

Shakespeare's Agent

AGENT'S OFFICE - 1590

*SHAKESPEARE sits in the outer office, waiting to see agent MORTY SHINGLE.
The SECRETARY, wearing an Elizabethan dress calls for him to enter.*

SECRETARY

Mr. Shakespeare, Sir Morty Shingle of Yorkshire shall see you.

SHAKESPEARE

Thank you, m'lady.

Shakespeare enters

AGENT

Have a seat.

Shakespeare sits. Agent holds up a script.

AGENT

What is this crap? You expect me to sell a manuscript like this? I'm an agent, not a magician.

SHAKESPEARE

'Twas not my pen gifted by the gods?

AGENT

Frankly...No! What kind of name is *(looks at title, annoyed)* "Hamlet"?

SHAKESPEARE

'Tis the namesake of a simple soul beseeched by common plight.

AGENT

Been there. Done that.

SHAKESPEARE

The story 'tis true, the words divine.

AGENT

That doesn't make a block-buster, Willie. These real-life dramas don't pull in the numbers anymore.

SHAKESPEARE

Did not the royal trumpets roar for the
sorrows of my troubled lovers?

AGENT

Romeo and Juliet? That was what?
Five seasons ago? Who's gonna remember?

SHAKESPEARE

My art shall not be sacrificed for
the glitter of the gold.

AGENT

Look, buddy, ten percent of twenty
pence does not my family feed.

SHAKESPEARE

Yet they feast upon the blood
of this pure and simple scribe.

AGENT

You conceited little bastard. I made you!
I keep you in velvet! This kind of crap
may fly on the Eastside, but it ain't
gonna cut it at the palace.

SHAKESPEARE

My words reflect the depth of man,
their feelings, their passion, their angst.

AGENT

Look, Willie, I've been in this business
since 1562. I know tragedy. Nobody
cares about the commoners.

SHAKESPEARE

The sorrows of the king, the sadness of the
serf. 'Tis not the same, but for the name?

AGENT

This is a glorious new century, babe.
The 1600s. Get with the program. The audience
is more sophisticated now. They want blood.
They want action. They want death.

SHAKESPEARE

Dost thou request thy alter the cloth?

AGENT

Yeah, and everything on it. *(holds up script)*
I made some changes. You had him as
a farmer, I made him a prince. You got
him losing his shack, I put him in a castle.
Then he goes nuts, slaughters everybody,
and Bam! Mega-hit!

SHAKESPEARE

Destroy the breath of man. 'Tis that art?

AGENT

Damn straight it is! Ben Johnson
has a 3-play deal in Paris. Am I
getting through to you, Bill!

SHAKESPEARE

'Twas my career but a simple masquerade?

AGENT

The best ones usually are. But don't
worry, I know how to package you.

Shakespeare stands and shouts with passion.

SHAKEPSEARE

My mighty pen shall prove thee wrong!
I shall stage this gem myself, and bring
the world to its praising knees.

Shakespeare storms out.

AGENT

(shakes head)
Writers!

Agent yells to secretary.

AGENT

M'lady, get me Galileo. I got a problem with his book and his so-called "theories of the universe".

GLOBE THEATER – MONTHS LATER

Shakespeare watches "his version" of "Hamlet" on stage, There is a pig FARMER, his WIFE and their STUPID PIG.

WIFE

The King hath stolen our breaths,
and left us with sorrow.

FARMER

We shall survive. The Lord
takes pity upon the wretched.

Shakespeare scans the theatre, bewildered. The AUDIENCE is bored.

WIFE

Come forth, young Hamlet.

The pig walks to the wife, and lays its head in her bosom.

WIFE

To market, to market you shall go.
For a pound of your flesh, we sell our soul.

FARMER

To be or not to be. That is the question for this noble pig. Whether 'tis nobler to face the slings and arrows of outrageous hunger or to slaughter this swine and end our sea of troubles.

An AUDIENCE MEMBER shouts out.

PATRON #1

Oh, God! Not another peasant story!

ANOTHER AUDIENCE MEMBER stands.

PATRON #2

This sucks!

PATRON #2 throws a ROTTEN FRUIT. Everyone else in the audience joins in, as fruit showers the stage.

PATRON #3

Who wrote this crap?

PATRON #4

I want my money back.

PATRON #5

I'll never come to this theater again.

Shakespeare bows his head in shame.

AGENT'S OFFICE – NEXT DAY

Shakespeare's Agent offers notes. Shakespeare eagerly scribbles them down.

AGENT

Like I was telling ya. This Hamlet guy loses his mind completely, and kills everybody. You can keep some of the poetic crap, I don't care. But you need blood, or they ain't coming out to see ya. Oh, and here's another angle. He sees a ghost. People love ghost stories...

Shakespeare continues to write feverishly, as the curtain falls.

-THE END-