

ALL IS TRUE

Screenplay by

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Black. As the following lines appear on screen, the familiar Droeshout portrait of William Shakespeare fades very slowly into view.

William Shakespeare was born on April 23rd 1564 in the English market town of Stratford Upon Avon. He was the son of a glove maker.

On November 27th 1582 he married Anne Hathaway. Will was 18, Anne was 26 and already pregnant. They had three children.

In the early 1590's Will moved to London, where he was to become the most successful and famous writer of his age.

His family remained in Stratford.

Will's only son, Hamnet, died in 1596, aged eleven.

The portrait slowly dissolves from the canvas image into a living, breathing version of the man himself, gazing the same enigmatic gaze at the viewer.

CUT TO BLACK

As the following lines appear, we scan across a period map of the densely crowded buildings of Elizabethan London. As we find Southwark, and its crammed streets, we close in on the roof of a round topped building.

On June 29th 1613 a performance of Shakespeare's *Life of Henry VIII* was given at The Globe Theatre. It was advertised under it's alternative title:

ALL IS TRUE

1 INT. DARKENED GLOBE STAGE

1

One actor, (The Chorus), is performing the opening Prologue of ALL IS TRUE.

CHORUS

*Be sad, as we would make ye think
ye see
The very persons of our noble story
As they were living; think you see
them great,
Then in a moment, see,
How soon this mightiness meets
misery:
And, if you can be merry then, I'll
say,
A man may weep upon his wedding-
day.*

Card: During Act 1 Scene 4 a misjudged stage effect began a fire.

The map. Fire flicks viciously through the drawn image of the Globe Theatre. CUT.

2 EXT. NIGHT 2

An explosive crack of fire . A figure stands silhouetted against the frame-filling flames. Shouts and screams and panic off screen.

3 EXT. THE GLOBE - DAWN 3

Low wide shot of a grey, smoking, empty wasteland. A figure stands in the smoldering aftermath of the fire.

Close on the figure, who slowly turns to face us. Not the Shakespeare of the famous portrait, but simply the man. A haunted man.

CARD. **The Globe Theatre burned entirely to the ground.**

CARD. **William Shakespeare never wrote another play.**

5 PUSH IN ON A PERIOD MAP OF STRATFORD UPON AVON WHICH LAYS OUT THE QUAIN'T ENVIRONS OF THE MARKET TOWN. THE NAME NEW PLACE, PICKED OUT.

6 INT. THE SHAKESPEARE'S LIVING ROOM - EVENING 6

Shakespeare's family, Anne, Susanna, and Judith sit together.

ANNE

He writes the life of a King? And calls it All is True? Your father has some nerve.

Susanna defensive of her father.

SUSANNA

No doubt the specific events will be true. And the people involved. The rest is anybody's guess. It *might* be true.

JUDITH

Nothing is ever true.

SUSANNA

The word of God is true.

Judith raises a contemptuous eyebrow.

7 EXT. THE TAVERN STRATFORD - EVENING 7

Noise. Flaming torches. A group of righteous Puritans are protesting outside the tavern. Amongst their leaders is Dr. John Hall (Susanna's husband).

JOHN HALL

Be not deceived! Neither drunkards,
nor fornicators, nor idolaters, nor
adulterers, shall inherit the
kingdom of God.

A messenger rushes up to a puritan who glances at the message and then shares it with John Hall. Hall knows he must leave.

8 EXT. COUNTRYSIDE - EVENING 8

A thump of hooves. A horse gallops across the wide lowlands of the garden of England.

9 EXT. THE COURT YARD OF A COUNTRY TAVERN - LATE AFTERNOON 9

An exhausted Will sits in the partially covered booth of an Inn. A frail boy (11) watches him. Will barely notices the child. The boy wears a ragged cloak against the chill, his face partly hid. The boy sees that Will's cloak is burned.

BOY

We heard a theatre burned Sir?
Which one was it?

WILL

Mine.

Will has scarcely glanced at him..

10 INT. THE SHAKESPEARE'S LIVING ROOM - DAY 10

John Hall has brought news. The family are shocked.

ANNE

A fire?

JOHN HALL

A furnace. We must prepare
ourselves for the worst. It is in
God's hands.

JUDITH

Well don't sound so bloody pleased
about it.

11 INT. THE ROADSIDE TAVERN - NIGHT

11

Will nurses a mug of ale. Eyes far away. Deep in thought. The landlady brings bread and cheese. A Romany. Hard bitten but with good reason. Will's attention is far away.

LANDLADY

Don't see a lot of strangers.

(beat)

Name's Dotia. It's my pub.

Will ignores her. The Landlady becomes wary.

LANDLADY (CONT'D)

And who might you be?

WILL

(startled)

Who am I?

He looks away again. Almost to himself?

WILL (CONT'D)

Who am I?

(far away)

I... I have worked in the theatre.

This exchange has confirmed her suspicions.

LANDLADY

Right then. I'll have the reckoning before you eat if it's all the same to you.

A look from Will.

LANDLADY (CONT'D)

I seen you strolling player types before.

WILL

And?

LANDLADY

An' you ain't exactly gen'lemen.

WILL

I am *exactly* a gentleman and Non sanz droict.

(the landlady doesn't understand)

"*Not without right*". You might see it on my Coat of Arms.

He reaches into his bag and pulls out a heavy bag of coins. He tosses a gold coin down. The landlady's eyes widen.

WILL (CONT'D)
Gentleman enough for you?

12 EXT. THE COURT YARD OF A COUNTRY TAVERN - NIGHT

12

Will preoccupied still. About to leave. The Boy is there, ignored by Will.

BOY
You're Shakespeare. The poet. You tell stories.

WILL
I used to.

BOY
I had a story. But it was never finished.

Will is fastening his cloak against the chill. Irritated by this nonsense.

BOY (CONT'D)
Will you finish it for me? Please?

Will is becoming impatient for his horse. Looks to the tavern door.

WILL
I'm done with stories lad. And I wouldn't know how to finish yours.

BOY (V.O.)
Yes you would. Of course you would.

Light thickens in the silent dusk. Will ignores the child and stares at the road ahead, as he waits, fearful, wondering. After a moment, he looks back around. The boy has gone. The Landlady comes to the door.

WILL
Where's the Boy?

LANDLADY
What Boy?

WILL
The lad who took my horse?

LANDLADY
No boy here. We found your horse untethered.

Will shivers. He looks out at the gloomy light.

He looks back at the Landlady who clearly has seen and heard nothing.

13 EXT. STRATFORD ON AVON. 13
Moving closer across the map of the town, which now features the famous Clopton Bridge.

14 EXT. THE TAVERN STRATFORD- EVENING 14
The Puritans still protest the tavern. Will walks past.
The tavern protest continues. A man emerges from the Tavern. John Lane, a surly drunkard. He glances furiously at the Puritans and spits on the ground. They stare menacingly back.

15 EXT. NEW PLACE - NIGHT 15
Will outside his house. He pauses at the front door to look at the Coat of Arms that hangs above it. He seems to take strength from this.

16 INT. THE SHAKESPEARE'S KITCHEN - NIGHT 16
Will has returned and at table with the family. Will is silent, shaken. It is uneasy reunion.

JOHN HALL

I rejoice to see you safe Father in Law. We all do.

WILL

I thank you for it John.

JOHN HALL

God burned your theatre but spared you. Thus is he both wise *and* merciful.

Perhaps this is offered as comfort but it doesn't give any. Will looks at John for a moment then stares once more into the fire. Remembering. Thinking. Anne breaks the silence.

ANNE

And when Will you return to London?

Will looks at her blankly.

The significance of this sinks slowly in for his family.

17 EXT HALLS CROFT NIGHT 17
The upstairs windows lit by candle.

18 INT. HALL'S CROFT BEDCHAMBER- NIGHT 18

Susanna and John Hall.

SUSANNA

I always thought he'd end his life
in London. Its where he lived.

JOHN HALL

It doesn't matter where he lived,
or where he dies, all that matters
is who will be his heir.

SUSANNA

I am his heir. And our daughter
Elizabeth after me.

JOHN HALL

Not if your sister gives him a
grandson.

SUSANNA

Or we do.

There is coldness and disappointment as they meet each
other's eye.

19 EXT NEW PLACE NIGHT 19

Candles at two separate windows upstairs.

20 INT. JUDITH'S BED CHAMBER - NIGHT 20

Judith lies alone, her face is blank. But there are tears on
her cheeks. She seems to cry without emotion. Damaged.

21 INT. ANNE'S BEDCHAMBER - EVENING 21

Anne is in the room. Will at the door.

ANNE

Good night Husband.

Anne begins to close the door on him.

ANNE (CONT'D)

Twenty years Will. We've seen you
less and less.

Will accepts the admonishment in silence.

ANNE (CONT'D)

To us you are a guest. And a guest
must have the best bed. Rest well.

Will is saddened but can only retreat.

22 EXT. MEADOW - DAY

22

A contemplative Will takes in the familiar countryside as he walks. Children are playing. He takes pleasure in their play. Two young women approach.

YOUNG WOMAN

Mr. Shakespeare? Is it true what they say? That you are he? The great poet?

WILL

Poet certainly.

YOUNG WOMAN

Such an honour.

Still traumatized, he takes pleasure at this attention. It is in stark contrast to his reception at home.

23 EXT. THE HIGH STREET - DAY

23

Will is walking along the once familiar street. He feels like a stranger but one who has earned his right to be there. He wears fine clothes and takes pride that people greet him. As a figure of respect. "Mr. Shakespeare." "An honour sir" "We heard you had come to live amongst us once more, such excitement".

24 INT. KINGS NEW SCHOOL STRATFORD - DAY

24

Will stands by a name plaque outside Stratford Grammar. His mind is filled with memories.

He listens at a window. He hears a class of teenage boys being instructed by their teacher. He hears a stern voice call out "William Shakespeare!"

It was just a memory. The voice that called Will was the current master come out to greet him.

SCHOOL MASTER

Mr. Shakespeare isn't it? I saw you looking in. Please, perhaps a few words of inspiration for the boys?

WILL

I... forgive me.. I think not.

Will turns away but then he turns back.

WILL (CONT'D)

Tell them... Tell them to get money.

SCHOOL MASTER

Money sir?

WILL

Money. Money and property.

SCHOOL MASTER

No words of wisdom? Philosophy?
Food for the soul?

Will considers this for a moment.

WILL

Money.

25 EXT. NEW PLACE - DUSK 25

The second best house in the town sits quietly in the twilight

26 INT. THE SHAKESPEARE'S KITCHEN - EVENING 26

Dinner. Anne, Judith and Will. They eat in silence for some time. Eventually Will breaks it.

WILL

I thought perhaps, I would make a garden.

ANNE

We've got a garden.

WILL

Not a kitchen Garden. Or a flower garden. But a special one. For Hamnet.

ANNE

Hamnet's in Paradise. He doesn't need a garden.

WILL

Perhaps I do.

Anne shrugs as if to say "do as you please".

27 EXT HALLS CROFT NIGHT 27

Through the windows we see the Hall family at supper.

28 INT. HALL'S CROFT - NIGHT 28

Susanna, John and Elizabeth Hall. Also in silence. Susanna throws a discreet smile at little Elizabeth to momentarily break the grimness.

JOHN HALL
Your father's mind is on his
legacy.

SUSANNA
Your mind is on his legacy.

John does not like her tone.

JOHN HALL
And therefore must be yours. For I
am your husband and what concerns
me concerns you.

John Hall gives Susanna a long and significant look.

29 EXT NEW PLACE GARDEN DAY 29

Will, like a stranger in a strange land, walks through the existing plants and flowers, scouting for his new plan. He is very engaged.

30 EXT. THE GARDEN - AFTERNOON 30

Will digging. Enjoying the air. The buzzing insects. The little birds that try to steal his seeds.

Anne brings him water. Will leans upon his spade, puffed out.

WILL
Digging up roots. Heavy work.

ANNE
You'll find that.

Will drinks long and deep. A thought amuses him.

WILL
I once uprooted an entire Wood and
moved it across a stage to
Dunsinane.

ANNE
Bit different in the real world.

A beat as their familiar awkwardness settles.

WILL
He showed such promise Anne.

ANNE

You scarcely knew him.

WILL

I knew him. Through his poems.

ANNE

You say poems.

WILL

Yes poems. Childish scribbles perhaps, but wit and mischief in every line.

ANNE

Well.

(beat)

He'll write no more.

WILL

No. And nor shall I.

She looks at him. Turns and walks away.

ANNE

It's not Hamnet you mourn. It's yourself.

WILL

I mourn my son!

She keeps walking.

ANNE

Now. You mourn him now. At the time you wrote The Merry Wives of Windsor.

He tries to return to his digging but gives it up. He lays aside his spade and heads into the lane.

31 EXT HALLS CROFT- DAY

31

Will is at the door of Susanna's house. He knocks and Susanna answers.

32 EXT. THE GREEN WOOD - DAY

32

Will is walking with Susanna. Elizabeth runs about playing.

SUSANNA

Its an adjustment. She must learn to be a wife once more.

They walk on. Birds twitter. Elizabeth laughs and skips.

SUSANNA (CONT'D)

My husband thinks you've come home to die.

WILL

Really? I've just bought a pension. I can't die for at least ten years or I'll be ruined.

A small moment of levity between them.

SUSANNA

So why are you come home? No more stories left to write?

WILL

Susanna, I have lived so long in imaginary worlds that I believe I've lost sight of what is real, of what is true.

SUSANNA

Judith says nothing is true.

WILL

Judith is 28 and a spinster. That is true.

Will walks on. Susanna calls after him.

SUSANNA

Will you write no more Father?

Will either doesn't hear or simply doesn't answer.

33 EXT NEW PLACE DAY

33

The work in the garden goes on. Will still clearing and rearranging the existing plants.

34 INT. THE SHAKESPEARE'S KITCHEN - DAY

34

Anne and Judith are preparing food together. Will is seen by them both in the garden beyond.

JUDITH

When Father dies I will be destitute.

ANNE

No child. A third of his fortune comes to me, while I live.

JUDITH

While you live. You're older than him, remember.

ANNE

Susanna will never see you want.

JUDITH

Susanna will obey her husband. I will get nothing. Which is what I deserve.

ANNE

Judith. If you won't forgive yourself. How can you expect God to?

JUDITH

I don't.

35

EXT. THE GREEN WOOD POND - DAY

35

Will and Susanna have arrived at a glade with a body of water.

WILL

I ran here on the day I was sacked from the school.

SUSANNA

I know Father.

WILL

When I was the son of an Alderman I had a free education. But the son of a thief? I thought my world had ended.

Will looks about him. Remembering.

WILL (CONT'D)

I loved this place. You children loved it too.

SUSANNA

Yes, we came here every day. Although Hamnet never went in the water. He wasn't bold like Judith. Or even me.

WILL

But his *mind* was bold.

(memories)

Once he brought me here, to show me what he'd written. I told him then that I was the proudest father in the Kingdom. I still am.

Will turns away. Susanna so sad for him.

36 EXT. NEW PLACE - DAY 36

Big broad sweeping vista from the garden. The leaves in the Green Wood are turning. Time is passing.

37 EXT. THE GARDEN - MORNING 37

Will works on his garden. Now digging, cutting turf, Gardening is hard. Anne emerges.

ANNE
Husband! Its Sunday.

WILL
Sunday?

ANNE
This isn't London. If you miss church here they fine you.

38 INT. THE SHAKESPEARE'S LIVING ROOM - MORNING 38

Susanna and John and Elizabeth have arrived in their Sunday best. Judith and Anne also. Will comes down buttoning his smart doublet trying to be the happy family man.

WILL
Well well! Here we all are. How sweet you look Elizabeth. Shall we be off?

JOHN HALL
I must needs first answer nature's call.

SUSANNA
Nature seems to like your company. It calls every five minutes.

Hall scowls and leaves, unbuttoning his cod piece as he goes, he's in a hurry.

39 EXT. NEW PLACE - MORNING 39

The family are leaving the house for Church. Will pauses outside the front door, picking up little Elizabeth he shows her the Coat of Arms above the door.

WILL
What's that Little Lizzie?

The little girl is proud to know the answer.

ELIZABETH
Our Coat of Arms Grandfather.

WILL

That's right. Which hangs upon the second best house in Stratford. The house of a gentleman.

The woman are unimpressed but Will takes great satisfaction and casts another look at the shield before leading the family to church.

40 THE MAP OF STRATFORD 40

Featuring the picturesque church of Holy Trinity.

41 INT. HOLY TRINITY CHURCH - MORNING 41

The congregation are at Sunday Service. The Shakespeare's enter. Many townsfolk tip their hats to an important family. Will is pleased to accept their greetings.

They take their places in the second row. In the far more impressive side box are the Lucy family, the grandest family of them all. Sir Thomas Lucy nods curtly at Will. Will feels this slight.

SIR THOMAS

Ah Shakespeare! Another Sunday and still you occupy your family pew. I pray that you are never obliged to vacate it. As your Father was.

This cuts.

WILL

I am not my Father Sir Thomas.

The congregation continues to assemble. Rafe Smith, a haberdasher enters. Susanna catches his eye and there is a brief moment of connection. Will notices this.

John Hall also notices it too. He whispers to Susanna.

JOHN HALL

I am happy that you have friends in the town Susanna. But kindly be discreet about it.

Susanna reddens, there is a secret here.

A group of giggling girls surround a handsome man, Tom Quiney. Quiney sees Judith and gives her a broad smile. She does not return it. The girls sneer, they don't like Judith.

The Puritans don't like Tom Quiney. The little congregation is a labyrinth of small town conflicts and alliances. We sense a story in every face, only some of them will we follow. The Vicar, Edward Woolmer enters. Music begins.

42 EXT. THE GARDEN - DAY

42

Will works in his garden. He makes slow but steady progress. Now cutting shapes and tracks in the earth with knife and trowel. Messy and content. John Hall approaches.

JOHN HALL

I joy to see you dig Sir. At last given up on your plays to distract the mob from our Lord.

Will considers this for a moment. A lark sings.

WILL

Does the Lark song distract you from your God John?

JOHN HALL

Of course not. It is evidence of God.

WILL

Well then. Perhaps for some, I was a Lark?

Will offers this with gentle twinkle. John Hall is slightly floored, he is about to attempt an answer but realizes he hasn't really got one. He gathers his dignity.

JOHN HALL

I came to ask a favour Father in Law. But I am loath to distract a man from his labours. Will you call when you are done with your garden?

Will nods. John departs.

43 EXT. STRATFORD HIGH STREET - DAY

43

People go about their business. Susanna walks to the tavern. She is greeted with respect as a wealthy doctors wife. Hats are tipped.

Susanna passes Tom Quiney's Wine and Tobacco shop. Quiney calls out cheerfully.

QUINEY

Good day to you Mrs. Hall. Tell your sister I have a fine Rhenish Wine delivered. She may have a bottle gratis for a single smile.

Susanna puts her nose in the air with disdain and walks on.

44 INT. THE TAVERN STRATFORD- DAY 44

The Tavern is also a Post House. Susanna enters and approaches the Landlady.

STRATFORD LANDLADY
Package for you Mrs Hall. Frank!

A nervous boy rushes forward but he is clumsy and trips. He drops it and inside a bottle is heard to break.

As the boy tries to gather up the parcel spots of silver liquid are seen amongst the straw.

A man is watching. It is John Lane. He drinks sullenly.

JOHN LANE
Mercury Mrs. Hall?

SUSANNA
My husband is a doctor.

JOHN LANE
She said the parcel was for you.

John Lane looks once more at the mercury and turns back to his drink. Susanna, begins furiously to gather up what is left of her parcel.

45 EXT HALLS CROFT DAY 45

Will is entering John and Susanna's house.

46 INT. HALL'S CROFT - DAY 46

John is appealing to Will.

JOHN HALL
The reformation is but half
completed Father in Law. The Vicar
of Holy Trinity is a recalcitrant.
It is intolerable.

47 INT. THE TAVERN - DAY 47

John Lane sullenly drinks his ale, crosses himself discreetly and leaves the Tavern.

48 INT. HALL'S CROFT - DAY 48

John Hall and Will continue their conversation.

JOHN HALL

You are an influential man. If you were to lend your voice to ours.

Will considers.

49

EXT. THE HIGH STREET - DAY

49

Susanna is walking past the shops. She pauses outside a haberdashery, then enters. Rafe Smith (35) is at the counter.

SUSANNA

Good day to you Mr. Smith.

RAFE SMITH

Mrs. Hall.

There is moment. A connection. A spark exists here.

SUSANNA

I need cloth. A loose weave. To make a summer dress. Black.

RAFE SMITH

Black? For summer? Perhaps this blue.

SUSANNA

My husband does not approve of fancy stuff.

RAFE SMITH

If your husband had his way Mrs. Hall my shop would be a very dull place. All in mourning and nobody dead.

Tension crackles between them.

SUSANNA

Our Saviour wore only simple cloth, and he was divine.

RAFE SMITH

As are you Susanna. In any cloth.

Susanna reddens.

SUSANNA

Mr. Smith. I am a married woman.

RAFE SMITH

Unhappily.

SUSANNA

That is not... I should tell my husband.

RAFE SMITH

Will you?

SUSANNA

(beat)

He knows.

50 EXT. THE HIGH STREET - DAY

50

Susanna is emerging from the Haberdashers. John Lane watches.

Across the street Quiney in his wine shop has also seen. It's a small town. Everybody knows everybody. Secrets are hard to hide.

51 INT. NEW PLACE - EVENING

51

The kitchen. Will dines with Anne and Judith.

WILL

John Hall wants my help to remove Woolmer as Vicar of Holy Trinity I thought he knew me better.

ANNE

He thinks you like him.

WILL

I'm a good actor.

Perhaps Anne takes this in a different way to what Will intended.

WILL (CONT'D)

I try to like him. For Sue's sake. But John is a...

JUDITH

Hypocritical shit.

WILL

A Puritan.

JUDITH

That's funny isn't it? A Puritan, who wants to close all the theatres, will have all of William Shakespeare's estate - Don't you think that's funny? I think it's funny.

Will is taken aback by her gleefully angry tone.

52 INT. HALL'S CROFT - EVENING 52

John Hall slumbers by the fire. Susanna rises and quietly makes for the door.

53 EXT. HALL'S CROFT - EVENING 53

It is dark. The front door opens and Susanna slips out.

Across the street John Lane has been watching. Susanna glances about furtively but does not see Lane. She scurries off into the night. Lane follows.

54 INT. NEW PLACE - EVENING 54

There has been a silence. Now Will answers Judith.

WILL

For what it's worth Judith I have no intention of leaving my estate to John Hall.

JUDITH

No you'll leave it to the sainted Susanna and by law her property is his. As is her body - for all the use he makes of it!

Even in her wild mood Judith knows she's gone too far.

55 EXT. THE HIGH STREET - NIGHT 55

Rafe Smith's Haberdashery. Susanna steals through the shadows and up to the door. Smith lets her in. John Lane is watching.

56 INT. NEW PLACE - NIGHT 56

Will, Judith and Anne.

WILL

You are grown hard Judith. There was a time when you were such a simple, joyful soul.

JUDITH

Was I Father? When was that?

Will doesn't answer.

JUDITH (CONT'D)

Before Hamnet died? Is that it?

(beat)

Before Hamnet died. And I survived.

ANNE

Judith. Don't.

JUDITH

It's what he thinks. Every time he reads those bloody poems, which aren't even that good! He thinks why did *she* survive not him?

ANNE

Judith.

JUDITH

The golden boy is gone and he's left with the girl. The useless, pointless girl. Oh she was a pretty thing once that *girl*. A simple joyful soul. But look at her now? Angry bitch. Still *hanging around*. Why did the *wrong twin die*.

Will doesn't answer. Because he knows there is some truth in what she says.

57 INT. HALL'S CROFT - NIGHT 57

John Hall still sleeps before the fire. Susanna opens the door and creeps back in. As she passes on her way to the stair his eyes open. He wasn't asleep at all and she knew it too. They stare at each other but say nothing.

58 EXT NEW PLACE NIGHT 58

The lonely candles at the windows. A passer by looks up to the great house.

59 INT. ANNES'S BEDROOM - NIGHT 59

Anne prepares for bed. Will appears at the door.

WILL

I never gave her cause. I never said an unkind word.

ANNE

You've spent so long putting words into other people's mouths, you think it only matters what is *said*.

She closes the door on him.

60 EXT RAFF SMITS SHOP NIGHT 60

The locked up shop. No light.

- 61 INT. RAFE SMITHS CHAMBER - NIGHT 61
Rafe sits alone on his bed, deep in thought. The bed is
unmade, the covers rumped. He gathers them up and breaths
them in.
- 62 EXT HALLS CROFT NIGHT 62
Darkness. Cold.
- 63 INT. SUSANNA'S CHAMBER - NIGHT 63
Susanna lies in bed. Eyes wide open. She hears pissing.
- 64 INT. JOHN HALL'S CHAMBER - NIGHT 64
John is pissing in his chamber pot. He is uncomfortable.
Unhappily he returns to bed.
- 65 EXT NEW PLACE NIGHT 65
All asleep bar one.
- 66 INT. THE SHAKESPEARE'S KITCHEN - NIGHT 66
Judith sits alone drinking.
- 67 EXT. THE GARDEN - MORNING 67
Time is passing. Will works on his garden. He is rolling
lengths of turf in front of a rich bank of flowers.
Now an earnest young student appears at the gate. Henry.
HENRY
Mr. Shakespeare? I don't want to
pester you.
WILL
Good. Excellent news. Cheerio then.
HENRY
It's just that I wanted to ask...
WILL
The best way to get started as a
writer is to start writing.
Cheerio.
HENRY
No really could I...

WILL

I don't have a favourite play. I admire all my fellow dramatists equally. And yes I do think women should be allowed to perform the female roles as is the practice on the continent. Now please. If you'll excuse me.

Will returns to his digging. Defeated, Henry almost leaves but doesn't.

HENRY

I have come all the way from Cambridge to see you. I left my college without leave.

WILL

(wearily)

And that was your choice.

Henry gets the message. Starts to walk away. Stops and turns. One last go.

HENRY

I just want to ask - *how you knew*.

WILL

Knew what?

HENRY

Everything.

WILL

My friend I don't even know how to keep the slugs out of the Hollyhocks.

HENRY

(impatient)

The world is full of gardeners. I mean everything that *matters*.

Will raises an eyebrow at this.

HENRY (CONT'D)

There is no corner of this world which you have not explored. No geography of the soul you can not navigate. How? How do you *know*?

Finally Will is forced to engage.

WILL

What I know. *If* I know it. And I don't say that I do. I have -
(a moment to consider)
Imagined.

HENRY

But they say you left school at fourteen... You've never travelled. Imagined? From what?

WILL

From my self!

HENRY

Your self?

WILL

Yes! Everything I've ever done. Everything I've ever seen, every book I've ever read, and every conversation I have ever had, including, God help me, this one. You will find the whole of me in every word I ever wrote. My thoughts, my feelings, my dreams. If you would be a playwright and speak for others then speak first for yourself. Search *within*. Consider the contents of your own soul. Your *humanity*. For *that* is the business of the theatre. Everything else is just stage directions.

Henry is trying to take it all in. Will takes a little pity and tries to sum it up in a more kindly tone.

WILL (CONT'D)

Write *what you are, what you know, what you feel and what you can imagine my friend*. And if you are honest then whatever you write *all is true*.

Henry wants to reply but can't think what to say.

WILL (CONT'D)

Now please. If you can't save my hollyhocks, leave me to mourn the dead.

Will returns to his digging. Henry is confused but also strangely inspired. He knows he should leave but can not resist pushing his luck.

HENRY

Then why....

Will looks up. Fierce now. The boy's being rude. Henry returns his stare.

HENRY (CONT'D)

Why did you stop? Why do you write
no more?

A beat. Is Will considering an answer? Another beat. If he
was he doesn't give it.

WILL

Cheerio.

Will turns his back. This time it's final.

68 EXT. THE HIGH STREET - DAY 68

Judith approaches Tom Quiney's wine and tobacco shop.

69 INT. QUINEY'S WINE SHOP - DAY 69

Judith enters. Her usual cold self. But she knows Quiney.

JUDITH

Good morning Tom Quiney. A barrel
of Huffcap ale and three flagons of
Malmesey wine to be delivered to
New Place if you would. On our
account.

Tom is a cheerful, flirtatious fellow.

QUINEY

Your usual order and my usual
reply. Marry me Judith. I would
help bring back your smile.

JUDITH

Yes and every other maid in the
county's. You chase them all.

QUINEY

But I only ever propose to one.

JUDITH

I'd think you'd tire of it.

Quiney's cheerful mask slips a little.

QUINEY

I remember a girl. The prettiest
and happiest in town. And I
remember her laugh and I remember
kiss chase. I'd like to see the
woman that girl should have become.
Because it surely isn't you.

70 INT. THE GARDEN - MORNING

70

Time for a break. Will sits amongst his gardening tools. He has his satchel of Hamnet's verse and is reading. Some line which catches his eye. It makes him smile, almost laugh.

WILL

Oh my son. My pretty chicken. My golden lad.

Anne emerges.

ANNE

It's Sunday.

Will carefully puts his precious pages away.

71 INT. HOLY TRINITY CHURCH - MORNING

71

The congregation are at Sunday Service. The Lucy family arrive. Will attempts to greet them as equals, but again Sir Thomas merely nods curtly at the Shakespeare's. Will pained and embarrassed.

Rafe Smith enters. For a moment he catches Susanna's eye. Do they share a secret.

Will notices this and turns to look at Hall who is also staring at Rafe Smith.

The dissolute John Lane is at the back. Tense. Sweating, perhaps discreetly drinking. He stares at Susanna and then at Rafe Smith. Building up to something.

The Vicar Edward Woolmer begins the service.

Quiney bustles in late with a pretty girl, Margaret Wheeler following. Both a little disheveled.

Now the service is almost over.

EDWARD WOOLMER

Our reading today was from the first chapter of Corinthians "I beseech ye bretheren, in the name of Jesus, that there be no divisions among you"

(beat)

There is division in our town. The Puritans protest against the old ways. The feastings, the merriment and customs long practised. Some of you resent this I know but I charge you remember Corinthians! These good Christians act from honest faith. They are upright citizens, decent and pious....

Suddenly John Lane jumps up.

JOHN LANE

Are they Mr. Woolmer! Are they? Or
are they fornicators!

General shock

JOHN LANE (CONT'D)

There is wickedness in this church
Mr. Woolmer! *Puritan* wickedness.

He points at Susanna.

JOHN LANE (CONT'D)

I have seen Susanna Hall creep from
her husband's house to Rafe Smith's
chamber in the night!

Card: In the summer of 1613 John Lane, yeoman of Stratford publicly accused Shakespeare's elder daughter Susanna of infidelity with Rafe Smith the Haberdasher.

Susanna mortified. Will stunned. The congregation in uproar etc. John Hall leaps to his feet.

JOHN HALL

This slander will be answered!

JOHN LANE

This slander will be proved! You'll
no more tell us how best to save
our souls *Doctor* Hall. Not while
your Puritan wives fornicate worse
than whores and then send to London
for Mercury to physic what they got
of it!

Card: John Lane compounded his charge by stating that Susanna had contracted Gonorrhoea.

The tumult grows.

EDWARD WOOLMER

Silence! This is a house of God!
And I am master here!

Edward Woolmer the Vicar glares at John Hall. Sensing a dangerous rival.

Will is red faced with anger and shame. He catches the patronizing look of Sir Thomas Lucy, half censure, half pity.

As the congregation bustle out, all talking of the scandal Sir Thomas Lucy pauses over Will.

SIR THOMAS

Well well Sir. You Shakespeare's
are never far from a scandal are
you?

Will is mortified. Sir Thomas glances at Susanna.

SIR THOMAS (CONT'D)

I suppose she gets it from her
Grandfather. Fixed the price of
Wool didn't he? Bad business. And
illegal money lending to boot!
Goodness! He was a busy fellow. No
wonder they chucked him off the
council.

Will who is pretty dumb struck. Anne however hit's back.

ANNE

Every family has it's dark Horse,
Sir Thomas, Even the Lucy's. Or
perhaps it is another Thomas Lucy
who's niece ran off with a serving
man in 1600?

Sir Thomas, moves on in fury.

74

INT. THE SHAKESPEARE'S LIVING ROOM - EVENING

74

The family assemble. All sit in shocked silence. Will enters.

WILL

I have instructed my lawyers. We
shall sue him for slander.

SUSANNA

A public trial?

WILL

It is a public slander.

JOHN HALL

John Lane is a dangerous man. We
can be sure he did not stage his
attack without some idea of how to
prove it.

Beat. Will turns to Susanna.

WILL

Prove it?

SUSANNA

How can you ask?

WILL

Because your husband fears he can.

John Hall is thrown by this. He had not expected Will to place such an astute interpretation on his remark.

JOHN HALL

I mean that I fear he has constructed a convincing lie.

Judith seems almost to revel in Susanna's discomfort.

JUDITH

Well now. What a disaster. And that it should befall such a fine and blameless family as ours.

Will is determined.

WILL

The Shakespeare's will not be ruined twice.

75 EXT. THE HIGH STREET - DAY 75

Susanna hurries along. All eyes turn on her. Very different from the respect she's used to. The town seems to be turning against her, reveling in her shame.

76 INT. CONSISTORY COURT AT WORCESTER - DAY 76

A packed court full of gawping towns folk. The Shakespeare family enter. Some snigger, some snarl. The Puritan element are tight lipped between shame and righteous anger.

CARD: The trial of John Lane for the slander of Susanna Shakespeare was convened at The Consistory Court, Worcester.

JUDGE

Bring forward the accused.

A Clerk stands.

CLERK

Call John Lane.

There is a pause. The Judge is impatient. An officer enters.

OFFICER

John Lane is not here you Honour.

JUDGE

Not here!

OFFICER

He has disappeared.

JUDGE

Susanna Shakespeare has been most
fouly used.

The crowd erupts.

**CARD: John Lane failed to attend his trial. The case being
uncontested, he was convicted of slander, and excommunicated.**

77

INT. THE SHAKESPEARE'S LIVING ROOM - EVENING

77

Anne and Will sit.

ANNE

Why? Why did this man slander our
Sue?

WILL

My guess is to damage her husband.
John Hall is a Puritan, and would
make Holy Trinity and all the town
likewise. John Lane on the other
hand likes his cakes and ale.

ANNE

Then why did he not attend the
court and press his case?

Beat.

WILL

I discussed the matter with him.

ANNE

Discussed? Discussed what?

WILL

I asked him if he'd ever seen Titus
Andronicus.

78

INT. THE TAVERN STRATFORD - NIGHT

78

Flashback. Will has met John Lane.

JOHN LANE

What do I know of plays? Get away
from me. I shall see you and your
whore daughter in Court.

WILL

It concerns a Moorish villain named
Aaron. And the African who played
him was magnificent and terrifying.

79

INT. THE GLOBE STAGE - DAY

79

A performance of Titus. Intimidating passion and violence.

ACTOR PLAYING AARON

*To kill a man, or else devise his
death,
Ravish a maid, or plot the way to
do it.
Accuse some innocent and forswear
myself,
Set deadly enmity between two
friends,
Make poor men's cattle break their
necks;
Set fire on barns and hay-stacks in
the night,
And bid the owners quench them with
their tears.
Oft have I digg'd up dead men from
their graves,
And set them upright at their dear
friends' doors,
Tut, I have done a thousand
dreadful things
As willingly as one would kill a
fly,
And nothing grieves me heartily
indeed
But that I cannot do ten thousand
more.*

80

INT. THE TAVERN STRATFORD - NIGHT

80

Flashback. Will still talks with John Lane who is pretty scared.

WILL

Mighty like a lion. Strong as a bear. I saw this man tear the heart from a fool who wronged him and eat it raw!

Lane is fearful.

WILL (CONT'D)

And yet - he could be tender too. And one day his wild heart was tamed. He loved my daughter.

JOHN LANE

Susanna?

WILL

Ay. Susanna. Their love could never be of course.

(MORE)

WILL (CONT'D)

But he swore that if ever she had need, his sword, his claws and his teeth would either defend her or kill for her. Should I tell him of Susanna's current distress?

John Lane is suitably nervous.

81 INT. THE SHAKESPEARE'S LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

81

Will and Anne.

ANNE

Will. I saw Titus. Aaron was played by the sweetest chap you could hope to meet. I talked to him for an hour afterwards at the George Inn.

WILL

Yes, He was a lovely fellow Wife, but John Lane doesn't know that, and I've never let the truth get in the way of a good story.

A moment of levity. Anne for the first time a little less cold.

WILL (CONT'D)

All men fear what they do not know Anne and I'll wager John Lane has never laid eyes on an African.

Anne once more reflective.

ANNE

Do you think there was any truth in it? In what Lane said? About Susanna?

WILL

Well. There is coldness between them. We've seen that.

Something they both recognize in themselves.

82 INT. HALL'S CROFT - EVENING

82

Susanna and John Hall sit in grim silence. She stitches, he reads the Bible. Will's voice-over comments on the scene.

WILL (V.O.)

'Tis five years since she and John have had a child.

John rises.

JOHN HALL

I'm going to bed. Good night.

He leaves. Susanna sad and alone.

WILL (V.O.)

And Susanna certainly knows this
Rafe Smith....

83 INT. RAFE SMITH'S SHOP - MORNING 83

A past moment. Susanna is buying material. Rafe holds some cloth against her body as if to say "look, this would suit you". It is physical, fun, she blushes coyly.

84 EXT. THE TAVERN - DAY 84

Another past moment. Susanna is hurrying from the tavern with the broken package of Mercury.

WILL (V.O.)

She did send to London for Mercury.
Mercury is a cure for Pox.

A drop or two more falls to the street as she hurries along. Susanna is nervous and embarrassed.

85 INT. THE SHAKESPEARE'S KITCHEN - EVENING 85

Will and Anne together.

ANNE

Sue is not poxed Will. I'd know.

WILL

He then?.....a poxed man is ever
pissing.

86 INT. THE SHAKESPEARE'S LIVING ROOM - MORNING 86

Flashback to the Sunday morning they went to church when Hall said he must answer nature's call. Susanna has just made her comment about nature liking Hall's company.

HALL

Have you some objection to my
visiting the privy?

87 INT. HALL'S CROFT - NIGHT 87

John Hall in his bed chamber, sweating and in pain. He takes a little bottle and swigs at it.

88 INT. THE SHAKESPEARE'S LIVING ROOM - EVENING 88
Back with Will and Anne's conversation.

WILL
Is that why she bares no more
children? Did she seek comfort
elsewhere?

89 INT. THE HIGH STREET - NIGHT 89
Susanna stealing into Smith's house.

90 INT. SMITH'S BED - NIGHT 90
Smith and Susanna are making passionate love.

SUSANNA
The Devil will take both our souls
for this.

RAFE SMITH
But we go there by way of Heaven.

91 INT. THE SHAKESPEARE'S KITCHEN - EVENING 91
Will and Anne still talking.

ANNE
Susanna is a God fearing woman. She
would not betray her husband.

Judith appears at the door. She's been listening.

JUDITH
Maybe it wasn't a betrayal?

WILL
Judith?

JUDITH
Maybe he told her to do it.

92 INT. HALL'S CROFT - EVENING 92
Susanna and John Hall sit.

JOHN HALL
It will be either your womb or your
sister's which secures your
father's fortune.

John stares at her. Then returns to reading his Bible.

93 INT. THE SHAKESPEARE'S LIVING ROOM - DAY 93

Judith confronting a shocked Anne and Will.

JUDITH

Well it's a thought isn't it? And frankly Father, if you got a grandson by it. Would you care if it were true?

Will decides not to answer this.

WILL

I care that Susanna is free from slander. That you may be sure is true.

JUDITH

Nothing is ever true.

94 EXT. THE GREEN WOOD - DAY 94

Once more Will walks with Susanna.

SUSANNA

You think my husband is trying to whore me to get a bigger house?

Will a bit flummoxed. Susanna is not usually so forthright.

SUSANNA (CONT'D)

We should not seek to lift the veil on other peoples marriages Father. All are complex. To understand one, you have to live it.

(beat)

And you're hardly an expert there.

Susanna walks on. Will can only follow, chastened.

95 EXT. THE GARDEN - DAY. 95

A change of season. Time is passing.

Will works in his garden. Some progress has been made on his design. Some curves, and turns in the rails of turf, but it's hard. He is hot. He is very tired. The heat of the sun starts to play tricks with his eyes as he shades them from the glare. As he works a boy leans on the fence. It is the boy from the tavern, he masks his eyes against the Sun, his face once more in shadow.

BOY

Got any berries?

WILL
Eventually. I have planted a
mulberry tree.

BOY
Well then, you've got time to
finish my story while we wait.

The boy has removed his hands. For the first time his face is
clear. Will's eyes focus through the haze. Is it his son?

WILL
Hamnet? Is it you?

The boy seems half lost in the haze.

BOY
I wrote you another poem today.
Would you like to hear it?

WILL
I want nothing more in this world.

The boys cheerfulness suddenly gives way to rising anger.

BOY
Well you'll have to wait won't you!
Like I waited. I had a poem before
for you but you never came! The
sickness came instead and still you
didn't come though Mother promised
you would!

Now the boy emerges from the haze but in a horrifying visual
transformation he becomes a plague victim. Great sores on his
face. Will recoils in horror as the boy confronts him.

BOY (CONT'D)
I had a poem for you! You never
came.

Will recoils in horror as the boy confronts him.

WILL
Hamnet!

Anne's voice intrudes upon the vision.

ANNE
Will?

Will spins around to her.

ANNE (CONT'D)
You're shouting....

He turns back, there is no boy. There was no boy.

WILL
He was here Anne.

ANNE
He'll always be here Will.

Now we see that from an upper window Judith has been watching the scene. Again there are tears on her cheeks.

96 EXT STRATFORD COUNTRYSIDE TWILIGHT 96

The gorgeous meadow in the last rays.

97 INT. THE SHAKESPEARE'S KITCHEN - EVENING 97

Will dines with Anne and Judith. The mood is sombre.

WILL
In London now the plays are just finished.

Will is doing his best.

WILL (CONT'D)
Taverns full.

JUDITH
If you're missing London. Why don't you go back there?

This is getting hard for Will. He is prepared to eat humble pie but this is relentless.

WILL
Do you wish I would Daughter?

JUDITH
It doesn't matter what I wish but what you wish. And it isn't to be with us.

WILL
What do you mean?

JUDITH
You've come back to mourn Hamnet!
To mourn your blessed departed son
and dig a bloody garden for him.

ANNE
That's enough Judith.

JUDITH
We mourned him Father! We mourned him when he died. And we mourned him thereafter.

(MORE)

JUDITH (CONT'D)

Now it seems we must begin again as
if his grave was freshly dug
because suddenly you've found time
to mourn him too!

WILL

Hold your tongue! Respect your
Father even if you can't respect
yourself.

That was a hard blow. Judith is in many ways a sorry sight.
Careless of her appearance. Often with a glass in her hand.

WILL (CONT'D)

If you are done with mourning him
at least honour his memory.

JUDITH

How can you say I don't?

WILL

Then start living up to it! If you
can not match his talent, try to
match his goodness and his
diligence. You are wasting your
life!

Judith stares at her father.

JUDITH

I know what you think's the purpose
of a woman's life. I know what you
want from me.

98

EXT. NEW PLACE GARDEN - DAY

98

Seasons change. In the montage, we see a quiet Will getting
on with building this garden as best he can. Thoughtful, as
if all that Judith has said sits with him. Preoccupies him.
Occasionally he looks about him. For signs of the boy. There
are none. Buds blossom. Leafs fall.

Will is measuring parts of the garden using twine and wheel.
He is assisted by a serving girl, Maria. Will counts off the
yards.

WILL

23, 24, 25....

Maria is inclined to chat.

MARIA

Bit of a change from making plays
in London.

Will leans on his stick, happy for a break. He likes her. He
considers her point.

WILL

In some ways yes Maria. In others.
Rather similar.

MARIA

Similar? I don't see how.

A light of enthusiasm begins to shine.

WILL

Well, today we take the measure of
our stage.

MARIA

A garden ain't a play.

Will enjoying himself. A relief from the grim family mood.

WILL

A play, a garden, a fresh baked
loaf like the ones you bake each
morning. All begin with an *idea*. A
compulsion to create a thing of
beauty, or need.

MARIA

Bread begins with yeast and flour.

WILL

Exactly! Now you're getting it!
Ingredients! Brambles, bushes.
Yeast, flour. Verses, players.
They're nothing without a dream!
Which *will not* be denied and which
endures in spite of all adversity.
The weather will turn, the bugs
will infest. The oven will cool and
the flour will mould. Your fellow
worker - in my case, a brilliant
lunatic actor called Dick Burbage -
will interfere and demand a bigger
show for a smaller budget, and a
shorter play with a *much* longer
part for himself. And all of these
trials must be countered and
overcome without ever losing sight
of the dream itself!

MARIA

And what does it feel like when all
of that works?

WILL

How does fresh baked bread smell?

MARIA

Wonderful.

He smiles at her as if to say 'exactly!'. That's his point. Maria is smiling too at his half comical passion.

99 EXT. NEW PLACE - MORNING 99

Will is hurrying up the garden path. Excited, he has a letter in his hand.

100 INT. THE SHAKESPEARE'S KITCHEN - MORNING 100

Will rushes in. Anne is cooking.

WILL

Anne! Anne. Anne. The Earl of Southampton makes a progress North.

(MORE)

WILL (CONT'D)

He writes that since he passes this way he will spend an hour or two in talk with me.

Anne does not share Will's excitement.

WILL (CONT'D)

Did you hear me wife? *The Earl of Southampton*.

ANNE

I heard you. And I recall the day I first heard about your friend the Earl of Southampton.

WILL

Wife?

ANNE

Same day I heard there'd been a book of poems published. Sonnets they told me.

Will is completely thrown. He was not expecting this.

ANNE (CONT'D)

Perhaps you thought because I couldn't read them I wouldn't mind. But plenty of people can read. Even in our little town. Including one of your own daughters.

WILL

Anne - Those sonnets were published illegally. Without my knowledge or consent.

ANNE

But you wrote 'em Will. And people read 'em. And after they'd read them they started asking "Who are they then?" "Who's this dark lady he's so in love with?"

WILL

They were just poems...

ANNE

And the Beautiful boy Will? The Fair youth?

Will at a loss.

ANNE (CONT'D)

Don't answer. I didn't want to know then and I don't want to know now.

(MORE)

ANNE (CONT'D)

But I do know who some people said
he was. And now it seems he's to
come to my house a'calling.

Will pretty shame faced.

ANNE (CONT'D)

All these years you've worried
about your reputation Will. Have
you even once considered mine?

107

EXT. NEW PLACE - DAY

107

Will and family at their gate. All in their best awaiting the
great visitor. Will is very excited.

WILL

I will introduce you but do *not*
address him unless he addresses
you. On my nod must you all depart
and leave us to our talk.

SUSANNA

He's just a man Father.

WILL

He is an *Earl* Susanna.
(to Elizabeth)
Do you hear that Lizzie, your
Grandpa is to drink wine with an
Earl.

ELIZABETH

Because you are a gentleman!

The little girl points excitedly at the Coat of Arms.

WILL

Yes! Because I am a gentleman!

Sir Thomas Lucy, his wife and servant approach on foot, also
in their Sunday best.

SIR THOMAS

Ah Shakespeare. I heard word of
your distinguished visitor. My men
tell me that he is even now
approaching the town. Of course you
will introduce me.

Will taken aback. He hadn't expected this. Anne assumes he
will tell Lucy to mind his own business, but Will buckles to
superior rank and says nothing.

SIR THOMAS (CONT'D)

I shall suggest he comes on to
Charlecote to take his ease.

(MORE)

SIR THOMAS (CONT'D)

Bit more what he's used to.
Naturally I shall ask that you
join us...

(glancing at Anne)

Just you I think. We shouldn't wish
to tire his Grace.

Clattering horses are heard.

EXT. NEW PLACE - DAY

SIR THOMAS

Welcome to Stratford Upon Avon Your
Grace.

The very impressive Earl of Southampton eyes Lucy.

SOUTHAMPTON

And you are?

SIR THOMAS

Sir Thomas Lucy of Charlecote Manor
your Grace and Member of Parliament
for this district. May I have the
honour of introducing my wife....

SOUTHAMPTON

Have we business?

SIR THOMAS

Well I...

SOUTHAMPTON

Is there some petition which you
are come to present?

SIR THOMAS

Oh no Your Grace I thought only to
invite you to...

SOUTHAMPTON

Then kindly remove yourself, Sir
Thomas. I want none of your
company. I am here to visit the
greatest man in the kingdom. After
His Majesty of course.

Southampton turns to Will.

SOUTHAMPTON (CONT'D)

Will!

108

INT. THE GREAT HALL NEW PLACE - AFTERNOON

108

Will and Southampton talking by the fire.

SOUTHAMPTON

Damn impudence. A grubby little Member of Parliament. They'll sell a knighthood to anybody these days.

WILL

He has snubbed me many times.

SOUTHAMPTON

But why do you let him snub you Will? What is he? The son of a son. Nothing more. All his pride and strut comes from no greater achievement than having been spat from the dick of a previous nonentity. I'm the same.

WILL

No!

(N.B Wriothsesley pronounced 'Wrizzly", as in grizzly.)

SOUTHAMPTON

I'm the son of a son Will. Henry Wriothsesley *son* of Henry Wriothsesley and if I were not the son of Henry Wriothsesley then your Thomas Lucy, *son* of Thomas Lucy would not grace me with a sneer. *You* on the other hand are...

WILL

The son of a thief.

SOUTHAMPTON

The son of Apollo! God of poetry! God of truth! The finest, the most complete and the most beautiful mind I'll warrant that ever existed in this world.

Will is of course delighted and deeply moved. Southampton stares at him for a few moments.

SOUTHAMPTON (CONT'D)

So why are you so small Will?

WILL

Small?

SOUTHAMPTON

Why are you are such a *little* man?

WILL
Your Grace?

SOUTHAMPTON

You can enchant the multitude with
the scratch of your quill.
Yet you cringe before a cur like
Sir Thomas Lucy.

WILL

Cringe?

SOUTHAMPTON

Your talent has a greater scope
than all the other poets combined
and yet you've led the smallest
life.

WILL

I don't think I've led a small life
your Grace.

SOUTHAMPTON

Oh come now Will! Compared to Kyd?
Or Marlowe! What a man. What a
life! Spy! Adventurer! Fucked for
England! Boys. Girls. Boys and
girls. He knew how to *live*.

WILL

He is dead of course, My Lord. So,
you know, win some lose some.

SOUTHAMPTON

They are all dead Will. Marlowe,
Greene...

WILL

Who called me upstart...

SOUTHAMPTON

....Crow! You see! Still you *care*.
Still it rankles. Kyd, Nashe,
Spenser, Oxford. All dead. Booze
and passion, sex and violence
killed 'em all. *Life* killed them.
And you? You survived.

WILL

Yes. I survived.

SOUTHAMPTON

With your nice house...

WILL

Several houses.

SOUTHAMPTON

And your Coat of Arms. How much did
that cost you Will?

WILL
Twenty pounds.

SOUTHAMPTON

Twenty pounds. The man who wrote Hamlet and Henry the fifth, Macbeth and Romeo and Juliet paid twenty pounds for the name of gentlemen. Oh Will. Will. Why do you care?

Will pours more wine and thinks about his answer.

WILL

My father was once fined for not attending Church. Can you guess why he didn't go?

SOUTHAMPTON

Priest too Protestant? I've heard it rumoured there's a whiff of Papery about you Shakespeare's.

WILL

Nothing so spiritual. He could not attend church because he owed money to most of the congregation.

A beat. Then Southampton roars with laughter.

SOUTHAMPTON

I think I'd have liked your Dad!

WILL

Yes. People did.

They drink in silence for a moment.

SOUTHAMPTON

You must write again Will. London needs you. We have only Jonson now.

WILL

Who laughs at me because I speak no Greek and don't care whether Bohemia has a coast.

SOUTHAMPTON

Christ Will why do you care what he thinks! You wrote King Lear.

WILL

I care because it matters Your Grace! In England it matters. I have what I have upon my own merit and for that I am suspect! Perhaps I will always be suspect. But I have my money and I have my houses and I have my Coat of Arms.

SOUTHAMPTON

You have your verse! Great Christ
man you have your poetry. Such
poetry. Such beautiful, beautiful
poetry....

Southampton's eyes grow a little misty.

SOUTHAMPTON (CONT'D)

And some of it. Some of it was writ
for me.

A long beat, they stare at each other.

WILL

Yes your Grace. For you.

Another beat. There is love here.

SOUTHAMPTON

I have grown old. As you said in
your sonnets that I would, you
bastard. But the beauty I inspired
in you will be forever young. And a
thousand years from now when people
read those lines, I shall be young.
Alive still in the minds of lovers
yet unborn.

WILL

They were only meant for you Your
Grace. Not for any other living
soul nor any yet to live. Just you.

SOUTHAMPTON

It was only flattery of course.
Flattery that was my due.

WILL

Yes. Just flattery. Except. I spoke
from deep within my heart.

They stare deep at one another.

SOUTHAMPTON

Well. I was younger then. Younger
and prettier.

WILL

Beautiful your Grace. As you will
ever be.
*When, in disgrace with fortune and
men's eyes,
I all alone bewep my outcast
state,
And trouble deaf heaven with my
bootless cries,*

(MORE)

WILL (CONT'D)

*And look upon myself and curse my
fate,
Wishing me like to one more rich in
hope,
Featured like him, like him with
friends possessed,
Desiring this man's art and that
man's scope,
With what I most enjoy contented
least;
Yet in these thoughts myself almost
despising,
Haply I think on thee, and then my
state,
(Like to the lark at break of day
arising
From sullen earth) sings hymns at
heaven's gate;
For thy sweet love remembered such
wealth brings
That then I scorn to change my
state with kings.*

SOUTHAMPTON

Yes, well. As I say. Just flattery.

WILL

Not flattery. Truth. And I always
dared to hope...

SOUTHAMPTON

Hope Will?

WILL

That, perhaps in some small way it
was reciprocated.

A tiny change of atmosphere. Will doesn't pick it up.

SOUTHAMPTON

Reciprocated?

WILL

That perhaps you also...

Suddenly Southampton's face is cold.

SOUTHAMPTON

You forget yourself Will.

WILL

I....

SOUTHAMPTON

As a poet you have no equal. And I,
like anyone with brain and heart am
your humble servant.

(MORE)

SOUTHAMPTON (CONT'D)

But as a man Will it is not your
place to love me and hanging a
twenty pound shield above your door
will never make it so.

Will is crushed. Southampton's good humour returns, he slaps
Will on the back and drains his glass.

SOUTHAMPTON (CONT'D)

I must be off. Goodbye Will
Shakespeare. It was the poet I came
to visit and it is the poet of whom
I take my leave.

Southampton stands, Will gets to his feet of course, but he
is sad, unable to make a merry parting. Southampton smiles a
friendly, conciliatory smile.

SOUTHAMPTON (CONT'D)

*When, in disgrace with fortune and
men's eyes,
I all alone bewep my outcast
state,
And trouble deaf heaven with my
bootless cries,
And look upon myself and curse my
fate,
Wishing me like to one more rich in
hope,
Featured like him, like him with
friends possessed,
Desiring this man's art and that
man's scope,
With what I most enjoy contented
least;
Yet in these thoughts myself almost
despising,
Haply I think on thee, and then my
state,
(Like to the lark at break of day
arising
From sullen earth) sings hymns at
heaven's gate;
For thy sweet love remembered such
wealth brings
That then I scorn to change my
state with kings*

The Southampton party leaves. His Grace does not look back.
Will stands very still watching the procession go. The rest
of the family start to move back into the house. Anne stands
there too, a little apart. There is nothing to say.

110 EXT. THE HIGH STREET - MORNING 110

Judith approaching Tom Quiney's wine and tobacco shop.

111 INT. QUINEY'S WINE SHOP - MORNING 111

Judith enters. Quiney as ever jolly and boisterous.

QUINEY

A glass Miss Shakespeare? To toast
this sunny morning?

JUDITH

I need no excuse for a glass of
wine Mr. Quiney.

Beat.

QUINEY

There is another pleasure, equally
heady.

JUDITH

And plenty of country girls for you
to get it with.

QUINEY

Your looks won't last forever Jude.

JUDITH

And I shall be glad when they're
gone because I shall be no more
bothered by the likes of you.

112 EXT AERIAL GARDEN DUSK 112

Will has been working hard. Working to forget.

Will and Douglas are at work again on the garden border. They
are planting grasses where previously they measured. Douglas
begins another conversation.

DOUGLAS

Sir. I suppose you've writ down all
sorts of men.

WILL

Indeed.

DOUGLAS

And now you grow flowers.

WILL

Trying.

DOUGLAS
Which do you like better?

WILL
Which do you?

DOUGLAS
Flowers Sir. They're beautiful.

WILL
Aren't people?

DOUGLAS
Some. I suppose But they're cruel
and selfish too.

WILL
And flowers?

DOUGLAS
Aren't.

WILL
But every flower fights for the
light. One will strangle and starve
another to survive. All they care
about is their place in the Sun.
Every one will put itself before
it's neighbour. But sometimes, we
do not. Once in a while, god knows
not very often, we'll reach to help
another up towards the Sun. I like
flowers. But I like people better.

Douglas smiles he likes the answer. They return to work.

Later Anne brings Will some water. An arm round the shoulder.
An attempt to restore normality. They slowly walk back
towards the house.

113 INT. THE SHAKESPEARE'S KITCHEN - EVENING

113

The family sit.

JUDITH
I notice that your friend the Earl
didn't bring his wife with him on
his travels. Perhaps he doesn't
find female company to his taste.

If this was a jibe Will ignores it.

WILL

I'm sure that His Grace and the
Countess Elizabeth are most happy
in their marriage.

Possible discreetly raised eye brows from Anne and Judith.

WILL (CONT'D)

As I would wish you to be Judith.
Why are you still unwed? You are
pretty enough I think.

JUDITH

I don't.

WILL

Then look in your glass.

JUDITH

I have no glass.

JUDITH (CONT'D)

I didn't like the person I saw in
it.

Will getting a little irritated at her endless negativity.

WILL

Good God Daughter that's a bleak
thought since the only company you
keep is your own.

JUDITH

But there it is.

WILL

But what of children? All women
want children.

JUDITH

Apparently.

WILL

Don't you want a child?

JUDITH

Do you want me to replace Hamnet
for you Father?

This is brutal. Will absorbs the blow. Tries to be
reasonable.

WILL

I meant for your own sake. A
husband, children. For comfort,
companionship.

ANNE

She's seen that marriage may not
bring you either.

Will's anger begins slowly to boil.

WILL

Is that it Judith? Have you seen
your mother's misery, and thought
better to be a spinster than
shackled to a man who neglects you?

ANNE

I did not say I was miserable.

WILL

No wife you didn't, but though I
put words into other people's
mouths, I too can occasionally see
beyond what is merely *said*.

Anne shrugs. Quite suddenly Will explodes. Fist on table.

WILL (CONT'D)

And I will take no more of this! I
have worked ceaselessly on behalf
of this family...

ANNE

On your own behalf-

WILL

And I am head of this family! I
have given you a fine house and
servants. I have sent you money
all your life. Is that not Comfort?
You have two beautiful daughters, a
brilliant son and a husband who
though absent, kept you always in
his thoughts! Is that not
companionship? In abundance?

Anne's face suggests this is a stretch. Will doubles down.

WILL (CONT'D)

I have raised this family up!
Through my genius I have brought
fame and fortune to this house. Yes
my genius! Would you have had me
ignore that? Ignore a gift from God
almighty so that I could be a
bloody glove maker, and *you* might
feel a bit more appreciated!

It's a hard blow. Will's defense is to go deeper.

WILL (CONT'D)

Hamnet died and I wasn't here. I know that. The plague took him and I wasn't here. But the plague has taken millions and it would have taken him whether I was in London, or in Stratford, or on that godforsaken highway. We lost our boy! We lost our beautiful, brilliant brilliant boy and I wasn't there...

Anne has merely bit her lip at all of this. Now, suddenly, it is Judith who answers Will. Jumping up and shouting.

JUDITH

Hamnet wasn't brilliant!

WILL

What?

A beat. Judith knows she has begun something which now can not be stopped.

JUDITH

He was beautiful but he wasn't brilliant.

ANNE

Judith. Don't.

WILL

What do you mean?

JUDITH

I wrote them.

WILL

Wrote what?

ANNE

Judith I said don't!

JUDITH

The poems.

There's no turning back. Judith grabs at Will's satchel and takes out the precious sheaf of papers.

JUDITH (CONT'D)

The verses you hold so dear! With wit and mischief in every line. I made them up. Hamnet only wrote them down.

ANNE

She helped him a little that's all.

JUDITH

I made them up! All of them. Hamnet was sweet and kind but he was no poet.

WILL

No! He was....

JUDITH

He wasn't!

WILL

Brilliant....

Anne realizes the game is up.

ANNE

No Will! He was just an ordinary little boy. You would have seen it in a moment had you ever looked.

WILL

I looked!

JUDITH

And you saw what you wanted to see. You saw yourself!

ANNE

Judith! Enough.

WILL

Myself?

JUDITH

A boy with a mind as big and bold as yours. But happy, with a father who appreciated his genius. Well Hamnet might not have been a genius but he was clever enough to know that he could never live up to what you wanted him to be! He dreaded your visits!

Will is devastated. Anne tries to explain.

ANNE

We didn't plan it. Not when it began. It was only that Jude was always making up stories, conjuring rhymes... One day Hamnet wrote one of hers down for practise with his pen. You found it and thought it was his and praised him so....

Will tries to come to terms with all this.

Judith has been holding the sheaf of papers.

JUDITH

So are they worthless now?

WILL

They aren't his.

JUDITH

Will you read them no more? Sit in the Sun and chuckle at their wit?

WILL

They are not his.

JUDITH

No! They're mine and so I will do what I please with them.

She throws them on the fire. For a moment it seems as if Will will jump up and pull them out. But he doesn't. He watches them burn.

114

INT. THE SHAKESPEARE'S KITCHEN - NIGHT

114

It is very late. Will now sits alone. The empty satchel in his lap. Anne appears.

ANNE

Judith tried to teach herself to write you know. After Hamnet died. But she never had the patience. Not like Sue.

A moment of silence.

ANNE (CONT'D)

I should have liked to have been able to write a few letters. Particularly married to you! Remember our wedding day? Me, older and pregnant, you this strange, clever lad of 18. I knew what people thought. I couldn't even sign the register, had to make a stupid mark. I felt so foolish.

Will looks at her, he hadn't known that.

ANNE (CONT'D)

Then you went off and become the greatest writer in England! With a wife at home who couldn't read a single word. I sometimes wondered wether that bothered you at all.

(beat)

But why would it? You were hardly here.

They both sit in the firelight with their thoughts.

115 EXT. THE GREEN WOOD - DAY

115

Will walks with Susanna.

SUSANNA

I didn't know it was she who wrote the verse. But then Judith and Hamnet were inseparable. I wasn't allowed into their world.

WILL

Why did she never tell me?

SUSANNA

Out of loyalty to Hamnet I suppose. He wanted you to believe him brilliant in life. Why would he wish it any less in death?

WILL

It was cruel.

SUSANNA

Cruel for her I think.

WILL

For Judith?

SUSANNA

Would you want to be denied credit for your verse? Have people think someone else writ them? Someone better educated?

WILL

No. No I shouldn't like it at all.

SUSANNA

Well look at them afresh. Celebrate your living daughter rather than your dead son. Perhaps Judith will finally smile again.

Will is beginning to have some understanding of his insensitivity.

WILL

She burned them.

SUSANNA

Burned them? Why?

WILL

Because I am a fool.

Will walks on. Susanna follows.

SUSANNA

Father. Why do you write no more?

Will still does not wish to answer this. But slowly, he tries.

WILL

On the morning after the theatre burnt, I stood there, among the ruins, determined to begin again. To write another play. My greatest yet. To open another theatre. Even greater.

He pauses. Collecting his thoughts. Susanna listens.

WILL (CONT'D)

And so I looked inside my self. Into my soul. I looked, as so often I had looked before. And this time... I found - Nothing. There was nothing there. I was as barren as the smoking ruins on which I stood. I was alone and frightened, and I realised this terrible thing. I realised that it just didn't matter to me anymore. And there on that sad morning I knew that I would never write again. My soul was empty.

SUSANNA

Your soul isn't empty Father. Your soul has the whole world in it. But even if it was, I'm glad. For it's brought you home.

Will is very moved.

116 INT. JUDITH'S BED CHAMBER - NIGHT

116

Judith in her room. Will appears.

WILL

I'm sorry.

JUDITH

You lost your son. Any man would mourn. A daughter is nothing. Destined only to become the property of another man. Or fade away.

WILL

You mustn't fade Judith. Why don't you write again?

JUDITH

Father you know I can not write.

WILL

I could teach you.

For a moment Judith is taken aback. This is such a potential resetting of their relationship. But it is too late.

JUDITH

I have no verse in me any more.

WILL

Why?

JUDITH

Because the wrong twin died.

WILL

No. Plague took him. Plague makes no judgements. It is just plague.

JUDITH

I wish a plague had taken me.

WILL

Judith. Why do you hate yourself?

JUDITH

I have stolen Hamnet from you twice. Once by surviving him, and now by taking your dream of him away.

WILL

You have given me a new dream. My beautiful daughter, the Poet.

JUDITH

A woman can not be a poet. A woman is put upon this Earth for but one reason. I know my duty now. I will make amends for stealing Hamnet from you. I promise I will make amends.

117 EXT. THE GARDEN - DAY

117

Will digs. Anne joins him. Beat.

WILL

I am glad Hamnet didn't write the poems.

ANNE

Glad?

WILL

I know him better now. It is love not ambition that will blossom in this garden.

Anne looks at the garden. It is still pretty grim. She smiles.

ANNE

Well it had better because it doesn't seem like much else has blossomed yet.

WILL

I am a poor gardener. It's true. I found it much easier to create things with words.

ANNE

Life's like that. Would you like me to help?

She smiles. He smiles. Together they begin to work on the garden.

118 INT. ANNE'S BEDROOM - NIGHT 118

Anne gets ready for bed. Will appears.

WILL

Goodnight my love.

ANNE

Stay Will. For comfort. With me. In our second best bed.

Will smiles. He enters.

119 EXT. THE HIGH STREET - DAY 119

Judith is approaching Quiney's wine shop.

120 EXT. HALL'S CROFT - DAY 120

Anne is approaching Susanna's house. She knocks at the door. Susanna answers.

ANNE

Susanna. There is something I should like your help with.

121 INT. QUINEY'S WINE SHOP - DAY 121

Judith enters. She closes the door and stares at Quiney.

JUDITH

I will take that glass of Rhennish wine with you Tom Quiney.

122 INT. HALL'S CROFT - EVENING 122

Susanna and John Hall. She stitching, he with his bible.

JOHN HALL

Your sister has been seen in Thomas Quiney's shop.

SUSANNA

Quiney supplies wine to my father's house.

JOHN HALL

She was not ordering wine. She was drinking it. With Quiney. She was inside for half an hour or more.

SUSANNA

Is this the faith your Puritan brothers practise? Spying on women?

JOHN HALL

They were quite public in their merry making. They went later together to the tavern.

SUSANNA

If Judith is reaching for a little happiness then I am glad of it.

JOHN HALL

Sinning will not make her happy.

SUSANNA

Really? Then let us hope it makes her unhappiness a little more bearable.

JOHN HALL

That is a wicked thing to say. Remember your scripture.

SUSANNA

What I remember is a little girl who smiled a lot. I should like to see what that smile looks like on the woman that girl became.

JOHN HALL

A reputation once lost can not be
refound.

SUSANNA

Mine was.

JOHN HALL

Yours was not lost! It was defamed
by a convicted drunkard and
suspected Papist. Judith must drop
this Quiney. He is debauched.

SUSANNA

If only those without sin were
allowed to marry, there would be
precious few weddings.

123 INT. QUINEY'S WINE SHOP - EVENING

123

Quiney and Judith kissing.

QUINEY

You know that I am not a good man.
There have been women. Many women.

JUDITH

I have seen too little of life.
You've seen too much. Between us
perhaps we may begin again.

124 EXT. THE HIGH STREET - MORNING

124

The hustle and bustle of a tiny market town. Quiney and
Judith walk together. She is still sombre and serious but he
buys her a piece of fruit from a stall, maybe even juggles
some? He wins a smile. The first we have seen!

Margaret Wheeler is watching. She is both sad and bitter.
Quiney sees her but manages to prevent Judith doing so.

125 EXT. THE GARDEN - DAY

125

Will and Anne work together in the garden.

WILL

He has a good business with his
wine and tobacco shop.

ANNE

And people will always want those.

WILL

Unless John and his Puritan friends
have their way.

ANNE

I've known the Quiney family all my life. They can be a wild and merry crew, but good hearted.

Will glad to hear it.

126

INT. THE HOME OF MARGARET WHEELER - EVENING

126

A poor lodging in a near by village. Quiney is visiting. Margaret Wheeler (who we saw him with at the church). She sits with her parents.

QUINEY

I can not see you anymore Margaret
I'm sorry.

MARGARET

Because of Judith Shakespeare?

QUINEY

I never made you promise Margaret
you know that. If we sinned we
sinned together.

Margaret's father speaks.

MARGARET'S FATHER

She's with child.

This is a big blow.

QUINEY

Can you be sure it's mine?

Margaret reddens, perhaps she can't be sure. Her father is though and takes up a hatchet from the fire side.

MARGARET'S FATHER

You dare ask it? Dare again!

The Father is intimidating, but Quiney holds his ground.

QUINEY

Margaret has many friends at the
tavern.

MARGARET

I'm certain... I think... I *believe*
it's yours Tom. Honestly I do.

Quiney is not a bad man. He and Margaret have been friends.

QUINEY

I have a wine shop. My family is
prosperous. You will always have
money for the child, always.

(MORE)

QUINEY (CONT'D)

And for your comfort too, a small dowry that you might find a husband who will take your child as his own.

Margaret's father puts down his axe.

QUINEY (CONT'D)

I hope that in return you will not name me as the father.

Margaret is sad but she knows it's the best deal she'll get. Her father knows this also. He nods grimly.

127 INT. THE TAVERN STRATFORD - DAY

127

John Hall enters. He approaches the Landlady.

STRATFORD LANDLADY

Well well. Doctor Hall. I did not look to see you in the Tavern. Has all your preachifying given you a thirst?

JOHN HALL

A cup of water if you please.

STRATFORD LANDLADY

I shall charge you pottage. There is water at the pump.

John Hall puts a coin down.

JOHN HALL

Tom Quiney the Vintner drinks here does he not?

STRATFORD LANDLADY

Since he was a boy.

JOHN HALL

I would have you tell me what company he has kept of late. What *female* company.

Hall puts another couple of coins down.

128 INT. NEW PLACE - DAY

128

Will in his study. A serving girl shows in his lawyer Francis Collins. Will is a feeling happy.

WILL

Francis Collins! Come in! Come in! You'll take some wine? Maria! A jug of wine if you please.

FRANCIS

I am relieved to see you in such high spirits Will. When a man sends for his lawyer it is not always so.

WILL

Judith's getting married!

FRANCIS

No! Congratulations! It was a crime that such a pretty girl remained unwed.

WILL

Well crime no longer! And thus would I amend my Will to include my new Son in Law Tom Quiney.

FRANCIS

Quiney is it? Wine and tobacco. Good trade.

WILL

Can't think of better. Also we must of course make provision for his and Judith's male issue.

The wine arrives. Will fills their glasses for a toast.

WILL (CONT'D)

My grandsons!

FRANCIS

Many of them!

They drink. Will has a mischievous glint in his eye.

WILL

And I wish also to leave something for Anne.

FRANCIS

Anne? If she survives you she will have a third by law.

WILL

Oh she'll survive me. I have little doubt of that. She's years older and ten times tougher. But I don't mean money! She'll have more of that than she can spend. I had in mind a piece of furniture.

FRANCIS

Furniture? But Anne will live here and have the use of every stick.

WILL

A *specific* piece of furniture.
Which when it is no longer *ours*
must be *hers*. And I hope that in it
will she smile and think of me.

Will drinks happily. Francis shrugs and gets papers and pen.

130 EXT. HOLY TRINITY CHURCH - MORNING 130

The congregation gathers. A merry scene as townsfolk go into the church. Quiney arrives with his brother, there is much back slapping as they make their way in.

Margaret Wheeler and her parents attend. She is heavily pregnant and ashamed that all pity her unmarried condition. Her father's face shows angry defiance.

131 INT. HOLY TRINITY CHURCH - MORNING 131

Quiney enters. He sees that amongst the happy faces Margaret, sits grimly and tearfully at the back with her mother and father. Quiney catches Margaret's eye but he can not read her face. Now Susanna and John Hall enter, John Hall sees Margaret and note that Quiney is looking at her.

132 EXT. HOLY TRINITY CHURCH - MORNING 132

Now Will arrives with Judith. A happy morning.

133 INT. HOLY TRINITY CHURCH - MORNING 133

The vicar Edward Woolmer is officiating over the wedding.

EDWARD WOOLMER

Before I pronounce you man and wife
I must ask this congregation does
any know of any reason why these
two should not wed.

This is a tense moment for Quiney. His eyes flick to Margaret, her face a mask, her father shifts in his pew, Will he speak? Will John Hall? Hall is watching intently.

None speak. The Vicar continues and completes the service.

EDWARD WOOLMER (CONT'D)

I now pronounce you man and wife.

Judith turns for a moment to her father. She smiles at him, she is doing this for him but she is happy. She turns back to Quiney and embraces him

CARD: On the tenth of February 1616 at Holy Trinity Church, Stratford Upon Avon, Judith Shakespeare then aged 31, married Thomas Quiney, the local Vintner and tobacconist whom she had known all her life.

EXT. HOLY TRINITY CHURCH - MORNING

The happy throng emerge. Margaret (her head bowed in shame over her very pregnant body) slips away with her parents.

John Hall follows them.

135 INT. NEW PLACE - DAY 135

The wedding feast. A great cheering. This is a happy and joyous affair.

136 EXT. THE HOME OF MARGARET WHEELER - DAY 136

John Hall is confronting Margaret and her parents.

JOHN HALL

Who is the father girl?

MARGARET

I will not tell.

John Hall glances at the well stocked shelves. Wine. Food. A pile of what are clearly new blankets and sheets.

JOHN HALL

This house is blessed with a goodly abundance. Your silence has been bought.

Margaret and her parents stare defiance at the two puritans.

137 INT. NEW PLACE - DAY 137

Will is making a speech to the rapt crowd

WILL

... One son in law owns a wine shop the other one wants to close it.

(laughter)

A happy balance I think, balance in nature always appealed to me and a happy balance is what I feel now at this wonderful feast. You all know the Shakespeare's. You knew my father when he was your Mayor, and you also knew him in less happy times...

A reveller calls out cheekily.

O/S REVELLER

He certainly knew the price of
wool!

WILL

Of course he did! He made it up
himself!

Laughter and some 'woos'. Will is being pretty honest.

WILL (CONT'D)

I know that sometimes we
Shakespeare's have been our own
worst enemies. And sometimes we
have *had* the worst of enemies.

Will looks at Susanna who gives him a little smile. Another
voice calls out.

O/S VOICE

If ever John Lane shows his face
around here again he'll have the
nose cut off it!

All cheer at that.

WILL

We have had our ups and downs but I
flatter myself that after my
father's shall we say 'creative'
approach to matters financial I
have brought some small credit to
my home town.

Another cheer and another voice shouts out.

O/S VOICE

The world will know of Stratford On
Avon because of you sir!

More cheers.

WILL

And although I no longer have a
son... and show me a family in this
town that has not lost at least one
child... I have two beautiful
daughters. So perhaps one day I
shall have a grandson.

Susanna is embarrassed by this. Judith smiles at Quiney.

WILL (CONT'D)

For that I look to you Tom and you
also John! Be about your business
both of you!

Much good natured cheering. Quiney raises his mug. Hall does his best to produce a grim smile.

WILL (CONT'D)

For family is everything and today,
I could not be more proud of mine.

More cheers. There are calls for "the Groom". Quiney stands.

QUINEY

My friends. I have known Judith all my life. And I have loved her near as long. I remember her as a happy child and I remember the shadow that fell on her when she lost that other half of herself. That twin soul with whom she entered this world. I have asked her for her hand many times across the years. I don't know what it was that finally caused her to say yes, all I can say is that I am happy for it and my dearest hope on this our wedding day is that I can bring into Judith's life a little of the happiness that has forsaken her for so long.

Judith is touched. Anne and Will too. All cheer.

138

INT. JUDITH AND QUINEY'S BED CHAMBER - NIGHT

138

It is their wedding night. They stand before each other.

JUDITH

I saw Margaret Wheeler in the Church today Tom.

QUINEY

I know it Judith and I have confessed all to you. I can not undo what is done. All I can say is that her child and she will not want.

They embrace and begin to make love.

CARD: Shortly after their wedding Judith and Tom Quiney conceived a child.

139

EXT. THE HIGH STREET - MORNING

139

Wide shot. Hustle and bustle of a market town.

Judith and Quiney walk hand in hand. They are happy.

140 INT. THE HOME OF MARGARET WHEELER - DAY 140

Margaret is in labour. It's a bad one. She's screaming. Her mother is trying to help but gives up.

MARGARET'S MOTHER
The child is breech.

MARGARET'S FATHER
We must send for Doctor Hall.

141 INT. THE SHAKESPEARE'S KITCHEN - DAY 141

Quiney and Judith are visiting Will and Anne.

WILL
Pregnant?

JUDITH
It's very early Father but I believe I am.

WILL
Oh my sweet girl.

142 INT. THE HOME OF MARGARET WHEELER - DAY 142

Margaret is screaming, the baby is not coming. Dr Hall is doing what he can but he knows it's desperate. He takes the grim forceps from his bag.

143 INT. THE SHAKESPEARE'S KITCHEN - DAY 143

Susanna has joined the family gathering.

SUSANNA
Sister. I am truly happy for you.

WILL
Where is John? He should be here.

SUSANNA
He was called out... to a confinement.

Judith and Quiney know who that is.

144 INT. THE HOME OF MARGARET WHEELER - DAY 144

Margaret's screams reach a terrible crescendo. Then silence. Her writhing body falls still. All know immediately that she is gone. John Hall works feverishly at the limp body but to no avail.

JOHN HALL

The child has departed with it's
mother.

145 INT. THE SHAKESPEARE'S KITCHEN - DAY

145

A merry conversation is in progress. Judith and Quiney laughing with Will and Anne. Even Susanna laughs merrily.

John Hall enters. Perhaps still blood splattered. Clearly something is wrong.

JOHN HALL

Quiney. Margaret Wheeler has died
in childbirth along with her baby.
The child has no name. It will not
enter heaven without one.

Quiney knows what he must do.

146 EXT. GRAVE YARD - DAY

146

Margaret's parents are burying their daughter and grandchild. Tom Quiney and Judith are also there and stand some way apart. Judith with her hand on her own belly lost in a confusion of thoughts.

The service ends. The parents turn to walk away. They pause before Quiney and Judith.

JUDITH

Mr. Wheeler. Mrs. Wheeler. I'm so
sorry.

**CARD: Margaret Wheeler, former lover to Thomas Quiney was
buried with her child on 16th March 1616.**

**CARD: On 25th of March 1616 Shakespeare once more amended his
Will, striking out provisions made for his new son in law.**

INT NEW PLACE DAY

Will has signed and lays down his pen. He looks so sad. For once John Hall is moved.

JOHN HALL

I take no pleasure in Judith's
distress Father in Law. Or yours.
It grieves me.

WILL

I know that. John.

149 INT. HOLY TRINITY CHURCH - DAY

149

The Bawdy court is assembling. Pious, grim figures.

CARD: On March 26th 1616 Tom Quiney was tried before the Bawdy Court in the same church in which he had been married six weeks earlier. He made a full confession.

Thomas Quiney stands before the Court and congregation.

QUINEY

I got her with child. It was carnal copulation out of wedlock and I am sorry for it. Sorry for the agony it has caused to her family and sorry for the shame I have brought on mine.

EDWARD WOOLMER

The sentence of the court is that you shall parade yourself in open penance, clad only in a white sheet for three Sundays before this congregation.

Will feels once more the weight of shame.

150 EXT. THE HIGH STREET - DAY

150

Will is walking in the High Street, still in smart clothes but looking older and sadder. He is no longer greeted with respect, instead he gets smirks or looks of sympathy, he catches people pointing.

Sir Thomas Lucy walks by.

SIR THOMAS

Well well Mr. Shakespeare. How very unfortunate. Seems your daughter's wedding was rushed for a reason. Like your own eh? The apple doesn't fall far from the tree. Damn me you Shakespeare's are a scandalous lot eh? Perhaps being an illiterate farm girl your wife was unable to teach your girls morals. Well well. Must be getting on. Can't loll about thinking pretty thoughts all day like you poets. I must to business.

Lucy is about to walk on. Will stops him.

WILL

Business Sir Thomas?

SIR THOMAS

Yes yes business. A large estate like Charlecote Manor doesn't run itself ye' know.

WILL

Oh I thought you meant a real business. Like building, owning and operating London's largest theatre for instance.

Sir Thomas about to speak but Will ploughs on.

WILL (CONT'D)

Actors, carpenters, seamstresses, crew. Bribes to pay, security to mount, politics to navigate. *Fifteen hundred* paying public each afternoon, to be fed, watered, and given a spectacle which must be ever greater than the last. 170 Royal performances for our Queen and our king. Have you ever considered the cost and logistics of mounting the Battle of Shrewsbury in the banqueting hall at Hampton Court? Please don't. It would make you very, very tired. And yet Sir Thomas, in all the years I ran my vast, complex and spectacularly successful business I also did find time to think and write down those pretty thoughts you mentioned, which in my experience brought immense pleasure to those seeking respite from this vale of tears, and without which the whole thing would have been as pointless as...? Well, as pointless as you Sir Thomas.

Will about to leave but then has a final thought.

WILL (CONT'D)

And since you brought her up, my wife Anne has more wisdom and decency in her daily *shit* than you have in your entire body.

Lucy is a little shaken but walks on with dignity. Will calls after him.

WILL (CONT'D)

I wish I *had* poached your bloody deer!

Will walks on.

151 EXT. THE GARDEN - DAY

151

Another day. Anne works alone. The garden is blooming but Anne is sad for Will seems to have forsaken it.

Will emerges from the house

ANNE

Will you work with me a while Husband? You could put some beer about for the slugs.

WILL

By the look of things Anne you do better without me. I think I shall walk a little.

He heads for the garden gate. Then pauses.

ANNE

She did it for you Will. You wanted a grandson.

She returns to her digging. Will walks on.

152 EXT. THE VILLAGE GREEN/POND - DAY

152

Will sits watching the children play. Once more he thinks he sees the boy. Once more when he looks again the boy has gone. Something occurs to Will.

153 EXT. HOLY TRINITY CHURCH - MORNING

153

Will is walking towards the church. He pauses at the graveyard wall.

Will enters and walks to his son's grave. The Stone reads "Hamnet Shakespeare. 1585 to 1596".

He stands in contemplation. Then walks into the church.

154 INT. HOLY TRINITY CHURCH - MORNING

154

Will walks through the empty church. He sits in a pew with his thoughts. The vicar enters.

EDWARD WOOLMER

Mr. Shakespeare. In church and it isn't Sunday? Dare I hope that you are seeking to know God a little better?

WILL

People who claim to know God feel entitled to speak for him. I prefer to maintain a respectful distance. Which I imagine God appreciates. May I see the Church register?

155 INT. HOLY TRINITY CHURCH - MORNING

155

The Chancery. Will sits at the desk. Woolmer busies himself with the registers.

EDWARD WOOLMER

You did not attend the funeral?

The question is a painful one.

WILL

I was travelling home. The news arrived in London after I had left. By the time I arrived he lay in the ground.

EDWARD WOOLMER

It was summer. No corpse remains unburied long. Particularly a plague corpse. Here is the page. August 1596.

Will looks at the entry for Hamnet's death. The Year 1596. His eye moves up and down the column. From the deaths recorded in 1596 to those in 95 and then 97.

Will traces his finger across the Hamnet's entry. Almost trying to touch the boy.

Will is remembering...

WILL

I'd brought him a pen knife. A special one with a folding blade. His name engraved upon the handle.
(beat)
How he would have loved that knife.

Will takes out the knife which is old now, and opens it.

WILL (CONT'D)

I keep it with me still...

There is a pot of quills on the desk. Will takes one.

WILL (CONT'D)
Do you mind?

Woolmer nods. Will begins to cut the quill.

WILL (CONT'D)
And whenever I cut a new nib, I
imagine that my hand is his hand.
Grown to be a man...

Will watches his hand as he cuts at the quill.

WILL (CONT'D)
Trimming his quill with the knife
his father gave him - on that
joyful home coming long ago.

Will has cut a beautiful nib. He dips it in ink.

WILL (CONT'D)
And when I dip the ink and mark the
page, it's still his hand I see and
the words that I write are his.

He writes a word or two.

WILL (CONT'D)
And then I tell myself that it
isn't me who thinks of him at all,
but that I am dead, while Hamnet
lives, and thinks of me.

Will lays down the quill and folds the knife away. Edward Woolmer glances down at the page Will has written on. He wrote "Hamnet Shakespeare".

WILL (CONT'D)
People often ask how I have writ so
much. How I found the energy and
dedication to sit alone at my desk
writing play after play after play.
The answer's simple, I was always
in the company of my son.

He gives way to grief. Edward Woolmer stand silently.

159 EXT. HOLY TRINITY CHURCH - DAY

159

Will has returned to Hamnet's grave. He reads the inscription again. Year of death 1596.

Will glances at the other graves close by, the years of death 1594, 1597, 1597, 1598.

Will is thinking.

160 HALL'S CROFT - DAY 160

Will has gone to talk with Susanna.

SUSANNA

It began and ended so quickly.

WILL

It is always so with the plague.

SUSANNA

The four of us had supped that night. We were usually a merry crowd we four at table but that night I recall Hamnet was quiet. The illness already in his system no doubt. Judith teased him as she always did but that night could win no smile in return.

162 INT. ANNE IN BED - NIGHT 162

Now it is a flashback we see Anne wake with a start. She has heard Judith's voice shout "Hamnet!" Susanna's voice over continues to describe the scene.

SUSANNA (V.O.)

Mother told me she was awoken that night by Judith's cry.

163 INT. JUDITH AND HAMNET IN BED - NIGHT 163

Still in flash back. Anne enters the children's room. First she sees Judith crying in fear. Judith points to Hamnet where he lies already becoming plague ridden.

SUSANNA (V.O.)

Mother bid Hamnet come at once with her to save Judith from infection.

164 EXT. THE GREEN WOOD - NIGHT 164

Still in flashback. Anne is leading the stricken boy to the woods.

SUSANNA (V.O.)

She knew already that Hamnet could not survive and so did her best to isolate him from all but herself. But Judith disobeyed and followed.

Judith is following Anne and Hamnet.

SUSANNA (V.O.)

It was a warm night. The air was sweet and Hamnet begged to be taken to his favourite place.

165 INT. THE GREEN WOOD POND - NIGHT

165

Hamnet, now with pustules fully breaking out lies on the Moon lit grass beside the water. He screams in fear and pain.

SUSANNA (V.O.)

They nursed him through the night with cool water from the brook and prayer. Mother did as best she could to keep Judith and herself from contact with his sores and by God's mercy neither was infected.

Dawn now. Hamnet dies.

SUSANNA (V.O.)

He left them as the Sun rose. Mother sent Judith for blankets and thread to make a shroud.

Cross fade. Anne has stitched blankets around the corpse, completely containing it.

SUSANNA (V.O.)

When the plague is involved it's best not to linger too long saying goodbye. When I awoke she'd sent for the graves-men. Hamnet was already in his coffin.

167 INT. HALL'S CROFT - DAY

167

Back in the present. Susanna still with Will.

SUSANNA

Judith never smiled again.

Will is thinking. He sees greater tragedy in his mind even than that which has been described.

168 INT. THE SHAKESPEARE'S KITCHEN - EVENING

168

Later Will and Anne before the fire. Judith enters.

JUDITH

You sent for me Father?

WILL

Yes Judith. Thank you for coming.
Your new home is comfortable I
hope?

JUDITH

There's much to do but my husband
is working hard. He is a good man
despite the shame he brought us.

Will swallows. It's still a painful memory.

WILL

I visited Hamnet's grave today. I
read his name in the Parish
Register.

ANNE

I am glad of it.

WILL

Anne I have known the plague. Many
times in London did it strike and
all the theatres must be closed.

Neither Anne or Judith reply.

WILL (CONT'D)

Yes, I have known the plague. And I
was thinking today that Black Death
is a scythe it is not a dagger.

ANNE

How so?

WILL

Never once did I see it strike a
single person, and then depart.

Anne and Judith remain silent. Will is wrestling with a
question he does not want to ask.

WILL (CONT'D)

How did Hamnet die?

Neither Anne nor Judith show any emotion. But now we see a
tear rolling from Judith's expressionless eyes.

WILL (CONT'D)

His death is recorded in the Parish
register but with no mention of the
cause.

ANNE

Plague husband. The priest
pronounced it at his funeral.

WILL

Because that is what you told him.
And also what no doubt you told the
grave's men when they arrived in
the greenwood to find him stitched
up in his shroud.

In all their minds a remembered scene...

169 INT. THE GREENWOOD MORNING

169

Hamnet's shrouded corpse lies in the grass, a sad bundle. Little Judith is being comforted by Anne. Two Grave's men have arrived. Heavily cloaked men wearing the horrible beak nosed masks used to ward off plague. They have a great sheet.

They approach the bundled corpse warily. Like hook beaked vultures gathering round carrion. They lift it quickly and fearfully, perhaps even manipulating it with hooked poles. Nobody wants to contact with a plague victim any longer than necessary. They dump it on the sheet and drag the corpse bundle away.

CARD: Hamnet Shakespeare died on or around the 9th of August 1596 and was buried on the 11th.

170 INT. THE SHAKESPEARE'S KITCHEN - EVENING

170

We are back in the moment, Will is still quietly questioning Anne.

WILL

When I look at other graves around about Hamnet's and at his name in the register. I see that no scythe swung through this town in the summer of 1596. Five children only were taken and three of those were new born's. Not like in other plague years. Why in 1597 even dozens were cut down.

(beat)

Wife. How did Hamnet die?

ANNE

He died of plague.

Will stares hard at Anne, his heart in torment. She returns his stare with stony defiance. Then Judith speaks. Slowly, scarcely with emotion. Her eyes distant, her voice toneless.

JUDITH

I woke Mother in the night with my cry.

Once more we see the scene in flashback. This time described by Judith in Voice Over.

171 INT. ANNE IN BED - NIGHT 171

Again in flashback we see Anne wake with a start. She has heard Judith's voice shout "Hamnet!"

172 INT. JUDITH IN BED - NIGHT 172

Still in flash back. Anne enters the children's room. First she sees Judith crying in fear. Judith points but this time to an empty place in the bed.

JUDITH (V.O.)
Hamnet's bed was empty.

173 EXT. THE GREENWOOD - NIGHT 173

Still in flashback. Anne rushing through the wood.

JUDITH (V.O.)
Mother searched the house and then thought of the Greenwood Pond that was his favourite place even though he couldn't swim and would never go in the water.

Judith emerges from the house and follows Anne.

174 INT. THE GREENWOOD POND - NIGHT 174

Anne approaches the water with Judith behind her. They walk to the edge and now, in the Moonlight they see Hamnet, dead, floating like Ophelia. He is surrounded not by lilies but by torn pages of paper.

JUDITH (V.O.)
Around him, torn and shredded floated the final verses I had conjured and which he had writ. The ones prepared for your return.

Anne moves towards the water to get Hamnet's corpse.

JUDITH (V.O.)
Mother sent me for blankets and thread. So that none would know how Hamnet died.

176

INT. THE SHAKESPEARE'S KITCHEN - EVENING

176

Back in the present Judith has told her story. Anne speaks with hollow firmness.

ANNE

That's your story Judith and you have carried it's burden ever since. But I say he died of plague. The vicar spake it at his grave and God accepts it. Millions have died of it and Hamnet entered Heaven amongst that host. Jesus would not have denied him his place whatever Judith thinks we saw.

Will is too broken to speak. Instead Judith cries out.

JUDITH

Of course he's in Heaven! Hamnet didn't kill himself, he only threw himself upon the water. It was I that caused it. I killed him! I killed my brother!

ANNE

No Judith! It isn't so!

Judith turns to Will, utterly distraught.

JUDITH

He wanted to please you so much. All he cared about was your love and all you cared about was him! I was jealous... I was jealous... Hamnet went to school. I helped in the kitchen because I was a girl. I wanted your approval too. I wanted your love...

Will is numb.

JUDITH (CONT'D)

So I told him I would tell you! That this time you would know which twin had writ the verse. I didn't mean it! I wouldn't have done it. I loved him. But he believed me... He couldn't face your disappointment.

Judith sobs in abject misery. Anne comforts Judith.

ANNE

He died of plague Judith. God accepts that. It was only a little lie. He was only a little boy.

Will gets up unsteadily, puts on his cloak and leaves.

177 EXT. THE GREEN WOOD - NIGHT

177

A wild night. Will stumbles through the woods. He calls out.

WILL

Hamnet!

He thinks he sees the Boy again. Somewhere in the woods. The boy runs. Will crashes after him. Rain lashing down.

Will has arrived at the pond. He stares at the still Moon lit water. Almost delirious he grabs at a rock and puts it in his shirt. Gathering another he wades into the water. When it is deep enough he plunges under.

The rocks aren't heavy enough. He surfaces but plunges again.

Then he sees the boy standing on the bank.

The boy smiles. Will stops. He stands waist deep in the water.

BOY

You finished it.

Will doesn't understand.

BOY (CONT'D)

My story's done.
Go home now.
I can rest.

Will reaches out his hand.

WILL

Hamnet please. Stay a moment.

BOY

*We are such stuff
As dreams are made on, and our
little life
Is rounded with a sleep.*

The boy is gone.

178 EXT. THE HIGH STREET - EARLY MORNING.

178

A few people are up and about. Milk churns are being carted. Bread baked. Will walks home through the town, a filthy and disheveled figure, soaked through. A stark contrast to the proud man in his fine clothes. A few faces turn.

179 EXT. NEW PLACE - MORNING

179

Will arrives home, a sorry, shivering figure. Anne opens the door to him. She looks on him with pity and with love. Will seems so diminished.

WILL

I think perhaps I have caught a little chill.

CARD: In April 1616 Shakespeare was visited by his friend and rival Ben Jonson

180 INT. THE SHAKESPEARE'S HALL - NIGHT

180

Will, wrapped in rugs and seeming rather ill is dining with Jonson.

JONSON

Christ Will! You have had a time of it! Both daughters caught up in scandals. Good for them!

WILL

Yes. So far retirement hasn't exactly brought me the peace I'd hoped for.

Jonson sups deep. He is a confident, bold, opinionated man but also astute and he loves Will.

JONSON

In my experience Will no one ever gets what they hope for. But they do tend to get what they deserve.

WILL

You think I got what I deserve?

JONSON

Not all of it perhaps but something certainly. You lost a son. No man deserves that but most men suffer it. I myself have lost a daughter and a son.

WILL

I know my friend.

JONSON

But you have two daughters still, who love you and a wife to share your bed. I have none of that. Mine own Anne despises me.

WILL

Well you publicly insult her and call her 'shrew'. Can you blame her?

JONSON

I didn't say she had no cause only that she does. Like your Anne (wife?). She loves William Shakespeare. But she won't put up with the monster. You tell me that Southampton says you've lived a little life. What an arse! You have conquered England and returned victorious to the bosom of your family? Is that little?

WILL

Perhaps the second part.

JONSON

The second part is the best part! You *made it home* Will. How many other conquerors can say as much? What poets? Anyone can die alone and despised. Marlowe was murdered and no one can agree on which of his many enemies did it, Greene died in poverty, estranged from all who knew him. Kyd the same. No one knows how Tom Nashe died but if his filthy dildo poem's are anything to go by it wasn't in the bosom of his family.

Will laughs which brings on a coughing fit.

JONSON (CONT'D)

And I? Well while I am not dead I may soon be for I am out of favour with the king and none will speak for me. But you Will. You made it home. Any of us might wish we had half your 'littleness'.

WILL

(chuckling)

Well, perhaps put like that.

JONSON

You have kept your friends too, even me and I am a waspish fellow. Hemming and Condell are feverishly seeking out your scripts intent that all should be published and your genius be preserved down the ages.

(MORE)

JONSON (CONT'D)

Name another writer the bloody
actors have revered like that? Yes
we tease you Will. I've done it
myself. A lot. 'Not without right'.

Will puts a bit of mustard on his ham in salute.

WILL
Or as you kindly put it publicly,
"Not without Mustard"

JONSON
But you have your family and your
friends, a full fire and a full
belly. And oh, by the way you have
written the greatest body of plays
that ever were or will be. Damn
your eyes you bastard! Yes my
friend, I think you got what you
deserved.

Will is much moved by all of this.

WILL
Ben. I have an idea.

180c EXT. JUDITH'S CHAMBER WINDOW- NIGHT

180c

Will and Jonson outside on the street.

WILL
Judith!

JUDITH
Father?

WILL
Shhh! Don't wake your husband.

JUDITH
What do you want?

WILL
We're going to the pub. Wanna come?

181 EXT. NEW PLACE - NIGHT

181

Will and Jonson both drunk have got a ladder and Jonson and
are setting it beneath Will's Coat of Arms. Judith stops
them.

JUDITH
You're both too drunk for ladders.
Just hold the bottom.

The pregnant Judith begins to climb.

182 EXT. THE HIGH STREET - NIGHT 182

The two playwrights and Judith are making their way tipsily up the street carrying the Coat of Arms.

183 INT. THE TAVERN - NIGHT 183

They enter and to everyone's astonishment plonk it on the bar.

WILL

The Shakespeare Coat of Arms. It cost me twenty quid. Who wants it for nothing?

General surprise. Judith smiles. She understands what this means to Will.

WILL (CONT'D)

Hang it above the bar if you wish for I have no more need of it. You all know me anyway! I'm the son of a dodgy trader and my wife was three months knocked up when I took her to the altar. One of my girls married a carnal copulator no offense Jude...

JUDITH

None taken Father, he did tell the entire town.

WILL

And the other one married a Puritan.

JUDITH

Which personally I think is worse!

WILL

Here here!

JONSON

Bloody right!

WILL

Some people think I poached one of Lucy's stags which I didn't but I wish I had.

JUDITH

And never mind stags anyway you once stole an entire theatre.

WILL

Very true.

JONSON

I was there!

WILL

I worked too hard, drank too little
and worried too much about what
arseholes like you lot thought of
me.

Good natured cheers.

WILL (CONT'D)

I took my extremely long suffering
wife for granted, neglected my
beautiful, clever daughters.

He looks at Judith who returns his smile.

WILL (CONT'D)

And expected too much of my beloved
son. Apart from all that, I wrote
37 plays, some of which I admit
were rather long but all of which
are works of absolute genius.
Except possibly *The Two Gentlemen
of Verona*.

WILL (CONT'D)

My name is William Shakespeare. And
I am *not* a gentleman.

All cheer. Judith hugs Will. The party begins.

183a EXT NEW PLACE DAWN

183a

A crisp spring morning.

184 INT. ANNES'S BEDROOM - MORNING

184

Will lies in bed. He's weak and ill. The chill is worse. He's
dying. Anne, Judith and Sue enter. Judith now showing her
pregnancy.

JUDITH

Father. It's a special day. And
Mother and Sue have prepared a
special present.

Susanna takes a document and hands it to him.

WILL

Goodness. What's this?

ANNE

Its our marriage licence Will. 34
years ago I put my mark to it.

SUSANNA

And now...

There is a little bureau, Susanna produces quill and ink.
Anne sits and with great care signs the licence.

ANNE

Anne.... Shakespeare.

Will smiles and looks at the licence.

WILL

You have a beautiful hand.

JUDITH

Sue is teaching me also and by the
time you are better I shall have
written you a poem.

Will smiles with deep and special pleasure.

WILL

You will need a pen knife then.
This is yours.

Will takes Hamnet's knife from his pocket and gives it her.

SUSANNA

And what should you like to do
today Father? On this special day?

He smiles. He is at peace.

WILL

*I know a bank where the wild thyme
blows...*

As the poem continues in voice over...

185

EXT. THE GARDEN - MORNING

185

It is beautiful now, a graphic maze garden of beautifully
arranged grasses. A knot garden of charm and symmetry. The
ladies lead Will to a seat and gather around him while little
Elizabeth plays. Standing apart but also included are Hall
and Quiney.

WILL (V.O.)

*Where oxlips and the nodding violet
grows,
Quite overcanopied with luscious
woodbine,
With sweet musk roses and with
eglantine.
There sleeps Titania sometime of
the night,*

(MORE)

WILL (V.O.) (CONT'D)
*Lulled in these flowers with dances
 and delight.*

CARD: William Shakespeare died on 23th April 1616 in the town where he was born. It was his birthday.

186 INT. HOLY TRINITY CHURCH - DAY

186

It is Will's funeral. Music. A sombre, respectful congregation. Now Anne, Judith and Susanna stand together at the dais. They have a piece of paper. First Anne reads, it is a little faltering but loud and proud.

ANNE

Fear no more the heat o the sun.

Judith reads the second line. Also falteringly. It is heartbreakingly poignant, Anne and Judith finally beginning to read Will's poetry.

JUDITH

Nor the furious winters rages

Now Susanna takes over. She of course reads with confidence and beautiful clarity.

SUSANNA

Thou thy worldly task hast done,
 Home art gone, and ta'en thy wages
 Golden lads and girls all must
 As chimney sweepers come to dust

As the verses continue, we move away down the church, and fade to black.

A final card

William Shakespeare, 1564 - 1616, writer.

CARD: Anne Died 9 years later.

Will had bequeathed her his second best bed.

Judith Quiney had three boys. All died young.

Elizabeth Hall, Susanna's only child married twice but had no children.

She died aged 61, the last of Shakespeare's line.