

[ADAM comes to the stage. As he reaches to shake DANIEL'S hand, he drops a small stack of 3x5 index cards: his notes. He hastily picks them up.]

DANIEL: Oops, sorry. Let me help you...

ADAM: No, don't touch them. They go in an order.

DANIEL: Okay, okay. [Sits in chair.]

ADAM: [Trying to quickly put his notes back in order.] Hi. As you can see, I'm not an audience member, I completely fooled you. I've just been taking a few notes on Shakespeare's life so we could get the show off to a good start, so you could know all the stuff he did an' everything...

DANIEL: [Sotto voce.] Just get on with it.

ADAM: Okay, okay. [He begins reading from the index cards.] William Shakespeare. William Shakespeare was born in 1564 in the town of Stratford-upon-Avon, Warwickshire. The third of eight children, he was the eldest son of John Shakespeare, a locally prominent merchant, and Mary Arden, daughter of a Roman. [He pauses, flips to the next card. With no comprehension of what he's reading.] Catholic member of the landed gentry. In 1582 he married Anne Hathaway, a farmer's daughter ... [To DANIEL.] Heh. Farmer's daught—

[But DANIEL cuts him off with a stern look.]

ADAM: [Reading again.] He is supposed to have left Stratford after he was caught poaching in the deer park of a local justice of the peace. [Next card.] Shakespeare arrived in London in 1588. By 1592, he had achieved success as an actor and a playwright. After 1608 his dramatic production lessened, and it seems that he spent more time in Stratford. [Next card.] There he dictated to his secretary, Rudolf Hess, the work *Mein Kampf*, in which he set forth his program for the restoration of Germany to a dominant position in Europe. After reoccupying the Rhineland zone between France and Germany, and annex-

ing Austria, the Sudetenland, and the remainder of Czechoslovakia [*Next card.*], Shakespeare invaded Poland on September 1, 1939, thus precipitating World War II. [*To DANIEL.*] I never knew that before.

[*DANIEL gestures to him to wrap it up.*]

ADAM: [*Reads rapidly.*] Shakespeare remained in Berlin when the Russians entered the city, and committed suicide with his mistress, Eva Braun. [*Next card.*] He lies buried in the church at Stratford. Thank you.

[*ADAM bows. DANIEL rises, shakes his hand, and hurries him offstage.*]

DANIEL: Now, without further ado, we are proud to present *The Complete Works of William Shakespeare [abridged]*!

[*Blackout. A pretentious heavy-metal version of 'Greensleeves' crashes through the sound system. The music ends with an enormous cymbal crash. A light comes up to reveal JESS in Shakespearean attire and Converse high-top canvas sneakers, sitting in the Masterpiece Theater chair and holding the Complete Works book. He regards the audience smugly for a moment, opens the book, and reads.*]

JESS: "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."