your day by engaging in needlework and of course on Sunday's, church. But today we will be engaging in some fun activities the *men* got to enjoy. Will, will you take your place as judge for the proceedings?

WILL: Indeed. (*crosses to a judge's chair*)

OSHER: Cleopatra, you shall go first.

CLEOPATRA: (*steps forward*) Naturally....Whatever shall my challenge be? Jousting, fencing, archery? As a Queen I do not play by the same rules as these common women folk, so I am practiced in all sport

OSHER: Cleopatra, step up and spin the 'Ye Olde Wheel of Fortune'.

CLEOPATRA: (*with much distaste, she spins the wheel. It stops on 'Apple Bobbing'*) Excuse me? Apple bobbing?

OSHER: Yes, the ancient tradition of bobbing for apples, dates back to the Roman invasion of Britain. One must dunk their heads into bucket of water and retrieve said apple with their teeth.

WILL: This is jolly fun!

CLEOPATRA: You're asking me to stick the royal head into a bucket of water?

OSHER: Yes.

WILL: (*encouraging*) You can do it!

CLEOPATRA: (*suddenly in a rage, beats Osher*) The most infectious pestilence upon thee!

OSHER: Good madam, patience. (*tries to shield himself*)

CLEOPATRA: What say you? Hence! Horrible villain, or I'll spurn thine eyes like balls before me. I'll unhair thy head: Thou shalt be whipp'd with wire, and stew'd in brine, smarting in lingering pickle.

WILL: Oh, this is gold! Gold! I must jot it all down. Pickle! (*giggles, starts madly writing in his notebook*)

OSHER: Alright. Alright. (*Osher holds up his hands in defeat*) Shall we move on? (*spins the wheel. It lands on 'Verse.'*) The next Elizabethan challenge is one of verse. As you probably have guessed Will is a huge fan of verse, of poetry, of wooing with words. This next challenge will pit Cordelia and Kate//

KATHERINE: Katherine.

OSHER: Kate, against each other. Ladies step forward. Will, please select the first lady to proclaim her undying love for you.

WILL: An easy choice! Cordelia.

Cordelia tentatively steps forward. Katherine is furious.

OSHER: Cordelia. You now have the privilege of wooing the bard of Strafford Upon Avon. Goodluck!

Will steps forward and takes Cordelia's hands. The other bachelorettes look on jealously.

WILL: Cordelia, speak low if you speak of love. What say you?

CORDELIA: Nothing my lord.

WILL: Nothing?

CORDELIA: Nothing.

WILL: Nothing can come of nothing. Speak again.

CORDELIA: Unhappy that I am, I cannot heave my heart into my mouth. I love you Will, as the writer, according to my bond; no more nor less.

WILL: How, how, Cordelia? Mend your speech a little, lest it may mar your fortunes.

CORDELIA: (*tenderly*) Good Will, you are the writer who begot me, created me, loved me; I return those duties back as are right fit. I adore you as the poet you are, and that is all.

WILL: (*disappointed*) So young, and so untender?

CORDELIA: So young, my lord, and true. I am here for the right reasons.

WILL: (*hurt, confused*) Frailty, thy name is woman.

KATHERINE: (*steps forward*) My turn. (*she turns to Cordelia and the other Bachelorettes*)

Fie, fie! unknit that threatening unkind brow,
 And dart not scornful glances from those eyes
 To wound thy lord, thy king, thy governor.
 It blots thy beauty as frosts do bite the meads,
 Thy husband is thy lord, thy life, thy keeper,
 Thy head, thy sovereign; one that cares for thee,
 And craves no other tribute at thy hands
 But love, fair looks, and true obedience-
 Too little payment for so great a debt.
 I am asham'd that women are so simple.
 To offer war where they should kneel for peace;
 Or seek for rule, supremacy, and sway,
 When they are bound to serve, love, and obey.
 Then vail your stomachs, for it is no boot,
 And place your hands below your husband's foot;
 In token of which duty, if he please,
 My hand is ready, may it do him ease.

*Katherine places her hand low to the ground and smiles coyly. Will applauds, impressed.
Katherine sashays back to the other bachelorettes.*

KATHERINE: Beat that!

WILL: Bravo! Bravo! There! There is a proclamation of love if ever I heard one.

CLEOPATRA: Are you kidding? She lies! She doesn't even believe in marriage whereas I have been married many, many times.

WILL: Kate?

Katherine smiles and blinks innocently. Will pulls out a rose. Katherine gasps.

WILL: Kate, will you accept this rose?

KATHERINE: Will I?! (*snatches the rose and gloats to the others*)

OSHER: Next bachelorette, Beatrice.

BEATRICE: (*steps forward*) This should be easy. Apple bobbing, reciting verse. What's next, fairy floss eating? Needlework? Dancing around the maypole (*Beatrice spins the wheel - it lands on Bear Baiting*) Bear baiting?

OSHER: Yes, Bear Baiting, a favourite Elizabethan pastime.

WILL: It's jolly entertaining.

BEATRICE: To bait? As in to tease? To hook one in? Is it a battle of wits? I shall do very well at this. In the last battle I had with Benedick four of his five wits went halting off and now the whole man is governed by one. So, I expect I'll win this battle.

OSHER: Umm... Almost. Bear baiting is when a bear is chained up and wild dogs are set upon it to tear the bear apart. Of course, to start with the bear kills the dogs but after a while the dogs start to break down the bear's defences and they are able to maul the poor creature to death.

WILL: Jolly good show! Elizabethan entertainment at its best.

SFX - A huge roar is heard offstage.

BEATRICE: (*suddenly terrified*) What the heck was that?

OSHER: I think you know what it was.

SFX - Another roar.

BEATRICE: A bear?

OSHER: Yes. A bear.

BEATRICE: And I am supposed to watch this... this, vile attempt of entertainment.

OSHER: Of course not!

BEATRICE: Thank goodness.

OSHER: For the purpose of this challenge, you will become one of the dogs. We have this cute puppy outfit for you to adorn yourself with. *(pulls a dog ears headband out of his pocket)*

BEATRICE: You have got to be kidding?

OSHER: Not at all.

SFX – Bear roars/ dogs bark.

Osher sticks the dog ears on Beatrice's head and starts pushing her off-stage towards the sound of a roaring bear. She struggles. Osher thrusts Beatrice off-stage and returns to the others wiping his hands and smiling. Suddenly Beatrice returns and runs screaming across the stage.

WILL: *(claps his hands in glee)* Exit! Pursued by a bear. Ho, ho, ho *(calls)* Fare thee well, Beatrice!

KATHERINE: She's seen better days.

CLEOPATRA: What a sorry sight.

BACHELORETTEs: Bye, bye Beatrice.

OSHER: Ok. Let's move on shall we. The next challenge, Juliet.

JULIET: *(steps forward, elated)* I'm ready. I'm always ready for you Will. *(blows kisses at Will)*

OSHER: *(Osher spins the wheel – it lands on Torture)* Oh dear, Juliet, it seems that you have spun the booby prize. Now this next challenge is not for the faint hearted as you must pick your favourite Elizabethan torture challenge to attempt to endure.

JULIET: Of course. As his future bride, I will do anything for Will. Anything! *(makes love heart gestures at Will)*

OSHER: So, you may choose from The Rack, The Scavenger's Daughter, The Collar, The Iron Maiden, Branding Irons, The Wheel or Thumbscrews.

JULIET: Hmm. Hard choice. Ok, definitely The Iron Maiden. *(bachelorettes gasp)* No! Hang on... The Wheel. *(bachelorettes gasp)* Or maybe The Collar? *(bachelorettes gasp)* Oh, it's such a difficult decision. How about the Scavengers Daughter? *(bachelorettes gasp)*

OSHER: Excellent choice. The Scavengers Daughter can be best described as the opposite of the rack where the body is stretched... In this case the victim, or in this case volunteer, is strung up on an A frame and the body is compressed from both sides, pushing the knees up and the head in the opposite direction.

JULIET: Compressed *(she touches her face)* So like squashed... Hmm, probs not. It'll give me wrinkles. Look, Will, can I actually have a private word with you, right now?

KATHERINE: She can't do that!

OSHER: I'll allow it.

SFX – Romantic music plays.

JULIET: (*grabs Will's hand and leads him away from the others*) Will, I've been thinking long and hard about this.

WILL: Go on.

JULIET: (*looks pained*) Two boys and one girl, maybe two, max.

WILL: Excuse me?

JULIET: How many kids we are going to have, silly. I have been thinking a lot about it and I reckon I am young and perky enough for my body to endure birthing three kids. Maybe four, but that's it! And I am not feeding them myself! No way! Ewh! My wet nurse can do that, she's got a few good years left in her. Baxter, Harriet and William Jr and I'm flexible on the fourth. (*she looks at him intently*) I bet you kiss by the book! (*leans forward, lips puckered*)

WILL: (*stops her*) Juliet. I'm sorry. I have something to say.

JULIET: Yes! I will accept your rose.

WILL: Alas, this is a rose by another name.

JULIET: You don't mean?

WILL: Juliet, I think it would be unfair to let you go any further. I do want to get married, but I think this is going too fast. I would need days, maybe weeks, before I'm going to be ready for a lifelong commitment.

JULIET: (*shocked*) What are you saying Will?

WILL: Farewell. Farewell. Parting is such sweet sorrow. (*calls*) Osher! Get the chariot.

JULIET: No!

WILL: I'm afraid so.

JULIET: (*sobs*) Oh! I have bought the mansion of love, but not possessed it.

WILL: Chin up, Juliet. One day you will meet someone who will make you a joyful bride.

JULIET: (*bawling, stamps her feet*) By Saint Peter's Church and Peter too, he shall not make me a joyful bride. (*storms off, wailing*)

CLEOPATRA: (*smugly*) Good riddance.

Blackout.

SCENE 9 – INTRUDERS ARE BACK

SFX – Bachelor music plays.

The bachelorettes are lounging around, waiting to hear from the Intruders.

TITANIA: I wonder how the intruders are going on their date.

TAMORA: Hopefully terribly.

Cleopatra walks in followed by Cordelia, bachelorettes all squeal and hug them. Suddenly a gloating Katherine enters with a rose. The bachelorettes all gasp.

OPHELIA: You got a rose?

KATHERINE: Of course.

TAMORA: How could you? Hang on, where is Juliet?

VIOLA: Yeah, and Beatrice? (*gasps*) You don't mean?

KATHERINE: Gone!

TITANIA: Oh! They were such great girls.

TAMORA: The mansion is going to feel really empty without them.

LADY MACBETH: I'm really going to miss them.

KATHERINE: Well, I'm not, because I'm now one step closer to winning this competition.

CORDELIA: Katherine! How can you say that? This is more than a competition. This is for Will. For Shakespeare himself.

Bachelorettes laugh at her in disdain.

KATHERINE: You're all just jealous because I got a rose and you didn't.

Viola bites her thumb at Katherine. Everyone gasps, shocked.

KATHERINE: Do you bite your thumb at me, miss?

VIOLA: (*nervous*) I do bite my thumb, miss.

KATHERINE: Do you bite your thumb at me, miss?

VIOLA: (*aside to Ophelia*) Are the producers on my side, if I say yes?

OPHELIA: (*scared*) No.

VIOLA: No, miss, I do not bite my thumb at you, miss, but I bite my thumb, miss.

KATHERINE: Do you quarrel, miss?

VIOLA: Quarrel miss! no, miss.

KATHERINE: You lie!

Katherine grabs Viola and ties her to a chair.

TITANIA: Part, fools! You know not what you do.

VIOLA: I do but keep the peace.

KATHERINE: Peace! I hate the word, As I hate hell, all bachelorettes, and to be honest, Will.

CORDELIA: (*gasps*) But you said...

KATHERINE: Oh, for goodness sake, I would have said anything to have won. But it's not worth it! I quit!

Bachelorettes all gasp.

KATHERINE: What? Will you not suffer me? No, now I see, you all must have a husband and I must dance bare foot on your wedding days. Talk not to me; I will go and sit and weep, til I can find an occasion of revenge. (*exits*)

CORDELIA: She lied...

TAMORA: (*sarcastic*) Oh, who would have thought that someone would lie to win on a reality TV show? I am shocked!

OSHER: (*enters*) Good evening, ladies.

Bachelorettes all scramble to stand in a line.

BACHELORETTES : Good evening, Osher.

OSHER: Ladies, I am afraid I come baring sad news. Viola, I am sorry, you have broken one of the fundamental rules of Elizabethan polite society. There can be no greater insult than to bite your thumb at someone.

VIOLA: I'm so ashamed. I don't know what came over me.

OSHER: I'm sorry to say, Viola, that I must send you packing. Your time in the mansion has come to an end.

VIOLA: (*nods sadly*) I understand.

The bachelorettes rush to say goodbye to Viola. She waves and exits.

SCENE 10 – THE ROSE CEREMONY.

SFX – Bachelor music.

OSHER: It's been quite the night. So far, we've had to say goodbye to Beatrice, Juliet, Katherine and Viola. But that's not all. Tonight, ladies, I'm afraid to say we will be still having a rose ceremony.

Bachelorettes look horrified, some gasp, cry a little.

OSHER: Cordelia already has a rose. and Will only has five roses left. Ladies, there are six of you and I'm afraid one of you is going home.

Juliet appears from nowhere and stands amongst the bachelorettes.

JULIET: (*a little wave*) Umm, Osher. Seven of us.

OSHER: Juliet?

JULIET: Yes Osher, I'm ready.

OSHER: No, what are you doing here?

JULIET: I'm waiting for Will to give me his rose, obviously.

OSHER: But you've been eliminated.

JULIET: Excuse me?

OSHER: Eliminated. Will has already asked you to leave.

JULIET: Oh, that? He wasn't serious, was he?

OSHER: Deadly serious. What's done is done.

JULIET: Oopsie. Me bad? (*reluctantly*) Well, I guess I'll just go.... Unless there's a chance, he's changed his mind?

OSHER: There's not.

JULIET: Jeeze! Chillax Osher. I'm gone. Ok!?! (*exits*)

OSHER: Ladies, sorry about that little interruption. (*whispers*) Here's Will.

Will enters, looking solemn. He stands on the spot and slowly picks up a rose.

SFX - Dramatic Music plays. LX - Lights change, blue light.

LADY MACBETH: (*steps forward and speaks direct to audience*) I'm quietly confident. Will and I have a great connection. (*steps back*)

OPHELIA: (*steps forward*) I hope it's not me going home. I don't feel like I've had enough time with Will. (*steps back*)

LX - Lights change back. SFX - Dramatic music - dum dum dum.

WILL: (*sad face, sudden happy face*) Titania

LX - Lights change, blue light.

LADY MACBETH: (*steps forward*) Seriously! Her? She's a fool. (*steps back*)

LX - Lights change back.

Titania, elated, crosses to Will.

WILL: Titania, will you accept this rose?

TITANIA: Yes, Will. I would love to. (*returns to line, beaming*)

LX - Lights change, blue light.

CLEOPATRA: *(steps forward)* As if he'd pick her before me. That's ok, he'll pick me next. I know he will. *(steps back, plasters smile on her face)*

LX - Lights change back. SFX - Dramatic music - dum dum dum.

WILL: *(sad face, sudden happy face)* Cleopatra.

Cleopatra, beaming, pretends to look surprised.

WILL: Cleopatra, will you accept this rose?

CLEOPATRA: I thought you'd never ask. *(returns to line with smug look on her face)*

LX - Lights change, blue light.

OPHELIA: *(steps forward)* I thought we had a connection but now I'm assuming the worst. *(steps back)*

TAMORA: *(steps forward)* Will had better pick me next if he knows what's good for him. *(steps back)*

LADY MACBETH: *(steps forward)* This is humiliating. I can't believe I might be going home. *(steps back)*

LX - Lights change back. SFX - Dramatic music - dum dum dum.

Will picks up another rose.

WILL: *(sad face, sudden happy face)* Tamora.

Bachelorettes look shocked. Tamora smiles evilly.

TAMORA: *(to herself)* Lucky, Will. Lucky. *(steps forward)*

WILL: Tamora, will you accept this rose?

TAMORA: Yes, Will. Anything for you. *(returns to line with smug look on her face)*

LX - Lights change, blue light.

LADY MACBETH: *(steps forward)* Bottom two. This is mortifying. I'll never be able to show my face in Scotland again. I'll be the laughingstock of Inverness. *(steps back)*

OPHELIA: *(steps forward)* This is it; I'm going home. I know it in my heart of hearts. Ophelia, you unlovable fool. *(steps back)*

LX - Lights change back.

OSHER: Ladies, Will only has one rose left.

Ophelia sobs. Lady Macbeth takes a deliberate step away from her and sprays Glen20 disinfectant around herself. Will picks up the rose. The bachelorettes gasp in anticipation...

SFX - Dramatic music - dum dum dum.

WILL: *(sad face, sudden happy face)* Lady Macbeth.

Lady Macbeth elated, turns in fake sympathy to Ophelia who is sobbing.

LADY MACBETH: Awh. *(gives Ophelia a quick wide arm, no touching hug, turns and struts over to Will, victorious)* Naughty, naughty Will. You shouldn't keep a girl waiting. There's no telling what she might do.

WILL: *(nervous)* Lady Macbeth, umm. Will you accept this rose?

LADY MACBETH: Of course I will, you big silly. I'll accept your rose!

Lady Macbeth whacks Will playfully, then violently, with her rose, petals fly. She composes herself and returns to stand with the other bachelorettes.

SFX - Sad music soars.

OSHER: *(solemn)* Ophelia. I'm sorry, you did not receive a rose. Take a moment to say your goodbyes.

The other bachelorettes all rush around her and give her cuddles. Ophelia dries her tears and walks over to Will.

OPHELIA: Will, thank you. I had a wonderful time. I just wanted to tell you before I go. Some of the bachelorettes are not here for the right reasons.

Will looks shocked. The bachelorettes gasp. Ophelia gloats and exits.

Blackout.

SCENE 11 – THE MORNING AFTER

SFX – Bachelor music plays.

The bachelorettes are sitting around drinking cups of tea.

LADY MACBETH: Well girls. Final five.

CORDELIA: I can't believe I made it this far.

TAMORA: *(droll)* I can't believe you made it this far either.

Osher enters. The bachelorettes are excited.

OSHER: Good morning, ladies.

BACHELORETTE: Good morning, Osher.

Juliet appears from nowhere, and sips on her tea.

JULIET: Good morning, Osher.

Other bachelorettes groan.

OSHER: Juliet!?! Again! What are you doing here? You've been eliminated, twice now.

JULIET: *(looks around confused)* I have no idea what you are talking about.

OSHER: I've already told you that you need to leave.

JULIET: Oh, you did? Silly me. Well, we all make mistakes. But seeing I'm back I might as well stay. I am so excited to be here...again. And I can't wait to see Will.

OSHER: Juliet. I'm going to need to call security.

JULIET: Come on Oshy, don't be a grouch.

OSHER: *(calls out)* Security! Security!

JULIET: Ok! Ok! I'm outie. But when Will comes looking for me to be his bride, don't say I didn't tell you so.

OSHER: *(yells)* Security!

Juliet bolts from the room. They all sigh in relief. Juliet ducks back into the room.

JULIET: The future Mrs Shakespeare signing out! *(thuggish)* See ya! *(exits running)*

OSHER: *(regaining his composure)* Ladies, in the Shakespeare Bachelor mansion, you never know what will happen next. In this case though, I think you can guess.

BACHELORETTE: *(in unison)* Date scroll!

OSHER: I've been doing this too long. I'm becoming predictable.

He exits. Bachelorettes all scramble for the scroll. Lady Macbeth suddenly gasps loudly, points at the table and seems to go into a trance. The other bachelorettes stop in fear.

SFX - Spooky music soars. LX - Creepy lighting change.

LADY MACBETH: Wait! Is this a dagger that I see before me?
 It's handle toward my hand...
 Come let me clutch thee.
 I have thee not, and yet I see thee still.
 Art thou not, fatal vision, sensible
 To feeling as to sight? or art thou but
 A dagger of the mind, a false creation,
 Proceeding from the heat-oppressed brain?
 I see thee yet, in form as palpable
 As this which now I draw.
 Thou marshall'st me the way that I was going;
 And such an instrument I was to use.
 Mine eyes are made the fools o' the other senses,
 Or else worth all the rest; I see thee still,
 And on thy blade and dudgeon gouts of blood,
 Which was not so before.

The bachelorettes are terrified. They clutch each other. Lady Macbeth grabs the dagger on the table.

LADY MACBETH: *(snaps out of it)* Nope! It's just an envelope opener. Handy.

LX - Lights return to normal.

Lady Macbeth picks up the scroll and slices open the seal with the envelope opener, it unravels. The bachelorettes are relieved.

LADY MACBETH: It's a group date. And we're all going. *(miserable)* Great!

Other bachelorettes cheer. Titania grabs the scroll.

TITANIA: Ok there's a clue here.

“There's no such sport as sport by sport o'erthrown.
So make theirs ours and ours none but our own:
So shall we stay, mocking intended game,
And they, well mock'd, depart away with shame.” Oh, I wonder what that means?

CORDELIA: Well, it speaks of sport so I'm guessing we will be competing in a game.

CLEOPATRA: Mocked? Shame? Great! It's probably one of those humiliating challenges where they make us dress in sumo suits or go commando training in the mud. I was expecting to be tasting wine at beautiful vineyards and lying on the deck of a magnificent yacht with *my* bachelor by now.

LADY MACBETH: Umm, *my* bachelor!

TAMORA: I think you'll find he's *my* bachelor.

LADY MACBETH: Excuse me?

TAMORA: You heard me.

LADY MACBETH: You have no idea what I'm capable of.

TITANIA: Ladies, fighting over a man, is no way to win him.

Enter Osher. Bachelorettes immediately run to their line, blinking innocently.

OSHER: Good morning, ladies.

BACHELORETTE: Good morning, Osher.

OSHER: Ladies today you will be competing to win Will's affections, by fighting over him.

TITANIA: *(stunned)* Wait. What?

Blackout.

SCENE 12 – THE INSULT JOUST

SFX – A bell rings.

Osher stands front and centre with Bachelorettes on either side of him. Will is in his judge's chair, holding score signs.

OSHER: Today you will be competing in an 'Insult Joust'. A battle to the end. You will prove your worth by taking down your opponent with Will's weapon of choice - His witty words. Are you ready to rumble?

SFX – 'Are you Ready to Rumble.' continues to play throughout scene.

Bachelorettes pose in fighting stance, except Cordelia who looks very nervous indeed.

BACHELORETTE: (yell) Yes, Osher!

Bachelorettes all limber up ready for battle.

OSHER: Round one. In in the red corner, the self-proclaimed living goddess and undisputed queen of the Nile, CLEOPATRA.

Cleopatra steps forward, waves royally to the crowd.

OSHER: And in the blue corner, the one, the only, the immortal, Queen of the fairies, TITANIA.

SFX – Crowd cheers.

Titania waves, and readies herself for battle.

OSHER: Now you two, I want a good clean fight. Nothing below the proverbial belt. Good luck to you both.

SFX – Bell ringing.

OSHER: And insult!

CLEOPATRA: Titania. You are as a candle.

TITANIA: What? A shining light?

CLEOPATRA: No, the better burnt out.

Others react with "ooh's and ahh's" and "no you didn't's"

TITANIA: The tartness of your face sours ripe grapes.

CLEOPATRA: Your brain is as dry as the remainder biscuit after voyage.

TITANIA: Thou art the rankest compound of villainous smell that ever offended a nostril.

CLEOPATRA: No! More of your conversation would infect my brain.

All react. Osher comes forward indicates to Titania. Will holds up a sign saying 8.

SFX – The crowd cheers.

Osher indicates to Cleopatra, Will holds up a sign saying 9.

SFX – The Crowd cheers.

Osher holds up Cleopatra's arm in victory, she gloats. They take their place at the side whilst Lady Macbeth and Tamora step up.

OSHER: That was, indeed, a battle of royal proportions. Now, round two. Step up, please ladies. Ladies and gentlemen, we have a truly murderous challenge here, and the victor may end up with blood on her hands, because, in the red corner we have the infamous, the villainous, the ruthless//

LADY MACBETH: *(flattered)* Oh, Osher! Stop!

OSHER: The wicked, LAADDYY MACCBETTHHH!

SFX – Crowd goes wild.

OSHER: And in the blue corner, The Queen of the Goths, and host of Netflix's new cooking show. 'Dining with Family' TAAMMORRAAA!

This play is not finished. Printable PDF scripts for perusal, classroom or rehearsal use are available for \$8 AUD / \$5 USD per copy, charged per student or participant. Email me at kristencmdoherty@gmail.com to order.