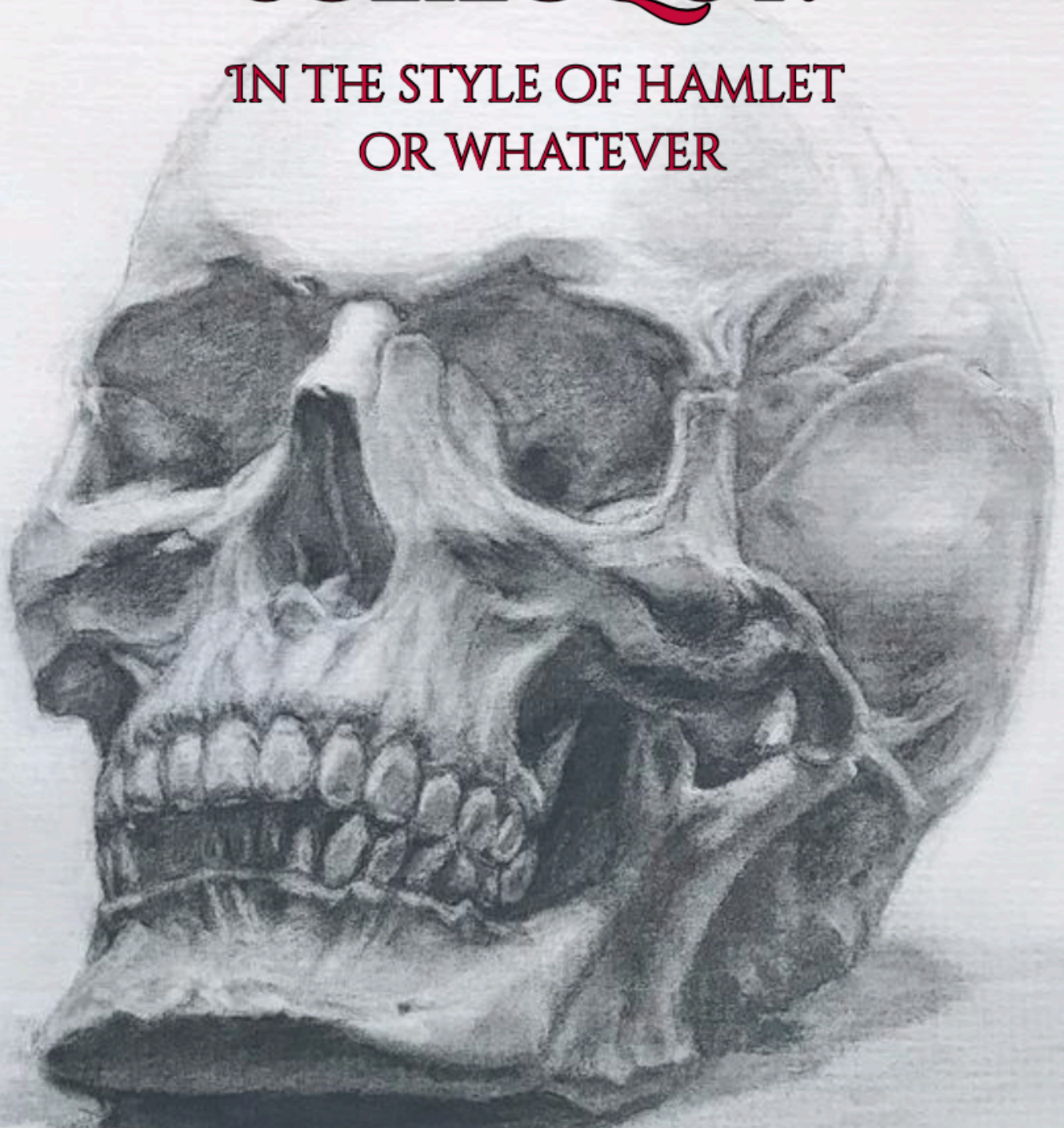


A 22-YEAR-OLD'S SOLILOQUY:

IN THE STYLE OF HAMLET
OR WHATEVER



Playwright: Annika Andersson - 10 minutes

SUMMARY

Harriet was never good at being alone, especially now. One night at 3 am, Harriet faces her grief (and her first “adult” break-up) by re-telling Shakespeare's Hamlet all by herself. Through it all, she can't help but wonder how much more complicated Hamlet's life would be if he was... I don't know... like her.

DEVELOPMENT HISTORY

Intermission Play Festival - Virtual Performance - 2020
Ann Arbor Civic Theatre - Virtual Performance - 2020

CHARACTERS

HARRIET - 22, a college student who is trying to adapt (might have lost her mind in progress)
FEMALE HAMLET - 22, Hamlet, but stronger (and wilder)
OPHELIA - 22, Hamlet's girlfriend (soon to be ex-girlfriend)
GHOST - 50, the shadow of Hamlet's dead Father
GRACE - 18, Harriet's over-optimistic sister

TIME

The present

PLACE

Harriet's Living Room

NOTES ON:

THE CHARACTERS

At this time, HARRIET is her only source of companionship. So... HAMLET, OPHELIA, and GHOST are all played by HARRIET.

STAGING

This was originally written to be performed on a livestream service (Zoom, Google Meet, etc.). Feel free to embrace the setting completely (HARRIET can move the camera, clean the lens, fall off camera, etc.).

“Is Okay Good? Okay is wonderful.”

- A Very Potter Musical

HARRIET's living room is revealed. A cardboard box labeled "Goodwill" sits in the background. A stack of books rests on top of the cardboard box. HARRIET is nowhere to be seen. After a few moments of awkward silence, HARRIET shimmies on to the screen. SHE is wearing pajamas and slippers and holding a hairbrush. SHE dramatically looks into the camera and uses the hairbrush as a microphone.

HARRIET

Heeeeeellooooooo fuuuuuuuuuuture ME! It's 2:48 in the morning and I cannot sleep! But, instead of laying in bed and drowning in my emotions, I decided to put on a little show for you! When you find this video in your camera roll...I hope it gives you a much needed laugh...

HARRIET breaks for a moment and leans into the camera.

HARRIET

...but then please delete this video. Seriously. This may be embarrassing...

HARRIET holds the microphone back up to her mouth.

HARRIET

...EMBARRASSINGLY GOOD! Let's do this.

HARRIET throws the hairbrush seductively. She attempts to do some form of half choreographed, half improvised dance (whatever is most popular nowadays - ya know). Since it is 3 am and she is wearing slippers, however, she slips all over the place. After one particularly unstable slip, HARRIET rips the slippers off her feet and throws them in a rage.

HARRIET

FUCK OFF.

HARRIET remembers the camera is still rolling.

HARRIET

Sorry. I hope that didn't scare you. I hear it can be scary to be alone with me.

A noise from outside. HARRIET backs up in fear and knocks the books on top of the cardboard box to the ground. SHE picks up "The Complete Works of William Shakespeare" and creeps towards the source of the noise. HARRIET re-enters the frame.

HARRIET

Maybe we're not alone...Wait. I'm not doing this. I will not be caught...*monologuing.*

HARRIET looks to the "Complete Works of William Shakespeare" as if its speaking to her.

HARRIET

No. This would be a soliloquy. I should leave that to Shakespeare. His soliloquies matter to people. I had to write a whole damn essay about “Hamlet” to prove it.

HARRIET gets an idea.

HARRIET

Hamlet? The young prince? Did he have insomnia too?

HARRIET runs over to the cardboard box and rips it open. SHE grabs the most regal pair of shoes and plants them on the ground. SHE stands behind them and poses, assuming the role of FEMALE HAMLET.

FEMALE HAMLET

I present to you...FEMALE HAMLET. Her deranged anxiety multiplies as she watched a gluttonous powerful man ruin THE WHOLE COUNTRY. But... is she truly overcome with womanly emotion? Or just feigning insanity to trick onlookers? You get to decide.

HARRIET assumes the role of FEMALE HAMLET.

FEMALE HAMLET

O that this too solid flesh would melt,
Thaw, and resolve itself into a dew!
But two months alone! — nay, not so much, not two:
The days escape me. Am I alone?

HARRIET runs to the cardboard box and pulls out a scarf. SHE places it on her head and assumes the role of GHOST.

GHOST

Maaaaaaaaark Meeeeeeeeeeeeee.....

HARRIET looks into the camera.

HARRIET

I'm a ghost!

HARRIET steps back to the pair of regal shoes and resumes FEMALE HAMLET. SHE hops between the regal shoes and scarf as SHE switches characters.

FEMALE HAMLET

Father!

GHOST

Revenge this foul and most unnatural murder.

FEMALE HAMLET

Murder!

GHOST

Murder most foul, as in the best it is;
But this most foul, strange and unnatural.

FEMALE

How unnatural? By the hand of man? Or by disease?

GHOST

Nay. By the murder of the spirit.
A foul thing to kill the spirit of your companions.

FEMALE HAMLET

I will do nothing of the sort.

GHOST

Oooooooooooooo....

HARRIET runs to the cardboard box and pulls out a pair of heels. HARRIET places the heels next to the regal shoes and steps in them, assuming OPHELIA.

OPHELIA

...Ooooooo my looooooord.

HARRIET walks into the regal shoes and assumes FEMALE HAMLET. SHE switches between shoes as she changes characters.

FEMALE HAMLET

Ophelia, my love...If thou dost marry, I'll give thee this plague for thy dowry: be thou as chaste as ice, as pure as snow, thou shalt not escape calumny. Get thee to a nunnery, go: farewell.

Be safe.

My love.

Take yourself far away from me.

And be clean.

Be well.

And be no more by me.

OPHELIA

No.

FEMALE HAMLET

Pardon me?

OPHELIA

I said no.

My lord,

You are the plague

And don't you dare compel me to be chaste

when a cloud of vapors follow you daily

Nay, a raincloud of despair

You are a hypocrite

You sucks my spirit dry with every breath you breathe

FEMALE HAMLET

What are you saying, my love?

OPHELIA

I am not going.

You.

Get thee to a nunnery

And do not breed sinners

Leave me.

I am not your lover any more.

FEMALE HAMLET

No, that's not how this happens-

OPHELIA

Leave. Now.

FEMALE HAMLET

I have no where else to go.

OPHELIA

Leave now.

FEMALE HAMLET

I cannot! I have no where to go! You know I can't go home!

OPHELIA

Leave

FEMALE HAMLET

Don't make me go home!

OPHELIA

THEN I'LL GO. Live with my parents or something. I can't stand being around you anymore. Just seeing your face... my spirit dies.

OPHELIA

You're a bitch.

OPHELIA takes a breath.

OPHELIA

YOU'RE A BITCH.

FEMALE HAMLET looks to the ground, gathers herself, then looks directly into the camera.

FEMALE HAMLET

To be, or not to be, that is the question,
Whether 'tis nobler in the mind to suffer
The slings and arrows of outrageous fortune,
Or to take arms against a sea of troubles,
And by opposing end them? To die: to sleep;
To sleep: perchance to dream:
to dream...
to dream...
Will we ever dream together again?

HARRIET becomes self-aware of the deafening silence.

HARRIET

Sorry. I keep changing the script. Shakespeare's words are better...I...stick to his words...

HARRIET approaches the cardboard box and pulls out shirts to use as OPHELIA's flowers.

OPHELIA

There's rosemary, that's for remembrance; pray,
love, remember: and there is pansies. that's for thoughts.
There's a daisy: I would give you
some violets, but they withered all when my father
and my mother
and my girlfriend
and my girlfriend
and my mother
and my father

OPHELIA (cont.)

told me to leave and never return
LEAVE AND NEVER RETURN

HARRIET throws all the shirts on the ground.

HARRIET

They all left me...

HARRIET gathers all of her anger and betrayal, then looks to "The Complete Works." SHE picks up "The Complete Works" and throws it onto the ground in frustration...directly on to her toe.

HARRIET

Shit!

HARRIET grabs her toe in pain. Slowly, HARRIET places the scarf on her head, takes in the mess around her, and clutches "The Complete Works" to her chest. All pretense melts away.

HARRIET

Mark me.

I'm 22 and I know nothing.

I don't know how to be alone.

I don't know every politicians stance on healthcare.

I don't know how to cope without using metaphor - sorry Hamlet.

And

I don't know how to be endearing.

especially to you.

I'm 22 and I think I've never been a real person.

I've felt things, yes.

Real things. Like happiness, and sorrow, and anger - that one's new.

But I don't think I've ever shown it before.

to real people, I mean.

Or at least when I've tried, they've ended up leaving me, so I learned to edit.

Edit myself.

Which makes me think I'm fake.

I'm 22 and I'm *not* depressed.

But if I were to get sick

I wouldn't be mad

because the universe decided that I should die

and not me

HARRIET (cont.)

I'm 22 and I hate myself for thinking that
So it's a good thing that I'm talking to you
and don't worry
I'll stop talking soon
this is just a moment
my moment
that I gave to myself
my soliloquy.

HARRIET walks forward, prepared to stop the video, but doesn't.

HARRIET

But before I go, can I just say one more thing?
I'm 22 and I don't like myself.
I hate my words
and the fact that they aren't spoken in verse
because then this would be art
and not shit.

I just had to tell you because I don't have parents or a girlfriend to talk to anymore.
And I used to tell them this stuff.
I mean, I'd mainly just tell them about my day
but then my parents chose to listen to others instead of me
and my girlfriend told me to leave and then left herself
so, it's just me.
And you.
...so thank you for listening.

*HARRIET goes to stop the recording, but the FaceTime ringtone starts blaring, stopping her.
HARRIET looks at the caller ID on her laptop. After a moment of deliberation, she answers.
GRACE pops up on the screen.*

HARRIET

...is everything alright?

GRACE

Yeah. Mom and Dad are asleep.

HARRIET

It's almost the witching hour.

GRACE.
Huh?

HARRIET
3 am. It is almost 3 am.

GRACE
Yeah, I wasn't sure if you'd still be up.

HARRIET
I am.

GRACE
What...are you doing?

HARRIET looks at the state of the room.

HARRIET
Oh...I was just...cleaning. While reading "The Complete Works of William Shakespeare."
There's some tips on how to fold clothes in the second act of Hamlet.

Silence.

GRACE
Mom wants to turn your room into a guest room.

HARRIET
Okay. I don't live there anymore.

GRACE
I know, it's just...it felt weird without you knowing.

HARRIET
I'm happy living here.

GRACE
With Amy?

HARRIET
Yeah.

GRACE
Amy moved out. She posted a picture of her new place on instagram.

Silence.

GRACE

Are you living there alone?

HARRIET

I'm fine, Grace.

GRACE

Are you able to connect with people?

HARRIET

I talk to people.

GRACE

You don't talk to me.

Silence.

GRACE

I'm not our parents, Harriet. I'm not gonna judge you. I thought you knew that. I hope you know that. And if you're living alone and talking to people, that's fine. I just hope you know you can talk to me.

HARRIET

You can talk to me too.

GRACE

You don't contact me and I get worried and I miss you-

HARRIET

I miss you too.

GRACE

Then call me and *tell* me that. Okay?

HARRIET

...Okay

GRACE leans into her camera.

GRACE

We are not our parents.

HARRIET leans into the camera.

HARRIET

We are not our parents.

GRACE

We listen to one another.

HARRIET

We listen to one another.

GRACE

We stay up until...the witching hour.

HARRIET

We stay up until the witching hour.

GRACE

We will talk to each other.

HARRIET

We will talk to each other.

GRACE

And I promise...even if you're monologuing I will stay up late and listen.

HARRIET

...I will listen. Even if you're monologuing.

GRACE leans back. HARRIET follows suit.

GRACE

Hamlet act two, right?

HARRIET

What? Oh, yeah. That's what I was reading.

GRACE

“What a piece of work is a man. How noble in reason.
How infinite in faculty! And yet, to me,
this is more than mere quintessence of dust.
Man delights me.”

HARRIET

First of all, what the fuck.

GRACE

AP Literature changed my life.

HARRIET

Second of all, it's man delights NOT me.

GRACE

I'm pretty sure he's in love with mankind.

HARRIET

Grace! He's *depressed*.

GRACE

Doesn't mean *we* can't find delight in man. Even from afar.

HARRIET

Oh my God. I need to go to bed.

GRACE

Oh please!

HARRIET

I'm serious that took a lot out of me.

GRACE

Okay, fine. I need to put this mind to rest anyway.

HARRIET

Please.

GRACE

This brilliant brilliant mind.

HARRIET

Goodnight Grace. I love you.

GRACE

I love you too.

HARRIET

I'll talk to you later.

GRACE waves to HARRIET, then hangs up. GRACE's picture disappears. It's just HARRIET and the camera again.

HARRIET

Oh shit. It kept recording?

HARRIET shakes her head, then looks deep into the camera

HARRIET

Next time, future Harriet, just call your sister.

HARRIET strikes a pose.

HARRIET

I'm out. See ya.

*HARRIET reaches to her laptop and hits "stop record."
End of Play.*