Saintspeare

By Lee Ann Hotovy

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This play has been taken from three of Shakespeare’s most famous plays: Hamlet, Romeo and Juliet, and A Midsummer’s Night Dream. The three plays run in and out of each other, working around a character named Beth Mack…a student of Shakespeare, and a lover of the Saints. It is a dream of outlandish circumstances that somehow leads to a significant ending—we hope!

*Cast of Characters:*

*Beth Mack—teenage girl (3)*

*Beth’s Shakespearean ego—Mack Beth—teenage girl, to replicate main character (3)dressed identical to Beth Mack*

*Beth’s Mother—older female*

*Robin Goodfellow (Puck)—Woodland fairy—male or female (3)*

*Clowns: Quince, Bottom, Flute, Snout, Snug, Starveling—male or female roles (2)*

*Hermia (a short Athenian maiden)—teenage female (3)*

*Helena (a tall Athenian maiden)—teenage female (3)*

*Lysander; beau of Hermia—teenage male (3)*

*Demetrius; suitor of Hermia—teenage male (3)*

*Oberon-king of the woodland fairies—male*

*Titania-queen of the woodland fairies—female*

*Woodland fairies: Cobweb/Moth/Mustard-Seed/Peas-Blossom*

*Capulet Servants: Gregory, Sampson—male or female roles*

*Montague Servants: Abram,Balthasar—male or female roles*

*Tybalt; Juliet’s cousin--male*

*Benvolio; friend of Romeo--male*

*Romeo; suitor of Juliet--male*

*Juliet; love of Romeo—female*

*Nurse; nursemaid to Juliet—older female*

*Hamlet; Duke of Norway—betrayed by his Uncle--male*

*Ghost of Hamlet’s deceased father—male*

*Ophelia; crazed love of Hamlet—female*

*Queen Gertrude: mother of Hamlet—female*

*Horatio; friend of Hamlet—male*

*Marcellus; friend of Hamlet—male*

*Act 1/Scene 1 Beth Mac’s Bedroom—contemporary teenage room: chair, bed, books, things strewn about. Mac Beth is hidden under blankets on bed. Beth appears dressed with Shakespearean costuming in part and a sword, supposedly studying for a test on the saints, but finds herself drawn into extemporaneous ramblings of Shakespeare; crying out dramatically as she reenacts a scene from Macbeth.*

Beth: Glamis thou art, and Cawdor and shalt be what thou art promis’d. Yet do I fear thy nature it is too full o’milk of human kindness t’ catch the nearest way. Thou would be great, art not without ambition, but without the illness should attend it…

*Mother enters*

Mother: Beth! Beth! Be ye studying or playing the sword?

Beth: Oh…I be studying, Mom…lots of studying! I am want to read about St. Thomas More, just now!

Voice: Well that’s good…I could have sworn I heard Macbeth. Remember…let not thyself fall prey to such sport, or ye shall earn a mark lower than the depths of despair. Fair thee well in thy studies dear daughter! Oh, and pick up your socks.

Beth: I thank thee, oh Mother of the child distract…I shall conquer all; I shall face thine enemy of binded wood and word, and learn thy facts of saints…I shall obey thy parent!

Mother: How now.

Mother exists taking dirty laundry.

Beth: How now, now?

Mother (offstage): Now!

Beth picks up her book of saints and removes her Shakespearean hat. Looks at clock.

Beth: Nine twenty-three. I have approximately one hour to learn about thirteen saints and their lives before I hit the sack. Aaaggg…its too hard. Why couldn’t it be a test on Hamlet or Romeo and Juliet…I know all about them! To be or … I guess it’s not to be…I shall keep thy word and get started.

*Beth lies on bed and opens book on saints.*

Beth: Ahh… the saints. Lives full of suffering, humility that some-how led to a grace-filled ending. It seems quite the opposite from the trials and misfortunes of the Bard’s characters, who nearly all die tragically. I wonder…(yawning) had Shakespeare lived at a different time, if he’d written of the St.Thomas Mores in life, rather than the Henry the Eighths? (yawning) The saints and Shakespeare…so many words…to read or not to read…(slaps herself to stay awake). That is the question? (sits up briefly as if reenergized)Whether tis nobler in the mind to suffer the slings and arrows of low grades, or to take up arms against a sea of my mind’s imagination, and by opposing them, end them til another morrow…sleep…sleep…devoutly to be wis…….

Beth falls asleep dropping book and sword. She snores. Suddenly Mac Beth begins to rise along side Beth.

Mac Beth: No more! And by a sleep to say we end? (shakes her head in disgust)The headache and the thousand natural shocks that flesh is heir to…tis a consummation. Well stay asleep then. It will serve its end even better. For I, your Shakesperean self…am off to Athens.

*Beth stirs and notices her other self leaving the room.*

Beth: Hey…where do you think you’re going?

MacBeth: Athens.

Beth: Athens…Greece? Why?

MacBeth: Because it ‘tis Midsummer and the woodland fairies are about.

Beth: But we’re…I’m…supposed to be studying for a test on the saints.

MacBeth: Go ahead.

Beth: But I can’t if you’re..I’m… heading to Athens…you will take all of me with you.

MacBeth: ‘Tis not my fault that you chose to study more of Shakespeare…than your book of saints.

Beth: This is so weird. I’m dreaming right? That’s why I’m talking to my self…my other self...

MacBeth: Quite. I represent your Shakespearean side; your theatrical, artistic, and oh, so clever side. I am your alter-ego.

Beth: And separated from you, I am…

MacBeth: The practical, somewhat cynical, “Oh…I have to study for a test-side.”

Beth: Is that sarcasm?

MacBeth: Is that cynicism?

Beth: Okay, I am going to wake up now…then you will go away. Wake up! Wake up!

*Beth tries to wake herself up, but she can’t.*

MacBeth: Too bad…we’re already in REM.

Beth: Already in REM? Help…

*MacBeth busies herself by taking sword and hat. Starts to leave room.*

Beth: Wait! You can’t go without me! Can you?

MacBeth: No…I don’t think so. But I am going.

*Beth grabs her saint book.*

Beth: Oh…this is such a weird dream…why do I have such a strong alter-ego! And why am I such a heavy-sleeper! Wait! I can’t leave without me!

*Both players exit. Music.*

*Act 1/Scene 2*

*Setting: Woodland forest just outside Athens in the time of the Ancient Greeks.*

*Beth and MacBeth enter forest looking around. MacBeth wears hat with feather and carries a sword.*

*Puck pops out from behind a tree.*

Puck: How now, spirit? Whither wander you?

Beth: What did she say?

MacBeth: Let me handleth this.

Macbeth moves toward Puck.

MacBeth: Over hill, over dale, through bush, through brier, over park, over pale, through flood, through fire, I do wander everywhere, swifter than the moon’s sphere.

Puck: The king doth keep his revels here tonight. Take heed, the Queen come not within his sight! For Oberon the King is passing fell and wrath!

MacBeth: The king is angry? But why?

Puck: Because she, for her crown has a golden ring stolen from an Indian King. She never had so bright a circlet. And the King…Oberon is jealous and would have the crown for his own, to be the glory of his elfish head.

Mac Beth: Ahhh…jealousy.

Beth: A ring? Like you wear on your finger?

MacBeth: Yes…but to a fairy, a ring can fitteth on their head.

Puck: But… the Queen withholds the ring from Oberon, and covers it with flowers like a jewel and makes it all her joy. And now the King and Queen never meet in grove or green, by fountain clear or starlight sheen. But they do square…which has sent all their elves, out of fear, to creep into their acorn cups and hide them there!

Beth: The fairies hide in acorn cups?

MacBeth: Shhh! Either I mistake your shape and making quite, or else you are that shrewd and knavish sprite, Robin Goodfellow! Are you not she?

Puck: That speakest right! I am the merry-wanderer of the night. Tis my job to jest to Oberon, and make him smile. But room fairy, how come you here…and do I not see double?

MacBeth: By way of a road, not carved in stone, but made of dust…dream-dust I fear. We are one, though our image bears two…I am the Shakespearean side…your creator dear, Robin…and she…

Beth: I am thouest, side of the Saint-ethseans…or at least I am in want of it-eth…if I could only study and wake from this dreadful dream…for no fear lies greater on my heart…than that of failing a test in the morning…morrow!

Puck: Her dialect leaves wanting…still she resembles thee, and does no harm.

MacBeth: Yes…now if thee would direct me to the King, I should like a word…

Puck: A word… with the King? Art thou a want-wit?

MacBeth: No…but I am curious to know…

Puck: Hush…here is my mistress, and the King…Oh we’re in for it now!

*Oberon and his train enter one side (Montagues), while Titania and her train enter from the other side (Capulets).*

Oberon: I’ll met by moonlight, proud Titania.

Titania: What? Jealous Oberon. I’ll have nothing to do with thee.

Oberon: Tarry, rash wanton! Am I not thy Lord?

Titania: Then I must be thy lady, but I know thou hast not always been true to thee, when thou has stolen away in the shape of Corin, and sat all day playing on pipes of corn.

Oberon: But I like to play on pipes of corn.

Titania: Hmmmf.

Oberon: Never mind the pipes…you have the golden ring that I desire. Handeth it over.

Titania: No.

Oberon: I pray thee. Give it me. I know a bank where the wild thyme blows, and nodding violets grow. And a snake or two…Wouldst thou like to visit there?

Titania: Your threats are of nothing to me Oberon…I will not part with the ring. I knew the owner and craftsman…he hath given it to me.

Oberon: Not stolen?

Titania: Nay.

Oberon: But I want one too! Cans’t thou ask this artisan to spin one for thy King?

Titania: Perhaps. But I tire of your whinings. Come fairies…let us find rest somewhere.

Sampson and Gregory: We’re Capulets, not fairies…note the swords!

Titania and her train exit.

MacBeth approaches Oberon: She’s a bit unreasonable isn’t she.

Oberon: Tell me abouteth it.

MacBeth: Maybe I could win the ring from her…shall I try.

Oberon: If thou woulds’t win the crown I would make thee a knight of my court.

MacBeth: Ooooh. A knight. How grand. Willt thou layest a sword on either shoulder to induct thee.

Oberon: Of course, although we woodland fairies prefer to use dandelions over swords.

MacBeth: Dandelions? With the puffy tops? Not what I had in mind, but I’ll do it.

Beth: Wait! Just what are you agreeing to…this may involve me?

MacBeth: I just going to get the crown for Oberon.

MacBeth moves to the back and starts looking for the crown.