

THE LAMENTABLE TRAGEDY OF KING HENRY THE FIFTH...WHEEL

TEN MINUTE PLAY

By Matt Thompson

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**THE LAMENTABLE TRAGEDY OF KING HENRY THE
FIFTH... WHEEL**
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SYNOPSIS: The romantic situation is tense: Shakespeare's most celebrated couples are discussing marriage, divorce, kids and how Hamlet remodeled the dungeon as a game room. Henry V feels like an outsider until the waitress, Hermia, sits down and they start to chat.

CAST OF CHARACTERS

(4 males, 4 females)

JULIET (f) (20 lines)
ROMEO (m) (17 lines)
HENRY (m) (24 lines)
HERMIA (f)..... (25 lines)
HAMLET (m) (14 lines)
OPHELIA (f) (10 lines)
SHAKESPEARE (m)..... (7 lines)
ANNE (f) (4 lines)

AT RISE: *HENRY is sitting at a café sipping a soda by himself. He looks around. Beat. ROMEO and JULIET enter and sit down. They are both laughing and in the middle of a joke.*

JULIET: So, Marlowe says, “Forget John Webster, get the cheese from the baker!”

ROMEO and JULIET laugh hysterically. HENRY tries to join in the laughter awkwardly.

ROMEO: Hello, Henry.

HENRY: Hey, Romeo. Juliet.

He shakes hands with ROMEO. JULIET then kisses him on the cheek. HENRY is a little awkward going about this.

JULIET: So, how’s the House of Lancaster, Henry?

HENRY: I’m doing well. In fact we have a coronation of sorts for—

ROMEO: *(To JULIET.)* That reminds me of that time we drank that sherry wine at Benvolio’s dorm room. Remember? Friar Lawrence and Richard III made Prospero dance on his staff?

JULIET: Oh, my goodness yes. That was phenomenal!

They laugh uncontrollably. HENRY is awkward.

JULIET: Oh, we are so sorry, Henry. So, how are things going for you?

HENRY: Uh... not bad, not bad, just uh... ruling England and thinking about invading France.

ROMEO: Can you do that? I mean just invade another country without any real reason.

HENRY: I... I don’t know I mean... I suppose so. Can’t you?

JULIET: If we are going to talk about politics then we should do so over another bottle of wine.

ROMEO: We haven’t ordered the first one yet.

The two of them laugh uncontrollably once again.

JULIET: Oh, Romeo, Romeo wherefore art—

ROMEO: My credit card!

They laugh uncontrollably and obnoxiously again. HENRY is still. They finally settle down.

JULIET: Oh sweetheart, you kill me!

ROMEO: Bar Maiden!

HERMIA appears, dressed as the bar maiden.

HERMIA: Hello, and welcome to the Mermaid Tavern. My name is Hermia and I'll be taking care of you today. Our special is pickled pigs feet and our house tap is apple cider.

JULIET: *(Recognizing her.)* Hermia?

HERMIA: *(Recognizing her.)* Juliet?

They laugh and hug.

JULIET: It's been so long. You remember Romeo?

HERMIA: How could I forget that darling face.

ROMEO/JULIET/HERMIA: "Is this the face that launched a thousand ships?"

HERMIA, ROMEO and JULIET all do a little familiar hand gesture between them. They all laugh nearly forgetting Henry.

ROMEO: Oh, how terribly rude. This is our friend King Henry the Fifth.

HENRY stands up and takes her hand and kisses it as gallantly as possible, with a swaggering air of confidence and romance.

HENRY: My lady. I would order a thousand foot soldiers to forge the fields of France for flowers for you to adore your gorgeous face. Yet none can compare thee to a summer's day.

He kisses her hand. She doesn't seem interested in him in the least.

HERMIA: How ya doing. (*Back to ROMEO and JULIET.*) So, anyhow, you two look great for taking poison and stabbing yourself!

JULIET: Love will do that! Right my little snicker butter?

ROMEO: Absolutely my cheeky monkey.

They do a little awkward public show of affection as HAMLET and OPHELIA enter.

ROMEO: (*Smiling and joking with HAMLET.*) Hey! Who's this guy? Who is this guy, huh! Come here pal!

HAMLET hugs ROMEO. JULIET grabs OPHELIA's hand.

OPHELIA: You look gorgeous J.J. You still look like you're 15!

JULIET: Oh stop it!

OPHELIA: And how are the kids?

JULIET: They're doing great! And do you and Hermia know each other?

OPHELIA: Oh my goodness of course. We go to yoga class together.

OPHELIA/HERMIA: Downward dog!

The girls share a laugh.

HAMLET: (*To ROMEO.*) And this guy! You stud, you! What about this guy, huh? Hermia, darling, great to see you.

HERMIA: Always a pleasure my prince.

HENRY: Uh... I'm a king.

No one hears HENRY.

HAMLET: (*To HERMIA.*) So, what have you been up to in the last few months? We haven't had you over for tea in ages.

HERMIA: Well, as you all know, Lysander and I divorced.

JULIET: What happened? I thought the counseling sessions were helping.

HERMIA: Well, he had an issue with my height for some reason.

OPHELIA: Was that it?

HERMIA: He just wasn't a very good communicator. He wouldn't talk to me about his feelings.

HENRY: I could torture him.

He laughs. No one else does. Everyone looks at HENRY. Beat. They all turn back to OPHELIA.

HERMIA: Yeah, so anyhow we're going through the split and I'm working here now since we we're no longer wanted at court.

OPHELIA: I'm glad you're feeling better about the entire thing Herm.

HERMIA: Thanks. Anyhow, I should get your drink order. Two ciders for R&J and what would you like?

HAMLET: My love?

OPHELIA: I'll take a Nantucket Nunnery.

HAMLET: And give me the Rotten Red Fiery Whisky.

HERMIA: Coming right up.

She exits.

HENRY: I'll have a ... Um... I'm not thirsty.

ROMEO: Oh, so sorry. Ophelia, Hamlet, this is King Henry the Fifth.

OPHELIA/HAMLET: (*Ad-lib.*) Hey / What's up? / Hi.

A bit of silence.

HAMLET: Anyhow you and Juliet should come over to the place. Ophelia makes the best Big Ben Bennies.

OPHELIA: Hamlet has added some fantastic Medieval touches to the castle. We've just re-roofed the minaret.

HAMLET: And I turned the dungeon into a game room.

ROMEO: We'd love to stop by.

JULIET: Sounds like fun!

Beat as they look at HENRY.

HAMLET: Ya know Henry, you're welcome of course. Come on by. Next weekend.

HENRY: Oh yeah. Ummm...well...next weekend, let's see. I'd love to but I've got to invade France next weekend.

ROMEO: I'm a betting man. What are your odds?

HENRY: About five to one.

JULIET: Ouch.

HENRY: Yeah, but we...ya know, I've got a nice little army going and a few knights and... uh... stuff ya know. So, I'd love to check out your place...

JULIET: It's a couples' party. Maybe you can grab a date or something?

HENRY: Sure, ya... It's been tough dating since I've been King.

HAMLET: I hear the King of France's daughter is a hottie.

OPHELIA: Hamlet!

HAMLET: Not as hot as you my mad little woman!

She smiles as they give each other a little kiss.

HENRY: If I can get a date after the attack or something. I'll try and stop by and—

SHAKESPEARE and ANNE walk up. All eyes turn to them as HAMLET cuts off HENRY.

HAMLET: Billy?! Billy, I knew that was you! Come here ya crazy Bard man!

SHAKESPEARE and HAMLET give each other a bear hug.

SHAKESPEARE: Hamlet, you're looking pretty good for a dead guy.

HAMLET: Death by venom will do that to your complexion.

There are greetings all around except for Henry who stands up but no one hugs him or anything.

JULIET: You look great Bill!

ROMEO: It's so great to see you. Were you coming here for brunch?

SHAKESPEARE: We were just out shopping.

ANNE: We just bought a second bed.

HAMLET: Did you get a good price?

SHAKESPEARE: I'm not sure. Shylock sold it to us.

HERMIA returns with the drinks.

HERMIA: Okay, is there anything else I can get you? (*Seeing Shakespeare.*) Oh, hiya Bill, Anne!

They greet each other.

SHAKESPEARE: (*To HERMIA.*) So it's down to this huh? I had all the guys in the Arden Forest chasing after you and here you are slinging drinks?

HERMIA: Lysander needs to work out some of his issues.

ANNE: So are you on a break?

HERMIA: I thought we were but then I saw him with Mustardseed down at Oberon's Pub.

SHAKESPEARE: Oh, I'm sorry my dear. I really should have written a more faithful character.

HERMIA: That's alright I suppose. This is a great job. Good hours and fantastic health and dental options. The Athenian court had an HMO. At least here, I can choose my own doctor.

They all agree and nod.

ANNE: Well, we should get going. We did say we would meet Timon for board game night.

ROMEO: Timon?

JULIET: Yes, who's that?

SHAKESPEARE: Timon of Athens?

They are all dumbstruck.

SHAKESPEARE: He's a friend. We need to hang out with him every now and again so that he feels relevant within the scope of the canon.

They all agree and ad-lib: Yes, of course / The poor thing / Must be hard on him, etc.

ANNE: Well, cheers all!

ALL: Cheers!

SHAKESPEARE and ANNE exit.

OPHELIA: We should get going too.

HAMLET: Oh yes, Ophelia has that nunnery class that meets once a week.

OPHELIA: He thinks I need it. I'd really rather die.

With smiles and cheers HAMLET and OPHELIA exit.

ROMEO: Well my dear are you ready to head off to the gym?

JULIET: I suppose so.

HENRY: The gym? But you just got here.

ROMEO: I know, but Juliet is pushing me to get into rock climbing.

JULIET: Technically, it's balcony climbing.

ROMEO: Bye guys!

With smiles and kisses they exit. HERMIA sits down.

HERMIA: Do you ever feel like you have a tough time fitting in?

HENRY: Yes.

HERMIA: I'm normally not into military guys but you're kinda cute.

HENRY: *(Finding some confidence.)* When I conquer France I shall open the gates of Paris and have thousands of French children sing songs with your name and I shall rename all of France Hermania.

She is struck a little bit by his hard, warrior charm.

HERMIA: I appreciate that, but you're pushing a bit. Loosen up. Don't try so hard to impress.

HENRY: *(Dropping all pretense, just being himself.)* Really?

HERMIA: Really.

HENRY: Do you like chocolate truffles?

HERMIA: O.M.G! They are like my favorite. Dark chocolate on the outside—

HENRY/HERMIA: Caramel on the inside.

They look at each other and smile. A small connection has been made.

HERMIA: Better yet, why don't you just take me to Paris instead.

HENRY: I would but...I promised I would invade France.

HERMIA: It would be a heck of a first date.

HENRY smiles and pulls out his cell phone and dials.

HENRY: *(Into his phone.)* Uncle Exeter? We gotta cancel the invasion. *(Listening.)* Uh... something's come up. *(Listening.)* Well, tell them to get down off of their horses. *(Listening.)* No need to send an escort, I'll walk home. Yeah. Okay. Bye.

He hangs up.

HENRY: Hey, You like Crepes?

HERMIA/HENRY: Cherry filled!

They look at each other.

HERMIA/HENRY: Me too!

He offers his arm. She takes it.

HENRY: Viva la France!

With a smile, they exit.

THE END